

Van High School

“Mighty Vandal Band”

Handbook

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## **VAN HIGH SCHOOL BAND PHILOSOPHY**

The goal of our effort is that we, the directors, are striving to mold young students into successful, productive adults. Just as music enriches student's lives with opportunities for self-expression, creativity, emotional and aesthetic development, membership and participation in this organization will be an opportunity for students to learn valuable life skills such as responsibility, commitment, goal setting, self-discipline, teamwork, and leadership. It is the philosophy of this band program to use these opportunities as our goals and to use music to help make our students intelligent, sensitive members of adult society.

## **PARTICIPATION AND MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS**

Prospective Van High School band students must have had prior training through the VISD band program (or equivalent). Membership and retention in the Van High School Band is determined through a required annual audition as well as continued evaluation throughout each school year. The criterion that involves this process includes an evaluation of the following things:

1. Enrollment in the V.I.S.D Middle or High School Band Program (or its equivalent) for all of the previous school year
2. Student's technical proficiency on their primary instrument
3. Student's leadership skills
4. Student's reliability and personal commitment to band requirements
5. Student's eligibility information
6. The Band Program's instrumentation limitations and needs

Every prospective Van High School Band Student will be offered fair and equitable opportunities for placement and retention in so long as these criteria are met. It must be understood that "Primary Instrument", that is mentioned in criteria number two, refers to the band instrument in which the student received at least one full year of consistent training the previous school year through the V.I.S.D. Band Program or another school band program. Furthermore, the above listed criteria have no correlation with the number of years that a student has been in the band program.

All prospective Van High School Band students are required to go through an audition process on the band instrument that they have received prior training. The audition information can be obtained through their campus director. Students who were enrolled in the band program must complete the audition that takes place during the Spring Semester in order to be considered for membership the following year. Transfer students must complete their audition by appointment with the High School directors.

Audition material consists of designated major scales with relative scales in thirds, a chromatic scale and a brief etude. Each student playing the audition material for one of the band directors conducts auditions privately. The audition process is completed and membership granted only when the student performs an "acceptable audition". An acceptable audition takes place when all parts of the music requirements are played in their entirety. Each student will be placed in "chair order" based on the scores of each phase of the audition process.

## BANDS

Band is a two-semester course. Members may not sign up for only one semester. Students will only be allowed to change their schedule into or out of band without written approval by the Band Director.

### MARCHING BAND

Summer Band practice will begin the last week of July. Rehearsals will consist of full band and section rehearsals each day. All students will audition for a place in the marching band which includes playing prescribed music, sight-reading and scales. Band members who fail to pass musical and marching requirements, or have unexcused absences from rehearsals or performances are selected as alternates. Activities include performances in the stands and on the field at football games, pep rallies, adding to the spirit of athletic events, and parades. ALL members, including alternates, attend ALL performances. **ANY STUDENT WHO HAS AN UNEXCUSED ABSENCE FROM A PERFORMANCE MAY BE DISMISSED FROM THE BAND PROGRAM.**

Students participate during marching season (August – November) in the following activities:

- a. Summer Band
- b. Monday Night Rehearsal (7:00-9:15 p.m.)
- c. Section Rehearsals
- d. All football games (includes playing in the stands and playoff games)
- e. U.I.L. Marching Contests (this includes Area and State on qualifying years)
- g. Christmas Parade
- h. Any other marching performance required by the director.

### PERFORMANCE POLICY

All band students will be given the opportunity to perform with the band. However, there are circumstances under which a student may not be allowed to perform:

- a. Failure to perform music or marching fundamentals at acceptable levels
- b. Unexcused absences from rehearsal(s) or excessive tardiness
- c. Band Director's discretion (usually involving student misconduct)
- d. Failing a course (No Pass-No Play)

### MARCHING ALTERNATES

Every VHS band student will have the opportunity to march with the "Mighty Vandal Band". However, due to drill design necessities, certain students will be chosen as marching alternates. Marching alternates are necessary in order to mathematically make a drill work. Alternates are students that do not march in the half time performances or at competitions. Academically eligible alternates do attend football games and play in the stands; march at parades; perform at pep rallies; and participate in every rehearsal. Criteria for alternates:

- a. No Pass-No Play (State Law)
- b. Difficulty playing and/or lack of attention to music pass offs
- c. Difficulty marching
- d. Absences and/or tardiness
- e. Poor attitude

Alternates may be able to earn a spot in the marching drill if and when positions become available by demonstrating playing/marching improvement, maintaining good attendance habits, and maintaining a good attitude.

## **CONCERT BAND**

The Concert Band is organized each year the week following football season. Chair placements will be determined by periodic playing evaluations. Students will receive a grade for each chair test. Students must have a fundamental background, and expect to advance rapidly on their instruments. Students participate during the school year in the following activities:

- a. Auditions for the All Region Band
- b. Participation in All Region Band Clinic and Concert
- c. U.I.L. Solo & Ensemble Contest
- d. Pre U.I.L. and Spring Concerts
- e. All rehearsals in preparation for U.I.L. Contest
- f. U.I.L. Concert & Sight-reading Contest

## **GENERAL BAND REGULATIONS**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

All band members are expected to attend all rehearsals and performances unless excused by the Band Director. If a band member is absent from rehearsal or performance, the parents should notify the Band Director in writing the following day or the absence will remain unexcused. The absence will be excused at the directors' discretion. Students absent during summer band rehearsals will forfeit their places in the marching line up and will serve as alternates. If their absence was caused by an emergency, they will be returned to their positions as soon as possible. If the absence was for other reasons, such as vacation, camp attendance, participation in other events, work, etc., they will serve as alternates until places become vacant in the marching line up.

Punctuality is of vital importance in the band. The nature of the band's operation at football games, concerts, and travel away from home make strict adherence to a schedule very important. Students who are habitually tardy or absent will forfeit any position or responsibility of honor with the band and may be transferred out of the Van Band program.

### **CONDUCT REQUIREMENTS**

Discipline is the most important element in any successful endeavor. Without self and group discipline our organization will not improve its level of performance or reach its goal. You are member of the VHS band during and outside of band activities, therefore, you must maintain an extremely high standard of conduct at all times. It is expected that each student act like a lady or gentlemen at all times and uphold all Van ISD rules and regulations as written in the district and campus handbooks and Code of Conduct. No band member shall knowingly possess, use, transmit, or be under the influence of any controlled substance or tobacco in any form while with the band. Any band member found to be in violation of this may, at director discretion, forfeit his/her right to participate in any band in Van ISD. Keep in mind that you represent your community, family, and school. Your behavior is a reflection of us all.

## **BAND HALL RULES**

Bandsmen are encouraged to cultivate an attitude of good discipline and attention during rehearsal. Each rehearsal should be a musical learning experience for each student. Each performance will be only as good as its best rehearsal. Constant disturbance by any bandsman in rehearsal shows lack of interest and respect to the band; therefore, these students should find another activity to hold their attention.

1. No gum, candy, food, or drink in the band hall at any time.
2. No horseplay at any time.
3. Get a drink of water and go to the restroom before rehearsal begins.
4. Do not get up out of your chair for any reason after rehearsal begins unless it is an emergency.
5. Check your instrument before rehearsal and get it fixed at that time.
6. Get necessary supplies (reed, oils, etc.) before time for rehearsal to begin.
7. Get all notes signed before rehearsal or wait until after rehearsal.
8. **BE IN YOUR CHAIR WITH YOUR INSTRUMENT, AND EVERYTHING YOU NEED; MUSIC PENCIL, GOOD REED, ETC. AT THE SCHEDULED REHEARSAL TIME!**
9. When the director stops the band, it is to give instructions for the benefit of the band. It is not for talking or discussion.
10. Do not talk during rehearsal for any reason, except to ask the director about the music or about some instructions that have been given.
11. The use of cell phones during any band rehearsal or performance is prohibited.
12. Instrument storage rooms are not a place to “hang out”.
13. Most importantly, give the director your total attention at all times.

## **STADIUM GUIDELINES**

Your performance begins the minute you leave the band hall. Therefore, everything about your behavior, uniform, etc. is on display for evaluation.

1. There will be no unsportsmanlike or derogatory comments made by any Van band member toward anyone including each other, other Van students, students from the other school, players on the field, adults, or the officiating crew.
2. You will have assigned seats in the stadium. You will remain in your assigned seat during the game.
3. When the band plays, everyone is expected to play. Always be ready. When our team scores, we will perform the fight song.
4. Always take your flip folder with music to the stands. A lyre is recommended to help you manage your music while you play.
5. For obvious safety reasons and dignity issues, dancing while with the band will be restricted at the Band Director’s discretion.
6. Stay in complete uniform at all times unless otherwise instructed by the Band Director. Keep your shirt tucked in. Hats, caps, or bandanas other than official Vandal Band uniform wear are not permitted.
7. Do not wear jewelry (rings, bracelets, earrings, watches, etc.) at performances. A necklace worn under the band the band T-shirt is permitted.
8. Students should use the restroom before the band enters the stadium.

## **BUS TRIP GUIDELINES**

All rules and regulations are for your safety.

1. Once seated, remain seated during trip. Do not stand up at any time.
2. No movement in aisles except for loading and unloading bus.
3. No changing busses. Student must remain on the same bus.
4. Conversations must be kept at moderate voice level. After a second warning, the student will be Moved to a seat with a chaperone.
5. Avoid sudden blasts of high-pitched laughter. No singing!
6. Any time the bus stops, be silent.
7. No talking, yelling, throwing things, etc. out of the windows.
8. No placing hands, arms, head, etc. out of the windows.
9. No food or drinks are allowed on Van ISD busses.
10. Do not throw things out of the windows at any time.
11. Small music players are permissible but must be used with headphones. You are responsible for any personal property that you bring on the bus. The Van band, Band Directors, and chaperones will not be held responsible for any lost or stolen property and you will not be reimbursed for lost or stolen property.
12. When the bus arrives at the destination, remain seated on the bus until further instructions are given.
13. Do not change into uniforms until instructions are given to do so.
14. Make sure uniforms are complete before unloading.
15. After unloading the bus, time will be given for a restroom break.
16. After unloading instruments, assemble in formation near the instrument truck.
17. After the return to Van, make sure your instrument is put in its proper place.
18. Students are not released until their uniform is properly returned to the uniform room and they have checked out with a director at the conclusion of the trip.
19. Do not exit at the rear of the bus.
20. Students should not change clothes on the bus.
21. Chaperone will report all violations of these guidelines to the Band Director.

## **BAND TRIPS**

All members ride to and from the destination on the designated busses. Students may not change busses on the return trip. The only exceptions to this rule:

1. A band member may be released by the director to a parent after the band has finished its performance and been released by the director to go home. However, the parent must:
  - a. complete, sign and return a pre-arranged release form.
  - b. come to the band director personally to pick up their child.
2. A band member may ride home with someone other than their parent providing:
  - a. the parent completes a pre-arranged release form stating who is to pick up their child, **PRIOR TO THE TRIP.**
3. In case of an emergency, the Band Director may approve other means of transportation. All parents must sign an Emergency Medical and Release Form before students make any trip with the band.

On out of state trips, which are usually made every two years, all eligibility requirements will be enforced. In addition, students who are placed in D.A.E.P. for disciplinary reasons are not eligible to participate. Read all trip guidelines carefully. A student in violation of the guidelines will be sent home at the parent's expense.

## **CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**

In the event that a student fails to comply with these guidelines, disciplinary actions including but not limited to the following may be taken at the Band Director's discretion.

1. Assignment to band hall detention. Details of a detention assignment will be decided according to each incident.
2. Loss of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter privileges. This requires that a student remain in the band stands (without family/friends or cell phone use) and not be allowed to visit the concessions stand. Food and drink may be delivered at the band stands to those students who have lost their 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter privileges.
3. Loss of spot in the marching drill.
4. Office referral.
5. Anything else deemed necessary by the Band Director and/or Principal.

## **DISMISSAL FROM THE BAND PROGRAM**

Any student may be dismissed from the band program by the Band Director due to **unexcused** absences from rehearsals or performances, repeated or severe misbehavior, lack of cooperation, refusal to conform to rules and regulations, or a general poor attitude.

## **GRADING POLICY**

In accordance with the guidelines of the Texas Education Agency, band is considered to be a Fine Arts Class and is deemed curricular in nature. Because band is curricular in nature playing and written tests and assignments are a part of the graded curriculum. Because Band is a fine arts class, outside of class rehearsals are considered to be "extensions of the classroom" and are also a part of the graded curriculum. Other examples of activities that are outside of the school day that are graded are: Sneak Preview Performance, Section Rehearsals, Full Band Rehearsals, Ensemble Rehearsals, Small Group Sectionals, Ensemble Recitals, and Concerts. Additionally, Weekly Participation Grades, which includes the director's assessment of each student's level of participation in the class, can be given on a weekly basis. Weekly Participation Grades are comprised of an evaluation of the following things:

- \*Promptly and appropriately seated at the beginning of class
- \*Displays a positive/supportive attitude
- \*Uses proper body posture
- \*Demonstrates a characteristic tone quality
- \*Uses proper instrument position while playing
- \*Shows care and respect for the instrument
- \*Listens to instructions
- \*Brings all band materials to class and stores them properly
- \*Prepares assignments carefully
- \*Respects the right of other classmate's opportunity to learn

Test Grades can be given based on assessment of playing tests, written tests, and/or verbal tests as well as participation in performances. The "music pass off" system also provides test grades. Music pass off grades will be assigned based on correctly playing the music by a deadline. Students may continue to pass off music after the deadline for an adjusted grade. To earn credit, pass off's must be completed by the end of the grading period.

## **SEATING AND PLACEMENT**

Several times during the year, each student will be given the opportunity to play for one of the directors so that his grade and placement in his section can be determined. Material for these auditions will vary. They may include major and minor scales, All Region music, Solo & Ensemble music, etudes, music in the folder and sight reading.

## **CHALLENGE SYSTEM**

1. Pick up a challenge sheet
2. a. you sign beside challenger  
b. they sign beside challengee – they must accept
3. Give the challenge sheet to your director
4. Look at the returned challenge sheet for assigned music, day and time of challenge

\*You do not have to challenge the person ahead of you, but if someone challenges you, you must accept.

\*If you do not accept, you forfeit your chair to the challenger.

\*You may only challenge the person one chair ahead of you.

\*If a person loses a challenge, they must wait one week to re-challenge.

\*Challenges will be used at the director's discretion.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

All students who participate in band are responsible for maintaining high academic standards, which include earning grades of 70 or above in each subject at the end of each grading period. A student is declared academically ineligible if they have received an average grade of 69 or lower in one or more subjects at the end of a grade reporting period. Students who have failed a class, however, are required to attend after-school rehearsals and on-campus performances during the time that they are academically ineligible. Students who failed a class may be reinstated for U.I.L. or off-campus performances if they are passing all subjects at the end of the fourth week after the new nine weeks has begun. It is the recommendation of the Band Department that a student reconsider their interest in band if the student is consistently declared academically ineligible. In this particular case the student could obviously benefit from not being required to attend after school band rehearsals by utilizing their time more wisely in structured study or tutoring programs as well as spending more time on homework.

## **MULTIPLE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Occasionally there are students in the band who elect to participate in other school activities and organizations. It is the philosophy of Van High School for sponsors and coaches to work together so that students can be successful in each organization that they choose to participate in. Conflicts with band performances and other school activities rarely occur. When it does occur, it is the student's responsibility to inform the band director of the conflict. These conflicts are generally worked out on an individual basis to the best benefit of the child, the organization and the activity involved.

## **FACILITIES**

Treat the Band Hall and all of the equipment and contents with the utmost respect. Do not handle personal belongings of fellow band members. Food or drink is not allowed in the band hall. Due to the amount of money invested in band instruments, equipment as well as the facilities, non-band members are not welcome in the band hall. The instrument storage slots are the property of Van ISD and are to be used as storage compartments for instruments, music and other instrument supplies. During the marching season students may also store clothes for marching practice as well as a water bottle. The slots are not to be used for permanent book or backpack storage. The slots are not to be defaced in any way.

## **SCHOOL OWNED INSTRUMENTS**

Students who do not own a personal band instrument will, in most cases, be issued a school-owned Van ISD band instrument. Students are responsible for the cleaning, care and upkeep of the school owned instruments. Van ISD will pay for all repairs that may occur as a result of normal use. However, it is the student's responsibility to pay for repairs in cases where there is evidence of neglect or miss-use of the instrument. Additionally, the student may be required to return the instrument that they were issued in cases of abuse or neglect.

## **MARCHING UNIFORMS**

The Mighty Vandal High School Band wears their marching band uniform for performances at Friday night football games, marching contests, parades, and UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Contest. In addition, students earning a spot in the All Region Band will wear their uniform for those performances. Uniform expectations are.

- \*Jackets are to be worn with the buttons fastened all the way to the top.
- \*Trousers will be altered to where the top of the front crease touches the top of the band shoe. No bunching should occur at the bottom of the pant leg.
- \*Trousers shall not be worn with the shoulder straps off the shoulder or with any buttons or zipper undone at any time while in public.
- \*You must wear white band shoes (correct shoes are ordered by the Band Director) and white crew length socks. Ankle socks are not appropriate.
- \*Hats are to be worn facing front only. The brim of the hat should measure your index and middle fingers put together above your nose.

There will be a uniform inspection prior to each performance. Inspections count as part of the test grade for that performance. Students should use the following checklist when preparing for inspection.

- \*Polished white marching shoes.
- \*Solid white crew length socks.
- \*Lightweight shorts to be worn under the uniform, no jeans. Wind pants or sweat pants are appropriate for colder weather but must not be seen below the bottom hem of the uniform pant.
- \*Mighty Vandal Band T-Shirt.
- \*Uniform trousers hemmed to the correct length.
- \*Uniform jacket, sleeves hemmed to the correct length.
- \*Breast plate correctly attached.
- \*Marching hat in hat box.

The marching uniforms are the property of the Van Independent School District. Any loss or damage to any part of the uniform will need to be paid for by the student who is responsible for the uniform. No student will be issued a uniform unless the Uniform Contract and cleaning fee has been turned in to the directors at the beginning

of the marching season. White marching shoes must be stored at home. It is the responsibility of the student to clean the shoes prior to each performance. As uniformity is the key to a successful marching band, any form of drawing attention to an individual while in uniform is not acceptable. Jewelry, nail polish, glitter, face paint, hair paint, etc. are not a part of the uniform and should not be worn to any marching performance. The official VHS Band T-shirt should be worn under the uniform to protect the fabric of the uniform coat. Students should have their uniforms completely on or completely off (as opposed to half on or off).

*The marching uniform should be worn with pride and handled with respect.*

### **BAND JACKETS**

The right to wear a band jacket is an honor at Van High School. A student must meet at least one of the following three criterion to earn an award jacket: (1) Be a senior member of the Van High School Band (2) Have earned a chair in the High School All-Region Band (an alternate position does not fulfill the criterion) (3) Have earned a first division at UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest and advanced to the State competition. The band director has the right to confiscate the award jacket if school policies or band policies are not upheld.

### **FEES**

While the VISD band program tries to provide for as many expenses as possible, some of the cost to participate does go to the students and parents. You will be notified of any fees that need to be paid in advance of those payment due dates. Any financial difficulties involved with paying band fees should be communicated to the Band Director prior to the fee's due date. Prior notification is essential in order to provide ample time to find a solution to the problem. The Van Band Parents Association helps to maintain some of the student fee payment records.

### **CONCLUSION**

Know that our program is built on pride, dedication and a commitment to Excellence!

<b>P</b>	<b>Persistence</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Intensity/Integrity</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Determination</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Excellence</b>

This handbook is dedicated to you, the members of the Van High School Band. The purpose of this handbook is to foster the success of the Band Program, to inform students and their parents, and to address questions and concerns that may arise throughout the school year. It has been prepared with the hope that it will serve as a reference that is capable of equipping each band student with the tools that will enable them to enjoy what will be one of the most positive experiences during their tenure at Van High School. Success in our program can be attributed to the dedication and support of our students, parents, directors and administrators. As you read through this handbook please become aware of your responsibilities to ensure that you will reap the many benefits of our band program. Upon signing and returning the Agreement page found in this handbook you enter a contractual agreement that states your understanding of the information. If you have any questions regarding any area in this handbook please feel free to email or call with any questions that you might have.

Rusty Lay, Director of Bands  
Nick Moore, Associate High School Director  
Tim Bagert, Associate Middle School Director