**La Grange ISD**

**Band Handbook**

**2016-2017**

**Handbook**

**Descriptions, Policies & Procedure**

**LA GRANGE ISD BAND**

**Policy Handbook**

1. **Forward**

The La Grange ISD Band Handbook has been devised for the benefit of the band members and parents involved in the La Grange Band Program. The handbook describes all organizational aspects of the La Grange ISD Band program. The handbook is also intended to provide knowledge of established traditions for the purpose of promoting “Esprit de Corps” within the band.

**Students and their parents/guardians are responsible for reading and understanding the contents of this handbook.** It should be kept at home as a reference for you and your parents/guardians should any questions or concerns arise during the year. All students are required to return the contract at the end of the handbook before being permitted to participate with the band.

1. **Philosophy**

Band is first and foremost an academic subject fulfilling the state requirement for “Fine Arts” in the school curriculum. With the implementation of House Bill 246 passed by the Texas legislature in 1984, the Texas Education Agency required Fine Arts to be offered in all Texas public schools, and high school students are required to have Fine Arts credits for graduation. Band meets and fulfills these requirements. Marching band also fulfills the state requirements for PE credits as well. Although the band is involved in many activities that occur outside of the regularly scheduled school day throughout the year, these are merely an extension of the TEKS essential elements being taught in the classroom. House Concurrent Resolution No. 105 states, “Whereas while education and technology may be the building materials of a prosperous society, the arts and humanities are the building materials of civilization and their importance in the lives of all individuals cannot be overestimated.”

There have been several generations of students that have been associated with the Tradition of Excellence associated with the La Grange Bands. The La Grange High School Band is well known throughout the state of Texas for its outstanding band program. Therefore, membership in the La Grange Band program should be considered a **privilege**, and not a right. It is an honor for a student to be a member of this band program and each band member is expected to uphold the honor of the La Grange Band through his/her conduct, loyalty and dedication.

1. **Bands**

All students starting band in the 6th grade are members of the **Beginning Band.**

There are 2 bands at La Grange Middle School

1. **Concert Band** - composed of intermediate level players; placement by audition.
2. **Symphonic Band -** composed of advanced level players; placement by audition.

There are three bands at La Grange High School

1. **Marching Band –** composed of all members of the La Grange High School Band.
2. **Concert Band** – composed of intermediate level players; placement by audition.
3. **Symphonic Band** – composed of advanced level players; placement by audition.

**Note**-All High School Band students are required to participate in Marching Band.

1. **Attendance**

**“To be early is to be on time, to be on time is to be late.”**

In order to maintain a high quality band program, it is sometimes necessary to have extra rehearsals outside of the regular school day. However, because of the large number of band students that are involved in other school activities, extra band rehearsals will be held to a minimum. All extra rehearsals will be announced in advance so that transportation and work schedule arrangements can be made. If at any time a student is unable to attend an extra rehearsal, the director must be notified at least one day in advance. The absence is unexcused unless advanced approval is given. Exceptions may be made for emergency situations. Students that have excessive absences from band due to disciplinary issues such as SAC/ISS or AEP (5 or more days) may forfeit a chair placement. They may also be moved to a lower band, forfeit participation in band activities and trips or may be removed from the band program. Absences from performances must be made up. Make up assignments will consist of either a 30 minute practice recording or a 2 page **hand written** biography of a composer. Students will receive a list of composers from the band director to use for this assignment.

Unexcused absences from rehearsals or performances may result in disciplinary action or may have a negative impact on a student’s grade. Continual unexcused absences from rehearsals may result in the student being removed from the performing group. Continued unexcused absences from rehearsals may result in the student being removed from the band program. An unexcused absence from a performance is considered the most severe violation of band attendance rules. Band members must be depended on to make every effort to be in attendance at all public performances.

All band students are required to attend all regularly scheduled rehearsals, and scheduled concerts (i.e. Christmas Concert, Pre-UIL Concert, Spring Concert etc.). All eligible students are required to attend all competitions and contests, and will perform at pep-rallies. All students are also highly encouraged to participate in Region Band auditions as well as the UIL Solo and Ensemble contest.

All students are expected to be inside the band hall when the tardy bell rings, and in their chairs with their instrument assembled, music and pencil on their stand, within 3 minutes of the tardy bell. Tardies will be handled in accordance to each campus policy. Every time a student is late to rehearsal, it disrupts class and takes away from the rehearsal process. In order to be the most efficient and successful, all students need to be ready when the director gives the first downbeat.

1. **General Band Hall Conduct**

The following rules are for band hall conduct:

1. Be on time. Be prepared
2. Keep hands, feet and other objects to yourself.
3. No gum, food, candy, drinks (except water) are allowed in the band hall.
4. Take proper care of school property including the band hall and your instrument storage space. Your instrument bin should be kept free of trash, clothes, etc. **Only band related items should be stored in your instrument bin**.
5. During rehearsal (from the time the director gives the downbeat until dismissal), only talk when instructed to do so or when called upon to speak. Excessive talking prevents others from learning and will not be tolerated.
6. Students who are not in band are not allowed in the band hall. Have them wait for you outside.

Basically all of our rules and procedures can be summarized into the following five points:

1. **Be at the right place**
2. **At the right time**
3. **With the right equipment**
4. **With the right attitude**
5. **Respect yourself, each other, our rehearsal, facility and equipment**

Only students who are in band are allowed in the band hall. The first time a student is found in violation of these guidelines, they will receive a verbal warning. The second time they will lose their band hall privileges for one week. If there is a third violation, the student will only be allowed in the band hall during scheduled rehearsals or events. We must be strict about this to protect our facilities and equipment. On that same note, students should only touch their own instruments. Practice time is not time to experiment with other instruments or to swap instruments with a friend.

1. **Disciplinary Action**

A student who is in violation of a band policy may be subject to any or all of the following actions:

1. Verbal warning
2. Physical training (High School Band only)
3. Forfeiting chair placement
4. Removal from the rehearsal setting or activity and/or alternate work
5. Parent Contact (i.e. letter, email, phone call, conference)
6. Referral to Vice Principal for discipline
7. In School Suspension (ISS)
8. Removal from the band program
9. **Grading**

As stated in section II, Philosophy, band is first and foremost an academic subject fulfilling the state requirement for Fine Arts. Band grades will be based on attendance at rehearsals and performances, as well as the students’ ability to demonstrate mastery of the essential elements required for band. Mastery will be demonstrated in the following ways:

1. Playing tests over music being taught and rehearsed during band
2. Playing tests over required scales and technical exercises
3. Playing tests to determine sight-reading skills
4. Written tests over rhythmic counting, note reading, key signature recognition, fingerings for an assigned instrument
5. Participation in extra rehearsals and performances. Attendance at all concerts is required. Listening to musical performances is a TEKS standard and student’s grades at concerts will be based on not only participation in the performance, but attendance at the concert in whole.
6. Participation in region band and solo/ensemble competition
7. Objective Sheets – Objective sheets are assignments that have multiple tasks included. The due dates on objective sheets can range from 1 week to 6 weeks. Objective sheets are weighted at 20% of the student’s grade. Objectives will range from playing assignments that must be played off for a director to obtaining a parental signature on the students’ objective sheet. Grade check forms will be included as well.

Students will be given the opportunity to make up written/playing tests and assignments given in class if they were absent from school the day of the test.

Students are also responsible for maintaining passing grades in all other classes. As per the guidelines found in the **TEA/UIL Side By Side**, any student who receives a grade lower than 70 at the 6 week grading period will become ineligible to participate in any events considered extra-curricular (i.e. pep-rallies, football games, marching festivals, UIL competitions, region band, solo/ensemble, spring trips, etc.) However, eligibility does not extend to events such as the Christmas Concert or Spring Concert. All students, regardless of academic eligibility will participate in those events. A student will regain their eligibility if passing all of their classes with a 70 or better at the end of either a progress report or report card grading period. Students that are ineligible to participate in band activities on a constant basis will be removed from the performing group. All students must be responsible in keeping their grades at a passing level. The success of the overall band program is dependent on this individual responsibility.

1. **Performance Requirements**
2. The student will be able to perform all music, warm-ups, scales, technical exercises, etc.
3. The student will be able to perform all solo and ensemble and region band music as required.
4. The student will attend all extra rehearsals including full rehearsals, sectional rehearsals, clinics and performances as required by the director.
5. The student will practice regularly. A good rule of thumb to follow is; **Students should practice on days that they eat a meal.**

Students are to practice music and technical exercises given to them in class. Practice may be done at home or at the band hall before or after school.

Local concerts are an extension of the classroom and all students are required to perform at the Christmas Concert and Spring Concert, regardless of eligibility, to fulfill the performance standard of the state music TEKS. In cases where eligibility affects a student’s ability to perform (i.e. football games, UIL competitions, solo and ensemble or region band) an alternate assignment will be given for a grade so that the student is still assessed on public performance skills. ALL MISSED PERFORMANCES WILL AFFECT A STUDENT’S GRADE AND MUST BE MADE UP BY ALTERNATE ASSIGNMENT. Depending on the circumstances of the missed performance, the alternate assignment may or may not count as 100% in place of the missed performance.

1. **Equipment and Music**

The equipment and music provided for us by the taxpayers of the school district and the generosity of the band boosters represents many tens of thousands of dollars. Beyond the expense involved in the instrumental music program, we each have a personal responsibility to maintain our equipment for longevity and personal pride.

Maintenance and care of school owned equipment becomes the responsibility of the student to whom it is checked out. Excessive abuse (i.e. dents, bent keys, broken drum heads, numerous broken sticks/mallets etc.) or damage due to neglect (i.e. frozen valves, slides, etc.) will be repaired at the student’s expense. Percussionists are responsible for the upkeep of all percussion instruments and the percussion storage area.

Students should avoid carrying their instruments to other classes. A director will be present before or after school to supervise instrument drop-off and pick-up of instruments. All instruments will be stored in the band hall in the proper locker or area designated for that instrument. **ALL INSTRUMENTS WILL BE KEPT IN THE CASE WITH THE CASE CLOSED AND LATCHED.** This helps protect the instrument.All students will be issued a combination lock for their instrument bin, and the director will be have the combination to the lock. All instruments bins are required to be locked when the instrument is not in use. During class, all cases need to be placed back inside the storage bin to keep the walkways clear. Students are encouraged to take their instruments home whenever possible not only to practice, but also to ensure better security for that instrument. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD AN INSTRUMENT BE TRANSPORTED TO ANY LOCATION WITHOUT THE CASE.** La Grange ISD is not responsible for the loss or damage to personal band instruments due to theft, vandalism, or accidents while at school or on a school activity.

The individual pieces of music and method books assigned to the student are the same as any textbook assigned to the student. If the student loses or damages a text, he or she is required to make monetary compensation to the school for the loss or damage. Therefore, any item checked out to the student immediately becomes the responsibility of that student.

As in the case with all classes, students are expected to come prepared for rehearsal every day. Students should have an instrument and mouthpiece, sticks, mallets, etc. on a daily basis. If a personal instrument is sent to the repair shop for cleaning or repair, the student is responsible for notifying the director when it was taken in, and when it is expected to be finished. In the meantime, a substitute instrument may be provided based on availability. If this option is not available, the student will be expected to act as though they are playing their instrument in class including sitting with correct posture and fingering all parts. In addition to their instrument, the students need to purchase a flip folder and lyre, appropriate valve and slide grease or rotary oil for brass instruments, and all appropriate reeds and cleaning clothes for woodwind instruments. Woodwind players need to maintain a minimum of three reeds at all times that are in playing condition. Reeds that are chipped or cracked in anyway are not acceptable.

All students are expected to purchase a copy of the method book entitled **Foundations for Superior Performance** for their respective instrument. **Beginning Band** students will also need **Essential Elements 2000** for their respective instruments. **Percussion Students** will also be required to purchase a separate percussion method as well. Percussion students will receive the list of required materials from the percussion director. All students are expected to keep their book and music neatly stored in a binder or music folder as assigned by the director in such a way as to be able to access those items needed for rehearsal quickly. Students should have their own music binder or folder in class daily and not rely on others to have a binder or folder for them as this causes problems when students are absent. All students are also required to have a **pencil** (not a pen) with them at all times in rehearsals. Highlighters are also encouraged for marking music. At no time should a student write on or mark on an original piece of music. Throughout the year, periodic checks for required materials will be conducted for a grade.

Instruments are to be kept in locked cases inside the storage bins. Your bin should be kept free from clutter and at no time should students store food or items for other classes in their bins. All bins must remain locked when instrument is not in use.

Failure to be prepared for class is considered a policy violation and will be handled under the guidelines stated in section VI, Disciplinary Action.

1. **Uniforms**

**Beginning Band –** The Beginning Band uniform will be the band t-shirt along with jeans. Information on sizing and pricing will be sent home at the beginning of the year.

**Middle School Band –** The Middle School Band uniform will consist of the band polo shirt and black slacks. Black shoes are preferred.

**High School Band -** The La Grange High School Band uniform will be worn at all times with pride and dignity. The uniform is an outward indication of the “Esprit de Corps” of the entire organization. The students will be responsible for purchasing the following items to be worn:

1. Athletic type tennis shoes. (running shoe or cross training shoe)
2. 1 pair black marching shoes (Super Drillmasters)
3. black socks
4. Show shirt to wear under uniform (2 shirts recommended)
5. Band Baseball Cap

The band uniform will be worn with pride. Shirts will be tucked in, jackets will be worn with all zippers zipped and all fasteners fastened. Uniform jackets will only be removed as designated by the director. Pant suspenders will be worn over the shoulder at all times. All pants will be altered as to fit correctly. The hem of the pant should just touch the top of the shoe without a break in the seam. Hats will always be worn in the proper fashion. Earrings, bracelets, necklaces or other jewelry are not allowed while in uniform. Religious pendants or medallions are allowed providing they are not visible. No make-up of any sort may be worn while in uniform. Long hair must be tied back, and will be tucked up inside the hat while the hat is being worn. Black socks and black marching shoes will always be worn while in uniform. No other color of sock or type of shoe will be allowed. At certain times, students will be allowed to remove their uniform jackets providing all students are wearing the proper shirt underneath their uniform. Students who do not have all of the required uniform parts will not be allowed to perform, and will be subject to disciplinary action. Students are required to keep up with all of their uniform items. Any lost or damaged items will be replaced at the student’s expense.

During high school marching rehearsals, all students need to wear proper footwear. Shoes must be either a running type or cross training type shoe. No other footwear will be allowed for marching rehearsals. Flip-flops, boots, heels etc. are not conducive to proper marching technique and they are a safety hazard as well. Students who do not have a pair of athletic type shoes available for rehearsal have the alternative of wearing their marching shoes. Students will not be allowed to march without proper footwear. It is also highly recommended to wear a hat while outdoors. Sunshades are also recommended. Please make sure to use sunscreen as well.

1. **Band Trips**

On all trips, each band member is responsible for making sure that their instrument, uniform and all necessary equipment is loaded. A loading crew may be assigned to load equipment, but it is the responsibility of the student to get their equipment to the loading crew. Upon returning from a trip, each student is responsible for putting their equipment in the proper place in the band hall or they may take it home. All uniforms will be hung properly and checked in to the uniform storage. All trash will be removed from the busses and band hall. All percussionists are responsible for packing, loading, unloading and putting away all percussion equipment on all trips. Students will not be dismissed until all busses have been cleared of trash, uniforms and instruments stored properly and all trash picked up from the band hall. The band will be dismissed together once all of this has been completed.

Students will keep arms, legs and all other body parts inside the bus at all times. Loud talking, yelling, screaming or horseplay will be allowed on the bus. You should act on the bus the same way you act in rehearsal. Personal media devices may be used, but with head phones only. All personal media devices will be left on the bus during a performance. No cell phones, mp3 players or other devices will be allowed in the performance. Any student who chooses to bring their personal device to a performance will have it confiscated and will receive disciplinary action. All devices are brought at your own risk. La Grange ISD will not be responsible for lost, stolen or broken items.

Public Displays of Affection (PDA’s) will not be tolerated. Failure to adhere to bus rules may result in the students being banned from future trips with the band.

The La Grange Bands may have the opportunity to take a trip in the spring or other times during the year to participate in festivals, competitions or other public performances. Each student will be responsible for earning his/her own way. Students will be given many opportunities to do those through either scholarship work or through fund-raising. There will be fundraising opportunities available to the students and although participation in these fundraisers is not mandatory, it is certainly encouraged and recommended. Keep in mind that all students must meet their financial obligations in full whether through work, fundraising or money paid out of pocket. Students who anticipate financial difficulty are strongly urged to participate in fund raisers to avoid financial burden.

Participation in the band trip should not be thought of as “optional”. The goal of these trips is to enrich the students’ lives thought educational opportunities. When we perform or participate at an event, we owe it to our community, our school and to ourselves to present the best possible performance. When we perform without some members present, we are not properly representing the “Tradition of Excellence” associated with our band program. This is not only a disservice to our program, but also to those who have worked and sacrificed to make our trip possible. Therefore, all band members are expected to make every possible effort to participate in the band trip. Students must be academically eligible to participate in the spring trip. **If a student pays for their trip, and then becomes academically ineligible, the money paid for the trip is non-refundable if the issue arises after final pay date of the trip.** Also, money will not be refunded in full if the issue arises within certain time frames before the trip occurs. To avoid any of these issues, students should make sure to maintain passing grades. **NOTE – Student MUST be academically eligible for UIL contest in order to participate in a Spring Trip.**

**Parent Pick-up after Band Activities**

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian of the band student to make arrangements to pick their student up in a timely manner after band activities are concluded. We will always do our best to dismiss activities on time or to return from trips at or before the posted time. All band members need to be picked up at the band hall after all activities have concluded. Students will be dismissed once all items have been stored and trash cleared from our facility. Students will not be allowed to drive themselves to or from activities. Students are only allowed to leave activities early due to extenuating circumstances. All early departures must be arranged prior to the event with the director. Students are not allowed to leave events with anyone other than their parent/guardian unless approved 24 hours in advance by Mr. Wagner.

All students need to be picked up from an event within one half hour (30 minutes) of the conclusion of that event. Please remember that the band directors are anxious to get back to their families as well, and that they may need to pick up their own children in a timely manner after these activities are over.

1. **Payments and Fees**

All payments and fees are to be paid in a timely manner. Students owing money for method books, fundraisers, reeds, shirts, shoes, lyres, flip-folders, sticks, mallets, instrument repair and/or maintenance need to make sure that they pay within the allotted time, or make arrangements with their director for alternate payment plan. Any fees not paid by the end of the school year will be submitted to the school administration for collection. High school band students will pay a $50 per year administrative fee. This fee will be waived if one parent or other adult representative works one concession stand shift during football season.

1. **Travel Conduct**

When the band appears in public, it is representing the school and the community. Band members are expected to always conduct themselves in a courteous and polite manner. Because of the size of our program, band members are expected to adhere to a higher code of conduct than what is expected from those outside of our organization. Band members are expected to represent themselves with class at all times. While traveling with the band no band member shall:

1. Use or be in possession of any tobacco product
2. Use or be in possession of any alcoholic beverages
3. Any drinks that are classified as an “energy” drink are prohibited.
4. Use or be in possession of any illegal drug or substance
5. Use or possession of any firearm or other weapons
6. Participate in any illegal activity including theft, vandalism etc.
7. Exhibit any improper behavior

Any band member that violates any of the preceding rules, or otherwise brings embarrassment to the band or the school is subject to disciplinary punishment, may forfeit future trips with the band, or removed from the band program. It is La Grange ISD policy that students travel to and from all events by bus. Students will not be allowed to leave events with anyone other than parents unless the director receives, in writing, permission from the students’ parent or guardian and must be approved by Mr. Wagner. Students are only allowed to leave events early if arrangements have been made at least one day in advance. All school policies pertaining to conduct and dress at school are in effect at all times on all band trips. Students may travel home from events with parents once the band has finished. Students must provide a written note from the parent and sign out with the director or chaperone that is in charge of their bus.

**XIV. Letter Jackets**

Students have the ability to earn letter jackets from the band program. Any student who has already received a letter jacket from another activity may not receive another jacket, however they may receive a letter. Letter Jackets are earned through an accumulation of points. Each activity that the student participates in will result in points being awarded to that student. Students should see the director regarding the point system. **Note – Students may only earn points for events as members of the La Grange High School Band.**

1. **Band Boosters**

Every parent or guardian of a student in band is already a member of the La Grange Band Boosters. The Boosters support our program throughout the year by assisting at band performances, chaperoning on trips, operating the concession stand, fundraising for band expenditures, and organizing band social events as well as other activities. The Band Booster meetings are held on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm at the High School Band Hall. Should that date or time change, your student will receive notification to pass along to you from the director. At Booster meetings, you can expect to receive valuable information regarding upcoming band events, fundraisers, and much, much more. We look forward to seeing all of our parents there!

1. **Summary**

The La Grange ISD Band is one of the largest, most visible organizations in the school. Therefore, members of the band have a responsibility to the school, the community, the band and to themselves to always represent the La Grange in a **First Class** manner. Becoming a winner starts first in the mind, second through actions and third through actual awards. The La Grange Band program has a reputation in the community for their Tradition of Excellence. It is the responsibility of every member of the band to uphold this tradition to the very best of their ability.

***STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK CONTRACT***

*I understand that I am responsible for reading and understanding the information in this handbook. Should questions or concerns arise during the year, I will look to this handbook for the answers first. I understand that participation in band is contingent upon completing and returning this contract and following the policies and rules that it sets forth.*

*Furthermore, I understand that membership in a performing organization requires understanding of all duties and responsibilities of every individual member as a team. As a member of the La Grange ISD Band Program, I agree to follow these rules and procedures at all times;*

***In the classroom:***

1. *I will be on time for every class with the proper materials.*
2. *I will have my playing assignments prepared for each day’s rehearsal.*
3. *I will participate in every class to the best of my ability.*
4. *I will keep my instrument and music materials in proper playing condition.*
5. *I will take care of all instruments and music materials that are provided for me to use in class.*
6. *I will carefully listen to and follow all instructions.*
7. *I will show respect for my teachers, administrators and fellow students and their belongings.*
8. *I will follow all rules and regulations set forth in the La Grange ISD Student Handbooks.*
9. *I will help keep our band hall and school clean at all times.*

***In performance:***

1. *I will be present, on time, correctly dressed, and properly prepared for every required performance*
2. *I will be present in school on the day of a performance*
3. *I will show respect toward anyone I encounter while representing the La Grange ISD Band, my school and my community*

***In all situations***

1. *I will maintain the highest grades and best behavior possible in all situations in order for me to participate successfully in all band activities and performances*
2. *I will attend school regularly and will make up all missed work in classes promptly so I do not miss any rehearsals or performances*

*I understand that all violations could result in grade adjustment, physical training (high school band only), loss of chair placement, and that repeated violations will result in disciplinary action as well as possible dismissal from the performing group.*

Student Name (printed)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (printed)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_