



# 2017 Band Handbook

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Dear Students and Parents,

Congratulations on your decision to be part of the Sulphur Springs Middle School Wildcat Band Program! We have an exciting year of music making in the works.

This year in addition to Mr. Jeff Garza and Mr. Steve Proctor Ms. Elizabeth Bialecki is the new Head Band Director, and Mr. Rothman Tafel will be the new Assistant Band Director.

The Sulphur Springs Middle School Band Program has created a legacy of success, and the continuation of that success is dependent upon the spirit, pride, leadership, teamwork, dedication, and cooperation of its members. Certain rules, policies, and procedures are necessary so that the overall goals of the group are met and the welfare of each individual member is best served. There are great things happening with the program, and we take great pride in this organization. Whether you are a student or parent, you should share in this pride and look forward with great excitement to the coming year.

By accepting membership in the Sulphur Springs Middle School Band program, you are agreeing to perform to the best of your abilities and work together with the band staff in making this year's band the finest musical organization that our combined efforts can produce. For this to occur, students need to be responsible, attentive, respectful, and have a positive attitude.

When a student signs up for band, they are committing to an entire school year of band. Getting out early is not a realistic option that is in the best interest of the student, the band program, or SSMS administration. However, if a student has not met the expectations outlined in the SSMS Band Handbook, the band directors can request the removal of a student early after consulting with their parents, SSMS principals, and counselors. Band is a step-wise program that builds every year that a student is in band. Students will realize that, with every year that they are in band, the rewards and privileges grow as well. Successful bands require every instrument to be well represented. Our band program depends on students building their skills on their assigned instrument. We require students to remain on the instrument that they begin on, year to year, so that they may continue to develop their skills with the pace of the other musicians and continue to be an integral part of the program. Directors' discretion is the final approval for any rare change of instrument.

This handbook has been developed to familiarize each band member with the general operation and procedures of the Sulphur Springs Middle School Band and standards by which all band members are expected to conduct themselves. The handbook is not intended to be all-inclusive, as every possible situation and question cannot be predicted in advance; however, a thorough knowledge of these materials is essential to the smooth operation and success of the band this year. If you ever have questions that cannot be answered with the information in this handbook, please feel free to contact us by email or phone.

## Communication

If you have any questions or concerns in relation to the SSMS Band program please do not hesitate to get in touch with the band directors using the contact information below. The best way to contact a specific director is through email.

Elizabeth Bialecki  
[ebialecki@ssisd.net](mailto:ebialecki@ssisd.net)

Rothman Tafel  
[rtafel@ssisd.net](mailto:rtafel@ssisd.net)

Jeff Garza  
[jgarza@ssisd.net](mailto:jgarza@ssisd.net)

Band Office Phone Numbers: 903.885.7741 x3360  
903.885.7741 x3361

Parents and student also can sign up for the SSMS Band Remind 101 which is a useful tool to receive information regarding upcoming events and class information. Please take the time to sign up for your student's group. It only takes a few seconds.

To sign up using text messaging find the following band code for your band and text it to the number 81010.

BEGINNING Band: @ssmsbegbnd      GOLD Band: @ssmsgold  
BLUE Band: @ssmsblue              HONORS Band: @ssmshonors

Another resource for information on the SSMS Band program is the band and percussion websites listed below.

Band Website:              [ssmsbnd.weebly.com](http://ssmsbnd.weebly.com)  
Percussion Website:      [ssisdperc.weebly.com](http://ssisdperc.weebly.com)

## Instruments

All students are required to have their instrument in band every day. Students without instruments will be given an alternate assignment. It is extremely important that all SSMS Band members have a functioning instrument at the beginning of the school year and throughout the remainder of the year. All instruments must be labeled on the outside of the case with the student's name. NEVER allow another person to play on your instrument. Remember that horseplay can cause damage to instruments and equipment.

### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

Students are expected to have their instrument daily starting on Tuesday, September 5th. Any student without an instrument will be subject to a schedule change out of band class if accommodations cannot be met. If needed, please contact the band staff for more information on obtaining an instrument.

A few possible means of obtaining an instrument are:

- Purchase an approved brand of instrument on your own from a music retailer; we recommend McKay's Music Company.
- Borrow/lease an instrument from family, friend, neighbors, etc.
- Upon careful inspection, obtain a used-approved brand in working order from classified ads, etc. Please contact a director should you have any questions about an instrument before purchasing

### 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Students are expected to have their instrument daily starting on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Any student without an instrument will be subject to a schedule change out of band class if accommodations cannot be met. If needed, please contact the band staff for concerns regarding instruments.

## School Owned Instruments

Due to their substantial cost Sulphur Springs Middle School provides Oboes, Bassoons, Tenor Saxophones, Baritone Saxophones, French Horns, Euphoniums, and Tubas to students playing these instruments. School owned instruments become the responsibility of the student and family to whom they are issued. Any repairs due to negligence or lack of maintenance while the instrument is in the student's possession is the responsibility of the student. If the instrument is lost or stolen while checked out to a student, it is the student's responsibility to replace the instrument. A student will not be allowed to use a school owned instrument until the rental agreement form has been turned in.

## Supplies

Below is a list of additional supplies that will be required for class and will be factored into each student's daily participation grade.

All students must have:

- A properly functioning 1" binder throughout the year exclusively reserved for their band music
- A pencil, either normal or mechanical, pens are prohibited

Beginning band students must have:

- Essential Elements 2000 for Band Book 1, for their respective instrument
  - Percussion do not need this book
  - Euphonium students need the Bass Clef (BC) Book

Woodwind players must have:

- A cleaning swab
- A minimum of three usable reeds always, size recommended by their director

Brass players must have:

- Valve oil and slide grease
- Trombone players will also need Slide oil and a small spray bottle for water

## Lockers and Storage

All students, except those playing tuba and baritone saxophone, will be assigned an instrument locker, and combination lock. The combination locks should remain on the locker always, and should never be taken out of the band hall. The lockers need to be locked at all time unless during a student's band class where it may hang on the locker latch. The band program assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen instruments or other items from lockers that are not properly locked. Students who are unable to follow these expectations may receive a consequence.

Lockers are only to be used for band-related supplies. Backpacks and other personal effects should be placed on the designated racks at the beginning of their class period. When instruments are being stored in a locker, the case should be closed. All lockers will be kept neat and tidy.

Tuba and baritone sax students will have their instrument stored in a separate storage room. These instruments are to be hung securely on the storage racks or placed in the cases as instructed by the directors. Tuba players will also be assigned a mouthpiece storage drawer in which they should use after each rehearsal time.

## Classroom Expectations

All band students will be held to certain behavior expectations. Students who are consistently unable to follow classroom expectations will receive consequences that can result in parental contact, disciplinary action, or possible removal from the band program.

- Students will:
  - Follow all school policies and will not tolerate students that go against school regulation.
  - Represent the band program throughout all aspects of school and performance in a positive way.
  - Be respectful to all band directors, band members, teachers, and parents ALWAYS.
  - Take proper care of all instruments and make sure they are in good playing condition.
  - Never bring food or drinks into the band hall at any time, except for water bottles.
  - Only handle items that belong to you; if it is not yours don't touch it.
  - Never disrupt rehearsal in any way. This includes unexcused tardies, talking, playing out of turn, or other disruption.
  - The band workroom is off limits unless you have permission from a director.

If a student cannot follow the classroom expectations the director of their class will go through the following consequences:

- First time: Verbal warning from the director.
- Second time: Parental contact.
- Third time: Written discipline referral to SSMS administrators.
- First discipline referral: Student will receive consequences from SSMS administrators.
- Second discipline referral: After a student receives a discipline referral they will restart the process. If a student receives a second discipline referral they will not be allowed to travel on the SSMS Band reward trip and may be removed from the program.

Severe actions may result in an automatic discipline referral.

## Attendance

A yearly band calendar is enclosed for your use in planning your family's schedule for the upcoming school year. Each band student is important to the success of our many activities, and we must be able to count on 100% attendance at these rehearsals and performances. If a family emergency or illness occurs unexpectedly, PARENTS, please call the band office at 903.885.7741 x3360. Concerts conducted on SSISD property are curricular events that are in line with the music TEKS, students MUST attend these concerts. Performances, and contests conducted outside of CMS are extra-curricular, and students MUST be academically eligible to perform in these events.

Extra after-school rehearsals are extremely important for the development of students playing skills. For a student to be eligible to go with their band to UIL or the SSMS Band reward trip, they must attend all required after-school rehearsals for their respective band.

## Eligibility

Eligibility is based on passing grades in all subjects (as mandated by Texas state law) and/or good attendance and participation at all rehearsals and previous performances (as determined by the band directors). If a student failed one or more of their classes in any six-weeks grading period, they will not be eligible until the next set of SSMS progress reports are sent home, and that will only be if the student is passing every class. If a student is ineligible they are not eligible to participate with the band in any out of town trips, including UIL activities. They will still be required to attend local concerts.

## Grading Policies

Student's grades are determined by a combination of class participation, practice records, playing tests, and attendance in concerts and after school rehearsals. The following is a breakdown of how student's grades are determined:

Daily Assignments – 50% of six weeks grade

- Class Participation – Students have their instrument, music, pencil and maintenance supplies.
- Practice Records – Due every Tuesday, and must be signed by a parent or guardian.
- Knowledge Checks – Students will have small assignments during the six weeks to check understanding.
- After School Rehearsal Attendance – please see attendance guidelines below.

Tests - 50% of six weeks grade

- Playing Tests – Students will be assigned tests throughout each six weeks to check their playing skills.
- Concert Attendance – please see attendance guidelines below.

## Attendance Grades

Student attendance at concerts and after-school rehearsals is critical to the success of the SSMS Band Program. Any unexcused absence from after-school rehearsals will result in a lowered grade. Any absence for missing a concert will always result in a makeup exam regardless of reason for absence. Tardiness to after-school rehearsals and concerts will also factor into the students' attendance grade. Students and parents are responsible for notifying the directors of any known conflicts with rehearsals at least seven (7) days before the rehearsal or concert. Students will receive an excused absence from rehearsals and/or concerts for the following reasons:

- School activities e.g. football, basketball, cheer directors will plan with sponsors of other school activities regarding sharing students.
- Sickness (student must bring a doctor's note to class the following day).
- Family emergencies, such as a death in the immediate family.

## Competitions, and Rewards Trips

The band will be competing in competitions throughout the year, and at the end of the year take a reward trip. Each student must meet the eligibility guidelines to attend these trips, and have filled out the combined medical release form and permission slip. Any trips needing special permission as deemed by the band directors and principal will have an additional slip sent home accordingly. The students are to conduct themselves properly on the school buses including no loud talking or getting out of their seat. The band directors may refuse the inclusion of trips for any student who has failed to consistently abide by the expectations of the band program. A severe infraction by any student during the trip will result in the principal and parent being notified, and could result in the parent being responsible for picking up the student. This could also result in the student being removed from the band program entirely.

Any one of the following circumstances will exclude a student from the end of year rewards trip:

- 3 (or more) unexcused absences from after school rehearsals.
- 1 unexcused absence from a band concert.

## Signature Page

**Please sign this page and return to the band hall by Friday August 25<sup>th</sup>.**

Your signature below signifies that you have read, understand, and agree to abide by the rules, regulations, and policies of the Sulphur Springs Middle School Band.

Please understand any one of the following circumstances will exclude a student from the end of year rewards trip:

- 3 or more unexcused absences from after school rehearsals.
- 1 unexcused absence from a band concert.
- 2 or more written office referrals.

Band Member Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Band Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_