

Harris Hawk Band

**Bernard Harris Middle School
Band Handbook
2017-2018**

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harrisband.weebly.com

Harris Middle School Band 2017-2018

A Note From the Directors

We are so glad that your child will be involved in our award winning band program this school year! Studies show that active participation in music helps humans to use their whole brain which promotes success in all academic areas!

In our program we strive to help our students become great human beings through teaching them the powerful skills of music. We promote responsibility, self-discipline, accomplishment, pride, growth, goal setting, and fun! Working together, we will help these students to become EXCELLENT adults and contributors to our world!

Please reference this handbook throughout the year to help you and your student understand the many aspects of our band program. Our goals are to provide nothing less than an outstanding musical experience for each student! To accomplish this goal, we must all work together. It is absolutely important for students to understand and uphold their responsibilities of participating in this organization. When our students are successful, we are successful as a program - each student and their success is important to us!

This handbook will be available on the band website all year and we would encourage you to refer to it when you need to. It is very important for students, as well as parents to read and understand this material.

We are looking forward to a wonderful year! Thank you for joining us!

Getting in contact with the directors

Please feel free to contact us if any questions arise throughout the year or if you need clarification for anything in this handbook. We will be sending out email correspondence throughout the year as well as keeping our band website updated. Please allow 24 hours for us to return your call or email. Email is the very best way to get in touch with us, as we are often having fun with music and not near the phone!

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Program Philosophy

The Harris Hawk Band is an integral part of the daily life of Harris Middle School. Band is an elective, yet curricular course with defined TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) objectives set by the state of Texas. We also promote spirit, pride, and a love for music! Joining the Harris Band is the first step in a seven-year journey culminating in membership in the Madison High School Band.

In the Hawk Band, students should:

- Perform proficiently on their instruments individually and as members of an ensemble (attend solo competitions and participate in the ensemble setting)
- Develop the ability to understand and evaluate musical performances with an educated ear (watch peer performances, high school performances, professional performances, and discover great musicians on the internet)
- Develop an understanding of our musical heritage and recognize the importance of music in culture (feel empowered to do musical research about what you are playing, learn about your instrument, actively work to play music as it was intended to be played)
- Develop self-confidence and self-discipline by working as a team member
- Build citizenship traits through mutually respectful relationships with teachers and peers
- Build a framework for the lifelong appreciation of music (be a lover of music for life!)

Statement of Mutual Responsibility

The Hawk Band has a reputation for a high standard of excellence in musical performance. This level of success requires a great deal of collaborative effort among teachers, administrators, parents, and students.

By enrolling in the Hawk Band, you are making a commitment to the band as an organization, to yourself, and to the other students in band. This commitment includes accepting responsibility for the following:

- Full year participation
- Grow musically as best as you can
- Maintain a positive and enthusiastic attitude
- Help support the goals of the band program

Sectionals

Honors Band members are required to attend one weekly sectional before or after school as set by the band directors. We work very well with the athletics coaches and all other teachers and make every effort to resolve any conflicts as they arise in regard to school activities. **Students will be notified of sectional schedules in class and the schedule will be placed on our Google Calendar and website.**

Symphonic Band members will be required to attend their sectionals as scheduled and will be given notice at least one week prior to their sectional time.

Students will earn a test grade for each sectional based on their prepared material and participation. Morning sectionals are held from 7:30-8:10AM (students should enter the building by the back doors near the band hall). Afternoon sectionals are held from 3:35-4:15PM. Sectionals are designed to address specific musical skills for each instrument in small groups which is vital to the success of the full band. Students are expected to be in their seat ready to play at the start of the sectional, so it is advised that students arrive early enough to take care of this. Students are considered late if they are not in their seat ready to play at the appropriate time. Students may have a lowered grade if they arrive late to sectionals.

The band hall will open by 7:15AM each day (unless otherwise stated). Students attending morning sectionals should arrive by 7:20AM to have time to get their instrument together and begin warming up. Students may enter the building through the back doors near the band hall up until 7:30AM. At this time, the directors will no longer be able to monitor who is entering the building and the doors will have to remain locked for safety reasons. Students who are late will need to enter the building through the main entrance when it is opened at 7:45AM.

Students attending morning tutoring for other classes need to do so on any day other than their sectional day.

Please do not schedule appointments or other activities during section rehearsal times. If a student must miss a section rehearsal due to illness, absence from school, or other excused conflict (please discuss any known conflicts with a band director prior to the absence), the sectional grade may be made up by making an appointment with the director.

Calendar of Events

Our band calendar is located on Google Calendars and is housed on our band website under the “calendar” tab. Please reference the calendar frequently as all updates will be made there. We have made every attempt to provide complete and accurate information on this calendar at the beginning of the year, but some changes and adjustments will naturally have to be made as the year progresses. We will alert you of any changes by changing it on the Google Calendar, emailing, and discussing the change in class.

Students are required to participate in all scheduled band activities unless noted otherwise as “optional” events. Absences are only excused in accordance with the established district criteria. Conflicts with non-school activities and events are not excusable reasons for missing a scheduled band event; however, most conflicts can be resolved with planning and communication. Some individual events (All-Region Band auditions and Solo and Ensemble Contests) do allow for flexibility in scheduling.

Please note all band activities on your personal calendar to avoid conflicts and last minute stresses.

Absence Procedures

Unlike most other academic classes, it is not possible to make up missed content in performance-based band classes. It is necessary to be present in order to benefit from music instruction. Students are expected to attend all scheduled band rehearsals and performances.

Excused Absences include the following:

- Personal or family illness verified by a note from parent/guardian not to exceed a total of eight (8) days in a school year.
- Natural disasters, weather or road conditions as declared by the District making travel dangerous.
- Death outside the family.
- Attending a special school function, without a school sponsor and identified by the District (ex: State play-offs). Emergencies recognized and approved by the principal or District.

Directors must be notified in writing stating the reason for the absence with a parent signature in order for an absence to be excused.

Unexcused absences from rehearsals or performances may result in a lowered grade, loss of privileges, or reassignment to a different part or role within the band for varying periods of time depending on the circumstances.

Since band is an interdependent organization, every student is important to our success! Please do not schedule regular appointments during your child's band class or sectional times.

Academic Eligibility

Under state law, all students must maintain passing grades in all classes to meet eligibility requirements for participation in **extracurricular** performances (contests, festivals, football games, and some other off-campus events are considered extracurricular); concerts, sectionals, and all other rehearsals are **curricular** and therefore not subject to eligibility rules.

If a student earns a grade below 70 in any course (including band) for a report card period, they are ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities for at least the next 3 weeks. Please refer to our eligibility calendar on the website to learn when students may regain their eligibility.

Classroom Procedures

Citizenship is an extremely important part of development within our band program. Classroom behavior greatly impacts student learning. Success in performance is directly correlated to success in rehearsals. A band will never perform better than it rehearses, and efficient rehearsals will lead to successful bands. Therefore, every ensemble member is responsible for the success of the *entire* band.

The following procedures will be enforced in the Harris Band program:

- Be Responsible
 - For your instrument: bring it every day and take it home every day
 - For all of your materials: instrument supplies, maintenance supplies (reeds, valve oil, etc), an organized band binder, and a pencil on your stand every day
 - For your playing: you must practice to get better! You must also mark mistakes in your music the first time you make them.
 - For following instructions the first time they are given
- Be Respectful
 - Of yourself, your peers, your teachers, and your band facility!
 - do not bring food, drinks, or gum into the band hall

- only band students are allowed in the band hall
 - During rehearsal: no talking or other off task behavior during rehearsal even if it was to help your neighbor
 - Of the property of others: only handle YOUR instrument
- Be Safe
 - Take care of yourself and others in the band hall by exhibiting safe behavior

Band Lockers

Band lockers are assigned to students as a place to keep their instrument and supplies. Advanced band students will also be assigned a slot in a folio cabinet for their band binder. Locks must be used correctly at all times (with the exception of during class). Please only keep band supplies in your band locker - no backpacks, books, lunches, etc except during your class period. **Instruments should not be left overnight!**

Practice Rooms

Our band hall has 5 practice rooms that students are welcome to use for *practicing*. There will be no more than 3 students per room unless special permission is given. Practice rooms should not be used for “hanging out” and disruptive students will lose their practice room privileges. Practice rooms are available before and after school on a first-come, first-served basis. Please follow the following procedures for practice room use:

- No food, gum, or drinks allowed in the practice rooms
- Any moved equipment must be returned to the original location when finished practicing (this includes chairs and stands)
- Turn off the light and close the door when finished
- No more than 3 students allowed per room unless special permission is given

Concert Etiquette

Concerts are the culmination of much student effort, and are necessary to meet state requirements for band. More importantly, concerts are an opportunity for students to demonstrate their talents and efforts for an appreciative audience. It is very important that both students and listeners observe appropriate concert etiquette during any musical performance. Please observe the following:

- Performers must dress appropriately for the performance (see calendar for specific requirements for each performance)
- Turn off all cell phones and other devices during the performance
- Refrain from talking when the director takes the podium

- Only enter or leave seats during applause or between groups
- Do not take flash photos while a group is playing (before and after is fine)
- Crying or fussy children should be taken to the lobby

A few other notes:

- It is appropriate to applaud as the director approaches the podium
- During a multi-movement piece, applaud at the conclusion of the work (when the conductor's hands come down)
- Do not applaud for soloists during a concert band performance; DO applaud for soloists during a jazz band performance
- Avoid shouting, heckling, or whistling
- Standing ovations are appropriate to recognize an outstanding performance

Please also note that students in the Harris Hawk Band are expected to support each other, and must attend other groups' performances in accordance with our curriculum. We expect students to stay for the ENTIRE concert, not just the portion in which they perform, and to exhibit EXCELLENT concert etiquette.

Concert Dress

Advanced Bands (Concert, Symphonic, and Honors)

- Informal Uniform
 - Harris Band "Excellence" purple t-shirt (can be purchased each year)
 - Jeans (no joggers or "skinny" pants)
 - Closed toed shoes
- Formal Uniform
 - Solid Black Slacks (jeans are unacceptable, regular fit - not "skinny" pants or leggings)
 - Solid Black Button Down Long Sleeved Dress Shirt
 - Solid Black Socks
 - Solid Black Dress Shoes

Beginner Band

- Concert Uniform
 - Harris Band "Excellence" purple t-shirt (can be purchased each year)
 - Jeans (no joggers or "skinny" pants)
 - Closed toed shoes

Band students may wear dressy clothing of their choice for Solo and Ensemble Contests, and may wear casual clothing without any Harris identifying features to All Region Band auditions.

Private Lessons

We are glad to help students find private instruction on their instrument with a credible teacher and allow them to take these lessons during their band classes and before and after school. Students are responsible for helping to ease communication between private lesson instructor and parents. If you are interested in private lessons for your student, please fill out the form at the beginning of the year and the appropriate instructor will contact you. Please note that some teachers fill up their time slots quickly, so be sure to turn forms in on time.

Practice

Students who practice effectively are successful! Consistent and regular practice is a very important habit for young musicians to get into. Every student in the Harris Hawk Band is expected to practice daily! Studies show that students who practice a little each day perform better than those who practice for a long time once or twice a week. Before and after school rehearsals are not considered individual practice time.

The directors understand that students sometimes lose interest in practicing. During these times of low interest, it is both the directors' and parents' responsibility to help motivate the student to continue practicing until his or her interest returns. Parents may be concerned that "forcing" their child to practice will negatively impact the child's attitude toward music. However, the most detrimental influence on a child's attitude toward music is their inability to perform successfully, and lack of practice simply perpetuates this negative cycle.

Good practice habits will reinforce good performance skills. Poor practice habits will reinforce poor performance skills. It is important that students understand how to practice correctly and that they apply this knowledge in their daily practice routine. As a parent, ask your child what their practice goals are each day. This simple task will do a great deal to promote good practice habits! Students nearly always will have specific skills to practice that have been presented in class.

There is no formal weekly practice record due each week, however, students are required to complete their weekly MusicFirst assignments online.

Grading Policy

The Harris Hawk Band grading categories will be as follows:

- Formative Assessments (daily grades, rehearsal behavior, materials and supplies, MusicFirst assignments) 50%
- Summative Assessments (playing tests, concerts and performances, written tests, MusicFirst assessments) 50%

Student grades can be monitored on Parent Portal which is found on the NEISD website. Grades will be updated weekly.

Please keep track of your child's grades in all classes, as this impacts their eligibility to participate in band activities!

MusicFirst

This year, our band program is fortunate to again be able to use the online classroom system, MusicFirst. Students will be required to frequently log on to their account to turn in multiple weekly assignments. These assignments are designed to help your student with their music fluency, music theory, listening skills, and practice habits. Instructions for logging on to MusicFirst can be found on our band website along with some troubleshooting tips. For this program to be effective, it is essential that students program in regular time to take care of these online assignments.

If students are unable to access MusicFirst at home, they must take care of their assignments before or after school. We have band hall iPads available for them to check out and use in the band hall every day.

Thank you for helping your student keep track of their assignments and manage their time wisely!

School Owned Instruments

Students using a school owned instrument (including advanced percussion students) will pay a yearly fee of \$30. This fee is due before the student can take the instrument home during the first two weeks of school. All students should have their own mouthpiece for sanitary reasons. Checks for the instrument maintenance fee can be made out to "Harris MS". Appropriate paperwork will be sent home with students explaining the fee.

Supplies

Beginner Band supply list:

- harrisband.weebly.com - for specific instrument requirements
- Purple “Excellence” Band T-Shirt (sold in the first few weeks of school)
- Blue jeans (blue only, and no “joggers”)

Advanced Band supply list:

- A good, working, and well maintained instrument
- Purple “Excellence” Band T-shirt (sold in the first few weeks of school)
- Foundations for Superior Performance Book (Blue Book) for your instrument
- Black 1 inch binder
- 8 tab dividers
- Metronome or tuner (can be on your phone!)
- Folding wire music stand for home practice (you should already have this!)
- Case tag to label your instrument with your name
- Care supplies for your instrument (reeds, valve oil, slide grease, clean swab, soft cloth, mouthpiece brush, etc)
- Percussionists need a clearly labeled stick bag (with name!) with their own snare sticks, and yarn mallets

Instrument Care and Maintenance

All instruments require regular maintenance to remain in working condition and to prevent the need for extensive repair. During “Maintenance Monday” students will be given a short period of time to wash their mouthpiece, oil valves, grease slides and corks, and adjust any screws. Students are expected to use this time wisely and correctly and be in their seat 5 minutes after the bell for inspection. The directors will choose several instruments to randomly inspect each Monday. On Monday holidays and clinician visits, time will be given on Tuesday to keep instruments properly maintained.

Percussionists are responsible for keeping percussion instruments covered and equipment stored properly. Covers should be hung on the hooks on the wall when they are not covering instruments.

All students are responsible for their own music, book, and binder. Beginners will keep these materials inside their band locker. Advanced band members will be assigned a slot in the folio cabinets to keep their binder for weekly inspections and ease of passing out new music. All students need a pencil on their stand every rehearsal. Please see your band director if for some reason you need another copy of your music.

Chaperones and Parent Volunteers

We always need parents to help us with band events and in other areas of the band program. Your support allows us to attend events such as football games, band contests, and social activities, and we welcome your involvement in your child's music education. Before volunteering, make sure to be cleared with the district by visiting neisd.net and looking in the "parents" tab.

Volunteer trip chaperones will be taken on a first come, first served basis. All volunteer opportunities will have an online form to indicate your interest. Please note that an email or conversation will not replace your filling out the form with your interest in chaperoning.

Band Placement

Auditions are held each spring for band placement for the following school year. These auditions are comprehensive, and cover scales, musical excerpts, and other concepts covered throughout the year. Students will receive audition material in the late spring. While the audition material is introduced in class, it is the responsibility of the student to practice and be prepared for their audition. Students should try their best, as audition scores primarily will determine placement. Parents should notify the directors in advance if your child will be unable to perform at his or her best due to illness, a problem with the instrument, etc. Once posted, audition results are final. Students may be moved at the director's discretion at any time throughout the year.

Our primary goal is to place each student so that they are appropriately challenged but not overwhelmed. All of our advanced bands have great performances and have the opportunity to participate in competitions. Symphonic and Honors attend UIL contest as well. The primary differences in these ensembles lie in the difficulty of the literature and the speed at which the students are expected to master the literature. We want the best for every child and strive to help them have the most rewarding musical experience possible for them.

Fundraising

The Harris Hawk Band is both a curricular course and campus organization. In order to function as an organization throughout the year, the band participates in several concession selling events, a fall tamale fundraiser, and a spring fundraising event. All money raised is used for the benefit of students in the Harris Hawk Band program.

We hope that since every student does benefit from the use of the funds, that every student will also participate in our fundraising events. Donations are gladly

accepted in lieu of fundraiser participation for those interested. More information on fundraisers will be shared as our fundraising time nears.

Trips and Off Campus Travel

All students will have the opportunity to attend a spring trip with us. This trip is not required, but is always a fun and musical experience! Specific information about each trip (beginner or advanced) will be sent home with students and will have a contract included.

It is important to remember that when students leave campus, they are representatives of our band, our school, and our district. This means that conduct and dress code still apply. We have a history of representing ourselves very well!

Website and Updates

Please make it a habit to visit our band website so that you can stay up to date with all of our band events. Our Google Calendar will always be updated first with any changes! When you click on an event on the calendar, you can see event details and attachments. Please also look for regular emails and subscribe to our Remind messaging system (directions found on the website). ***Please note that our website will be changing this school year. We will provide the new link on handouts sent home and by linking to the new website on our current one. Please update your bookmarks accordingly when this change occurs - thank you for your patience!***

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