

# Gore HS Band Handbook

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## Foundations

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### Band Statement

A band is any collection of people united for a common purpose. In general, the purposes of this organization can be described as:

- To further musical skills and knowledge in our membership;
- To provide opportunities for individual and collective achievement both in our community and in the larger community we are a part of; and
- To perform effectively for our audiences' enjoyment, and our own.

This handbook will outline the methods the Gore HS Band uses to achieve these purposes.

### Director's Commitments

Mr. Boys is keenly aware of the meaning of the title "Director." His aim is to provide direction for the band, and to hold its members to the course. To that end, he will:

- Be available. No effort will be spared to find rehearsal times and movement scheduling that work best for the most people.
- Be communicative. Without communication between the students, parents, and director, the purposes of this organization cannot be adequately fulfilled. In conjunction with being available, this should go a long way toward eliminating obstacles to our goals.
- Provide music. While seemingly a very simple chore, this task includes consideration for stretching students' musical talents and experience without frustrating those being stretched, for offering outstanding instrumentalists and flag members the chance to perform in the spotlight, and for balancing these ideals with pieces that are appropriate for the performance level of the group as a whole.
- Continue to expand his own skills and knowledge. A band should never be held back by its director.

### Band's Commitments

Being a part of the band means aligning your purposes with those of the band. To this end, you necessarily must align your actions with those of your fellow members. Make every effort to:

- Be available. Everyone is needed, all the time. More than any other organization, we depend on each person for every performance, and thus for every practice. You cannot be replaced, and your absence will be felt; it will have an effect on our performances, on the field and off.
- Be communicative. Though this especially applies to the hopefully-rare occasions where your availability becomes an option, this commitment should act as a prevention more than a cure. Know what's going on with the band and your family, and make sure that each is aware of what's going on with the other.

- Practice your part. There may never be a perfect performance, but there is no reason not to try for it. Remember, there is a difference between rehearsal and practice; we put everything together when we rehearse as a group, but we will only be able to improve as a group if we improve as individuals first. Remember also that there is no difference between how you prepare for a performance and how you will perform when it is time. Practice makes performance.
- Be ready to expand your skills and knowledge. When the director asks for or teaches you something new or different than you've done before, this comes out of his own long experience and training; even more, it comes out of his eagerness to see you improve. Your best is enough until you can do better.

## Codes of Conduct

Throughout this handbook you will find that the school's codes of conduct and academic achievement are considered to be a minimum standard, a standard that should be easily and routinely surpassed. While youthful indiscretions and foolishness can be nothing but expected, neither can anything but learning from and improving upon your mistakes. As a member of this band, you will demonstrate effort to at least follow the school's minimum behavioral and academic standards, if not raise the bar for yourself and your classmates.

The band – with each of its members absolutely necessary to produce the best possible performance – performs at least once weekly in the fall semester alone. A pattern of misbehavior, substance abuse, or academic underperformance must, out of necessity, remove our dependence upon you by removing you from the band. The alternative – a pattern of excellence in all things – can only make us greater. Be worthy of our reliance upon you.

## Marching Season

In these pages, you'll find **soft expectations** and **hard expectations** for marching band rehearsals, performances, and equipment. The difference is in **what I have personally found advisable**, or **information that you can generally rely upon to be accurate**, but that may change in certain circumstances; and in **what will always happen regardless of circumstance**. You can plan around both and usually avoid any dire consequences.

## Rehearsals

Many rehearsals and sectionals will take place on the marked parking lot at the Gore Elementary campus; others will be at the band hall at Gore HS, or on the football field proper. **Attendance at after school and summer rehearsals** is expected. If there is a conflict, **notify the Director in advance** whenever possible.

## Equipment

- **Instrument/flag**, every time.
- **Music/drill sheet**, every time. Even when it's memorized, it's a useful tool for rehearsal.
- Sun protection. A **hat** is the minimum to prevent severe burns and help allay heat exhaustion or heat stroke. **Sunscreen** and **sunglasses** are also great ideas.
- **Water**. If you don't have water, you will not be allowed to practice outside. **At least a liter** is a great amount, as a standard water bottle may not last you an entire two-hour rehearsal in the sun. Water breaks will be taken regularly and as needed. **If the Director or an Officer asks you to drink some water, drink it.**
- Shoes should be **closed-toe** only; no flip-flops, sandals, etc. **No bare feet**. Also, to make marching practice translate better to performance, any kind of **boots are discouraged**. A **well-worn pair of tennis shoes** is suggested – new shoes that haven't been broken in have a tendency to cause blisters. Marching/flag shoes are acceptable at rehearsal if kept in good condition for performances.
- Clothing should take into account both weather conditions and modesty; **school dress code** should be regarded as a minimum guideline for modesty. On colder days, remember a jacket. Even if your classes are inside all day, an outdoor rehearsal will leave you exposed to the elements.
- A **pencil** is a useful thing to have when we work music. Marking changes, corrections, or refinements in the music can help you perform the music that much better that much faster. Pens are somewhat too permanent in most cases, and especially on original sheet music.

## Summer Band

- In order to produce the best show possible, it's necessary to begin practice before the fall semester starts. Dates will be communicated by the end of the prior school year.

- The dates set will include an **orientation day** for **new members and Officers**. This is intended to introduce our newest members to marching band and those fellow students they can look to for help.

### Semester Rehearsals

- Come to each class-time rehearsal **prepared to be outside**, just in case. Rehearsal time will be used to maximize the amount of learning and repetition we can get, but must also work around weather conditions; what is usually a music day could easily become a marching day to compensate for time lost somewhere else, or vice-versa.
- Scheduling around other activities is difficult; our band members are often involved in several organizations. Though we will attempt to avoid conflicts, some will inevitably arise. Conflicts between organizations' schedules will be negotiated based on each group's needs; in general, ***the closer you are to performance in a group, the more that organization should be prioritized.***
- **Sectional** schedules (brass, woodwind, percussion, and flags) will be determined according to the schedules of those students involved in each section. In some cases, Section Leaders may be called upon to lead a sectional, but the **Director will be in attendance at all officially sanctioned sectionals.**
- On some occasions, a Saturday rehearsal may be called for. Such occasions include upcoming competitions or other performances that merit an extra rehearsal.

### Games

We will perform at all home and away games, both to support our school and football team as well as to increase our own performance opportunities. Performances consist of "The Star-Spangled Banner" at relevant games; the halftime show; and stand tunes during the first, second, and fourth quarters.

### Equipment

- **Instrument/flag and music.** This especially applies to **stand tunes** and the **national anthem**; while having **show music** is suggested for ease of warming up, it's not absolutely necessary to the performance unless you've fallen behind in **memorizing the show.**
- Appropriate clothes include **performance shoes**, a pair of **approved socks** (based on uniform), and the **band shirt**. Underneath the uniform pants, any **non-denim short** is acceptable. For especially cold weather, any cold-weather clothing that does not significantly alter the appearance of the uniform is acceptable.
- A **complete uniform**, as prescribed by the Director and dictated by the current band uniform. Inclement weather or other factors may merit a change in uniform for a particular performance. In that case, **blue jeans** and the **band shirt**, along with **performance shoes**, are the most likely "dressed down" uniform.
- Money for concessions is suggested, and spending it at any band-profitting stand is encouraged.

### Home Games

- The band will **begin warming up** on game days at a **time designated** at the beginning of the week. Arriving **fifteen to twenty minutes early** allows for plenty of time to assemble instrument, music, uniform, and being ready to play at the downbeat.
- We are given a designated area on the home side as ours. This means that we'll stay there for most of the game; it also means that no one else will. Please do not welcome Visitors.
- Support our team **first and foremost musically**. We are not mere spectators of the game; we have a job to do. Keep an eye on the Director and Drum Major and your instrument/flag and music close at hand.
- While other groups or individuals are doing their part (including the opposing team, band, the referees, etc.), be aware that your opinions are your own, and not necessarily shared by other people. As long as we are in public, appearing as a band, keep them that way; modify any reaction that is not enthusiastic approval to polite interest. **Perform with class**.
- We aren't done when the game is over. We will **leave as a group to put away equipment**, make sure **uniforms are properly put away**, etc. The Director will dismiss you when these and any other orders of business are taken care of.

#### Away Games

- The band will **travel together** to away games. Each week the arrival time at the band hall will be posted on Monday. This time is an appointment to be **ready to go, dressed as directed, with all equipment at hand**. Showing up **fifteen to twenty minutes early** will keep us moving on time, and consistent punctuality will result in longer times between the end of school and the arrival time announced. Consistent tardiness will result in earlier meeting times to ensure we get on the bus on time.
- Upon arriving at the stadium, some time will be allowed to use the restroom. **Refrain from using this time to go to the concession stand**; we need time to set up and warm up before the game starts, and any food or drink has the possibility of ending up on your uniform before we even get started.
- You will be allowed to check out from the game with **documented approval from your immediate family only**. Lacking this documentation means you travel home on the bus with the band.
- All home game standards also apply to away games.

#### Third Quarter

- If all current responsibilities are fulfilled – particularly applying to **music memorization** – the third quarter will be given to you as a break after any remarks from the Director after the halftime show. **Be back and ready to play** when the game clock reaches the designated point. If you have not earned the break, this **will not prevent you from eating**, you are simply restricted to your place in the stands. Send a friend to the concessions if you need to eat.
- Concessions at this point are acceptable. Remember that the Band Boosters profit from our away concessions at the home games! Please consume or throw away all food and drink before we start playing in the fourth quarter, in order to more easily keep our area and equipment clean.
- We are still in a public performance, and you represent your band, the school, and Gore. **Uniforms must be kept uniform** at this point, though the Director may choose to allow jackets

to be opened or taken off, or similar modifications, to let you enjoy your breather. Take care to keep uniforms clean at this point! If it's survived the field only to have nacho cheese painted on the front, it will have been preventable in most cases.

## Contests

To participate in a contest is, literally, to try yourself against someone or something. Whether we play in direct competition with other bands or at a more relaxed festival, the name "contest" covers both settings. Each performance is a test of our ability to raise the bar, to surpass the standard we set with the last performance. While this holds true for halftime performances, contests are generally the performances that "count" – not least because in contests, the band is not the intermission, but the main event. Our audience is comprised of other bands, band families, band directors, and, more often than not, judges who themselves have been involved in band for decades. It is the most attentive, most appreciative audience we will have in the fall.

### Equipment

- **Instruments and flags.** Music will be needed for warmup only, if at all, and only as a memory aid for measures, etc., as we **will not be marching with lyres at contest.**
- Game guidelines for dress apply here as well. The only additions to make are to remind you that our on-field performance will usually be a fraction of the day; two fractions of the day if we make it to a finals round. Get on the bus **prepared for whatever weather** we are likely to be out in for several hours. Again, **school dress code** is a minimum standard for public appearance when you are affiliated with the band and school.
- Money for concessions and souvenirs. Contests often feature T-shirts, buttons, or other wares, and along with food proceeds these sales sometimes help to pay for the contest or support the hosting band program.

### Pre-Performance

- Contests are often held on **Saturdays**. When possible and practical, loading of equipment will take place **on the night before the contest**. When applicable, the **band shirt will be used** as an out-of-uniform uniform, so please – for your sake and others – make sure it is still fresh after Friday night.
- Arrival at and departure from the band hall will be similar to **away game procedure**. If any deviation is necessary, it will be announced well in advance.
- Our typical arrival time will be chosen to have us arrive with time to get uniforms completed, equipment unloaded, and instruments put together before going to the **scheduled warmup**. Again, any restroom trips should be left unsupplied by the local concession stand.

### Performance

- Our business begins before we get off the bus. By the time we reach warmup, you are well into your performance as a band. If you begin to perform only when you take the field, it is too late

to deliver what you are capable of to the audience. While this is true for halftime shows as well, here the audience will be able to see and hear the difference.

#### Post-Performance

- Contests differ in what is scheduled for a band immediately after its performance; be ready for instruction.
- Packing as quickly and accurately as possible means more time for yourself. **After packing and any remarks from the director about times and places**, you will either get on the bus to leave, or more likely **return to enjoy other bands' performances**. **Band shirts** will be worn at this point.
- In the event of a finals performance, pay close attention to the announced times to return to our bus and prepare for the cycle to repeat.
- **Whenever possible, we will stay for any awards announcements or ceremonies**. At the conclusion of those events, make your way to the bus with as few detours as you can manage.

#### Contest Etiquette

- Contests are about the bands. They take place in football stadiums, but there are no teams playing, and no two bands take the field against each other – or at least, not at the same time. **Only gestures of appreciation will be accepted**, by anyone present. Keep any negativity to yourself until such time as we are on a moving bus out of sight and earshot of anyone you may offend. That is allowed only as a concession to human nature; it would be better to keep it to yourself entirely, or to never have it to keep. If anyone is offended, chances are that they are justly so. By all means, be positive, and that enthusiastically, for all the bands represented at the contest.
- Here, the performance is about carefully crafted sounds and visual effects. To keep from disrupting a band's show or the audience's enjoyment of it, **do not move among, into, or out of the bleachers while a band is on the field**. Save your cheering for the end of their show, but between parts a little applause is appreciated – just don't ruin the music on either side of it. If there is a soloist you wish to clap for, go ahead – but keep it brief enough that you do not miss what comes next.
- The Boosters and your families will in all likelihood gather in one place. While your time is for the most part your own after or between our performances, find that place before vanishing. **Gather there for awards announcements**, to make our celebration more effective. Try to stay away from "obnoxious" in the event of prestige, though.



## Concert Season

Concert season begins as soon as marching season ends, and lasts until the next marching season begins right before summer break. You may expect concerts in Gore around Christmastime and in the latter half of the spring semester, with other performances scattered throughout time and space. Rehearsals are not as physically strenuous and performances not as regular as in the fall; still, the same level of commitment is necessary to make the most of our time and those opportunities we do have to perform.

For the jazz band, concert season could be considered to last the full year. Performances at concerts in Gore with other groups can be expected; other possible performances to fill in the fall gaps will be forthcoming. Jazz will be new to our repertoire this year; you are blazing new trails, and a little uncertainty comes with the uncharted territory.

## Rehearsals

Most rehearsals and sectionals will be held at the band hall. Exceptions will be noted.

### Equipment

- Once again, your **instrument and music** are indispensable. We will likely read several pieces, and choose from among them for each concert we have, so make sure to keep up with any music given to you at any point. To this end, keep your music **in your music folder**, and in the **folder slots** whenever you have occasion to leave it in the band hall. Please do not leave your music or folder in your case or in any other area of the band hall.
- A **pencil** is vital to keep you from making any mistake more than twice, and to add to or take away from the music printed on the page. Bring it, use it.
- **Semiformal-to-formal dress clothes will be used at concerts.** Do not wait until the days leading up to a concert to check your wardrobe. Slacks are preferred to denim every time. Tennis shoes are frowned upon. Dresses or skirts should be school appropriate, at minimum. As to color: ***When in doubt, wear black.*** As to whether something is “nice” enough: ***When in doubt, assume it is not and class it up some more.*** Dressing appropriately for a given occasion is considered by your Director to be a life skill that you should develop sooner rather than later. That said, remember that our primary concern is to produce music, and avoid making what the eye sees more attention-grabbing than what the ear hears.

### Semester Rehearsals

- Weekly full band rehearsals may or may not be held outside of class. If not, this conveniently frees up more of your time for personal practice!
- **Sectionals**, however, will likely be held in place of full rehearsals. These will be in effect no different than fall sectionals.
- Occasionally a special rehearsal may be called for in preparation for a concert. You will be given notice of these occasions. These rehearsals ***may be at alternate locations*** to fill a specific need, such as getting used to our sound in a more open space than the band hall’s close walls.

## Performances

In general, contest performances and our own concerts will differ little, at least procedurally, from our performances in the fall. The one significant difference will be in the amount of instruments and equipment we will need to move from place to place, and thus in the amount of manpower we will need to accomplish this in a timely manner. As concerts can differ widely in what is needed or provided on stage, you can expect specific details relating to each performance as it approaches.

## Concert Etiquette

Any event you attend has certain expectations attached to it. Football games, church services, birthday parties, weddings, movies, funerals; all have their own unique, silent codes of conduct that you learn from experience. Concerts differ only in that many people miss out on them until either they join band or their children do, and are therefore unsure of how or when to act. What follows is a brief introduction to the expectations that have arisen out of necessity and long tradition.

- Please **silence your phones**. As with most of these guidelines, limiting noise and visual disturbances helps the audience and the band focus on the pieces being performed. This goes for performers as well!
- When possible, use the time **between pieces** to enter, exit, or move about the seating area.
- Sometimes, a composer will write multiple “movements” in one piece of music. Traditionally, ***the audience holds its applause until the conductor signals the end of a piece*** by dropping his or her arms, in order to keep the associated music together in an unbroken flow. However, if you cannot refrain from some quick clapping, by all means do so. Few people will begrudge you a genuine response to what you hear, and the band members will be grateful for your appreciation.
- For jazz performances, soloists are likely. Unlike the standard concert band setting, jazz tradition allows for a ***soloist to be awarded applause immediately*** after their work is finished, during the piece. This is not least because a jazz soloist is often improvised spontaneously!
- As to applause, try to keep it to straight hand-clapping for the most part, with scattered cheering as you feel moved to cheer. Whistles, air horns, and certain phrases (“put it in the net” has been heard before) are all artifacts of other events, and do not really serve your purpose in this setting. Similarly, band is very much a joint effort, so **applaud for the whole ensemble**, and try to avoid singling out friends or family members; it often embarrasses instead of praises them, and unfortunately belittles the contributions of the rest of the band.
- On the flip side of that coin, if you are on stage, do not wave at your family, or make faces at your friends, or stand up and shade your eyes as you look to see who made it. Do all of that later. For now, **smile in acknowledgement when you first come onstage**, and then return to your business. Find your personal part of the audience and thank them afterward, and you will have given them a better performance by not being distracted.

## Travel

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In this section you will find information on how to best retain our privileges of bus use, and how to give us the best odds of arriving at any destination in one piece.

## Bus

The bus will be the most-often used mode of transportation for our membership, both for out-of-town performances and fall class-time rehearsals at the elementary school. Generally speaking, most bus procedures can also apply to smaller vehicles when we have occasion to use them.

### Equipment

- When speaking of instruments, **anything bigger than a clarinet case** should go in the trailer or (if we are using the activity bus) in the storage compartments underneath the bus.
- You are initially allowed **one small bag** for personal belongings. Your Director reserves the right to revoke this privilege, whether for a specific person or for the general population, if it proves impractical to continue allowing it.
- Take **water** as your bus drink. Even if spilled, it dries quickly and doesn't stick or stain, and it is better for you than anything else you could be drinking, especially in marching season.
- If you are brave enough to bring a snack on the bus, make sure it is something that does not melt, crumble, spill, leave your mouth by design, or come in many small pieces. Good luck.
- The **bus must be clean when we leave it**. While Section Leaders or the Director will do a final check, it is your responsibility to keep the bus clean as far as you are able.
- Nothing enters or leaves by a window. Not even if "it's biodegradable."

### Safety

- **Pick a seat and remain faithful to it**. Wandering on a moving bus invites injury or death.
- Realize that you have a natural tendency to get louder as time goes on, and **adjust accordingly**. Limit conversation to those nearest to you. Distracting the driver or actually drowning out road noise invites injury or death.
- **Be on the bus or far from it**. Lurking near the exhaust pipe or the headlights, or lounging underneath the tires, invites injury or death.
- Before leaving a location, roll will be called. **Remain quiet** until your name or section is called, and then **make your response obvious** enough to be seen and/or heard, and also understood, by the person taking the roll the first time. This keeps us from wasting time, and doing otherwise invites injury or death.
- Adopt the airplane approach to emergency exits. Either sit by one knowingly, willingly, and knowledgeably, or let someone else take it. While accepting the seat does not in any way make you responsible for the life or death of anyone else on the bus, being prepared to act can go a long way to warding off injury or death.

## Trailer

At times, we will have the use of a trailer to transport our larger instruments and pieces of equipment. The **Loading Crew is responsible for putting items in and taking them out**, but help moving these items from place to place necessarily falls to the rest of us. You are **responsible for the instrument or instruments you play** getting to the Loading Crew. Do not delegate if you want to be certain your instrument accompanies us to our next destination. Avoid “volunteering” to help a person with their instrument without getting their go-ahead, or we will have the world’s worst shell game on our hands.

## Officers

Band is an excellent opportunity to develop your ability to serve and lead your peers. Officers are selected in two different ways: Mainly, by nomination and election; and in the case of the drum major position only, by interest and subsequent appointment. Though the specific needs of each office are listed below, the following are expected from all of them:

- Enthusiastic about band
- Willing to commit at least the amount of time asked of everyone, if not more
- Consistently positive attitude toward fellow band members
- Respectful dealings with peers, younger students, and school faculty and staff
- Service-minded and on hand to do what needs doing
- Can delineate between leadership and authority
- Fulfills expectations of school behavior and dress codes
- Reliably meets or exceeds academic standards
- Member of the high school band for one or more full years

Band is, of course, a class and not a true model of democratic government. Your Director may step in to make sure justice – or mercy – is served in any case of unqualified nomination, lapse in suitability, or general disaster.

## Section Leader

This is the bread and butter of student leadership, the position with the most direct role in shaping the band. Our numbers being what they are, there are currently four Sections to be led: Woodwinds, Brass, Percussion, and Flags. A Section Leader should:

- Be proficient at their instrument. Being able to help others that play that instrument is an extension of this principle.
- Be present. Section Leaders, even when not specifically tasked with something by the Director, are really always at work, every time their section meets.
- Be adaptable. Your Section's members respond in different ways to different stimuli. Some need tough love; others need compassion. Still more may just need occasional recognition for their good work. Try not to let yourself get stuck in one "leadership style" – being flexible will serve you better.

## Loading Crew Leader

If the Section Leader has the most direct role, the Crew Leader has the role that is most literally hands-on. To them we entrust our instruments and equipment, and from them we expect to receive them back whole. To this end, the Crew Leader's duties are to:

- Choose their Crew. A small team can get much accomplished. Loading crews are notoriously ill-tempered and hurried at times; taking this into account – and that neither quality is really efficient – can provide a good litmus test for your team’s membership.
- Keep a cool head. Time is short, equipment is spread haphazardly on the ground, and your crew is soaking up the chaos like an unfortunate sponge. Your job is to help everyone else keep their cool by keeping a lid on your own frustrations, and thereby avoid leaving something behind in a blind rage.
- Have a system. Know in what ways the items you are handling are fragile, and how to compensate for it. If the trailer is balanced improperly, then at some point you will find yourself on an accidental see-saw (or teeter-totter, or what have you).
- Pass the torch. When selecting your Crew, make sure you have someone in it that will be there when you are gone (making them a likely candidate for Crew Leader in the future), and make sure everyone knows the system you use. Even if equipment changes or the next Leader’s system itself is different, you contribute to the next year’s ease of loading by letting other people learn how to do the job. Avoid “one-man army” syndrome.

## Librarian

This post is in many ways the one that most clearly exemplifies the concept of leadership through service. The band must have music, and the Director will often be needed for rehearsal, so the Librarian steps in. This person will be granted access to the music library and the printer/copy machine in the band hall, so that they may distribute music where it is needed. This job necessitates that you:

- Be proficient in your instrument. Practically speaking, you will miss out on some rehearsal time to perform your duties, and should be comfortable enough with your instrument and music that you feel the loss of that time as little as possible.
- Be an organizer. The more you can conform your work to the library’s system, the less confusion and chaos you will create for yourself, the Director, and future Librarians.
- Be dexterous. Clumsiness does not necessarily negate your nominations to this post, but be advised that dropping a stack of music the thickness of a boxed set of Harry Potter books does not make for a pleasant chore afterward. Original documents must be preserved with particular care, as copy quality suffers somewhat when you start making copies of copies – that have themselves been copied. Fewer accidents, more payoff.

## Drum Major

As stated above, the Drum Major is a unique position among the officers in that it is an appointment, not an elected office. The Drum Major is equal parts leader and figurehead for the band, and performances can hinge on the Drum Major’s own part in it. In addition, this officer will often find themselves used in an assistant’s capacity, not least because they will be the most free to help when the Director is rehearsing the band. In their role as right-hand man, they will be asked to coordinate and lead their peers on many occasions. Leadership skills are as important as the conducting skills used on the field. The Director, therefore, will assess both, after a period of teaching and practice. Candidates

will put themselves forward for consideration in the spring, and will be notified of the decision before summer begins.

## Seventh and Eighth Grade Roles

Seventh and eighth grade students who are members of the band program will have two paths available to them if they wish to be involved in the high school band's fall performances. Both roles they may play require that they maintain their academic and behavioral responsibilities at the level expected of the high school band's membership.

## Band Aides

Band aides are seventh and eighth graders that act as "gophers" for the band. They are not expected at any rehearsals during or after school, but will accompany us to games and contests. The number and membership of the band aides will be selected according to the band's current needs as determined by the Director, but anyone meeting the expectations described above is eligible for consideration.

## Band Members

As seventh grade students transition to eighth grade, those who demonstrate an ability to perform at a given level beyond that expected from their age and experience may be given the opportunity to swell the high school band's numbers. This is not a lightly made decision, as that ensemble's gain is the seventh and eighth grade band's loss, and playing ability is no guarantee of chemistry with the older students in their rehearsals and performances; in addition, students must enroll in the high school band class, which at the time of this writing conflicts with junior high athletics. The end-of-year performance test, therefore, may be taken at will by any student, but passing it is not a guarantee of promotion; nor is it an obligation to enroll.

## Financing and Fundraising

Members of the band will have to purchase some equipment for their personal use; in particular, **flip folders**, **marching shoes**, and similar items. You can *usually* expect the Band Boosters to contribute or outright pay for the band T-shirt each year, and to help fund and feed us on our travels.

However, it should be noted that this help is completely dependent on how well the Band Boosters and Band fundraisers go. In the event that participation is lacking to the point that assistance, in whole or in part, is not feasible, you will be asked to pay for your own fees, food, etc. This is an **unnecessary burden** if you participate in our fundraisers, especially for families with multiple students.

As of now, there is no requirement to fundraise, other than that imposed by necessity; likewise, there is no penalty currently associated with failure to participate, other than that imposed by the logical consequences of that failure.



## Amending and Editing

The edition number shown on the front page of the handbook will reflect every change made in it. Amendments to the handbook – such as additional officer positions, or removal of bus privileges that have been deemed unworkable, etc. – will be reflected by the edition number’s increase to the next integer (for example, edition 1.4 would become edition 2.0). Editing of the current content – such as changes in phrasing for clarification, typo correction, or small changes such as typical rehearsal times – will result in the decimal changing (a change from edition 2.3 to edition 2.4 has no change in expectations, procedures, etc.).

Each year this handbook will be reissued to you. If a major amendment is introduced mid-year, that edition will be issued in place of the previous one. If an edition is edited, you will be notified about the specific changes and the reasons for them, but copies will only be given upon request. Any decisions the Director must make will be made using the latest edition of the handbook and his best judgment.

## Additional Covenants

Some sections or groups within the band may wish to bind themselves to their own constitutions or agreements. If this is the case, the handbook will take precedence over any approved student-made covenants. These will be approved by the Director if both the group of individuals making the covenant and the band as a greater whole are served by the agreements made, and if there are no conflicts in expectation or procedure with the handbook or the school’s codes of conduct. In all cases of proposed consequences for excellence or lapses in duty, the Director will have the final word in what justice is carried out.

## Eligibility and Forms

By various laws and district policies, there are baseline requirements to be fulfilled before you may participate in performances, or even (in some cases) in rehearsals.

- Each year, you must have a **current physical**, a **drug test**, and **signed proof of insurance and concussion forms** before you may take the field, in **practice or performance**. The school provides opportunities for both of these; if these opportunities have been passed by, then your participation in outside rehearsal or performance will be limited to the role of observer, or you will be given alternate goals to achieve until such time as all forms have been turned in.
- One additional form, the **transportation form**, is necessary to travel. As we depend on your presence outside of town, this form should be turned in with the rest.
- **Academic eligibility** is... tricky. Current policy is best understood as a universal “two strikes” system. For an entire semester, you get one, and *only* one, academic probation week, from *any class*, before any other failed class results in ineligibility. Ineligibility *does not affect practice*, only performance. Though district policy may allow some venues of performance in the case of your academic ineligibility, it has already been established that this is a minimum standard. **Pass your classes.**

## Grading

Band is not merely an extracurricular activity – it is also a class, with music education as its subject. Grading is a necessary tool for measuring and tracking student learning, and one required by the district. Most grades will fall into two categories – rehearsal and performance. The semester test is also described below.

- Rehearsals are, in effect, daily grades, reflecting the work you put into each rehearsal, your grasp of the concepts introduced, and performance of the skills you've learned. **Being on time** will be rewarded with full marks for your efforts – **tardiness or absence from an afterschool rehearsal** will lose ten percent of the grade automatically. **This includes "excused" absences**, as each and every rehearsal is vital to become the best we can be. **During the school day**, tardiness and absence will be dealt with by simple attendance documentation, and not a zero; however, no points can be awarded for a rehearsal you've missed – consistent absences are likely to limit your ability to make up for lower grades. Coming without your instrument to a rehearsal is almost tantamount to not being there, and will be recorded as a tardy; remember that two of those will net you an absence in school records. **Unexcused absences from afterschool rehearsal** will be marked as a zero. In general, absences are excused in the case of conflicts with other activities' performances (games, contests, etc. – practices on a case-by-case basis), illness, injury, deaths in the family, or once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. **Do not expect absences to be excused** if the cause is "my friend's birthday," "my birthday," "annual family reunion," "I didn't feel like it," etc. Remember: You've committed yourself to being here, and we need you. We'll give you back when you graduate, we promise.
- Performances are the culmination of all your effort, and your chance to show off for friends, family, and the community at large. As such, they are generally worth more points per grade. This means that tardiness or unpreparedness, and especially absence, will hurt more, and that timeliness, preparedness, and dedication will gain more. Excused absences will be harder to come by in that other activities' practice schedules are expected (by this program, by the district, and by state laws) to give way to our needs, within reasonable expectations like performance events. Otherwise, the guidelines remain the same.
- The semester tests will consist of designated concert performances. For the purpose of exemptions in other classes, you can be exempted from the band's test score upon request, but you are a necessary part of the performance, and **must in fact still perform**. Your Director would like to remind you at this point that **grades are not a wage** that you choose or decline to work for, they are a tool in an educational process. Your involvement in the ensemble is at will, both yours and the Director's; if you decline to be a part of the band when you don't stand to lose GPA points, this may be taken as a sign that you no longer care to commit yourself to it, and a discussion of and plan for your future with the band will be necessary.

## Acceptance and Commitment

This page will be signed and turned in to the Director.

### Band Member

By signing below, you signify that you are both aware of and accepting the level of commitment asked of you. It is not an easy thing to be good at what you do; you will have to want it, and then put in the effort and time necessary to achieve that desire. While you are not yet an adult, and therefore not solely responsible for your transportation, etc., you should know that you will be held to a standard of excellence that will only increase as you meet it. If you agree to be committed, and to follow through on the responsibilities of that commitment as best as you are able, you will enjoy the benefits; likely, for the rest of your life. Sign below.

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### Family Members of the Student

If you have read this handbook, you know I expect much from your child. True dedication from each member is necessary for them to succeed; true support is just as necessary. By asking for your signature below, I'm asking for you to do your utmost to help your child taste what a great band program can be like. I'm asking for them, and for every other kid that's joined the band; if we don't have everybody, or not everyone is on board, we feel the loss. I know I'm asking for a lot of sacrifice on your part, not just theirs, but I believe it's worth it, and that you'll see a difference in your child. Kids are better for being in band.

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Witnessed,

K. Boys

Director of Bands

Gore High School2