

McMillan Junior High School Marauder Band Handbook

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the McMillan Marauder Band Program! Your participation helps continue a great Wylie tradition – *that Wylie Band!*

The SUCCESS of our students depends on a partnership between teachers, parents, and students. The teachers will do everything they can to effectively explain, demonstrate, and instill good playing habits. We will provide every opportunity possible for students to experience SUCCESS on their instrument.

We feel strongly that parents need to be involved in the musical lives of their students if meaningful SUCCESS is to occur. Parents cannot practice FOR the students, but they can help students learn to organize their time, and support the efforts of their children in music. We appreciate the investment you have made in your student's musical life!

The following handbook is provided to help our band remain enjoyable, efficient, and educational for all of its members. Making expectations clear at the beginning of the school year helps make this possible. Included in this handbook is a great deal of information necessary to function as a successful McMillan band member.

Please take the time to read the information included and keep this handbook for your reference. We are looking forward to a wonderful year!

Lisa Fitts
Director of Bands
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John Denis
Associate Director
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McMillan Band Information

Student Name _____ Instrument _____

Home Address _____ I live with (circle): mom dad
_____ Other _____

Mother (or guardian) Information:

Name _____

Phone Numbers:

Work _____

Home _____

Cell _____

Address _____

Father (or guardian) Information:

Name _____

Phone Numbers:

Work _____

Home _____

Cell _____

Address _____

For email addresses – please print clearly

E-mail _____

E-mail _____

- **I have read and understand the contents of the McMillan Band Handbook. All signatures are necessary.**

PRINT Student's Name Date

Student Signature Date

PRINT Mother's/Guardian's Name Date

Signature Date

PRINT Father's/Guardian's Name Date

Signature Date

- I DO / DO NOT (circle one) give permission for my child's photograph to be used on the band website.

(parent signature and date)

McMillan Junior High Marauder Band



Handbook
2007-2008

Continuing the Tradition!

Lisa Fitts and John Denis **Directors**

The **McMillan Band** program is founded upon the fundamentals of musicianship and citizenship. Our goal is to develop the following qualities of outstanding musicians and exemplary citizens in each of our students:

mental and physical self discipline
physical conditioning
good listening skills
music reading skills
proper playing technique
creative self-expression

self respect and self confidence
respect for adults and peers
cooperation and teamwork
responsibility
leadership
loyalty and school spirit

Many band students in grades 6-12 are involved in multiple activities on their campuses. By organizing time and schedules, band students can enjoy being a part of *that Wylie band* tradition and still participate in athletics, cheerleading, etc. while maintaining high academic averages.

GRADES

Students will earn six weeks grades in band based on the following Wylie ISD policy:

60% Major Grades

- Playing tests
- Written tests
- Attendance and participation in Public Performances
- Attendance and participation at weekly sectionals and possibly 1 or 2 after school rehearsals to be arranged if needed.

40% Minor Grades

- Daily preparation and performance (including punctuality, participation, following class procedures, and having required supplies in class)
- Practice records (a daily log of at-home practice, signed by a parent, and turned in every Tuesday)
- Homework assignments (other than practice)

Students will have the opportunity to retest on playing tests ONE time only. Students must retest within one week of the original test date. The original grade and the retest grade will be averaged to determine the student's final test score. If the test was also a chair test, the grade may be improved upon by retesting, but the chair does not change.

Students may also retest on written tests ONE time only. Students must retest within one week of the original test date. The original grade and the retest grade will be averaged to determine the student's final test score.

Retesting will *not* be done during class time (unless otherwise indicated by the director). Students should make arrangements with their director to be retested before or after school or at the end of a student's regular sectional time.

SECTIONALS - An effective sectional requires ALL students to attend. Balance of the group, fundamentals pertinent to that instrument, intonation of the group, and articulations and styles specific to that instrument can only be achieved when the entire section is present. In the case of a school excused absence, i.e. absent all day, field trip, or school sport competition, the student's grade will not be penalized. The grade book will show an X when the student is not penalized. In all other instances when having missed a sectional, the grade will be a zero. A grade of zero may be brought up to a 60 by attending evening school as per McMillan policy. While this will help the student's average, the primary goal of improving the section will not be achieved. A sectional missed during the last week of a six weeks grading period will have to be made up before grades are due in the office.

PERFORMANCES

McMillan band students will have several concerts and contests throughout the school year. The dates of these rehearsals and concerts will be set well in advance, and parents will be notified in writing (see band calendar). Because performances are a part of the state-mandated curriculum for band, **these performances and any additional rehearsals will be required of each student, and a grade of "0" will be given for unexcused absences.**

An excused absence from a performance or concert rehearsal will require the same criteria as an excused absence from school – personal illness, religious holiday, or a major family medical emergency verified by a parent phone call or note in writing. It is the responsibility of each band member to arrange his/her schedule in order to attend these events. **A parent should contact the student's band director IMMEDIATELY if a major scheduling conflict arises.**

ELIGIBILITY

A student must maintain an average of 70 or higher in all classes in order to travel and perform with the band for a competition. **All students are eligible for concerts** scheduled on campus or at the high school auditorium.

PERFORMANCE DRESS CODE

The following uniform is required of all band students for public performances:

- McMillan Band polo shirt (ordered through the band directors at the beginning of school)
- Black pants (slacks, no jeans, no large silver buttons or zippers that detract from the overall "black from the waist down appearance")
- Black socks- must reach the calf; no ankle socks
- Black **closed-toe** shoes (NO SANDALS or TENNIS SHOES or HIGH HEELS)
- The first concert where the black pants, etc. are required is the Winter Concert in December.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Start-Up Supplies

Binder – A black binder will be issued to all band students. The student is expected to use this binder every day in class. A well-organized binder is a key component to daily success. If the

binder becomes broken or no longer looks presentable for a performance, students will be required to purchase a new one. Binders are \$2.00.

Binder supplies – Each band student is required to have the following supplies in the binder every day in class. It is the student's responsibility to obtain these supplies, replace them as necessary, and have them at their chair every day in class.

Foundations for Superior Performance, Band Book (all bands except Beginning Band)

Pencil – sharpened or mechanical (never, **ever** use pen when marking on music)

Highlighter

At least 3 reeds if you are a woodwind; oil and grease if you are a brass; mallet bag for percussionists.

Use/Upkeep of School-Owned Instruments

The following instruments are owned by the school: oboe, bassoon, French horn, euphonium, and tuba. Students will be responsible for maintaining the instrument in good working order and notifying a director immediately when it is not working properly. Any repair for damages beyond normal wear to the instrument or the case will be charged to the student responsible. Students should never take a school-owned instrument to a repair shop without first consulting a director. A \$45.00 yearly fee will be collected to help offset the chemical cleaning done every 1-2 years on each instrument.

Individually-Owned Instruments

Students who play flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, and percussion must furnish their own instruments (percussionists have a specific list). These instruments are not provided or maintained by Wylie ISD. The success of a student can be adversely affected by an instrument of poor quality, or one that needs repair. We do have a list of preferred brands for each instrument. Please talk to a band director if you have questions about instrument rentals, purchases, and/or repair.

As a student becomes a more advanced musician, a more professional model instrument may be desirable. In many cases, professional quality instruments are purchased during seventh grade and eighth grade. Band directors and private lesson teachers can assist you in making the decision about which instrument is best suited for your child.

A brand new instrument will cost more than \$500. If you find one for less than that, then you are purchasing an instrument made of inferior materials and it will produce an inferior sound. Shiny keys and a low price do not make for a good instrument.

Insurance for Instruments

School owned instruments are insured by the school district when in use on campus or at a school activity. Privately owned or rented instruments are NOT covered by school district insurance.

It is recommended that families either purchase instrument insurance or attach the instrument's serial number to their homeowners or renters policy. This will protect any liability that a student and family may have in case of loss or damage to an instrument.

Repair of Instruments

When a student feels his instrument is not working properly, the instrument should be brought to a band director FIRST. Most of the time, directors are able to diagnose and make minor repairs and adjustments, saving the parent a trip to the music store and preventing the student from losing valuable playing time in class. If the director cannot fix the instrument, the student will be given instructions about how and where to have it repaired by a certified repairman. **Do not take the instrument to the repair shop without first consulting a band director.** In many cases, a music store repairman will be on our campus once a week and can fix or take the instrument to the shop for you.

Fundraising

The McMillan Band will have one fundraiser during the first semester. Students and parents are not required to participate; however, we strongly encourage every family to assist with this project. Monies raised through this project will be used to help fund activities for band students, help pay for transportation to certain events, help purchase supplies for the whole group, and may sometimes help defray costs of tickets to Six Flags or other places. All students benefit from the results of fundraising and that's why we would like all students to participate in fundraising.

LOCKERS AND LOCKS

Lockers in the band hall for instruments and supplies will be assigned to all band students the first week of the school year. They are not provided for overnight instrument storage on a daily basis, but for a secure place for a student's instrument during the school day. A combination lock is assigned to each locker for student use. Loss of this lock will be the financial responsibility of the student. Students should understand that the only way to keep personal items secured is to keep their locker locked at all times. Students SHOULD NOT store instruments in their regular school lockers, nor should they carry their instrument around all day in a backpack. The band locker is NOT to be used for storage of backpacks, books, jackets, etc. at any time.

PRACTICE

You should practice only on the days you eat.

Practice is sometimes fun, sometimes hard work, and ALWAYS NECESSARY. It is a fundamental part of learning anything new, as well as maintaining what one can already do. Much like athletics, practice in band develops and conditions muscles. The best way to make practice more enjoyable and productive is to get in a regular habit of practice.

Each day in band class an assignment is given for home practice. The most effective home practice is based on a daily half-hour of quality work. Setting short-term, reachable goals can create some instant success. Make certain you listen for improvement – don't just "put in time." Make certain you practice difficult passages, not just the fun ones.

Practice Environment

- **We suggest that you and your child mutually agree on a practice time and a special area designated for their uninterrupted practice.** You may even ask them to play for you, which provides an opportunity for encouragement.
- A QUIET, well lit room is necessary. Avoid distractions such as radio, TV, etc.
- Students should sit on a firm chair with no arms and ALWAYS use a music stand. Percussionists should always stand when they play.
- Most practice should be done with an audible metronome.
- Use a tuner daily to check certain pitches after a good warm-up routine has been played.

Practice Habits

Many times students experience difficulties because they do not know how to practice. Some suggestions for successful practice have been included below.

- Practice daily. Persistence = results!
- Warm up properly at the beginning of each practice session.
- Concentrate on producing your best tone quality – TONE IS ALWAYS TOP PRIORITY.
- Always practice with correct hand position and posture.
- IMPROVE YOUR BASIC MUSICAL SKILLS – long tones, lip slurs, scales, arpeggios, technical exercises, and rhythm counting should be practiced every night. **These exercises should make up most of your practice time since these skills transfer to ANYTHING and EVERYTHING you play.**
- Practice the things that are difficult, not just the things you can already play well.
- Never sacrifice accuracy for speed. If you are having trouble with something, slow it down! When you can play it well slowly, increase the speed a little at a time.
- Practice SMALL sections (1-4 measures at a time). Seek to improve them, and then add the small pieces together. Small goals add up very quickly to HUGE SUCCESS!

Practice Records

Students are encouraged to **practice at least 5 days per week**. Directors will set minimum weekly practice goals for each six weeks.

Students will log daily practice time on practice records. **Practice records are due every Tuesday WITH A PARENT SIGNATURE.** Per WISD policy, practice records will be accepted ONE day late for a maximum of 70. Practice records without a parent signature, turned in one day late, will receive a maximum grade of 50.

Each six weeks, a new practice record is given to the student. Parent signatures on any other piece of paper will not be accepted. If a student loses a practice record, then ONE replacement per six weeks will be given to them without penalty. When the third practice record is given to a student, a 10 point penalty will be placed on the grade. Students must learn to be responsible for their work.

Practice records will often have information about upcoming events and practice suggestions on them, as well as the practice requirements and grading scale for that six weeks. A sample practice record is included at the back of this handbook.

As a reward for musical excellence, some students will be allowed to skip practice records. This reward will be given to students who have shown a high level of proficiency on playing tests and contests. The student and parent will be informed by the band director when and if this reward is given.

PRIVATE LESSONS

We are fortunate to be able to offer our students at McMillan Junior High the opportunity to take private lessons from highly qualified professional musicians who are experts on their instruments. The fee for private lessons is set by the school district at \$16.00 per one weekly 25 minute lesson (Fees may vary for lessons taken off campus). Band directors maintain a list of teachers who have been approved to teach in the district.

Even though private study is not a requirement for participation in the band program, many students take advantage of this excellent opportunity. Private lesson teachers can teach precisely to the individual student's needs, as opposed to the classroom setting where the band director must teach to the level of the majority of the class. Additionally, band directors work very closely with the private lesson staff in evaluating and monitoring each student's progress. Participation in private lessons by as many students as possible is strongly encouraged.

Lessons are scheduled by our private teachers at school when possible, and during class if the schedule permits. Lessons may also be scheduled before or after school. **Lessons are scheduled by the private lesson teachers on a first come, first served basis.** Students who wish to take private lessons should turn in a lesson request form and/or talk to a band director.

DAILY PROCEDURES

Starting Class. Students who enter the band hall after the tardy bell will be counted tardy. Students are expected to be in their seats with instrument and all needed materials one minute after the tardy bell rings. This is extremely important to prevent loss of class time – students taking too long to prepare for class keep the entire class from achieving its goals. Students who are late to their seat will be asked to write their infraction in The Book. Points are deducted for each infraction incurred each week and will be used in determining the student's Daily Participation Grade.

During Class. Listen carefully, and participate in all class activities. Treat **others** with **respect**, treat **teachers** with **respect**, and treat **yourself** with **respect**. When you disrupt class, you are not only cheating YOURSELF, you are cheating your classmates. Inappropriate attitudes, comments, and behaviors from students will not be tolerated. If a student forgets his/her instrument or the instrument is being repaired, he/she will be expected to participate in class as specified by the band director. Participation points will be lost if the student does not have an instrument for class, or if the student does not have all the required materials.

Ending Class. Students will be dismissed by the teacher (NOT THE BELL) every day. All instruments and materials need to be put up properly and CAREFULLY, and locked in the student's band locker. Teachers will allow time for this at the end of class.

After School. When school is out, students may pick up instruments and binders. Please try to do this quickly because section rehearsals begin immediately after school. All students need to clear the band hall by 3:20 each day, except for those involved in private lessons, detentions, or section rehearsals.

Students waiting for rides should wait in the front of the school.

THE BOOK

The Book is used to record the discipline and behavior infractions of the student. The weekly participation grade is determined by the number of infractions the student has listed in the book.

Examples of infractions are, but not limited to:

No instrument -20 points

No pencil, book, binder -10 points

Not having 3 reeds (WW only) -20 points

Not in seat on time -10 points

Inappropriate/rude behavior or comments -10 points

Chewing gum, candy, food -20 points

Excessive talking -10 points

BAND HALL RULES

1. Displays of temper, profanity, flagrant violation of rules, etc. will not be tolerated. Any behavior which is not conducive to good citizenship and respect for others may result in the student's dismissal from the band program.
2. For security reasons, only band students are allowed in the band hall at any time of the day. Please cooperate by having non-band friends meet you outside.
3. **Food, drink, candy, and/or gum are not allowed in the band hall.**
4. Practice rooms are to be used for practice or private lessons only. Students are welcome to use the practice rooms, but need to ask permission from a band director first. **ONLY YOU, YOUR INSTRUMENT, AND YOUR BAND BINDER ARE ALLOWED IN A PRACTICE ROOM. Do NOT take any other backpacks, purses, jackets, or people in a practice room with you. Your privilege to use a practice room will be revoked if these rules are not followed.**
5. Students are not allowed in the band office without permission. **PLEASE KNOCK BEFORE ENTERING.**
6. Do not touch or use any school owned equipment such as metronomes, percussion instruments, tuner, copy machine, computer, telephone, etc. without permission from a director.
7. Defacing or damaging any part of the band hall or equipment (including music stands) will not be tolerated.
8. Students are not to touch, handle, or use any instruments or belongings other than their own.
9. All instruments are to remain in cases with latches closed and stored in assigned locker when not in use.
10. Students are solely responsible for the care, maintenance, and safety of their assigned equipment and personal items. Keep them secure.
11. All paper, trash, and old reeds should be discarded in trash cans **ONLY**.
12. Please be considerate of directors' requests for assistance with small tasks around the band hall.

13. The telephone in the band hall is for business use. Only under special circumstances will students be allowed to use the band hall phone. Rides after school should be prearranged.
14. THE BACK DOOR is to be used in the mornings only for those students who have a morning sectional. If you do not have a sectional that morning, then you will need to enter through the front doors of the school when those doors open at 7:40 AM. After school, the back door is not to be used and parents will need to pick up their child in the front of the school. At no time should students be hanging around the back door to the band hall. Only those band students involved in afternoon athletics or afternoon sectionals will be allowed to use the back door.

WYLIE BAND BOOSTERS

We are very fortunate to have an active booster organization that works to support all WISD Band programs in grades 6-12. The Booster Club meets on the first Monday of each month in the High School Band Hall. Our boosters are involved in many activities including: Football concession stands, All-Region Audition hosts, Private Lesson program, Band Camp Scholarships, etc. There are a few times during the year that the high school boosters ask for our assistance. Please make an effort to help out during these events. See band calendar for a schedule of meetings.

COMMUNICATION WITH DIRECTORS

Parents are encouraged to communicate with directors at any time, and especially when scheduling conflicts arise. If you have concerns or comments please feel free to contact us, either by phone or email. We will make every effort to get back to you within 24 hours.

We appreciate the opportunity to teach your child, and look forward to sharing these two years of band with you.

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