Austin Middle School



Band Handbook

2023 – 2024

**Austin Middle School Band**

www.austinmiddleschoolband.weebly.com

I am excited that you are joining us and have designed this book as a reference tool to help familiarize your family with the policies, protocols, and procedures as a member of the band program. Please look through the sections:

1. Introduction & Insight
2. Attendance, Conduct, Rehearsals, & Concerts
3. Grading Procedures
4. Instrument Supplies & Equipment Introduction

**Introduction and Insight**

**Purpose**

The Austin Middle School Band Handbook has been created as a guide for students and parents to gain important information about our band program. This handbook will provide insight into daily responsibilities and helpful tips to be a successful member of the band.

**Mission**

The mission of the Austin Middle School Band is to provide each student with a well-rounded musical experience in a supportive, positive environment that also develops important life skills such as self-confidence, self-discipline, teamwork, organization, dedication, hard-work, responsibility, and respect.

**Questions**

If you have any concerns or questions about the band program at Austin Middle School, you can contact me at (770) 942-0316 ex. 38032 or email at Jtbrown@paulding.k12.ga.us

**Band is an activity that develops:**

**Self-confidence:** Ability to go from learning notes and rhythms to producing music instills a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence.

**Coordination:** Hand, eye, body, posture, and thought/motor skills all working together are the basics of playing an instrument. These skills transfer into life.

**Teamwork:** Every child wants to be part of a group. Band allows everyone to “be on the team” and to play an important role.

**Comprehension:** The skill to perceive and derive meaning from musical sounds sharpens your child’s ability to comprehend abstractions.

**Problem-Solving:** Learning the basics of musical language and interpreting a work through performance teaches the ability to understand a problem and reach an appropriate solution.

**Discipline:** Learning the basics of music and applying them correctly takes perception and discipline.

**Arts Appreciation**: The words beauty, serenity, & excitement come to life with each musical performance.

**Logical Reasoning:** When a child learns to analyze a musical work from all perspectives, both inductive and deductive reasoning grow stronger.

**Communication:** Music offers the ability to cultivate our feelings and thoughts through non-verbal means and recognize how cultures utilize music for personal use.

**Conceptualizing:** Your child learns to classify by learning to identify different types & styles of music and time periods, history & genres of music around the world.

**Value Judgments:** Learning to comprehend, consider, and evaluate in music helps your child make a decision and uphold value judgments in other aspects of life.

**Using Symbols & Languages:** Learning to read, write, and interpret musical notation strengthens the use of other symbol systems and decoding skills, such as mathematics and foreign languages.

**Parent Involvement and Practice Tips for your Child**

Simply putting in time on your instrument is not effective. Good practice habits make a significant difference. Poor practice habits can actually develop bad habits. What’s the best way to practice?

1. **Limit distractions.** It’s difficult to concentrate when kids are competing with the TV, music, or conversations. If possible, set-up a practice area in a quiet part of your home.
2. **Choose an optimal practice time.** If possible, try to break up your practice sessions. For example, if it’s your goal to practice an hour each day, consider two 30 minute practices. That way, once children learn a piece of music in their first practice session they can review it during the second practice session.
3. **Warm up.** Properly warming up will not only sound better it will reinforce the fundamentals. Similar to how a runner warms up with stretches and other exercises, take the time to warm up before launching right into practice.
4. **Set goals.** It’s important to set goals and objectives. Do you want to be able to play a particular piece? Do you want to perform at a recital or concert? Think about your goals and what it will take to get you there. Setting up goals and working backwards will help you devise a roadmap for meeting your objectives.
5. **Practice what you are not good at playing.** It’s very easy to get caught in the habit of working on what sounds good, because we feel good about ourselves. This does not do much of anything when it comes to improving our musicianship. A practice session should not sound perfect. Practice is a time to make mistakes, and work on fixing them.
6. **Record your practice.** Recording practices can offer incredible insight. Don’t get caught up in trying to get a professional recording. Even a recording from cell phone can offer the feedback kids need to improve.

**Before School Band**

Students will have the opportunity to practice in the band room before School. I will be there to guide practice during these times. Practice time should be focused and productive. Any students not following these directions will be asked to leave the practice session. Practice is from 8am to 8:30am. Students should eat breakfast before attending practice.

**Attendance, Conduct, Rehearsals, and Concerts**

Band rehearses during the school day. However, when before or after school rehearsals are scheduled, band members are **required** to be present. As part of the PCSD Board Policy, band is defined as a “co-curricular activity.” This means that students can and will receive grades for any scheduled activity that takes place before, during and after school hours.

Because the band program functions as a team and counts on each member’s presence at rehearsal to accomplish the goals, prompt attendance at each and every band function is crucial to the success of the program.

Each member is responsible to be at the required location, properly attired, with his or her instrument and all of the necessary equipment, before the appointed time.

The following guidelines outline the attendance policies for the band:

**Unexcused Tardiness**

Students who have more than one unexcused tardy are subject to one of the following:

1. Student-Teacher conference

2. Phone call/email home

**Excused Absence**

Your grade in the Austin Middle School Band will reflect active participation in rehearsal and success as a performer. Coming to rehearsal prepared enables each musician to enjoy a successful performance during school year. Excused absences are limited to:

1. Medical Emergency (Doctor’s note required)
2. Death in the Family
3. Academic Intervention (conference with teacher/counselor required)
4. Religious reasons

**Any absences that do not fit into the four categories above are considered unexcused.**

Students who have an **excused** absence from a rehearsal or concert will be allowed to do a makeup assignment and receive up to full credit for their grade. Students who have an **unexcused** absence from a rehearsal or concert will be allowed to do a makeup assignment and receive up to a 70 for their grade.

**General Conduct / Expectations**

Individual behavior during a band function is a reflection of the group. Band Members will observe all policies set forth by the Paulding County School District, in addition to the following, as they pertain to the instrumental music setting:

1. All students are expected to conduct themselves properly at all times.

(Display of profanity, temper, flagrant violation of rules, etc., will not be tolerated)

1. Students will be in the assigned area ready to work at the set time.

1. Students will bring all equipment to rehearsals daily. (See detailed supply list.)

1. Students will keep hands, feet, and other objects to themselves.

1. Students will bring no food, drinks, candy or gum in the band room except water.

1. Students will not use anyone else's instrument, or personal belongings.

1. Students should ask for permission to speak by raising their hand. All rehearsals are expected to be extremely quiet so that our time will be utilized wisely.

1. Students will not deface or mark on music stands and chairs.

1. Students should keep their equipment in the designated storage area, and keep the storage area clean and neat in appearance.

1. NO CELL PHONES ARE TO BE USED during rehearsals, or in concert performances. Cell phones may be used after a practice to phone home, but will be taken by the Band Director if seen during a rehearsal, or performance.

**Performance / Rehearsal Expectations for the Concert Ensembles**

Each of the concert ensembles will perform at various times throughout the school year. Students are expected to participate in the performances of their assigned ensemble.

Performances of the concert ensembles will include but are not limited to the following:

* Fall Concert
* Winter Concert
* Spring Concert
* Large Group Performance Evaluation (Festival)

**Concerts / Performances**

Concerts and performances are important for all band students. **Punctuality is essential.** A concert concludes when the last group performs and directors have given permission for students to be dismissed. A report time will be given.

Concert Guidelines

1. All concerts are a group effort, thus, **attendance is required.**
2. All concerts are an extension of the classroom and will be graded accordingly.
3. The appropriate dress for all concerts will be addressed below.
4. Students are expected to stay the entire concert.

Special Note:

The band can only perform at the highest level if ALL its members are present for performances. **Students who misses 2 performances (excused or unexcused) will automatically be dismissed from the program regardless of financial commitment.**

**Concert Dress**

* 6th grade: Band shirt and kaki pants (sneakers ok)
* 7th/8th Black Shoes (no sandals or sneakers)
* 7th/8th Black Socks (no ankle socks please)
* 7th/8th grade Black or White dress shirt and Black slacks
* 7th/8th grade ladies may wear Black or White blouse or Black dress below the knee

**Methods of Communication**

There are numerous ways that information is sent out to reach parents and family members. The following are just a few lines of communication utilized:

* Band Website: www.austinmiddleschoolband.weebly.com
* Paper notices sent home with students
* Remind
* Email - jtbrown@paulding.k12.ga.us

**Grading Procedures**

60% - Summative Assignments (Concerts, Written Tests, Playing Tests, Passoffs)

40% - Formative Assignments (Weekly Classroom Performance Grades, Before School Rehearsals, Practice Records)

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100% - Total Possible Grade

Weekly Performance Grades are defined as:

Every week students earn a performance grade based on their ability to come to class prepared with all needed materials, participate in all playing exercises and music for the entire class duration and show continuous improvement on their assigned music. **Forgetting an instrument, music or other materials not only hinders the student’s ability to participate but also doesn’t allow the band to perform at its highest potential!**

Practice Records are defined as:

Practice Records are weekly assignments turned in every Thursday. Daily individual practice is essential. This is daily practice outside of the normal band rehearsal. Each student must practice at least 100 minutes individually per week, 20 minutes per day is recommended.

Passoffs, written and playing tests:

These are based on individual progress made playing the instrument---reflected in playing, pass offs and written tests. *Makeup work for absences must be completed in 3 days after absence.* It is the band member’s responsibility to find out if any test should be made up. Pass offs are assigned lines from a student’s band book or music. They may be assigned each nine weeks. Students may pass off more lines to earn an award at the end of the year. Lines can be passed off before or after school, or during class with permission.

**Instrument Supplies & Equipment**

**Supplies for All Band Students**

The following is a list of supplies to have at each rehearsal. This list is not all inclusive:

* Pencil
* A 3-ring binder - 1 inch
* Plastic sheet protectors for sheet music (at least 10)
* Composition Book
* Band Method Book - see below
* Tuner/Metronome (can be a smartphone app)
* Music Stand (keep at home for individual practice)
* Instrument specific materials - a list will be provided

**Band Method Book (all are instrument specific)**

* 6th Grade: Essential Elements 2000 - Book 1

**Local Music Stores**

Ken Stanton Music Paulding Music Center

3636 Dallas Hwy 10175 Dallas Acworth Hwy

Marietta, GA 30064 Dallas, GA 30132

(770) 429-8816 (770) 974-1158

Hopp Frogg Music \*Art’s Music Shop

318 Main Street 4647 Hwy 280

Dallas, GA 30132 Birmingham, AL 35242

(770) 443-4211 (205) 995-8376

\*Music and Arts Jackson’s Music

1255 Johnson Ferry Rd Swe 9 5485 Westmoreland Plaza

Marietta, GA 30068 Douglasville, GA 30134

(770) 977-7073 (770) 949-5262

\*These music stores have representatives that come to our school each week to look at any

instruments that might need repair. In many cases they can fix instruments on site without having to send them into their repair shop.

**Parent Contact Information & Signature Page**

(Due Friday, August 11th)

Student Name Grade A A

Shirt Size (Circle one) Youth L S M L XL XXL

Parent/Guardian Contact Information

Name A

Email Address A

Cell Phone Number A

I have read and reviewed the Austin Middle School Band Handbook with my child. I

understand the attendance expectations, grading procedure, needed supplies, concert and behavior guidelines. I also understand that any policy listed in this handbook may change at any time if it is in the best interest of the students and the band program.

**From time to time, photographs and articles of the Austin MS Band are placed on social or other media. Please mark the appropriate box below:**

\_\_\_ I do **NOT** want my child’s picture and/or name included in articles.

\_\_\_ I **do** want my child’s picture and/or name included in articles.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_