

Grisham Band Handbook

Beginning Band

2019-2020

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Welcome

Welcome to the Grisham Middle School Band Program! It is with great enthusiasm and excitement that we introduce our band program to you in a more detailed manner. The GMS band program has established a wonderful tradition of excellence and we are glad you have chosen to be a part of it.

Your child's participation in our band program is beneficial in many ways. Band students are engaged daily in a highly creative performing art that stimulates growth in areas of the human brain that no other discipline can. This growth effortlessly transfers into your student's academic life. In addition, our band students will develop traits such as teamwork, responsibility, dedication, self-discipline, social skills, confidence, leadership, and dependability. Membership in our band program will give all a sense of accomplishment, pride, and respect as the students develop musical and personal skills that will enrich their lives.

The purpose of this handbook is to serve as a guide and as a source of information for students and parents involved in the Grisham Middle School Band program. **Both students and their parents should take the time to thoroughly read this handbook.** Upon completion, the contract that was distributed to your student during class (or downloaded from our web site) should be signed and returned to school, indicating your understanding of these guidelines and expectations.

Please visit our website - grishamband.com - for the most updated information throughout the year!

Contact Information

The directors encourage positive communication and are willing to discuss any aspect of a student's progress in band with his/her parents. **The best and fastest way to communicate with a director is through email.**

Liz Love, Director of Bands
Liz_Love@roundrockisd.org
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CONFERENCE PERIODS

Director's main conference period is from 12:21pm - 1:06pm daily. *Please schedule an appointment with a respective director if you would like to meet.*

Please understand that our communication to you – the parents – is a very high priority for us. We want to take care of concerns and make every situation the best for each student. Please contact us for clarification on any concerns before they become major issues.

E-MAIL POLICY

We will be sending home many updates and communications via e-mail throughout the year. Due to the nature of e-mail, all major concerns will need to be addressed through conferences or phone communication. This is to avoid any misunderstandings or unclear intentions through e-mail communication. Parents are encouraged to use e-mail to get more information or clarification regarding events, or to schedule a parent conference.

STUDENT COMMUNICATION

Students are also encouraged to communicate with the directors before concerns become issues. They should do this in person at an appropriate time, one on one. Again, clarification and solid communication will keep everything running smoothly throughout the entire year.

Throughout the year, we will be sending quite a bit of information home in the form of letters. Please make every effort to read this information carefully, check calendars often and keep us informed of any conflicts. The sooner we know of a situation, the more options we have in solving problems.

Volunteering

Any person wishing to volunteer in RRISD is required to complete a Volunteer Application each school year, to improve student safety. Please complete the online application as early as possible. More information on our band website: grishamband.com.

Once this application is complete, you can volunteer two different ways.

1. If you are wanting to volunteer for any event on the GMS campus or for the GMS football game concessions, log in to your child's Charms account and click on the Volunteer drop down link. There will be different events and times to choose from.
2. If you would like to volunteer for any of the Westwood HS football game concessions, go to www.westwoodband.com and click on the Get Involved link.

WABB (Westwood Area Band Boosters)

Middle School Information

Why is it called Westwood AREA Band Boosters (WABB)?

It's called this because in addition to supporting the band program at Westwood High School, it also supports the band programs and students at **Grisham** and Canyon Vista middle schools. So if your band student is in the area that feeds into Westwood High School they are supporting him or her as well.

How much does the WABB give to Canyon Vista and Grisham Middle Schools?

It gives \$15,000 a year to each of the two schools. So \$30,000 of WABB's fundraising efforts go to their feeder middle schools. The middle schools use this money to pay for percussion

instruction, middle school band camp scholarships, private lessons, master classes, director conferences, music, clinicians, and instruments.

Why does WABB give so much to CVMS and GMS?

The directors and parents know that building strong musicians starts from the beginning. Giving the middle school students the opportunity to learn and grow early on makes them stronger musicians and just makes it more fun. Students are happier doing things when they feel good at it, so they want to give these young musicians every opportunity to excel.

What can you do to help?

Join WABB! We will send out an email with a link each year. You can also volunteer to help with concessions at our middle school games or volunteer at the one of the WHS football games.

Over **90%** of the Grisham Band's funds come from WABB and the more our parents are involved, the better it will be for the entire community!

Goals and Objectives

- Organizational skills
- Practice techniques
- Mental and physical discipline
- Citizenship through group endeavors
- Cultural growth
- Value judgments
- Music theory
- Proper instrumental technique
- Life lessons
- Creative self-expression
- Aural skills
- Ethics/10 Ethical Principals
- Teamwork/social skills
- Performance skills
- Music appreciation
- Responsibility
- Accountability

Student Conduct Expectations

- The student is expected to be on time, to have all materials daily, and to participate in the class in a positive manner.
- The student is to be seated in his/her assigned seat, with all class materials, at the time specified by the director.
- Students will follow directors' instructions.
- The student will demonstrate good citizenship, be courteous, and will respect teachers, guests, and other students and their property.
- The student is expected to not play or touch any instrument except their own. Students will be held responsible for any damage they do to another's instrument.
- The student is expected to ask for and to make up all missed work in a timely manner.
- The student is expected to take his/her instrument home daily.
- The student is expected to participate in all required band functions. These include concerts, festivals, contests, pep rallies, etc. You will always be informed well ahead of time of these events so that conflicts can be avoided. Most dates have already been scheduled.

SEE YOUR BAND CALENDAR!

Behavior

Minor behavior violations and disciplinary problems will be handled by the teacher who observes the misbehavior. The teacher may discuss the misbehavior with the parent, administrator and / or support personnel. IF the problem persists, a more severe response will be necessary. The parent will be contacted and a conference will be scheduled. The Round Rock ISD Discipline Management Plan will be followed in all cases. (See your student handbook.)

Digital Citizenship

Maintaining a higher standard of conduct will also include ensuring that band member websites are appropriate. The internet is a worldwide, publicly accessible form of communication. Any communication appearing on the internet is public domain, even if it is marked private. Members are responsible for their personal websites and postings, as well as posting from or on other students' websites. The areas of appropriateness will include but are not limited to profane, foul, or disrespectful language (abbreviated or alluding to), pictures, suggestive poses, clothing, references to alcohol, drugs, and/or tobacco, and postings (either verbal or photos) that could be interpreted as being negative or threatening towards other RRISD teaching staff or band members, or that demonstrate poor sportsmanship or a disrespectful attitude towards other bands. Any such incident will result in review by the principal (or designee) and may lead to probation or dismissal from the band.

In addition to considerations listed above under Probation and Dismissal, band members that violate the above guidelines shall be subject to the following:

- Upon confirmation of a violation, the member will be asked to remove any offensive items from the website(s) and will be asked to give an apology and plan of action to deter this behavior to the principal, directors, and band members. Parents/guardians will be contacted and made aware of the offensive behavior.
- If a violation occurs that is deemed to be of a more serious nature, including but not limited to a threat, bullying, inappropriate and/or foul language, or a series of violations, the student may be subject to a higher level of discipline as determined by the director and school administration, such as suspension, probation, or dismissal from the band.

Financial Obligations

It is the philosophy of the Grisham Middle School Band that no student should be denied the privilege of band membership due to financial hardship. For options in meeting financial obligations, parents should contact the director.

Fundraising

We have several fundraisers planned for the school year. Participation in fundraisers is encouraged, but not required. Fundraisers will be used to defray the students' fees and trip expenses. Any other money raised will be used to purchase additional materials and equipment for the GMS Band Program. **Due to budget limitations, this has become a**

necessity. If the money is not fundraised, then any expenses will be paid to the band department from the family's own financial resources.

Students that leave the band program will forfeit use of fundraising money as it can not be transferred to another elective or another school.

Student Practice

Practicing is most crucial to a band students's success. At the start of the year, beginning band students will not take their instruments home to practice. When they start bringing it home, the expectation will only be 5-10 minutes a day. Quality of practice is more important than quantity; therefore, it is important that students practice correctly and have a systematic approach to their daily practice. Select a time of day that will be free of interruptions and try to practice at this same time every day. Set a goal for each practice session and stick to it. Don't spend valuable time playing through what you have already mastered; instead concentrate on the difficult parts. Slow, steady practice will pay off much more quickly than trying to play things as fast as you can. This will only result in errors.

Ideal Practice Session

- Long tones (Slow voicing and tuning warm ups) - 5 min.
 - Technique (Scales/Clark Studies/etc.) - 5 min.
 - Songs (Essential Elements Book) - 10 min.
- AND/OR
- Repertoire (Solos/ensembles/PL music) 10+ min.

Materials

All band students must have the following items every day:

- Working instrument and all its necessary equipment (*reeds, mouthpiece, swab, valve oil, stick bag*)
- Organized 1" 3 ring binder with 5 tab dividers, pencil pouch, page protectors
- 3 pencils and 3 highlighters
- Working tuner and pick up

Students who do not have the necessary materials for band class will be loaned the materials if possible. If it is impossible to loan out the materials, an alternative classroom assignment will be made and the student will be expected to make up the work missed in class. If a persistent problem occurs, the teacher will contact the parent for a conference.

Instrument Storage & Identification

Lockers are located in the band hall where students need to leave their instruments during the school day. Students are expected to keep their instruments in their assigned lockers. Band lockers are for band items ONLY. Locks are not required, but if a student chooses to use one, the combination must also be given to the directors.

Every student must have their name fastened to their instrument case. Percussionist are to have their name on all of their equipment, including sticks and mallets.

Students are **not** allowed to leave their instrument unattended at any time. There will be consequences for any student whose instrument is brought to us by another student, teacher, etc. -- whether it is found on or off school property.

Private Lessons

This is a district wide program that provides a high-quality enhancement to classroom instruction. All of our teachers are professional musicians in the Austin area and have advanced degrees in the performance of their instruments. Lessons are extremely valuable to the individual student.

- *ALL* students are *STRONGLY ENCOURAGED* to take individualized private instruction.
- Teachers are screened and interviewed by the district.
- Lessons will be given weekly during the band classes, before, and after school.
- If there is a need for before/after school lessons, every effort will be made to schedule private lessons at times that do not conflict with sectionals or other activities.
- Detailed information on the private lesson program will be distributed to the band students.

Concerts / Co-Curricular Events

Concerts are a co-curricular event and all students are required to participate. The Round Rock ISD School Board has determined that band is a performing art and that performances are an extension of class time. Performance is our ultimate goal in band. It is essential that students be at all performances. An unexcused absence from any performance, or any scheduled rehearsal, will severely affect the students grade. The band department follows school policy determining the status of absences. The following policy will be used for performances and extra (scheduled) rehearsals.

- An unexcused absence from a performance or a required rehearsal will result in the student receiving a grade of zero for the event. The student may be removed from the performing organization after review with all parties involved and with approval of the administration.

The only valid excuse for missing a performance is a death in the family or severe personal illness. We realize that there may be other **emergency** circumstances beyond your control that can come up in the course of the year. These emergencies will certainly be excused; however, we are asking that you communicate with us about the situation. Many times solutions are found for potential conflicts.

IF A STUDENT MUST BE ABSENT FROM ANY REQUIRED BAND FUNCTION, A PARENT MUST INFORM A DIRECTOR BEFORE THE EVENT OCCURS IN ORDER FOR THE ABSENCE TO BE EXCUSED.

Concert Behavior Expectations

Band students will exhibit proper concert behavior during all performances, in either their own band or as an audience member. Students will be graded on their behavior. Concert etiquette is an integral part of music education. Appropriate conduct in formal and informal concert settings is included in the TEKS.

The following rules will be followed by parents and students at all times:

- Talking is not permitted on stage or in the audience. It is disrespectful to the performers on stage and audience members.
- Do not distract the performing band in any way.
- Do not leave your seat for any reason during a performance. You will be given ample time to use the restroom and drinking fountain before a concert begins. If you must leave, do so as quietly and inconspicuously as possible (make sure the doors do not slam shut). Leave between songs only.
- No food or drink is allowed on stage, backstage, or in the seating area. This includes water bottles and gum.
- Cell phones must be turned off (not on vibrate or silent) and stowed away. Any student using a cell phone during a performance may have consequences.
- Move between the seating area and stage in quiet, single-file lines. Sit in your assigned seat/row. Do not talk as you enter or exit.
- Support your fellow band members with appropriate applause. Yelling, whistling, shouting names, etc. is not acceptable.
- Set a good example for the audience and other students. Other people may not know how to behave in a concert setting.
- We hope all parents and guests will stay for the concert when bringing a student to a concert. If a student needs to be picked up, please do so in a timely manner. Any student not picked up on time may not be allowed to participate in future GMS activities.
- Students are expected to stay for the entire concert.

Student Travel

Behavior Requirements:

During the course of the year, band students have the opportunity to participate on a spring trip. These trips are designed to be a **reward** for students that participate well, behave well and earn passing grades. It is our policy that any student receiving ISS more than once during the school year, will not be allowed to attend the spring trip. If a student receives ISS even once for a band related incident, they will not be able to attend the trip as well.

Grade Requirements:

Students and parents should understand that grades below 70 on the report card prior to the event, will prevent a band member from participating on trip activities. All “no-pass, no-play” rules will be followed.

Uniform

Beginning Band Uniform:

2019-2020 Grisham Band t-shirt
Blue jeans
Closed-toe shoes

Grading Guidelines

Formative Grades - 60%

Materials Check - Every day each student should have the schools supplies mentioned earlier in the handbook. These items will be checked frequently and a grade will be given.

Practice Records - Students will need to practice on a daily basis and show record of it by turning in their practice sheets every Wednesday.

Artistic Engagement - Band is a class based on participation. If your student shows up with all of their supplies and participates in class at the highest level, they will receive a 100% on this!

Summative Grades - 40%

Playing Test - Students will be given playing tests during sectionals that will evaluate any new concepts that the group is working on. Students will be evaluated on:

- Posture
- Hand Position
- Tempo (staying w/metronome)
- Tone
- Phrasing (Musical Line / Breathing)
- Articulations
- Accuracy of note and rhythms

Performances - All performances are mandatory requirements of the class and may only be missed for illness or family emergencies. If a performance is missed for an approved absence, full credit can be made up by the student performing for his/her band director. If it is missed for a non-approved absence the student can make up the grade for a max grade of a 70 by performing for their band director.

Late Work

Students who fail to turn in their work on time will face a reduced grade as per our Grisham Middle School Student Handbook. We want students to learn to be responsible for managing deadlines and completing work on time.