



Olathe East BANDS

BAND HANDBOOK

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to the Olathe East Band program! The students and ensembles of the Olathe East Band program are consistently among the finest in Kansas, and we are excited that you have chosen to help us continue our tradition of excellence.

The information in this handbook is designed to inform both the student and parent, of the policies and expectations for which each member is responsible.

Please read through all of it, and you'll begin your year informed and prepared!

Your cooperation and support will help ensure that your band experience will be rewarding and successful.

Sincerely,

Jeff Smikahl
Director of Bands
Olathe East High School

THE RULES

All the other things in the rest of this book are policies, procedures, and guidelines. They are VERY important (otherwise we wouldn't bother with them), but in terms of classroom rules I like to break it down to two very easy rules that when followed really encompass all situations.

1. You don't have to be great, but you have to try hard.

This means even if you are not as talented on your instrument as others, you have to always give your maximum effort in rehearsals and performances.

2. Keep it classy.

On the bus, in rehearsal or performance, or anywhere that you are representing the Olathe East Band, make sure that you use your very best judgment and represent the program in the best way possible. If you have to ask if it is classy then it probably isn't and you shouldn't do it.

Attendance

Classes in band are largely **performance** based—our most important objectives somehow involve the public performance of music. Band is also a **large-group** activity, as well an individual activity. A successful public performance is not an accident, it's the result of a group of interdependent team members who have successfully **prepared** to **perform**. Therefore, much of the academic credit you earn concerns your attendance and participation in performances (in and out of school) and preparation (in rehearsal, in sectionals, and as an individual) for the performances.

While many aspects of our program are flexible, attendance is ***not one of those aspects!***

- Attendance is required at every class rehearsal. Credit is earned at each rehearsal for both participation and quality of contribution.
- Students are expected to be on time for all classes, rehearsals, and performances. Late arrivals will be documented. Excessive tardiness may result in the loss of participation points and is cause for removal from upcoming performances. If a student is removed from a performance due to tardiness, they forfeit their points for that performance. This is at the discretion of the directors and applies to both marching and concert band.
- Attendance is required at every performance scheduled for a student's performing group. The most current schedule is updated on our website at www.oeband.com
- **Absences from class rehearsals are considered unexcused** unless **prior** arrangements are **agreed** upon by the directors or in the case of verifiable family emergency or illness.
- Requests for a non-emergency excused absence from a performance **must be made at least 60 days prior** to the performance (or during the 1st week of school, for any performance during the first quarter).
- Absences will not be excused retroactively. This means you **must** arrange in advance.
- An unexcused absence results in complete loss of credit for that class or performance.

Simply put, the success of the group depends on each member. **Students**, it is your responsibility to keep your calendar compatible with required events, and to initiate communication with me if you foresee any issues. Do not assume that membership in another activity releases you from performance responsibilities, and “work” is never an acceptable excuse for missing a performance. Plan ahead!

Parents, your support is necessary and appreciated for a successful band! Please consider all alternatives before requesting an excused absence for any performance. The absence of one person not only affects that person, but the entire group. Your child is important to our band!

Attendance & Grades

Grades in band classes are closely linked to attendance. You earn your academic credit by rehearsing, performing, and being assessed on your playing progress. This requires your presence! Here's how attendance impacts your grades—both positively for good attendance and negatively for problems with your attendance.

Participation Grades—40% of each quarter's grade

Students will earn points for their attendance and quality participation at each class period.

- **Remember that during marching season, all of the Olathe high schools begin class at 7 a.m. each day except Thursday.** This is “protected” time and is to be free of conflicts with other commitments, club meetings, etc. This means that the 7 a.m. rehearsal is subject to the tardy policy discussed on the previous page.

Performance Grades—30% of each quarter's grade

Students will earn points for attendance and quality participation at all performances required for their ensemble.

- **Unexcused absence from any performance results in a loss of all points for that event.** At the discretion of the directors, performance points lost due to an unexcused absence may or may not be eligible for a make up assignment.

See the previous page regarding your responsibility in maintaining your calendar!

Assessment Grades—20% of each quarter's grade

Students will earn points for playing assessments and other quizzes assigned in class. These may include playing/chair tests, scale quizzes, music memorization pass-offs, drill quizzes, or other assignments given throughout the year.

Extra Rehearsal Grades—10% of each quarter's grade

Students will earn points for attendance at all rehearsals that are assigned outside of the regular school Day. These may include extra marching rehearsals, early rehearsals during concert season, and other rehearsals necessary to prepare for or combine ensembles for an upcoming performance.

Transportation

The district will provide transportation to and from any practices or performances outside school grounds, with the exception of various auditions and performances with honor bands that only apply to certain students. Specifically, transportation will not be provided to the following events:

- ECKMEA District Honor Band Auditions
- ECKMEA District Honor Band
- John Philip Sousa Honor Band
- KMEA All-State Band (students who are selected to perform at KMEA are expected to supply a ride home from Wichita. Transportation will be provided to Wichita),
- Regional Solo/Ensemble Festival
- State Solo/Ensemble Festival

In some cases, parents or legal guardians may drive or pick-up their own student, if prior arrangements are made. For these situations there is a form available in the band office and on the website that we ask parents to fill out and submit. Students must use school-provided transportation to and from the event if no such arrangements are made. **On-site verbal arrangements are not acceptable. We must account for a large number of students at each performance. Advanced arrangements are a school district legal requirement.**

- Students must display excellent behavior, in a manner consistent with pride, while on buses. Failure to do so may result in a loss of bus rights, or a permanent seat assignment.
- Students are always expected to wait for instructions from the directors and/or chaperones prior to exiting the bus.

Arrive 10-15 minutes before you're due to report for an event. This gives you time to deal with an unexpected problem, or time to hang with your friends if you have no problems.

“YOU are responsible for you.”

“If you're early, then you're on time. If you're barely on-time, then you're late.”

Uniforms

In the OE Band program, we want to sound our best and look our best! With the help of our booster organization and support from the school district, we are very fortunate to be able to outfit each student with uniforms that will help us do exactly that. There is no charge or rental fee for the uniforms. Part of the booster fee covers routine uniform cleanings and maintenance. The exception to this would be for uniforms that are not cared for properly and are damaged because of neglect. In this case, the student will be responsible for any additional cleaning or repairs deemed necessary by the directors. A hold will be placed in the office and students will not be allowed to graduate until they have paid all uniform fees.

Additionally, there are some uniform items that each student must purchase. These items are:

Marching Band

- Marching Band Dry Fit Performance Shirt– This must be worn under the uniform for marching season performances.
- Marching Band shoes (obtained through the band office, pricing available on the website.)
- Black marching gloves for all non-percussionists (obtained through the band office, pricing available on the website).
- Black socks (student provides– must be at least calf length and always worn with uniform).

The marching uniform provided by the school consists of:

- Uniform bag
- Marching pants, jacket and overlay.
- Shako and box

For marching season, the uniform is stored in the band room, and student must arrive early enough before the performance to allow time to change. At the end of each performance, the uniform is to be hung neatly on the hanger and returned to the band room to be ready for the next performance.

Concert Band

- Everyone needs black dress shoes. This should be handled individually, as there will not be any type of group order. However, black tennis shoes are not acceptable.
- Students wearing a concert tux will need to order a tux shirt and bow tie. A link to a website will be provided early in the school year directing students to the specific items that need to be purchased. If students still own a suitable tux shirt and bow tie from previous years that still fits, they may use that one instead.

The concert band uniform provided by the school consists of:

- Concert tux jacket and pants (excluding shirt) tie & cummerbund
- OR
- Concert dress

For concert season, the tux or dress is sent home with the student. At the end of each season, the uniform must be returned complete and in good order. The student will be billed for any missing parts. Furthermore, the student must turn in the same numbered uniform parts that were checked out. For example, if a student checks out jacket #1, but turns in jacket #2, that student is still responsible for jacket #1. Each student is responsible for keeping track of all parts of their uniform!

Uniforms, continued

Students are responsible for having a complete, clean, presentable uniform for all performances. This is part of each performance grade. Students may not be allowed to perform in improper uniform, at the expense of academic credit. If there are financial concerns please contact Mr. Smikahl directly so arrangements can be made.

Our uniform is a visible, public representation of the pride we take in our groups! Each member must treat their uniform with care and RESPECT. Disrespect to our uniforms is completely unacceptable—examples of this could include:

- Stuffing uniforms into lockers, car trunks, etc.
- Wearing visible jewelry, hats/ballcaps, sunglasses, or other accessories. In cold weather at football games, plain blue, black or OE hats are acceptable.
- Partial wearing of a uniform. You are not to be seen with jackets unzipped, pant straps hanging loose, tux shirts untucked, etc.
- Wearing any socks besides plain, calf-length black socks with the marching uniform or concert tux.
- Any damage caused by student neglect is the responsibility of the student. These fines will be turned into the office and the student will not be allowed to graduate until these fines have been paid.

Why make such a big deal about the uniform? It's simple – the uniform identifies you as a member of our group, and it is up to you to represent our group in the most positive manner possible. These guidelines help you do exactly that.

If we take off shakos or jackets at a performance, make sure no one takes yours by mistake, and don't take someone else's. When the time comes to turn in uniforms, you're still responsible for turning in the exact numbered items you checked out. Take a few minutes the day before a performance to check through your uniform. Are you missing buttons? Is your zipper not working on your jacket? Come early to have any problems fixed, because there is not time to fix them once everyone reports and the activity begins.

***“Before any audience hears us play a note, they’re going to SEE us, and form an impression from what they SEE. That impression will reflect on everything else we do as we perform. In many instances audiences hear what they see.*”**

Contributions and Fees

Booster Contribution

There are some supplies and services that our students receive that are not provided by Olathe East High School. Additionally, the OE Band Boosters fund several activities or benefits that our band students enjoy. Many years ago, our Boosters adopted the position of asking for a contribution from each band member to the Boosters instead of relying on constant fundraisers like many programs do. This allows the bulk of the fundraising we do with the band to benefit individual student costs, like major trips & other approved band-related expenses. This includes the use of the fundraising money to pay for the booster suggested contribution.

For this school year, the Band Booster Organization voted for the suggested contribution to be **\$350 per student** per year, with a reduced amount for siblings in the program. While this is a significant amount of money for all families, it should be noted that programs in the area that we regularly compete against charge up to a thousand dollars per student. We will never exclude any student who is unable to make the \$350 commitment to the program. If you are in a financial situation that does not make the contribution possible, please email Mr. Smikahl and let him know. Additionally, there are many parents that choose to spread that contribution out over the course of the entire school year and make small monthly payments. That works fine; once again, just please contact Mr. Smikahl and let him know that is what you plan to do. We will never let finances keep a student from participating in the program.

For all concert band students who are not in marching band, the suggested contribution is **\$50**.

The Booster suggested contribution amount reflects uniform cleaning & alteration fees, specialist instructors, truck rental costs, refreshments at performances, halftime—props, and costs for the many other ways to support our students throughout the year. Detailed information is always available at our monthly Band Booster Meetings.

Fees

Please note that the booster suggested contribution does not include the shoes, gloves, or shirt mentioned in the earlier “Uniforms” section. Also, it does not include costs for some optional band activities for which a nominal purchase might be required (i.e. Pep Band shirts, Jazz Band shirts, solo & ensemble entry fees, All-State auditions etc.)

Your prompt attention & payment is appreciated to these items! Once again, if there are financial concerns please contact Mr. Smikahl directly so arrangements can be made.

Marching Band Participation

Students who choose to not attend our mandatory band camp may (at the discretion of the directors) not have a permanent position in the marching band show. Instead they will be designated as an alternate. How they fill this role will depend on the year, the needs of the band, and if any illnesses or injuries occur in the band. Once again, this will be decided by the directors. It should be noted that students that are designated an alternate may travel with the band but might not perform at some of the competitive contests depending on the needs of the band that year. It should also be noted that students who demonstrate consistent lack of follow-through in attendance and tardy policies may forfeit their permanent spot in the show to an alternate member. In addition, students who do not meet the requirements of the class, both in or outside of rehearsals, may be removed from the show at the discretion of the directors.

Performance Calendar

All members are held to the same expectations for performance attendance. Our performance calendar is not maintained or updated in hardcopy form but can be supplied for any student that requests one. However, it is maintained online at our website www.oeband.com and is included in this handbook. Additions or revisions to the performance calendar are generally made with at least a month's notice, and only after careful consideration of the master school calendar. Members are responsible for keeping their calendars current. Remember, **any excused absence from a performance must be approved at least 60 (sixty) days before the performance takes place, or during the first week of school for 1st quarter performances.**

School-owned instruments

Students who are issued school-owned instruments are responsible for the care and condition of the instrument as stated in the checkout agreement.

The school will cover the cost of maintaining the instrument's general playing condition. **The student and/or family will cover the cost of repair for damages beyond normal wear & tear to the instrument while checked out to the student. This includes creased bells on marching mello, baritones, and sousaphones. It also includes instruments that are constantly needing adjustment (bari and tenor saxes specifically). This is usually a sign of students who are not being careful enough with their instruments. This will be strictly enforced.** Students are not to let anyone else use the instrument checked out to him/her without director(s) permission. Percussion students may choose to use the school's equipment for rehearsals and performances. All percussionists are responsible for providing their own sticks and/or mallets when not provided by the school. A detailed list of required sticks and mallets will be given to students.