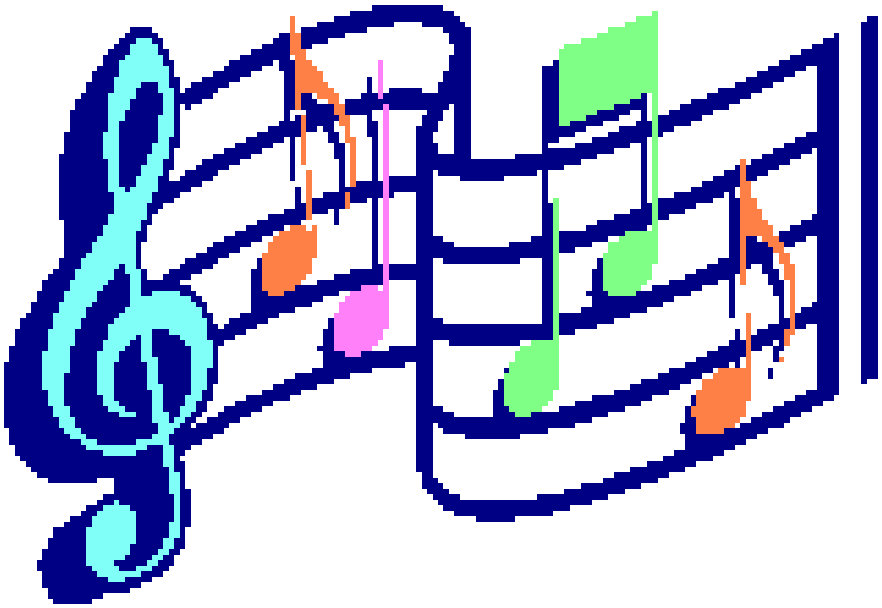
Smithson Valley Middle School



Beginning Band

Handbook

2026-2027

Dear Mustang Band students and parents,

Welcome to the beginning of a new school year!

We are so excited to be back at school, ready to make music with you again. As we return to learning together, it is important that we get on the same page regarding our common goals, expectations, and procedures. To this end, we have put together this handbook as a resource to help you understand what it means to be a part of the Smithson Valley Middle School Band program and provide you with a reference to answer common questions you might have later in the school year.

The information provided on the following pages is straightforward and, we hope, easy to understand. Abiding by the policies as listed will help us all work towards our common goals and fulfill an obligation to your school, your fellow band members, your family, and yourself. Remember that only when every member of the band puts forth 100% effort can a band achieve its goals.

You are now a part of the **Mustang Band Family!!!** Our success is in YOUR hands...

As you read, please take special notice of the sections dealing with ATTENDANCE at CONCERTS, DAILY PROCEDURES, SUPPLIES / EQUIPMENT, and DISCIPLINE.

We're also excited to continue the tradition of the **House Sorting Project**! Every new student will be sorted into one of four unique HOUSES (**Impact**, **Serenade**, **Spark**, **Bravura**). Students already in a house from last year will remain in their house, helping to foster community, leadership, and peer mentorship across our program while building a legacy of musical excellence!

To learn more about the House Sorting Project AND stay updated with the latest band news, bookmark our website here: **http://bit.ly/svmsband**

You can also sign up for our REMIND messaging groups *(we will not spam you with text messages…)*. The links are on our website. *SIGN UP TODAY and STAY IN THE KNOW!*

All students and parents are asked to **read this entire handbook**, discuss it, and keep it for reference. Once you have read it, **please complete and sign the electronic handbook agreement** as well as the other required forms **listed at the end of the handbook**. We appreciate your continued support and look forward to a great year!

Sincerely,

James Hargreaves
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Aryn Standeford
SVMS Principal

THE SMITHSON VALLEY BAND PROGRAM

This Smithson Valley Mustang Band Handbook provides an overview of the procedures and policies we follow. Our students belong to a program that has consistently earned recognition at solo and ensemble contests, UIL contests, and various concert band festivals, as well as region, area, and state competitions at both the middle and high school levels.

While these accomplishments are impressive, they only tell part of our story. The true essence of the Smithson Valley Band tradition lies in our ATTITUDE**: a commitment to making this year's band better than the last, grounded in cooperation, dedication, enthusiasm, and hard work.** How we embody this attitude throughout the year will define our success as a musical organization and as proud representatives of SVMS.

OUR FIVE COMMON GOALS

- To **master** and **continually improve** musical *knowledge*, *skills*, and instrument *techniques*.
- To foster a **safe** and **respectful atmosphere** where every member belongs and feels welcomed.
- To **prepare** and **present** musical **performances** to the highest level of our collective ability.
- To develop **self-discipline** and **perseverance**, working collaboratively to creatively solve problems.
- To become **creative** and **independent** musicians whose experience in band serves as a basis for lifelong enjoyment of the arts.

FOUR STUDENT EXPECTATIONS: (Show Up - With your Stuff - Ready to Work - Willing to Learn)

- ★ **PARTICIPATION** *(SHOW UP)* – Each student is expected to ***be present*** for all rehearsals, concerts, and contest performances. Any absence will result in a lowering of the grade. Every member of a performing ensemble is vital, and ***we all depend on one another***.
- ★ **RESPONSIBILITY** *(WITH YOUR STUFF)* – Each student is expected to fulfill their assigned duties, bring all their assigned materials to class every day, and ***take proper care*** of the rehearsal rooms, storage areas, instruments, equipment, uniforms, supplies, and sheet music.
- ★ **MUSICIANSHIP** *(READY TO WORK)* – Each student is expected to ***be adequately prepared*** for all rehearsals and performances through individual effort and practice at home or at school.
- ★ **ATTITUDE** *(WILLING TO LEARN)* – Each student is expected to be ***courteous and willing to work*** in alignment with the ensemble's standards and goals. Members are expected to ***accept feedback*** and suggestions positively.

GRADING POLICY

Your band grade will be earned in a similar way to other class grades. It will be based on the following:

I. 40% - Major Grade (Performances/Playing Tests)

1. Playing assignments (LIVE in class and/or RECORDED at home)
2. Objectives / pass-offs / Written Tests
   - ***a.)*** *Objectives performed unsatisfactorily may be replayed before or after school.*
   - ***b.)*** *A specific list of objectives will be given to the students during school.*
3. **Performances** (proper concert attire and punctuality required)

In Beginning Band, we only have two performances - one in December; one in May.

a. *****Attendance is Required for all performances!*****

Of course, medical emergencies and family crises do come up and can be excused with a note from the parent. **If you will miss a concert for some sort of emergency, please communicate with us ASAP.**

Please understand, however, that missing a concert for any extracurricular activity that is not school-sponsored *(i.e. club sports, community meetings, family shopping trips, etc.)* will NOT be excused and the student will receive a failing grade for that performance.

Every member of the band is a crucial part of creating a successful performance. If you miss a concert, the band will not be as good without you! *(... it is impossible to make up a missed live performance …)*

We will give you accurate start and finish times for all of our events but due to scheduling conflicts, we ask you to be flexible. **In short, if there is a conflict** with any performance date/time, **please contact us immediately** so we can resolve the situation.

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II. **60% - Daily Rehearsal Grade** *(divided as 25% Daily Work / 35% Quizzes & Equipment checks)***:**

Every member of the SVMS Mustang Band is expected to come to class prepared for rehearsal with all necessary materials and a positive work-oriented attitude.

Each student begins each week of the grading period with an average of 100 points. During the course of each week, deductions may be made for the following reasons:

1. Disruption of rehearsal (D): 10 points each occurrence
2. No Instrument (NI): 20 points each occurrence
3. Lack of essential equipment: 5 point each occurrence
   - **a.)** No pencil (NP)
   - **b.)** No music (NM)
   - **c.)** No book/binder (NB)
   - **d.)** No reed/mouthpiece (NR)
   - **e.)** Music not in order (MO)
   - **f.)** Music not marked (MM)

The FOUR STUDENT EXPECTATIONS **(Participation, Responsibility, Musicianship, and Attitude)** are directly related to each student's grade in band. In short, if a student shows up, tries hard, plays their part, and follows directions they should expect to get a consistently high grade in band class. (SHOW UP - WITH YOUR STUFF - READY TO WORK - WILLING TO LEARN)

DAILY REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS

We expect one thing and one thing only: that you work to your potential EVERY DAY! As a result, the following guidelines are essential to every successful rehearsal:

1. **Enter** the band hall quietly and immediately get out your instrument and be seated.
2. Absolutely **no gum**, food, or drinks will be allowed in the band hall. WATER ONLY!
3. You must have all of your equipment, music, and a **PENCIL** every day at your seat. Materials from other classes should be kept in your instrument locker or backpack.
4. Instrument Lockers should **remain closed** after retrieving and returning instruments.
5. All students must **stop talking** as soon as the director signals the beginning of rehearsal.
6. **Raise your hand** to be recognized before speaking or leaving your seat. Also, please don't ask questions before a count-off. Instead, wait until after a cut-off before raising your hand.
7. Demonstrate proper playing **posture** at all times.
8. You may **not talk** or play your instrument during rehearsal **unless given permission**.
9. **Do not play anyone else's instrument**. This includes school-owned instruments and percussion.
10. **No foul language**.
11. At the end of class each day, all instruments and supplies must be **returned to their** assigned **locker**.
12. In order for you to **practice at home** each week, your instrument must go home with you on a regular basis. You may come into the band hall to drop off your instrument before school and stop by in the afternoon to pick it up before going home for the day.
13. If your instrument is in the **repair shop**, please bring a note from home. **You are still expected to participate in rehearsal.** Bring your mouthpiece/reeds and music because we may have a spare instrument for you to borrow. (Remember, coming to class unprepared will result in a lowered grade.)
14. Use common sense and maintain a **POSITIVE ATTITUDE ALWAYS!**

DISCIPLINE

All discipline problems will be handled individually on a case-by-case basis.

1. First offense = warning
2. Second offense = student/teacher conference
3. Third offense = parent contact
4. *Fourth offense = administrative referral

***We may skip directly to step 4 for serious offenses.**

Students who receive repeated discipline referrals to ICE/ISS or are suspended from school for any reason may lose privileges and status within the band, including (but not limited to) restriction from participating in social functions and trips (including the end-of-year reward trip in May), lowering of a student's band placement, or removal from the band program altogether.

Band students have always been the BEST behaved students in the school! Let's keep that tradition alive - EVERY DAY!

EQUIPMENT

All band students are expected to have all the required equipment every day. This includes:

- **Instrument** - You are expected to furnish your own instrument *(with the exception of: oboe, bassoon, bass clarinet, tenor sax, bari sax, french horn, euphonium, tuba, and large percussion.)* **You are responsible for the care and maintenance of your instrument** and are expected to keep it in excellent working condition.

  (TAKE CARE OF YOUR INSTRUMENT AND IT WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU!)
- **3-Ring Binder** w/ pockets for **method books, 5-tab dividers, sheet protectors for music** *(at least 30)***,** and a **pencil**. Please label your binder with your name before bringing it to school. (This binder is only for band stuff, not to be used for any other class.)
- Instrument **Accessories** - as listed on the recommended items sheet you received over the summer. (These sheets are also available on our SVMS Band website.)

SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS

A maintenance fee of $80.00 a year will be charged to all students using a school instrument. Please pay these fees at the time of school registration.

Any student who needs to use a school-owned instrument will be asked to sign an **Equipment Usage Agreement** (PDF LINKED HERE) with their parent(s) at the time of issue. From that point until the instrument is returned, the student will be held responsible for the care of the instrument. The maintenance fee will cover normal wear and tear and cleaning of the instrument at the end of the year. **Repairs to the instrument necessitated by student neglect are the sole responsibility of the student and his/her parent(s).**

INSTRUMENT LOCKER

Each student will be assigned a band locker in which to keep his/her instrument. These lockers will be monitored, and you are not to put anything except your instrument **(in its case)** and music in the locker. Please take everything else with you. There will be severe punishment for those students who go into someone else's locker without permission.

Every child may furnish their own **combination lock** for their locker and provide the directors with the combination. **No key locks will be allowed**. For students sharing an instrument locker with another student, only one combination lock is necessary between them.

INSTRUMENT INSURANCE

It is strongly recommended that all personally owned instruments be insured against theft and/or damage. Please check if your homeowners' policy covers this. Contact a Band Director for more information.

Be sure that you have a **record of the make, model, and serial number of your student's instrument**. This information is necessary if something should happen to your instrument. Should you need help locating this information on the instrument, please ask a band director.

UNIFORMS

The dress code for the Beginning Band Concerts will be:

SVMS Band Shirt, Blue Jeans, and Close-Toed Shoes (no flip-flops)

FUNDRAISING

The Smithson Valley Middle School Band will be participating in our annual catalog and online fundraiser at the end of the first week of school. ***(This is a great opportunity to get a head start on your holiday shopping!)*** The profits raised go to support the band's many operating costs including transportation and trip costs, new instruments and equipment, new music, contest fees, guest clinicians, and social functions. **It is essential that all students participate, as this fundraiser is a necessary part of meeting our financial needs each year.** Donations are also welcome!

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The Smithson Valley Band Program could not do what it does without the support of our dedicated Band Parents! Students need their parents to help provide direction, encouragement, and the ***occasional reminder to practice their instrument at home***. Thanks for all that you do!

In addition, we are always in need of volunteers who are willing to donate their time. In the beginning band, we primarily need chaperones for our end-of-the-year Festival and Spring Trip (more info to be announced!).

If you would like to sign up to Chaperone, then LET US KNOW!!!

You will also need to fill out a Comal ISD background check to participate.

Go to https://www.comalisd.org/apps/pages/volunteer_information to complete this step.

PERMISSION FORMS - ONLINE

Anytime we go off campus for a trip or performance, we will need parent/guardian permission for each student to participate. Where available, we will be using online forms in place of printed forms. A link to the forms will be sent through email, so please ensure that we have an updated email address on file. You will always be notified well in advance of any trips that we plan.

If you prefer a printed form to sign, please notify the band directors at the beginning of the school year.

In addition, we need a completed **SVMS BAND - Online Registration Form** on file for your child before they can participate in any off-campus events. This Google Form can be found on our website or by clicking on the link above. Please contact a Band Director if you encounter any issues completing this form. ***(THIS FORM SHOULD BE COMPLETED before or during REGISTRATION)***

SOCIAL EVENTS

We do have a 6th grade band Spring trip planned in May along with other social functions to serve as rewards for working hard all year long. *Details about these events will be posted on our website and handed out in class later in the year.*

REMINDER: Students who have multiple or severe disciplinary infractions will not be eligible to attend social functions or special trips, including our beginning band Spring Trip. If you have a question about your student's status, please contact the band directors or SVMS administration.

Being successful as a band and as individual musicians does require effort, but it also brings tremendous joy!

"Whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well."
- Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield

A band that dedicates itself every day to working hard and playing hard, ***together***, will always find success. They will discover a pride in their accomplishments and the unique joy that makes being in band so rewarding!

After reading this handbook, please make sure to complete and SIGN the Handbook Agreement at the end of our SVMS BAND - Online Registration Form (⬅ CLICK HERE)

In addition, if your child is using a school-owned instrument, please **complete** and **sign** the following form and return it to the band directors as soon as possible:

- Instrument Usage Agreement.pdf **(⬅ School Instruments Only)**

You can print and turn in the signed physical form or, if you would prefer, sign them electronically and send them by email to Mr. Hargreaves at his school **GMAIL** account: ***J.Hargreaves@comalisd.org***. Please use the subject line: **"Band Form - *{your child's full name}"***