

**DOWELL MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**BAND HANDBOOK**  
2008-2009

Dear Band Parents,

As a member of the Dowell Middle School Band, your son or daughter is not part of one of the school's most important and respected "teams." As with all other teams, the success of the Dowell Band will depend on the loyalty, cooperation and dedication of each and every member.

This packet serves as a handbook for the DMS Band program. It should help you understand the policies, guidelines, and expectations for Dowell band members, and is designed to co-exist with the policies and procedures of Dowell Middle School and the McKinney Independent School District.

Please take a few minutes to read through this material with your son or daughter and return all forms with your signature.

Respectfully,

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DMS Band Staff

Dowell Middle School Administration

Logan Faris, Principal

Alan Arbabi, Assistant Principal

Vicki Thomas, Assistant Principal

## A. ORGANIZATION & COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Bands

1. Consists of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Graders
2. Rehearses every day
3. Attendance **required** at all scheduled **section rehearsals and co-curricular performances**
4. Performs at school functions, local concerts, and festivals
5. Participates in **self-improvement activities**  
(All-Region band auditions, solo/ensemble contest – expected of Wind Ensemble members and highly encouraged for Symphonic Band members)
6. Must turn in **practice reports** on a consistent basis
7. **Full year participation** is required (Except in isolated cases involving extreme student misbehavior or other circumstances involving removal from the program as determined by the band director(s) and/or the DMS Administration)

### Wind Ensemble

Members of the Wind Ensemble show advanced levels of achievement in all aspects of their playing ability. The function of this group is to provide the members with challenging literature in preparation for their high school experience while maintaining interest through exposure to and performance of a wide variety of musical literature.

(Note: Due to the advanced nature and high performance expectations of this group, Wind Ensemble members are expected to participate in Private Lessons, All-Region Auditions, and Solo/Ensemble activities and performance events.)

### Symphonic Band

Members of the Symphonic Band continue their musical development by building upon their prior knowledge. Care is taken to reinforce concepts of tone, rhythm, balance, phrasing, individual technique and other ensemble fundamentals learned in previous year(s) instruction. Further emphasis is placed on self-discipline and team attitude in working with others toward a common goal.

(Note: Private lessons and Solo/Ensemble activities are highly encouraged. Exceptionally motivated students may be permitted to participate in All-Region Auditions by approval of the Band Director, and should be involved in private lessons and extra sectional practices.)

## B. PRACTICE HABITS

Practice is a necessary element for success on any musical instrument. The best way to make practice times more enjoyable and productive is to get in a regular habit of practicing on a **daily basis**. Listen for improvement – don't just "put in your time." When your playing improves, then all the time spent will have been worthwhile. Be in charge of your progress.

Concentrate on making a GOOD SOUND. It makes no difference how fast or loud you can play if you cannot do so with a tone that is enjoyable to listen to. NEVER SACRIFICE ACCURACY FOR SPEED. Practice the techniques and sections of the piece you cannot play well. It makes no sense to practice the parts you can already play well.

**“THE MORE YOU PRACTICE – THE BETTER YOU GET –  
THE BETTER YOU GET – THE MORE YOU ENJOY IT!”**

## C. PRACTICE REPORTS

To reward home practice, weekly grades will be assigned for individual practice time. Practice time will be recorded on a **daily** basis, totaled, and verified with a parent/guardian signature. Student are expected to practice 30 minutes a day – FIVE TO SIX DAYS a week. The emphasis for grades will be the number of DAYS practiced, so students avoid the counterproductive process of “cramming” their time in just one or two practice sessions.

Practice Reports are due every **Wednesday** and will not be accepted after class on **Thursday**. A ten point grade reduction will be assigned for reports received on Thursday, except in cases of illness or other excused absences as determined by the band director(s). It is the student’s responsibility to communicate with their director to verify if their absence is considered excused or unexcused. For acceptable improvement, students are expected to take their instruments home EVERYDAY.

NOTE FOR EUPHONIUM & TUBA PLAYERS: Due to limited instruments and bus regulations, Euphonium and Tuba students will be expected to practice in the Practice Rooms before or after school at least twice a week for appropriate progress. Arrangements can also be made for students to check out instruments over the weekend with parent assisted transportation.

**A blank practice report is provided for you. Make 16 copies to use throughout the year. Copies may also be downloaded from charmsmusic.com.**

## D. PRIVATE LESSONS ~ SUPPLEMENTAL MUSIC STUDY

We are fortunate to be able to offer our students a fully professional faculty from whom private lessons are available. Each member of the faculty is approved by the McKinney ISD, and is an authority on his/her instrument. The private lesson program is offered as a non-required supplement to our program. We strongly recommend private lessons as a way of achieving increased musical growth. Most students take advantage of this opportunity because of the personalized assistance that they receive. The private lesson program is a minimum semester-long commitment.

Scholarship Program: Students requiring financial assistance to help pay for private lessons can apply for scholarship aid. Scholarships are awarded on a case by case basis. It is the student’s responsibility to pick up the necessary form(s) from their director. All information received is strictly confidential. Students may receive assistance for up to ½ the cost of each private lesson. In rare circumstances, full scholarships may be awarded as deemed necessary by the band director(s).

Note: Please be aware that this program is a privilege and not a “right.” Therefore, if the student does not maintain acceptable progress, it is within the rights of the directors and the BPO to cancel assistance at anytime. We appreciate your understanding in this matter.

## E. BAND GRADING POLICIES

The nine-week grade is an average of the following:

1. Chair tests, written tests, pop quizzes (playing and written)
2. Practice reports – See section C (must be turned in no later than Thursday)
3. Bandsmanship/Participation – daily effort, attitude, materials brought to class
4. Concert Performances (Winter Concert, Solo & Ensemble, Open House, Spring Concert, All-Region Band Auditions etc. See DMS Band Calendar)
5. Band Notebook kept organized with all music materials and pencil pouch for pencils, metronome and tuner. **\*You must have a separate notebook just for band.**

We promise to maintain realistic expectations. It is our hope that the students will commit to daily practice and outstanding citizenship/bandsmanship. Lack of practice and frequent absences will cause a band student to fall behind. Participation and contribution **IS** the band experience.

## F. SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS

If you are fortunate to have been entrusted with a school-owned instrument, do not forget the special responsibility that accompanies its use. Any damage to the instrument, its case, or other provided materials, due to student carelessness or abuse will be charged to the student(s) responsible. A non-refundable \$100.00 instrument use fee is charged by the McKinney ISD to maintain normal wear and use of the instrument for the school year. Those students whose behavior becomes problematic or who exhibit carelessness with the instrument/supplies, etc. will be denied further use of the instrument. Please help your child understand the importance of properly caring for these expensive school items. **Make checks payable to DMS Bands.**

### REPAIRS AND SUPPLIES

If an instrument should need repair, please consult with your director. If we are unable to deal with the problem, please take it to the dealer from which the instrument was purchased. School-owned instrument repairs should ALWAYS be handled through your director.

Supplies (reeds, valve oil, slide cream, sticks/mallets, cleaning cloth, etc.) are essential items for band class and can be obtained from a local music store. All single & double reed players are to have at least **THREE PLAYABLE REEDS** at all times. (Reed guards are excellent for preserving the longevity of your reeds.) Music, book, pencil, band binder/folder must also be brought daily.

## G. CARE OF THE BAND HALL, LOCKERS, PRACTICE ROOMS AND EQUIPMENT

It is the responsibility of each band member to help keep the band room, instrument locker, and practice room areas neat and orderly. The chairs and stands are to be kept in place. Instrument lockers are assigned in the Fall. \*Combination locks are not required and must be checked out before or after school from one of the band directors.

Instrument storage lockers will be assigned to every student. (Combination locks are available for a **\$5.00** user fee. All students are responsible for keeping track of their own combination number. Students will be charged a \$10.00 replacement fee should the lock become lost, damaged or stolen. **Personal locks are not permitted.**)

Instrument lockers are for the storage of band related materials only (instrument, book, etc.). It is HIGHLY encouraged that students store other class books/materials, especially backpacks, in their personal school locker whenever possible. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter as space is very, very limited in the locker storage area.

**Percussion equipment is for the use of our percussionists ONLY.** Just as nobody but yourself is to play on your instrument, the same is true for the percussion instruments. Due to limited space, most of this equipment is left in the rehearsal area at all times and it can be a great temptation to touch it. Treat percussion equipment as if it were someone else's property. In a matter of speaking it does belong to somebody else – the school.

The band director's office is PRIVATE and students must knock before entering. Student use of the phone is frowned upon. If it is not a band-related issue – don't even ask. Students should use the phone in the front office whenever possible. Use of the band hall or director's phone is by permission of the director(s) only. There will be consequences for inappropriate, unexcused use of the band hall or band director phones.

### PRACTICE ROOMS

The use of the practice rooms is a privilege. Only one student at a time will be allowed in the practice rooms unless approved by the director. Space is limited due to private lessons and the practice expectations of our low brass students (see section C.) At the same time, we **do want** to encourage use of the practice rooms when not in use as stated above.

(Note: Practice rooms are for practice only – they are not a “hang out.” Space is limited and must be utilized appropriately. Don’t misuse this privilege. There will be consequences.)

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

Finally, there is to be NO food, drinks, candy, gum or horseplay in the band hall. This policy will be strictly enforced as stated in the DMS Student Handbook. The only exception regarding food & drink consumption is by permission of the band director(s). Also, only students participating in private lessons, low brass practice, or sectionals will be permitted in the band hall before or after school. Please see your director if you have special circumstances in this regard. Any student that is not a band member will not be permitted to enter the band hall. Please make your friends aware of this important policy. Make arrangements to meet your friends someplace else after you pick up or return your instrument and music to the band hall.

## **H. PERFORMANCE/SECTIONAL ATTENDANCE**

As a member of the Dowell Band program, Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band members are required to attend all scheduled band performances. Students may only be excused from a performance by the director or principal (non-school sports or similar events are not considered excused absences), and must be submitted in writing at least two weeks prior to the performance (see calendar). Students receive a grade for all concerts. Performances are a vital extension of the academic class. Those students whose behavior becomes problematic during the class may be DENIED performance privileges with the band.

Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band members will be required to attend one section rehearsal per week as part of their band grade. Morning sectionals will take place before school from 6:40 – 7:35 AM. In some sections, students that are not involved with after school athletics, cheerleading, Spanish, academic tutoring, or drill team, will meet from 3:05 – 4:00 pm. The purpose of the section rehearsal is to help students improve on his/her instrument in a more concentrated and individualized manner than the large class setting allows. Sectionals are a vital part of the band experience. Parental support in this matter is greatly appreciated!

Students who attend the sectional on time (plan accordingly for morning sectionals – arrive at least 10 minutes in advance of your scheduled time), and are prepared with all materials will earn a grade of 100. Students missing a section rehearsal for any reason will need to arrange a make up time with the band director. All missed sectional (excused and unexcused) must be made up within the nine-week marking period. Make up sectionals will be graded as follows: excused absences will receive a 100 and unexcused absences will receive a 70. Sectionals not made up will be recorded as a 0. Sectionals will be set far enough in advance to avoid most conflicts that could arise. **Sectionals will begin the week of Monday, September 8th.** Please do not have anything scheduled on the day that you have your sectional rehearsal. Remember – sectionals are designed to help you AND major performance exams are taken during your sectional.

**“AWESOME THINGS HAPPEN – WHEN AWESOME PEOPLE WORK TOGETHER – TOWARD AN AWESOME COMMON GOAL!”**

## **I. ELIGIBILITY**

Students must pass all classes with a 70 in order to participate in extra-curricular activities. This is Texas state law. Band events considered extra-curricular are concerts performed off-campus, contests and festivals, and concerts with an admission charge – *concerts at Dowell are not extra-curricular*. Due to eligibility requirements, some *eligible* students may not be able to participate in ensemble events at the **MISD Middle School Solo & Ensemble Festival** if too many of the members become ineligible. **BE PREPARED AND RESPONSIBLE – PASS YOUR CLASSES!**

#### **J. DOWELL BAND T SHIRT**

All band members will need a Dowell Band T Shirt. This shirt will be worn at various events as specified by your director. They may also be worn to school, too. The cost will be **\$12.00** per shirt. Please make checks out to DMS Bands. More than one shirt may be purchased. All sizes are adult and are available to family, friends and relatives! Be sure to see your director if you have not already purchased your shirt(s).

#### **K. CONCERT DRESS ATTIRE**

Proper attire is required for all band members participating in formal concerts and contests throughout the year. (Note: It is the responsibility of the student and parents to purchase the items listed below from a local retailer. \*Please see your director if there are questions or concerns.)

##### **Guys:**

- White, long-sleeved “button-down” shirt (must be all white with a collar, no designer emblems)
- Black dress pants (no jeans – no grey colors)
- Long solid black tie (consider purchasing “clip-on” style)
- Black dress shoes (no tennis shoes)
- Black dress socks

##### **Ladies:**

- White, long-sleeved blouse (must be all white with a collar, no designer emblems)
- Black dress pants (no jeans – no grey colors)
- Black “close-toed” dress shoes (no tennis shoes)
- Black socks

#### **L. TRIPS**

A Dowell Band member represents his or her school, home, community, and self when on a band trip. Appropriate individual and group conduct should reflect positively on the school, the home, the community, the band, and of course, yourself.

As an individual you can sometimes be passed unnoticed. However, as a member of a group, the public will observe your every action with interest.

**“TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR BAND – BE LOYAL AND DEDICATED TO YOUR BAND ACTIVITIES. HELP TO CONTINUE THE TRADITION – MAKE THE DOWELL MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND – THE BEST!”**

**PRACTICE REPORT**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**MAKE 16 COPIES FOR THE ENTIRE YEAR**

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Grading (total minutes per week)

Wednesday \_\_\_\_\_

180 min. = 100

150 min. = 95 \*Minimum 5 days per week

Thursday \_\_\_\_\_

120 min. = 90

90 min. = 85

60 min. = 80 \*Due every Wednesday. Not accepted after Thursday (-10 pts.)

Friday \_\_\_\_\_

30 min. = 75

15 min. = 70

10 min. = 50

unless approved by director.

Saturday \_\_\_\_\_

No practice turned in = no credit

Sunday \_\_\_\_\_

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

Monday \_\_\_\_\_

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

(must have parent signature for credit)

Tuesday \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_ Minutes

\_\_\_\_\_ Days (most important element - See section C)

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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

Monday \_\_\_\_\_

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

(must have parent signature for credit)

Tuesday \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_ Minutes

\_\_\_\_\_ Days (most important element - See section C)

## McKINNEY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT PRIVATE LESSON PROGRAM

The supplemental private lesson program is an enrichment opportunity available to all Dowell band students. Qualified specialists, who will strengthen the fundamentals and knowledge of literature your child is learning on his or her instrument, teach these lessons. Though not required, participation in the private lesson program is highly encouraged. Students will not be penalized for electing not to participate. Lessons will be taught at Dowell during the scheduled band class, before school, or after school. Specific times are assigned by the order in which the forms are received. However, please discuss any potential schedule conflicts with the private instructor. The private lesson program is a minimum semester-long commitment.

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. **Prepare** all assignments for each lesson
2. **Contact** your private teacher at least **24 hours** in advance of an absence. The Instructor will also extend this courtesy to you.
3. **Supply** method books and materials as required by the private teacher
4. **Discuss** any concerns you have regarding your lessons with the private teacher
5. **Promptly** turn in your check to the private teacher. \*(Prefer one month in advance)

### **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

The cost of each music lesson is **\$16.00** per week or **\*\$64.00** per month. Parents will send a check for the specified amount with the student who will give the check to the private instructor at the time of their lesson. Checks are to be made out to the private lesson instructor. Any billing concerns should be discussed with the private instructor.

PLEASE HONOR YOUR FINANCIAL OBLIGATION TO THESE INSTRUCTORS.  
REMEMBER THIS IS HOW THEY MAKE THEIR LIVLIHOOD FOR THEMSELVES  
AND THEIR FAMILIES.



**SIGN AND RETURN PAGE**

**TRAVEL RELEASE FORM**

**MCKINNEY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
Permission for Members of Student Groups to Participate in  
School-Sponsored Trips

Group Name:           Dowell Middle School Band          

School Year of Group Activities: 2008 – 2009

I desire my son/daughter be allowed to travel to and from the events attended by the group listed above during this school year and to participate in these events.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Parent/Guardian                      Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Student                                      Signature of Student                                      Date

**NOTE:** Student Medical/Emergency Information Card must be on file in the school office.

**STUDENT AGREEMENT – PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN**

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This is to certify that I have received and read the 2008-2009 Dowell Middle School Band Handbook and Calendar of Events. I hereby agree to abide by all stated policies and procedures, including participation at all required performing events. I understand that band is a “team” activity and as such requires the full cooperation of each and every member in order for the band to realize its’ full performing potential. I agree to do my part to help the band achieve this goal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT PRINTED NAME                                      STUDENT SIGNATURE                                      DATE

**PARENT AGREEMENT**

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This is to certify that we have received and read the 2008-2009 Dowell Middle School Band Handbook and Calendar of Events. We agree to its stated policies and procedures.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT(S)/LEGAL GUARDIAN(S) SIGNATURES                                      DATE