# Nichols MS
# Band Handbook
# 2026-2027




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Welcome to the Nichols Middle School Band Program! We are very excited that you have chosen to be a part of our band family. There are many benefits to having a music education and we will do everything that we can to make sure that you have a great experience. Do not ever hesitate to contact a band director if you have any questions or concerns. Email is usually the quickest way to get a response.

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Performances

Concerts are REQUIRED performances outside of normal school hours for our band students based on Chapter 117 of the Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills for Fine Arts adopted by the State of Texas in 2013. We require every band student to be in attendance at our performances unless extenuating circumstances arise. Extenuating circumstances are defined by the school as either a death in the immediate family or the student has become ill (documentation required). Our concerts are our major assessments and are treated as test grades. Performing in band is equivalent to a written test in another class. Concerts and UIL evaluation are not considered extracurricular. **Students are REQUIRED to stay for the entire concert: TEKS §117.208-210 c 5.**

Eligibility for the Extracurricular Component

A few of our events this year will be considered extracurricular. These events are still required, however it is state law for students to be passing ALL CLASSES in order to participate in these events. Students who are not eligible will receive an alternate assignment to meet the requirement. Extracurricular activities include Band Night (Grades 7-8) our Spring Festival (Grades 6-8) and All Region auditions. Eligibility is evaluated by grading period and determined by state law. Students who fail ANY class in a 9 weeks grading period will become ineligible following that grading period. Please keep up with your grades in Skyward and if there is an issue, please let us know so that we can try to help.

Grading Policy

Grades in band are given in the following areas:

- Daily Rehearsal – This includes having all supplies needed for class on a daily basis and proper rehearsal etiquette and participation in class activities.
- Assessment – This will include any assessments given in class, any homework assignments and playing tests. Tests and assessments can be given at any time over skills taught and can include online recording assignments.
- Performances – We are a performing organization. Concerts and other performances are required. Clinics, sectionals, and masterclasses will count as performances for grading purposes. **Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills §117.208-210 c 3 A-E requires that music students be taught to perform both alone and in groups.** Part of the performance grade is listening to the other bands perform. **Texas Essential Knowledge &Skills §117.208-210 c 5 requires that students are taught to be active and engaged listeners and evaluators.**

Year Long Course

Band is considered a year long course. Students are expected to complete the entire school year. Band is a class in which students rely on each other. One student deciding to drop mid year can affect multiple classes since it often requires directors to move other kids around as well to keep bands balanced. A commitment to the year is very important to our program and we ask students to honor this commitment.

Sectionals

One weekly sectional will be required for the members of the Honor Band and Symphonic Band. In order to perform at our very highest level, each section needs to have one rehearsal where they can get instrument-specific instruction outside of their band class. These may occur before or after school. Every attempt will be made to accommodate the scheduling needs of students to find the best time for that section to meet and we will do our very best to work with any conflicts. A student who cannot attend sectionals or has two or more unexcused absences may be placed into a lower band or not allowed to participate in competitions or extracurricular events (including spring trip). Excused absences from sectionals may be made up with a director.

Concert Dress Code

**Formal** – Only 2nd and 3rd year band students have a formal uniform. This will consist of the band polo shirt with solid black dress pants, solid black closed-toe shoes (with no other colors on them) and long solid black socks or black hose/tights. Please do not wear shiny belts, large necklaces/earrings or large hair decorations. The goal is to look uniform. This is our concert and contest uniform.

**Informal** – All students will have an informal uniform. This will consist of the band t-shirt, full length blue jeans and closed tennis shoes. T-shirt must be tucked in for performances and pictures. This will be for our more casual events and for beginners.

Band Fees

There are items that you will need for a successful band experience. Many of the items are listed on the financial sheet. Please keep in mind that many of these items will be used all the way through high school and will not have to be purchased again unless they break, get lost, or are outgrown. All fees are non-refundable.

***Please contact a band director if you have any financial concerns. We want everyone to be able to be in band regardless of financial situation.***

Spring Festival

All students who meet the following criteria will be eligible to go on the spring trip. There is not a refund of any fees if a student becomes ineligible to participate for any reason. There will be a fee to participate in the spring festival.

- Academically eligible (No Pass No Play applies)
- Adequate demonstration of prepared material for performing groups
- Consistent sectional attendance for Honor and Symphonic band students
- All fees paid by deadline (contact band director with concerns)
- No more than 2 ISS assignments in the spring semester. No student assigned to ISS at the time of the trip will attend.

JISD Procedures for Students Participating in Multiple Activities

We love for our students to participate in as many organizations as they wish to be a part of. We will always work with a student who is involved in multiple activities to minimize conflicts and to work through them. Joshua ISD has established an order that determines when certain events take precedence over other events and this will be followed. We will work with coaches and sponsors to make sure that students are allowed to attend their mandatory rehearsals/sectionals. Students are not allowed to miss a JISD event for a non-JISD event without being in violation of the Extracurricular Handbook and Procedures (found on the JISD website).

Dental Procedures

Please do not schedule dental procedures (including braces) two weeks before major events when avoidable. Students work very hard to be prepared for auditions, competitions and concerts and this can often cause them to be unable to perform their best which can be highly disappointing to them. Braces often need a couple of weeks to get used to (sometimes longer) and it prohibits the child from being as successful as they want to be. We do understand that sometimes there is no choice, but when there is, please consider the band calendar when making appointments.

Lockers

Every student will be assigned a locker to keep their band instrument and supplies. Some students will be assigned to share. You are more than welcome to put your own lock on the locker to keep your items safe, however if you have a shared locker, you will need a combination lock. It is REQUIRED that you give your extra key or combination to the band staff. If, for any reason, the student cannot get into the locker and we are unable to help, we will cut the lock off so that the student can participate in class. The band department will not replace or reimburse for any broken locks.

Daily Procedures*

- In the morning, the band hall will be open for instrument drop off and practice starting at 7:30 am.
- When the tardy bell rings, you will have two minutes to finish getting ready and to be in your assigned seat.
- Do not run in the band hall or down the fine arts hallway. We don't want anything or anyone damaged!
- No one is allowed to touch or play another person's instrument. We do not want to share germs or risk the chance of an instrument being damaged. This applies to percussion equipment too! Only percussionists can play on the percussion equipment. A good rule is "if it is not yours, then don't touch it."

- No food, drink or gum in the band hall. These can cause damage to our very expensive equipment and beautiful facility.
- Non-band students are NOT allowed in the band hall, even after school. This is YOUR space only and we want you to feel safe and at home in here.

Money Procedures

When you need to turn in band fees or any other money (repairs, etc.) you will get an envelope from the cubbies by the band office. Fill out the front of the envelope, place your money inside, seal it, and insert into the money drop box. It is best if fees are paid online using the Joshua ISD Revtrak system. You can find the link to Revtrak on the main Joshua ISD web page.

Band Schedule

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|---|---|
| 1st Period | Beginner |
| 2nd Period | Concert Band / Beginner Bassoon, Oboe |
| 3rd Period | Conference |
| 5th Period | Honor Band |
| 6th Period | Symphonic Band |
| 7th Period | Beginner |
| 8th Period | Beginner |
| 9th Period | Beginner |

Private Lesson Program

The private lesson program plays a very important role in the music education of the Nichols Middle School Band and its individual students. We urge you to take advantage of the opportunity afforded our students by private study. The rates for these lessons are comparable or below that one would pay in a music studio or on a college campus. These lessons are offered during the school year and usually during the summer.

Private lessons are directly responsible for the successes that the NMS Bands have enjoyed in recent years. Students involved in this program enjoy receiving more individual attention than the band director can give in a typical band class. The time that the student spends once a week with the instructor in a one on one situation will help him/her to excel much more quickly.

These students receive instruction on fundamentals and technique in addition to help on solos, ensembles, chair tests, try-out materials, scale tests, recording grades, all region band preparation and more!

Lessons are typically given once a week.

Rehearsal Etiquette:

The quality of work that a performing ensemble achieves in its rehearsal is the single most important factor in the overall success of the group. Efficient rehearsals produce SUPERIOR bands. There are certain factors that will contribute to good rehearsals on a daily basis.

**ALWAYS BE IN THE RIGHT PLACE, AT THE RIGHT TIME, WITH THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT, AND THE RIGHT ATTITUDE**

1) **A POSITIVE ATTITUDE** will go a long way in helping the band reach its potential. Always enter the band hall with a purpose of accomplishing a musical goal. Leave other problems outside of the band hall and focus on the rehearsal at hand.
2) **THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT** will make the rehearsal go smoother. HAVE A PENCIL on your music stand at all times. Marking music will help you remember important information about the piece being prepared. Be well prepared by having all equipment in the proper working condition. If you have a mechanical problem with your instrument, please seek help from the assisting director in your band.
3) **THE RIGHT TIME**. To be early is to be on time and to be on time is to be late. Always give yourself enough time to get set up. When in a rush, your focus and concentration are the first things that suffer. Students should be in their seats ready to play 1 minute after the tardy bell rings. All noise and movement should come to a halt at that time.
4) **GOOD POSTURE and HAND POSITION**: Every band member should know the importance of good habits in posture and hand position. Please be responsible for maintaining a high level of professionalism in your approach to playing your instrument.
5) **SELF DISCIPLINE**: Rehearsals run smoother when the classroom atmosphere is at a superior focus level. Students can make a big difference in the direction of a rehearsal by following these etiquette guidelines:
a. No talking during rehearsal
b. Eyes on the conductor throughout the rehearsal
c. Raise your hand if you have a question
d. Be patient with others and listen to progress taking place
e. Always answer a question with a “yes or no sir,” “yes or no ma’am.”
f. Concentrate: Be ready to move quickly and quietly between tasks.
6) **RESPECT:** When a large group of people work closely together on a daily basis, it is important to show respect for each other and the director in and out of rehearsal. Please be sensitive to the feelings of others in the group. Be polite and treat others as you would want to be treated.

We want the Nichols Band to be **THE** premier middle school band in our district and our region, therefore our expectations are high for our students every day. Students should come prepared with everything they need to be successful every single day. Required daily supplies are:

- Working Pencil with eraser (no pens)
- Band binder with all music and band book
- Instrument (stick bag with required sticks for percussion)
- Proper instrument accessories (reed, mouthpiece, valve oil, cork grease, etc.)
- Good work ethic & GREAT attitude!!