

McDowell Middle School Band Policies

Hondo Band Mission Statement:

McDowell Middle School, Hondo Independent School District, and the community endorse involvement in activities that contribute to the healthy, supportive and interactive school culture at the Middle School level. Membership in The McDowell Band offers a unique opportunity for personal growth, leadership and involvement in diverse activities. The attitude, dedication and enthusiasm of the band members are just as important as the skills required. Members must be committed to the highest level of athleticism, performance, self-discipline, respect for the school and others, personal exemplary conduct and the performance of all responsibilities related to the pursuit of school spirit and pride. Furthermore, all members of the team must demonstrate a proven ability to balance academic requirements with extracurricular and personal activities.

To all McDowell Band Members:

In order for this ensemble to operate efficiently, students must understand that certain guidelines need to be followed. The intent of this document is to ensure that all students understand the expectations required of all Hondo Owl Band members.

Attendance:

The band competes and performs as a unit. If individuals are not present at rehearsals or performances, the entire group is affected. A permanent schedule will be given to the students during the first week of school; therefore, students are expected to make arrangements to attend ALL performances and rehearsals. In the event a change is made in a scheduled performance or rehearsal, students are expected to make every effort to adapt to that change. If ample notice of the change is not possible, the policy on absence will be adjusted accordingly.

An excused absence can only be granted with prior notification in writing. It is up to the director's discretion whether an absence is excused or not. Emergency situations require a phone call or an email as soon as possible. The number to the band hall is 830-426-3027 (extension 3300), and the email address is jchessher@hondoisd.net. Parents or students are asked to leave a voicemail if no answer, or an email is acceptable. Alternative notification can be made through the school messenger system found on the McDowell Band website. Please refrain from using social media or the Remind system to notify a director of an absence. In the event of an emergency absence, the student must bring written documentation upon his/her return to school in order for the absence to be excused.

Students that are absent from school, or will be, must call the band hall before the scheduled practice or performance in order to be excused. Do not rely on another student to notify a band director before reporting time. Acceptable excused absences are as follows: severe personal illness, death in the family, or required school related activities. The Band Director will make the decision whether or not to excuse the absence in a case-by-case manner. Dentist appointments (non-serious nature), orthodontist appointments, outside-of-school organizational activities, club meetings (school or otherwise), and non-serious family member illnesses will not be excused and will result in the appropriate grade reduction. Dental emergencies (i.e. severe tooth ache, tooth knocked out, abscess, etc.) will be covered by the "severe personal illness" excuse. If a student is found to have a habitual attendance problem, regardless of the nature, corrective measures may be taken at the discretion of the director.

Rehearsals:

Rehearsals are the lifeblood of the band program. It is during the rehearsals that all instructional materials will be discussed, passed out and/or used. Rehearsals are your time to learn all you can about your active and successful membership in the band program. It is of the utmost importance that you attend all rehearsals in order to be current and updated on all of the latest happenings. One rehearsal can make the difference of your success or failure on a given mastery or assignment. In order to organize our rehearsals so that we get the maximum benefit from the precious time, there must be some guidelines to follow:

- Be on time, in your place, with all materials ready to rehearse!
- Chewing gum at ANY time during band is not allowed.
- No books or materials from other classes are to be brought to your seat. A place will be provided for you to store your bags.
- Except for flute and clarinet, no instrument cases are to be brought to your seat. All other cases are to be returned to your assigned slot during rehearsal.
- When a Director, Drum Major, or Guest steps onto the podium, all talking must cease and you must give your undivided attention to that person.
 - **The quicker you respond to beginning rehearsals, the faster the objectives can be obtained and the further the band program can go with the allotted time.**
- Do not leave the rehearsal for any reason without the permission of a director.
- Personal electronic devices will remain off during rehearsal, unless authorized by a director.
- School tuners must be turned in at the end of every rehearsal.

Performances:

- All performances are required.
- All students must be on time for the roll call of each performance.
- All performances will be in uniform. The uniform for each performance will be decided by the director.
- Absence from any required performance may result in ineligibility for Spring Reward Trips.
- Personal electronic devices will remain off during performances.

Marching Rehearsals:

- Attendance at all scheduled marching rehearsals is required.
- Proper footwear is required for all marching rehearsals. This means athletic style shoes or band shoes only.
- Personal water containers are required for evening rehearsals.

Concert Rehearsals:

- Attendance at all scheduled concert rehearsals is required. This includes scheduled sectionals.
- Do not talk during rehearsal.
- Always use the correct posture for your instrument.
- Always have a pencil at your stand, mark your music with pencil only.
- Keep your music in the folder provided. Even if you share a stand, you must have your own music available at all times.
- All sticks, music, mallets, and hand percussion instruments are to be put away after every rehearsal.

Uniforms:

- The McDowell Band Uniform is a symbol of pride, and should be treated with respect.
 - No disrespect is to be shown to players, coaches, officials or fans during any event.
 - Absolutely no public display of affection while in uniform.
- Students in all McDowell Bands will need to purchase a band shirt and pants as specified by the director.
- All fingernail polish must be removed while in uniform.
- Jewelry may not be worn with the uniform.
- Calf length, or knee length **ALL** white socks and the designated band shoe must be worn with your uniform.
- Band shoes will be designated by the band director.
- Directors may make additional requirements of students in regard to dress, grooming, behavior and preparation for performances.

Band Hall:

- The band hall is for band students only.
 - If you have non-band friends, please ask them to wait in the foyer for you until you are done in the Band Hall.
- Keep the band hall as neat and clean as possible.
- No horseplay or roughhousing in the band hall.
- Inappropriate, abusive, or vulgar language of any kind will not be tolerated.
- Keep your music, instrument, and other personal items in the slot provided.
- The office phone is available to students for band business only.
- Gum, candy, food, or drinks (except water) are not permitted in the band hall, or any room associated with the band hall at any time. (Socials and controlled activities may be excluded)
- **DO NOT** write on the whiteboards, music stands, walls or any other surface not designed for such activity.
- **DO NOT** touch, move, or use any equipment that does not belong to you or is not checked out to you!
- The band hall office is off limits to students and adults, **unless a director invites you in.**
- DAMAGE - No student shall damage or deface any property belonging to the District. The type of discipline which may be imposed for damage to school property by students depends upon the circumstances.
- LIABILITY - A parent or guardian who has the duty of control and reasonable discipline of a child is liable for any property damage caused by negligence, malice, or misconduct of their child.
- Practice Rooms are not to be used without a Director's permission.
 - Unless specifically instructed by a Director, practice rooms are for one person at a time.
- The Library, and Band Hall sink are for Director use only.

Instruments:

- All instrument cases **will** be appropriately marked with your name.
- The serial number and make of all personally owned instruments must be on file with the band office.
- Music should only be stored in the case if the case is designed to hold music as well as the instrument.
- School owned instruments must be checked out through the band office.
- There is a fee of \$35 per year for the use of school owned instruments. This fee is to help defray the cost of maintenance and normal wear and tear throughout the school year. **This includes percussion!** Students who use more than one instrument per year will pay only one fee.
- If you have a school owned instrument in need of repair, report it to one of the directors.
- If you need a personally owned instrument repaired, you may take your instrument to a repair facility of your choice, or you may send your instrument to be repaired through the Hondo Band. If you decide to send your instrument through the Band, there is a minimum fee of \$15.00. Instruments are typically picked up on

Wednesday, and returned on the following Wednesday. Any outstanding balance must be paid before your instrument will be returned to you.

- The issue of school owned equipment will be done on a contract basis, with the student assuming all responsibility for the use, storage, and any damage caused to the instrument. This includes monetary responsibility for all repairs outside of normal wear and tear. This will be determined by the band directors.
- If it is deemed that a student is failing to properly care for and maintain the instrument or if a student abuses the instrument, the student may lose the privilege of using any equipment furnished by the school, and will be responsible for any monetary cost in repairs or replacement.
- School owned equipment will be stored in the assigned storage area, and will be kept in its case (properly stored) with the case closed and latched.
- Privately owned instruments will also be kept in the assigned storage area. The band department or the school district assumes no responsibility for damaged, lost or stolen privately owned instruments.
- Any outstanding repair bills or band fees not paid prior to the Spring Trip may result in exclusion from Spring Trips.
- Never use or handle an instrument that you do not own, or that is not checked out to you.

Transportation:

All band students will ride the bus to and from all band activities and performances unless there are conflicts with other school groups, or other school activities. Only **STUDENTS** who are actively participating as a member of the organization may ride with the band. Band parents, legal guardians, or adult chaperones (with director approval) may accompany the band as long as they have had a background check through central office, and have been added to the official school volunteer list. In addition to the Band Bus Policies, students must follow, and are subject to the rules and regulations set forth in the Hondo ISD Bus Riders Safety Handbook.

- Students may not change seats or buses without prior approval from the director.
- Seating may be changed at any time during the year at the discretion of a director.
- Personal Electronic Devices are allowed, however if they produce audible sounds, students are required to utilize headphones or ear buds.
 - Devices that produce audible sounds may be confiscated at the discretion of the director.
- Bus radios or stereos will not be turned on during any trip.
- No yelling or excessively loud conversation.
- Stay seated at all times while the bus is in motion.
- Keep the aisles clear at all times.
- Keep all body parts inside the bus at all times.
- At no time should any object be thrown out of the bus.
- No food or drinks are allowed on the bus except for water.
- Emergency exits must be kept clear at all times.
 - Uniforms may not be hung on emergency exits.
- Students may ride home with parents after a performance only if they have completed the Hondo ISD Travel Release, and it has been signed by an administrator.
 - Students may ride home with another band parent, provided permission is granted in writing, and approved by an administrator PRIOR to leaving Hondo ISD property.
 - When leaving with a parent, the student is solely responsible for returning all equipment (including uniforms) to the band hall in a timely manner.

Grading:

Your six week grade will be decided by the observations of the directors. These observations will include all band activities. All performances are required, and are weighted double. Beginning Band will be graded primarily on playing tests and class participation. All other bands will receive a weekly grade based on participation and preparation in addition to periodic graded playing tests. Any make up test that is not completed by the end of a six-week period will be recorded as a "0".

Actions that will result in minor deductions from your six week grade include, but are not restricted to the following:

- Habitual tardies to rehearsals or performances
- Chewing gum
- Being unprepared for a rehearsal
- Not having the correct equipment for a rehearsal or performance
- Displaying a negative attitude
- Talking during rehearsal
- Breaking ranks in a marching rehearsal, or a performance.

Actions that will result in **significant** deductions from your six week grade include, but are not restricted to the following:

- Missing an after school rehearsal. This may also keep you from marching in that week's performance.
- Insubordination towards a director
- Missing a performance
- Using someone's horn without permission
- Leaving early without permission.

If you understand what we are trying to accomplish as an ensemble, and for you individually, your band grade will be excellent.

Auditions:

In the spring semester, 6th and 7th grade band students will participate in a summative assessment, which will be used to place students in separate ensembles by ability level. The audition may consist of, but is not limited to: scales, a prepared etude, and sight reading.

- Audition music will be selected by the directors.
- Audition music will be made available to all band students on the same day.
- All 6th and 7th grade band students are required to perform for a grade, regardless of their intent to continue in band the following year.
- Each section will start and complete the audition process on the same day, when possible. This provides each section across the bands with the same amount of practice time.
- All audition results are final, and non-negotiable, and there will be NO retests.
- All auditions will be performed for Mr. Chessher.
- If a student is absent on their audition day, the director will decide if they are excused, and eligible to make-up the audition. Unexcused absences from an audition may result in a reduced grade for the audition.
- The director reserves the right to determine how many students will be placed in each ensemble, based on the needs of the ensemble.
- In extreme circumstances, the director reserves the right to move students between ensembles, based on the needs of the ensemble.

Discipline:

In an organization such as the *Owl Band*; and its sub unit the *McDowell Band*, we hope that discipline issues will not be a concern. Very often we are in the public eye and serve as representatives of our school and community. For this reason our behavior needs to be above reproach. Minor discipline issues will be noted by the band directors.

Serious discipline problems that occur while traveling or performing with the band will be subject to a probationary process. Actions in this category include, but are not limited to the following:

- Public insubordination towards a director
- Refusal to follow instructions from a director or contest host
- Inappropriate displays of affection while in uniform
- Theft
- Fighting
- Missing multiple performances
- Reporting to a performance under the influence of drugs or alcohol

The probationary process includes the following steps:

- Step 1: With the first violation, discipline will include a contractual agreement between the band member, parents, and administration. Requirements of the contract could include but are not limited to: extra duties, an apology to the ensemble, and restrictions to travel.
- Step 2: A second violation by the same student, or a violation of the contract described in Step 1 will result in dismissal from the band program for the remainder of the semester in which the violation occurs.
- Step 3: A third violation by the same student will result in permanent dismissal from the band program.

For major discipline problems both in and out of band, you may refer to the **Student Code of Conduct**.

Voluntary Withdrawal from Band:

- A student who voluntarily withdraws from the Hondo Band while still a full time Hondo ISD student will not be able to return to the program. Exceptions to this policy may be made for extreme circumstances at the discretion of the band director and the school administration.

Although there are many more requirements for building a quality band program than those mentioned here, you need to consider the points in this document before making a commitment to this organization. If we work together, communicate, and feel that Hondo Pride, the McDowell Band will continue its excellent representation of our school and community. If you agree, you and your parents need to sign and date the bottom of the Band Policy Agreement and Medical Form. This form states that you agree to adhere to the guidelines listed in these pages.

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