



SOMERSET ACADEMY
— **BROOKS** —

Band Handbook

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I - Introduction

Welcome to the Band! The Bengal Band is the largest spirit organization on campus, supporting the school through a tradition of excellence. To achieve this, the Band requires cooperation from the students, parents/guardians, director, and school administration. The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize current members and their parents/guardians with the Bengal Band.

This handbook will outline the Band's goals, responsibilities, rules, and requirements. Both parents and members are requested to read through the handbook. Members and parents must sign the Handbook Acknowledgement form to indicate their consent to the commitment to comply with the Bands rules and requirements. This is to help ensure that we can work as efficiently as possible to achieve success!

II - Program Description

The Bengal Band places strong emphasis on individual musical awareness and enrichment. The Band provides this through giving the students opportunities to perform in various settings. The Band offers students various levels of music literature and skill that are both engaging and challenging. The Band has been and will remain an active part of campus life and overall spirit!

The Band continually strives for excellence. Each individual member should develop and mature in character, loyalty, dependability, dedication, leadership and musical skills while substantially contributing to the success of the Band. We seek to enhance each member's school experience, and to provide each member the best possible music education and band experience. We also strive to help develop character traits that will positively serve those members throughout their lives.

The opportunity to participate in co-curricular activities at Somerset Academy Brooks, such as band, is a privilege. Students who accept the privilege of participating in co-curricular activities must recognize that they are representatives of Somerset Academy Brooks and will be

held to a higher standard of conduct. Furthermore, the privilege of participating in Band requires that each member be fully committed to our goals and do what is necessary to achieve them.

III - Objectives and Expectations

Our objectives are as such:

- To teach music through performance
- To develop each individual's musical skills and performance on the various instruments
- To provide music to the school and community
- To develop a well rounded music repertoire
- To help develop positive character traits that the students will serve the students throughout their lives
- To promote a love and appreciation for music and music education
- To give the students the opportunity for self expression

We expect students to give their full participation to this activity. We understand that life happens, but when that happens, it needs to be communicated to the band director. We also ask for students to hold themselves to a high standard, as they will now not only represent themselves, but our school, district, and organization.

IV - Grading Policy

Grading is broken up into **4 categories**:

Performance Attendance (20%):

- Band is a performance based fine art. As such, we stress an importance for students to be at each performance on the given dates at the **start of the semester**. If there is an excuse for an absence of a performance, this must be communicated to the band director **immediately** with an excuse letter or some type of documentation.

Rehearsal Attendance/Participation (15%):

- To prepare for our performances, our students will meet before and/or after school for rehearsals throughout the year. Students who are in the Advanced Band will be expected to participate in all band related activities unless otherwise notified.

Playing Tests/Pass Offs (40%):

- Playing tests and music pass offs will be held often. Playing tests will be in person and will require the students to perform in front of others during class time. There will be **at least one** playing test every 2 weeks. It will be the students responsibility to prepare for each playing test and pass off. Pass offs will be either in person during class or prerecorded, and will consist of excerpts from the student's music. On both pass offs and playing tests, students will be assessed on their musical qualities, which includes, but is **not limited to**: tone quality, rhythmic accuracy, dynamic phrasing, and articulation style. Please note, these are **NOT** chair tests. Grades on playing tests and pass offs will be confidential between the student and band director.

Demonstration of Knowledge/In Class Assignments (45%):

- In class assignments will be given **daily**. Students will also have a lot of opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge during class. With such a high occurrence of these types of assessments, they will provide a learning opportunity for the students to be able to learn from their failures instead of getting discouraged by them. The in class assignments will include, but **are not limited to**: identifying key signatures, being able to count a rhythm, identifying musical terminology and notation, and dynamic/tempo markings.

V - Classroom Management

Students are required to follow all band guidelines. This is to ensure that class and rehearsals are run with efficiency so we can address everything that is needed. The guidelines are those that follow:

- Students will have their instruments and proper materials needed at all rehearsals.
- Students will be at rehearsals on time, unless excused or discussed prior to the start of rehearsal.
- Students will show proper rehearsal etiquette. (Ex.- not talking when the director or student leader is).
- Student areas should remain clean, organized, and be used for band use only.
- Students will be able to leave the class to use the restroom. Only one student can be out at a time, and they can not leave within the first and last 10 minutes of class.

As a high acting spirit organization, we need to maintain order and comply with all rules at all times to be able to achieve our goals. We are not only representing ourselves, but also the band, school, and district whenever we are seen. All band members are required to follow all state laws, school rules, district policies, and band requirements at all times. These laws and policies only establish the minimum for acceptable behavior in the band program. This section is to provide a notice that **any** misbehavior may be subject to disciplinary action.

In addition to disciplinary action for the violation of other specific rules and requirements, disciplinary action may also be imposed for any major misconduct, which includes, but is not limited to:

1. Violation of any state law, or district policy regarding drugs, alcohol, or tobacco
2. Unexcused absences from any function.
3. Failure to be properly prepared for any band related function. (Ex.- Forgetting their instrument during a performance)
4. Failure to properly care for any band property including music or instrument.
5. Tampering with another member's instrument, music, or personal property.
6. Poor participation in any band function.
7. Improper behavior at any band function.
8. Improper behavior in or treatment of the band hall or any school property.
9. Disrespectful or other improper treatment of the director or student leaders.
10. Failure to follow the directions of Band director, instructors, or student leaders.

11. Conduct which has an incidental, but real, adverse impact on the reputation of the band, school, or district.

Consequences

For a violation of any State law, school policy, or band requirement, the following disciplinary actions may be imposed, but are not limited to:

1. Initial correction/warning.
2. Parental notification or conference.
3. Correction or counseling dealing with the misbehavior.
4. Exclusion from one or multiple band functions.
5. Loss of placement in advanced band.
6. Exclusion or removal from a leadership position(s).
7. Removal from the Band completely.

The disciplinary action imposed in each instance will be at the discretion of the Band Director. This will be considering the nature and severity of the misconduct, the circumstances of the situation, its frequency, prior action dealing with the misbehavior, and other possible factors.

VI - Communication Policy

There are a few options for communication with the band director. Those who need to reach the band director can email them, and they will get back to you as soon as possible. You can also send a message to the director through the BAND app. These are the most reliable methods of communication. From there, if needed, we can set up a time to meet in person or to schedule a phone call.

If a student has a schedule conflict with the band calendar, please communicate that with the band director by email. The email must be sent **at least 1 week in advance**. This is to ensure all the necessary material is taught and no one falls behind.

VII - Rehearsal Information

Rehearsals will be scheduled at the discretion of the band director. Some weeks may have more than others in order to prepare for upcoming performances.

To make sure rehearsals are run efficiently, we will have different members of student leadership to help instruct and move rehearsal along. There will also be some procedures to go along with rehearsals. The procedures are as follows:

- Students must be ready to play two minutes after the start of class. Upon showing up for rehearsal, students should retrieve their instrument, pencil, and music for the day, head toward their designated rehearsal area, and begin warming up.
- Woodwinds should make sure they have extra reeds, in case one breaks.
- Brass should make sure all valves and slides are oiled and greased before the start of rehearsal.
- Percussionists should make sure all their equipment is set up before rehearsal starts.
- Talking should be at a minimum during rehearsal.
- All questions will go through student leadership before being addressed by a director.
- Individual warm-up should resemble one that we do in class. (Ex. lip slurs, long tones, scales, etc.)

VIII - Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all scheduled rehearsals and performances. If a student is absent from school on the day of an after-school rehearsal, this does not automatically excuse the student for that afternoon. The student must communicate to the director their excused absence either through email or the BAND app. All absences that would be excused by the school and the district will be excused by the band director.

If there is a conflict with the band schedule, such as athletics practice, please notify the band director. This must be done at least 1 week in advance. The band director will work with

the student to work out a plan to make sure the student is getting the necessary information to be successful. Students are responsible for any work and practice they would miss.

IX - Dress Code

During the school day, the dress code is the one set by the school and district.

During marching rehearsals, clothes should be light and athletic, due to the extreme Texas heat. Students are required to wear shirts at all times during rehearsals. Those who are not dressed appropriately will be asked to sit out of rehearsal in order to ensure their own safety.

Concert attire for beginners will be that year's Band shirt with black slacks, or black or tan khaki pants. The band shirt will be provided sometime before the first concert.

Concert attire for non-beginners is all black. Men should wear slacks, black dress shoes, and a black button up shirt. Jackets are optional. Women should wear either a solid black dress, or what is listed for the guys above. The dress will need to be at least knee length, with leggings that cover the rest of their legs. They should also wear black dress shoes; no heels should be worn in order to eliminate the risk of tripping and damaging instruments.

X - Student Leadership Information

Band officers will be elected or appointed by the Band Director for the next school year in an election conducted on a date that is to be selected. Officers will serve for a period of one year. Elected officers will serve until officers elected in the following year take office, unless the officer is removed. Officers are expected to participate in all Band functions and all other activities and events as well as all officer meetings. An officer who is removed from office or is not able to fulfill their responsibilities may be replaced. The spot may also remain vacant until the following election.

Section leaders and drum majors will be selected based on many different factors. The students must be in good standing with the director and band. The student must have participated in band for at least one year. All members interested in a leadership position will write an essay and hold an interview with the band director. Those interested in a Drum Major position will do

the same as well as go through an audition process. More information about the audition will come as the spring semester comes close to an end. The amount of Drum Majors and section leaders will be determined by the band director.

The student leaders agree to and assume significant positions of leadership in the Band and undertake substantially greater responsibility and commitment than other Band members. Student leaders must demonstrate strong determination, musicality, self management, and many other leadership skills. Student leadership must work closely and cooperate fully with the Band Director in the many undertakings necessary to the success of the Band. All student leaders should keep a grade point average of a B (80) or higher.

XI - Band Program Fee

The Band Program fee is required for all Advanced Band members. This fee will be used to help offset such expenses as music, clinicians, and other needs of the orchestra program. In addition, this fee will include the cost of a band shirt which will be our performance shirt this year for our beginner classes. Our other classes will use the shirt as an “informal” uniform at performances during the year, such as pep rallies, football games, etc. If there is a financial concern about the program fee, please contact the director in order to make payment arrangements and/or discuss the fee.

XII - School-Owned Instruments

There will be an instrument fee of \$30 for all school-owned instruments. These funds will be used to help offset repair expenses incurred by normal wear and tear. It is not designed to cover costs from damage or loss of instrument due to theft/misplacement, etc. This type of repair is the responsibility of the student who is using the instrument. Each instrument issued will be in excellent playing condition. Students are expected to keep the instruments clean and in top condition. Basic supplies must be purchased and repairs must be made just like personally owned instruments. School-owned instruments are distributed on a first come, first serve basis. Due to inventory restrictions, some instruments may not be available.

SOMERSET ACADEMY

BROOKS

Band Handbook Acknowledgement Form

Student's name _____

Grade Level _____

Please initial next to each of the items below to indicate your understanding of each item. In our effort to reduce paper, the Band Handbook is available on the BAND app; copies and PDFs are available upon request from the parent.

Student initials	Parent initials	Expectation of Policy
		I understand that it is my responsibility to inform my director of any conflicts that may prevent me from attending a required event.
		I understand the difference between an excused and unexcused absence from a required activity.
		I understand the grading policy.
		I understand that consistent, quality practice is necessary to develop my skills as a musician and to honor my commitment to my peers within the band. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to properly document my practice with integrity and honesty.
		I understand there is an advanced band fee and a school-owned instrument fee. If there is an issue with paying the fee, I will communicate with the director.
		I understand the requirements for proper concert attire as defined in the Band Handbook.
		I understand the expectations of behavior during any rehearsal, performance, or trip with the Bengal Band.

I have read and understand the Band Handbook and am aware of my responsibilities as a member of the Bengal Band.

Student signature: _____

As a parent, I have read and understand the Somerset Academy Brooks Band Handbook and am aware of my child's responsibilities as a member of the Bengal Band.

Also, (please circle one of the following) I DO / I DO NOT give permission to have my child's photograph to be used on the Somerset Academy website and other social media platforms.

Parent Signature: _____