

2023 - 2024

BAND HANDBOOK



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EXCELLENCE IN ALL WE DO.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the Innovation Academy Band Program! It is with great enthusiasm and excitement that we introduce our band program to you in a more detailed manner. The IA 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 members 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 scholar's academic life. In addition, our band members 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 scholars develop musical and personal skills that will enrich their lives.

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the guidelines and expectations for making this year a success for all involved and to serve as a guide and resource for scholars and parents. Both scholars and their parents should take the time to thoroughly read this handbook. Upon completion, the contract that was distributed to your child during class (or downloaded from our website) should be signed and returned to school, indicating your understanding of these guidelines and expectations.

Sincerely,



Andrew E. Lawson
Director of Bands
Innovation Academy of Robertson County
iabands.weebly.com

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

At Innovation Academy, we strongly believe that music has the ability to enrich every person's life in unique and powerful ways. Therefore, our primary goal is to foster the development of a life-long relationship with music in every young person in our program. Whether our scholars go on to be symphony musicians, doctors, lawyers, teachers, businessmen and women, tradesmen, or simply music fans, our goal is for them to have a love and appreciation of music and music-making.

Beyond the purely musical goals of the program, we also aim to develop scholars' interpersonal and leadership skills. Teamwork is a requirement for ensembles. There are no "second-string" players in a band. Instead, each individual in the ensemble - down to the last chair player - plays a vital role in the quality of the whole. Additionally, there are no right or wrong answers in music. Each musical performance is unique and can never be perfect. Even the best professional musicians spend their entire lives reaching for perfection, never quite attaining it. This is what we constantly strive for: Excellence. These characteristics separate instrumental music from other subjects and are what make it is such an irreplaceable aspect of a student's education.

Given all of this, we are not in the business of producing only "conservatory players" who have ambitions to pursue music as a profession. We are very much in the business, however, of developing a life-long relationship with music in every scholar. Along the way we will also be providing and encouraging positive interactions and personal growth through the medium of music. The road towards these goals is extremely rewarding, yet very challenging. Only through positive effort on the part of everybody involved in the program can true excellence be achieved.

"MEANS TO AND END" PROCESS

Providing a positive experience for all band members is a weighty task and requires cooperation on the part of students, student leaders, parents and staff. We are working with young people over their three-year middle school career and four-year high school career. Individual ability and comprehension levels will vary greatly from person to person over those seven years. Consequently, band members are requested to maintain a positive and helpful decorum as we work toward both individual skill enhancement and comprehension, and group progress and performance readiness. Scholars should use class time to the best possible advantage. They should: concentrate, make a positive contribution, and study music when waiting for rehearsal to move on, etc. Individual learning styles will vary. Individuals will be evaluated on the basis of progress from their own starting point. The goal is to progress as far as possible toward the written objectives of the experience.

A STATEMENT OF POLICY

In order to assist band members and parents in understanding areas of responsibility, a statement of band policy is herein set forth. Becoming familiar with this policy will enable each individual to make the most of this great opportunity to be a member of the Innovation Academy Band Program: becoming a better person and a better musician.

We firmly believe that each scholar should improve through regular practice. In the Innovation Academy Band Program, we believe when an individual has lost the will to improve him/herself or make a better contribution to the band, he/she is wasting the time and efforts of fellow members and the community by continuing in this program. The HAPPIEST scholar is the one who is improving their skills through regular habits of practice and daily progress. He/she must develop a high sense of purpose toward which they are willing to work, know right from wrong, and be able to stand for principles. RESPONSIBILITY is the focus behind any level of achievement within this program. We intend to conduct ourselves in a manner that will facilitate all scholars in learning and bettering themselves.

***Band is a full year course, and scholars who enroll are expected to commit for the full academic school year. This is essential to the success of both the individuals of the ensemble and the ensemble as a whole. Changes of schedule taking place mid-year will only occur under extenuating circumstances. ***

EXCELLENCE IN ALL WE DO.

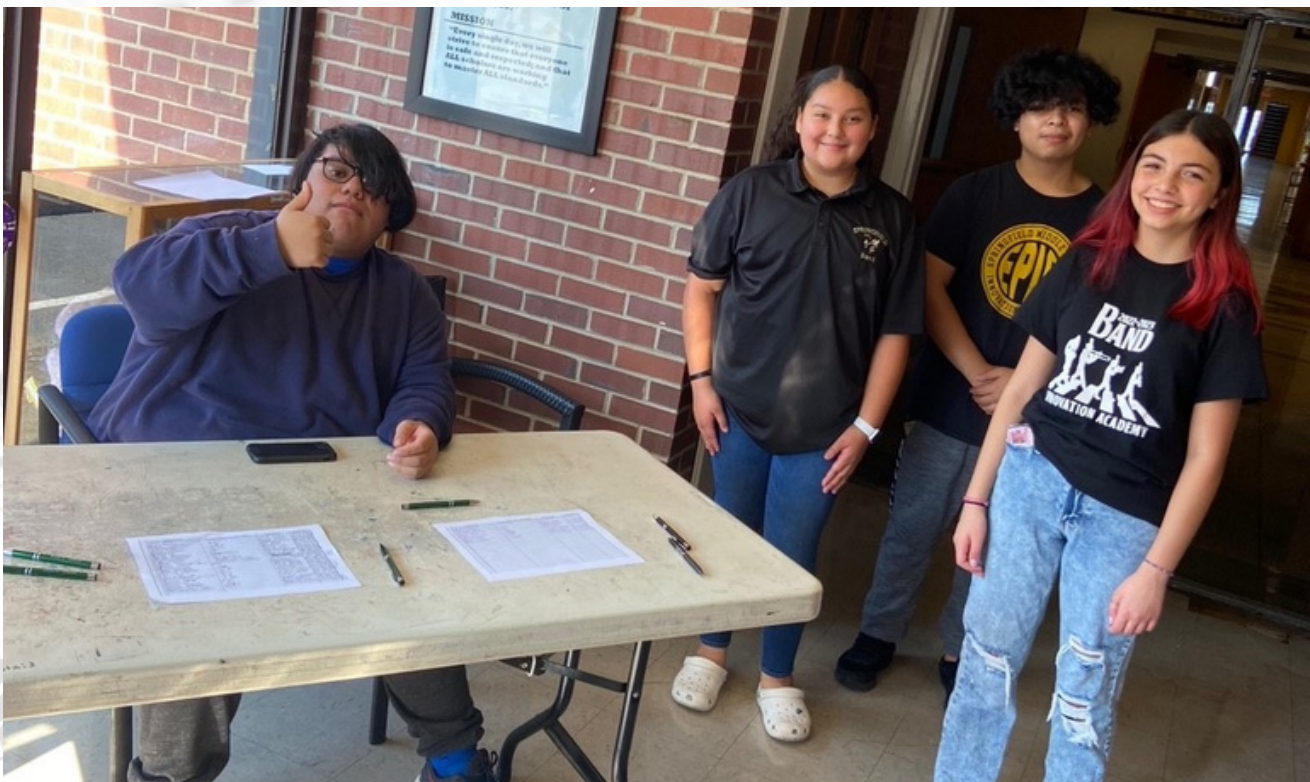
Our philosophy in the Innovation Academy Band Program can be summed up best by a quote by Dr. Rick Rigsby, *"You are what you repeatedly do. Therefore, excellence ought to be a habit, not an act."* In the iA Band Program, we seek to establish just that - a tradition of excellence. As part of this process, all scholars must establish habits of excellence from day one. These habits form a firm foundation on top of which success is built, on and off stage.

The Three P's of Excellence

- **Prepared** - Band members must always be prepared for class, having everything they need to complete the day's tasks. *"Before anything else, preparation is the key to success."* - Alexander Graham Bell
- **Punctual** - Band members must always strive to be punctual. *Early is on time, On time is late.*
- **Productive** - Band members must always make the best use of their time in class. *Wasted time is lost time.*

THE MENTOR PROJECT

In an effort to promote a culture that pursues excellence, encourages teamwork, and builds trust among the band members, a program is offered free of charge to all band members called the "Mentor Project." Scholars in middle school band are assigned a mentor selected from upperclassmen in 8th, 9th, 10th, and/or 11th Grade. These select band members serve as mentors to their younger peers and volunteer their time before, during, and after school to help others with schoolwork through peer tutoring in both music and other academic courses. These select mentors are chosen according to their overall academic and musical achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership skills over the course of their time at Innovation Academy. These scholars hold leadership positions in a variety of school organizations, including Jr. and Sr. Beta Club, Robotics, FCA, sports teams, and of course, the band, and demonstrate the very best of what Innovation Academy has to offer. To participate in this program, middle school band members need only to sign up or simply ask one of the appointed mentors to meet with them.



THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTITUDE

The greatest single factor that will determine the success of any individual or organization is *attitude*. The kind of person that you are is an individual choice and how we feel about something, which involves attitude, is one of the few actual independent choices that we have in life. It takes intense dedication to reach goals. Scholars should learn to discipline themselves to daily practice on fundamentals. The “right attitude” must be present along with sincerity, concentration, and dedication as the basic foundation. Such an attitude makes an artistic performance inevitable and is the difference between a winning organization and a mediocre group. The band can do much for you. Make the most of it in every rehearsal and performance.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLINE

Because of the nature of the organization, band discipline must be strict! Band members and parents must believe in the ideals, principles, and philosophy of the organization. Each member must always be aware of good behavior and think for himself/herself. Any misconduct casts a bad light on the school, community, and band program, and likewise its members. Any member who casts discredit to the organization by his/her conduct or actions in band, in another class, or on a trip, shall be subject to dismissal from the band program or may lose a privilege within the program. This may include the chance to go on trips, perform at concerts, or attend community/school events. This decision will be at the director’s discretion.

CLASSROOM RULES AND PROCEDURES

The rules and procedures given below are designed to not only provide order and discipline in the classroom, but also to help shape *Habits of Excellence* including the 3 P’s: **Preparedness, Punctuality, and Productivity**.

1. **Don’t talk while the teacher is talking.** *If your mouth is moving, your ears aren’t listening.*
2. **Everything is expensive.** *If it’s not yours, don’t touch it.*
3. **Scholars WILL behave.** *Band kids are the best kids.*
4. **No non-band kids allowed in the band hall.** They don’t know our rules, expectations, or procedures.
5. **The band room is for band stuff only.** Except water, all food, drinks, candy, and gum are not allowed.
6. **Band lockers are for band stuff.** No school stuff or lunch left in band lockers.
7. **Music stands are delicate.** Don’t write on, lean on or twirl music stands. They cost \$80 each.
9. **No devices or books in band.** Cell phones, laptops, and other devices will be confiscated according to school policy if seen being used, *unless* permission is given by the teacher to use the device.
10. **You MUST be prepared for class EVERY day.** Scholars must bring their band binder (with sheet protectors), method books, a pencil, and their instrument every day. Anyone ill-prepared for class will receive a grade deduction that day.

BAND ROOM BILL OF RIGHTS

The Band Room Bill of Rights establishes a system by which all expectations may be followed. This "Bill of Rights" also provides scholars with an expectation of how they are to be treated, how they should treat other, and how they should view themselves when in the band facility. It is understood by all scholars that when individuals violate these rights, they take away from the their learning experience, and the learning experience of their peers. Their conduct also reflects poorly upon themselves, their family, the band program, and the school. Scholars must uphold these rights, working to the very best individual they can be.

1. You have the right to be successful.
2. You have the right to fail.
3. You have the right to waste your time.
4. You do not have the right to waste anyone else's time.
5. You have the right to be respected.
6. You do not have the right to be disrespectful.

CONCERT AND REHEARSAL ATTENDANCE

It is essential for all band members to attend every concert held during the school year. These performances are the equivalent to state testing and serve as the final assessment for each grading period. Attendance is mandatory to all after school performances. Concerts are an extension of the classroom and will be graded accordingly. Scholars with an unexcused absence will receive a zero-test grade for the concert.

Concert Performance Assessment is also a mandatory event for members of the High School Band. CPA generally occurs during school and is an extension of the classroom. It will be graded accordingly. The dates of CPA will be published in the upcoming band calendar. Specific times will be published as soon as they are announced. After school rehearsals will be held in preparation for MTSBOA Concert Performance Assessment. These dates will be posted well in advance to allow for planning. Attendance is required to each rehearsal and the performance.

GRADING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Grades will be provided on an individual basis using different forms of assessment and assignment. Each activity and assessment is worth a specific amount of points. Performance-based assessments are graded according to state and national standards.

25 pts each - Daily Performance Grades (Sight-reading, rehearsal techniques, etc.)

25 pts each - Listening Assignments/Journals

100 pts each - Performance Tests (Scale tests, Sight-Reading tests, Chair placements, Other playing tests/exams)

500 pts each - After School Rehearsal (***) They are RARE, but are graded when they occur)

1000 pts each - Concert Performances (These also serve as Mid-terms and Finals for High School Band)

******Scholars will have an unlimited number of chances to improve scores on Performance Tests (other than chair placements) until the end of the grading period, *providing* that the assignment is first completed by the assigned due date. After the first attempt, if a higher grade is desired, scholars may request a time to make another attempt. The goal here is to promote *progress* over perfection. I am much more interested in seeing progress made on a specific skill than simply assigning a grade and moving forward.**

CELL PHONE POLICY

Cell phones and other electronic devices may not be used during school hours in the classroom unless permission is given by the teacher to do so. All devices are to remain in one of the following locations at all times during instruction:

1. **In the scholar's backpack or locker.**
2. **In the scholar's pocket.**
3. **In the provided cell phone pouch at the front of the room.**

Devices being operated in the classroom during school hours without permission will be confiscated *if* they are not put away following a verbal warning.

From the Robertson County Schools Student Handbook:

Students in grades 3 – 12 may possess personal communication devices and personal electronic devices so long as such devices are turned off and stored in backpacks, purses, or personal carry-alls. Such devices include but are not limited to: wearable technology such as eyeglasses, rings, or watches that have the capability to record, live stream, or interact with wireless technology; cell phones; laptops; tablets; and mp3 players. At no time shall a student operate an electronic device with video or picture-taking capabilities in a locker room, classroom, bathroom, or other location where such operation may violate the privacy right of another person. Violation of this policy may result in confiscation of the device and other disciplinary actions.

At no time shall the school be responsible for preventing theft, loss, or damage to devices brought onto school property.

Students can use personally owned devices in the classroom for educational purposes only, and this must be done under the direct supervision of the teacher.

1st offense—Confiscation of device; return in 3 school days or \$10 fine.

2nd offense—Confiscation of device; return in 5 school days or \$20 fine.

3rd offense—Confiscation of device; return in 10 school days or at end of grading period, whichever is longer, or \$30 fine.

4th offense—Confiscation of device; return at end of semester or \$40 fine.

Subsequent offenses will be treated under 4th offense guidance and may result in more serious discipline

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY TO THE BAND

It is the responsibility of every parent and guardian to see that the policies outlined in the HANDBOOK are followed and that the form in the back is signed and returned. This states that you UNDERSTAND the policies as set within, and that any questions are to be directed to the band director by making an appointment. Each parent is responsible for the attendance of his/her child at all band functions. It is the responsibility of each parent to see that their child practices his / her instrument regularly. The hands of the director are tied without the help of parents. It is often said that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. As we work to create and maintain a strong, successful band program, it is imperative that parent support be strong in the lives of all of our band members.

The director encourages positive and consistent communication and is willing to discuss any aspect of a scholar's progress in band with his/her parents. Throughout the year, the director will frequently communicate with parents through the use of email and the **BAND** app. Phone calls may also be used for a variety of reasons. A phone call to a parent may be issued to a scholar for various reasons including, but not limited to the following:

- Accomplishment or outstanding achievement in class.
- Outstanding (exceptionally good) behavior in class.
- Tardiness to class/rehearsals.
- Failure to return equipment/ instrument to its proper storage area following rehearsals.
- Disruption during rehearsal or performance.
- Conduct not appropriate for a band member.

Consequences for Poor Conduct

1. If two or more phone calls/emails home due to disciplinary problems within one 9-week grading period takes place, a parent-teacher conference will be held at the earliest possible time available.
2. Following 3 phone calls/emails home due to discipline problems during a 9-week grading period, a scholar may be suspended from an upcoming performance, resulting in a grade deduction.
3. Following 4 or more phone calls/emails home due to discipline problems during a 9- week grading period, the scholar will be suspended from all upcoming performances (with grade deduction) and will be removed from the Innovation Academy Band Program at the conclusion of the grading period.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

When a “band question” arises, it is important that you get factual information before discussing it with others. We do more harm to ourselves, the band family, when we talk about things that contain one or more “falsehoods” but consider them facts. If questions arise, it is important to remember this axiom: If it is a performance issue or anything dealing with the band proper, contact Mr. Lawson.

- Show an interest in the music study of your child.
- Support your child by arranging a regular time for your child to practice.
- Find a quiet place where he/she can practice without interruption.
- Listen to performances of practice material, when asked to do so.
- Help your child keep a DAILY RECORD of practicing.
- Come up with a reward system for DAILY practice.
- Keep the instrument in good repair and keep at least three reeds in the case; get a metronome!
- Be extra-careful with school-owned instruments. Repair costs are high!
- Teach your child to be prepared and on time to each rehearsal or lesson.
- Provide private instruction!
- Make faithful attendance at all band activities an important priority.
- Buy your child a personal planner for marking important dates.
- Keep the Handbook in a safe place and refer to it often.
- Notify the teacher if your child is to be absent for rehearsals.
- Double-check behind your child to make sure that they have their instrument. A forgotten instrument impacts EVERY person in the ensemble.
- If your child is absent, make sure that their folder gets to school, if they share it with someone.
- Visit rehearsals occasionally.
- Attend parent meetings, concerts, games, and contests.
- Turn in fundraising money on time.

Did You Know?

“...students with experience in music performance score measurably higher in both the verbal and math sections of the SAT;”

“...music has been identified as enhancing spatial reasoning ability; a key for unlocking math and developing the scientific mind;”

“...being exposed to music strengthens all other learning forms, and national test scores rise proportionately with the length of time spent studying music in school;”

(“Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser’s Music Advocacy Guide: Music Makes the Difference”)

FUNDRAISERS

Because of the many moving parts within a band program and the expenses incurred by the program, several fundraisers occur during the school year to offset operating costs and eliminate student fees. **Every band member** is expected to participate in at least **two** band fundraisers. These fundraisers go towards the purchase of music, instruments, trips, and the hiring of guest instructors throughout the year. Without these funds, the operation of the band program cannot be successful.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Every band member needs the following items in addition to their instrument.

- 1-inch black 3-ring binder
- 50 clear page protectors
- 1 Pack of pencils
- 1 Eraser

******Woodwinds (specifically clarinets and saxophones) must have a supply of at least three good reeds at all times.**

CONCERT ATTIRE

The following dress code is to be followed by all band members on concert days.

Middle School Band (Grades 6 - 8): Band T-Shirt, Blue Jeans (no large holes or tears), and tennis shoes/sneakers (no crocs, sandals, flip-flops).

High School Band (Grades 9 - 12):

- **Gentlemen:**
 - Solid black Button-up or Polo shirt
 - Black dress pants (no sweat-pants, shorts, or other athletic wear)
 - Black Socks and Black Dress Shoes
- **Ladies:** Ladies may choose to match the men's dress code or wear the following:
 - Black dress/skirt with black hosiery/leggings
 - Black Dress Shoes
 - No excessive jewelry (small earrings and necklaces are fine.)

INNOVATION ACADEMY BANDS

SCHOLAR, PARENT, AND BAND DIRECTOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Innovation Academy Band Handbook has been developed as a guide through which you will become better equipped in the basic fundamentals of being an outstanding band member, and more importantly, and outstanding individual. READ IT CAREFULLY!

The Innovation Academy Band needs your help and cooperation. It is important that every individual understands the general information within the handbook and is encouraged by his or her parents or guardians to follow the rules and regulations set forth in this document. Please read and discuss this policy with your child. When you have done so, it is requested that you sign this form and return it to the band director. Your signature and that of your child acknowledges receipt and review of the policies. This form will be kept on file with all data and information secure. Failure to sign this contract does not take away the responsibility of the scholar or parent/guardian to abide by the rules and regulations, nor does it excuse any member of the band from being held to the expectations laid out within this document.

Scholar Signature

Scholar Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Date

Date

Parent e-mail address