

**VAN JH BAND HANDBOOK  
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## **VAN ISD BAND HANDBOOK**

Welcome to the Van ISD Band family! It is our desire that your tenure in the band program here in the Van Independent School District is one of the most rewarding and enjoyable experiences in your public school career.

Students who begin in our band program can look forward to a comprehensive, sequential music education in band through twelfth grade. Throughout their study, students will be provided a thorough foundation in individual performance fundamentals with an emphasis on developing ensemble concepts and skills.

With your help, we can begin a long-lasting tradition of excellence at Van Independent School District.

This handbook has been prepared in order that you will be better equipped to be an outstanding band member. The Band Directors, VISD Staff, and the Van Band Parents Association look forward to working with you and your family.

If you have any questions regarding the information contained in this Handbook, please contact the front office at 903-963-1461 and ask to be transferred to the band hall.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Peterson  
Principal, Van JH

Rusty Lay  
Band Director, Van HS

Nick Moore  
Band Director, Van JH

Tim Bagert  
Band Director, Van MS

## **PREFACE**

The Van Junior High Band Program will exhibit a sense of excellence and will strive for a long-lasting history of excellence in musical performance. The success of the band program centers on pride, commitment to task, and the willingness to work hard to achieve a common goal. As a member of the Vandal Band you will make long-lasting friendships and develop a sense of camaraderie that is unique to our organization. While we do not expect every student in the band to become a virtuoso musician, we do expect every student to establish both short and long-range goals for improvement on his or her instrument. We do expect mature, responsible attitudes and actions – and lots of hard work from everyone.

Every year is a new challenge – new combinations of personalities and talent, new audiences, new music, new members, and new leadership from section leaders. By accepting membership in the Vandal Band, you agree to perform to the best of your abilities and work together with the band staff to make this year's band the finest musical organization that our combined efforts can produce.

This handbook is designed to help you understand the concepts and guidelines of our organization. We hope that the handbook can be used to answer questions of both parents and students and will prove to be a helpful guide for defining the boundaries that are important in keeping the band a quality ensemble. If utilized properly, the concepts of responsibility, teamwork, and good citizenship will develop as each student experiences the world of music. If you need information that does not appear here, please call. We will try to assist in whatever way possible.

The band staff at Van Junior High is very proud to be a part of the tradition of excellence established by the Van Independent School District. We are here to continue the tradition by bringing new energy and ideas to the program.

## MEMBERSHIP

1. Band at Van ISD is an elective. After completing one year of 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Beginner Band, students are placed in chair order in the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Band. After completing 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Band, students are placed in chair order in the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band. After completing 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band, students become part of the “Mighty Vandal High School Band” starting in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
2. Students moving into Van ISD will need to audition with a Band Director for appropriate chair placement.
3. Band is a full year course. No student may register for only the Fall or Spring semester.
4. Students will only be allowed to change their schedule into or out of band with written approval signed by the Band Director.
5. Band membership is cumulative. A student may or may not, at the Band Director’s discretion, be admitted/re-admitted to the Van Band Program after choosing not to participate in band.

## GRADING SYSTEM

Every Van Band student will earn their progress report and report card grades based upon the following criteria:

### 1. Daily Average

- The Daily Grade for each grading period is derived from assessment of homework, classroom participation, and students having their materials. Points may be added or deducted from a student’s daily grade if they perform above/below the established standard for that performance.
- A student’s daily *average* may be lowered by 10 points for each unexcused tardy to a rehearsal or performance call time. 10 daily average points can be regained through 30 minutes of supervised practice time in the band hall or other activity as determined by the Band Directors.

### 2. Test Average

- The Test Average for each grading period is derived by averaging together multiple test grades. 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 (VHS Band; 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Bands) also provides test grades. This pass off system uses the following definitions and standard grades:

#### Definitions

- “Pass” is recorded when a student performs assigned music for a Band Director with the correct notes and rhythms with a good sound, the correct tempo, appropriate dynamics, and appropriate musical style/interpretation.
- An “attempt” is when a student attempts to perform assigned music with the “pass” criteria in mind but does not meet the standard set for that particular performance or assignment.
- “On Time” means performed for the first time before the designated deadline.
- “Late” means performed for the first time after the designated deadline.

#### Grades

- 70 to 100 – Pass (on time)
- 0 to 70 – Attempt (on time)
- Late grades will be assessed a 30 point penalty

*Students are given until the next to last day of a grading period to bring the grade of “attempt” up to “pass”. Repeated attempts to pass selected music off may result in a student’s grade being raised. The amount that a grade is raised will depend on the number of times attempted and the amount of improvement shown. Any music attempted after the set deadline will have a maximum grade of an 80 upon bringing it up to a “pass”.*

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY/ABSENCES**

The success of any good organization is due largely to the commitment of its members to attend all functions that are scheduled. Therefore, attendance at rehearsals and performances is mandatory.

A calendar of events is issued to each student well before any events take place in order to circumvent potential conflicts with other organizations and/or family functions. Out of respect for your time, every effort will be made to keep you informed well in advance.

Absences will be excused and grades can be made up if you are disabled due to a debilitating illness or if there is a death in the family. You are expected to play your instrument if you are at school unless you have a note from your doctor stating that you are to be excused from playing. **All absences, excused or unexcused, must be reported to the Band Director prior to the absence if at all possible.**

**Any unexcused absence from a performance can result in a failing test grade and may be grounds for immediate dismissal from band at the Band Director's discretion.**

## **CONDUCT**

Each one of the Van Bands serves as a representative of our school district; therefore each band member must act as a goodwill ambassador for the Van Independent School District. You are expected to follow the VISD Student Code of Conduct and you are subject at all times to Code of Conduct consequences. Keep in mind that you represent your community, family, and school. Your behavior is a reflection of us all.

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 and will also be subject to the appropriate and/or specified consequences listed in the VISD Code of Conduct.

## **BAND REHEARSAL RULES**

*Included but are not limited to:*

1. No gum, candy, food, or drink in the band hall at any time unless otherwise stated by a Band Director. Failure to comply will result in a referral- no questions asked.
2. No horseplay at any time.
3. Cell phones are NOT to be used during band
4. Get a drink of water and use the restroom **prior** to the beginning of rehearsal.
5. BE IN YOUR PLACE WITH YOUR INSTRUMENT, MUSIC, PENCIL, GOOD REED, ETC. **PRIOR** TO THE START OF THE SCHEDULED REHEARSAL TIME.
6. If your instrument will not work during a rehearsal, let the Band Director know about the problem as soon as you become aware of it. Sit and do fingerings and listen to instructions. It is important that you stay engaged in the rehearsal. Your Band Director will attend to your instrument as soon as possible. However, necessary repairs may have to wait until after the rehearsal has ended.
7. When the Band Director stops the band, it is **not** an invitation for you to begin talking. These necessary stops are to provide feedback concerning the ensemble's performance and to give further instruction.

8. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in a verbal reprimand, student/teacher conference, reduction in chair placement, assignment to another class, or other behavior modification techniques at the discretion of the Band Director and school administration.

### **BUS & TRAVEL REGULATIONS**

*\*All rules and regulations are for your safety.*

1. Follow the instructions of the bus driver, Band Director, or adult chaperones at all times.
2. Stay seated while the bus is moving with conversation voices only - no loud talking or shouting.
3. Keep hands, arms, and heads inside the windows. This includes our voices - no yelling out of windows.
4. DO NOT throw things out of the windows at any time. Do not open the back door except in the case of an emergency.
5. Small music players (such as iPods) are permissible WHEN USED WITH HEADPHONES. These are not to be seen or heard any other time besides on a bus! 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.
6. Eating and/or drinking on the bus are not allowed unless otherwise stated by the Band Director.
7. Glass bottles or containers are not allowed on the bus.
8. When leaving the bus, be sure all windows are closed. After returning to school, double check to make sure that you unloaded all of your personal belongings and equipment. Throw trash in appropriate receptacles - buses will be left clean. Your instrument and music must be placed in their proper storage area in the band hall or taken home with you.
9. If you plan on not returning home with the band, you may be released to your parents ONLY after they sign you out with a Band Director or designated chaperone. Parents wishing for their student to leave with someone else need to send a signed note (or email) stating to whom you will be released. People to whom you may be released are: other band parents, ADULT family members, or other school personnel. The person that you are leaving with must come to a Band Director or designated chaperone to sign you out.

*\* For safety and logistical reasons please make every effort to give any notes to a Band Director by the end of the school day at least one day before the bus trip for which that note is intended. Parents may qualify another adult to pick up their student more than once by specifying all of the affected dates in one note.*

## **DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **Expectations**

Van Band students are expected to follow all policies outlined in each section of this handbook as well as the VISD Student Code of Conduct at all times. Taking a proactive approach to making good decisions about one's own actions is always the best choice. Students should respect other students' right to learn and the teacher's right to teach. Disrupting the learning process or compromising the safe environment of other students will not be tolerated.

### **Rewards**

Van Band students who meet expectations can expect verbal or written praise from the Band Directors. Students can also expect to be a part of a successful and respected band program. Students will be assisted in forming a positive self-image and will be proud of the high level of self-discipline and hard work required to meet all expectations.

### **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:

- Assignment to band hall detention. Details of a detention assignment will be decided according to each incident.
- Office referral.
- Anything else deemed necessary by the Band Director and/or the Principal.

### **Dismissal from Band**

Any student may be dismissed from the Van Band because of lack of cooperation, refusal to conform to rules and regulations, a general poor attitude, or unexcused absence from rehearsals or a performance.

Parents or guardians will be notified of a problem which could lead to a student being dismissed from band before the student is dismissed. This will almost always be a warning notification. However, in extreme cases a student can be dismissed without "having a second chance". Extreme cases can include violence, destroying band property, public displays of extreme disrespect, an unexcused absence from a performance, and anything else deemed appropriate for immediate dismissal by the Band Director and Principal. Students may or may not (at the Band Director's discretion) be re-admitted to the band after being dismissed from band for disciplinary reasons.

### **Loss of Credit**



Any student that is removed from band or quits band after the 9<sup>th</sup> day of instruction during a semester will lose credit for band for that entire semester.

## **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:

1. Failure to perform music or marching fundamentals at acceptable levels.
2. Unexcused absences from rehearsal(s) or excessive tardiness.
3. Band Director's discretion (usually involving student misconduct).
4. Failing a course (No Pass-No Play - state law). *Ask Band Director for details.*

## **EXTRA REHEARSALS**

Extra rehearsals may be required in order for our ensembles to be prepared to succeed at an upcoming concert or contest. Attendance for these rehearsals will be **mandatory**. All students and parents will be given adequate notice to make the necessary arrangements.

## **CHAIR PLACEMENT**

Chair placement will be determined by periodic playing tests. The frequency of chair tests will vary from class to class and differ by grade level. Students who are absent the day of a chair test will be allowed to make-up the test and will be placed within their section at the director's discretion.

## **INDIVIDUAL AWARDS**

Several individual awards may be earned throughout the school year. These awards range from certificates of achievement to solo and ensemble medals. To be eligible to receive an award, you must do one or more of the following:

1. Students must be academically eligible. (No failing grades on his/her report card.)
2. Participate in all Mighty Vandal Junior High Band performances.
3. Earn a 1<sup>st</sup> Division rating on either a solo or an ensemble.
4. Put forth outstanding individual effort in the band.

## 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.

## UNIFORMS

### **Band Uniform**

The Van 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Bands will wear the following uniforms:

- For pep rallies, football games:
  - Band T-Shirt, blue jeans/shorts
- For concerts and contests:
  - Boys- Black dress pants and white, long-sleeved dress shirt.
  - Girls- Same as boys, or solid black dress (dress code still applies)

**Please make an attempt to procure these items in a timely manner. Students will not be allowed to participate if they do not have the appropriate attire.**

## INSTRUMENTS

The Van ISD Band Program provides certain instruments at no cost to the students who play those specific instruments. These instruments are most commonly French Horn; Baritone; Tuba; and marching & concert Percussion instruments/equipment. Every instrument not listed here is the responsibility of the parent to provide.

Each student who uses a school owned instrument will check that instrument out and be responsible for that instrument with great care. Students are not to allow anyone else to hold or use their instrument unless otherwise instructed by a Band Director.

It is the policy of the band to pay for any expenses pertaining to routine repair and maintenance of a *school owned instrument*. However, damages caused due to student negligence will be repaired at the expense of the student/parent. Students will fill out appropriate forms with the Band Directors before taking any instruments/equipment from the Van band halls.

## **BAND TRIPS**

The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Bands typically participate in a trip to a musical festival each school year. This trip will be of minimal cost and will not include an overnight stay.

The rules outlined in the “Performance Policy” section of this handbook will govern whether or not a student will be able to participate in a trip.

## **EXPLANATION OF EVENTS**

**All-Region Band:** (Individual Competition) Students prepare prescribed music to audition for a position in the Region 21 All-Region Band. Many schools send their students to attempt to achieve this honor. The students selected will participate in a clinic/rehearsal to prepare for a concert. The clinic/concert is conducted by superior teachers and directors. Participation in the All-Region Band audition process is strongly encouraged but not mandatory.

**Solo/Ensemble Contest:** Students prepare prescribed solos and ensembles to be evaluated by UIL adjudicators. Students need to practice before/after school and at home and strive to do their best. Medals are given to students who achieve a 1<sup>st</sup> division rating. Participation in a solo and/or an ensemble is strongly encouraged but is not mandatory.

**Sandy Lake/ Other Music Festivals:** It is our intent for The Mighty Vandal Junior High Band to represent Van ISD at a Music Festival each year. Three prescribed selections of music are prepared to be performed for adjudicators who will evaluate the performance according to a state-wide standard. After performing on stage, the students will move to the sight-reading room where the band will be evaluated on sight-reading ability by three more adjudicators. Participation in UIL Concert and Sight Reading Contest is mandatory for all academically eligible Mighty Vandal High School Band members as well as 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band members.

**Stephen F. Austin State University Band Camp:** This is an optional camp which is held on the campus of SFASU in Nacogdoches, TX. All students going into grades 7-12 are eligible to attend this camp. While this camp does cost a fair amount of money, the benefits are tremendous. Look for details about the SFA band camp during the spring semester of the school year.

## **FUNDRAISERS**

The Van Bands participate in fundraisers each year. Information concerning fundraiser dates, procedures, and profit distribution will be supplied through handouts and mailings. Each fundraiser will have a fundraising agreement form that must be signed by a parent before that fundraiser begins. Fundraisers are a very necessary part of every highly functional band program. Trips and other fun events require money. Thanks in advance for helping the Van Band Program raise money. It is to your benefit! The Van Band Directors and Van Band Parents Association fundraising coordinator will maintain all student fundraiser payment records.

## **STUDENT CONTACT INFORMATION CONFIDENTIALITY**

All student and parent contact information given to the Van Band Program will be kept confidential. Only Band Directors and select Van Band Booster members will be allowed access to personal phone numbers and email addresses. Certain Van Band Booster members will need contact information in order to communicate volunteer needs for specific events. The Van Band Booster Fundraiser Coordinator/Student Payments team will need contact information in order to maintain open lines of communication for student payments.

## **CELL PHONE POLICY**

Van Band students are allowed to take cell phones with them on all band functions. Students may be asked to turn off and/or turn in cell phones to the Band Directors and/or chaperones as necessary to facilitate proper etiquette as required for each function. A student will have their cell phone taken up by a Band Director when caught using, texting, or calling during rehearsals and performances. Students may pick them up after class. Students who continue to use their phones in class will have their device taken to the office.

## **VAN JUNIOR HIGH HANDBOOK CHANGES**

Changes to the VAN Junior High BAND HANDBOOK can be made by the Band Director. Sufficient written notice will be provided in such cases.

# Van Junior High Band

## HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

This handbook is distributed to all Van Junior High band students and parents. The information is intended to make your band experience as positive and fulfilling as possible. Please sign the following consent form and return it to the band office.

### **STUDENTS**

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT I HAVE RECEIVED AND READ THE  
VAN JUNIOR HIGH BAND HANDBOOK AND WILL OBSERVE  
ALL GUIDELINES FOUND THEREIN.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Printed Name

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **PARENTS**

**I HAVE RECEIVED AND READ THE VAN JUNIOR HIGH BAND  
HANDBOOK AND UNDERSTAND HOW IT APPLIES TO MY  
BAND STUDENT. I WILL ADHERE TO THE POLICIES  
OUTLINED WITHIN THE VAN JUNIOR HIGH BAND  
HANDBOOK IN ADDITION TO THOSE ALREADY  
ESTABLISHED BY THE DISTRICT.**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date