



## **TACHE Band Handbook**

### **Band Contract**

-My student(s) and I recognize that students will be expected to be at all rehearsals on Thursday afternoons for my band ensemble. Band is hard work and it is a team sport. Joining the band is just like joining a sports team, you must show up for practice in order to play in the big game. More than two absences each semester may result in not being able to participate in concerts, football games and any other fun or music related events. Additionally, as a group activity, your fellow band members count on each other to perform in the concerts so practices and performances should be a priority for your student and family calendar.

-My student(s) and I recognize that students are expected to practice daily at home. Practice goals will be set by the director and child and building practice habits is a part of this class. This is not always fun or exciting, but it is necessary. Make Music must be used for practice and pass-offs. This allows us to meet only once a week but still make consistent progress. The privilege of playing in the concerts will depend on successfully passing off music in Make Music as well as any other pass off assignments requested by the director.

-Essential Elements and/or Standards of Excellence is our curriculum. It must be used every school day as a class subject. This is where the students learn more about notes, rhythm and technique. It gives them music to practice that will help them grow. This book needs to be brought to class as it will be reviewed and used each week in class.

-My student(s) and I recognize that there is no second string in the band. Everyone who joins the band is a first string player and they have a responsibility to their team to participate with a great attitude and practice outside of class, coming prepared and ready to work. Students must bring working instruments and music notebooks to class each week.

-As a parent, I recognize I have a role in helping establish good practice habits and to help build the organization with the time and talents I have available. I will purchase/rent a quality instrument for my student and encourage my students to practice daily. I will also support the band co-op by serving as a parent volunteer. This program will not work without parental involvement both at home and during rehearsals.

# **ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES**

## **TACHE Oversight**

We exist under the TACHE umbrella in order to provide a level of protection for our families and administrative assistance to our organization. As a member of TACHE, the TACHE Statement of Faith and Standards of Conduct should be followed at all times. Any conduct not conforming to these standards will be brought to the attention of the parents to be addressed. If inappropriate behavior continues it will be brought to the attention of the TACHE board to be dealt with.

## **Anti-bully policy**

Behavior that infringes on the safety of any student will not be tolerated. A student shall not bully or intimidate any student through words or actions. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to direct physical contact, verbal assaults, the use of electronic methods, and social isolation and/or manipulation. All students and/or volunteers shall immediately report incidents of bullying, harassment or intimidation to a director. If a student is found to be bullying a fellow student, the student will be isolated immediately and their parent called to retrieve the child. If bullying behavior continues, students will be removed from the band program.

## **TACHE Band Vision**

Our goal is to give students aged 10 through High School an opportunity to worship the Lord using band instruments. We desire that they would learn to play musical instruments, enjoy fellowship, and perform in a team environment. We desire to have fun but also encourage students to grow as musicians and challenge them to achieve high standards of excellence in performing. We strive to equip students to live out our theme verse: Psalm 33:3 "Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy."

The purpose of the band is to provide basic instrumental instructions in order to give a good foundation for our students and the opportunity for them to perform in a group of their peers. Our primary focus will be on foundational skills and group performance.

The Beginner band will be focused on the fundamentals and may feel boring or repetitive at times. We will do our best to make it enjoyable but it will be hard work and require practice and dedication. The first semester will focus on reading music and learning proper technique. The second semester will focus more on learning to play as a group, but the music will continue to be basic and expand the range of the student without being frustrating as long as the students are practicing daily at home and using their curriculum.

The Intermediate band will include more opportunities to perform and more interesting music, but will continue to require a lot of hard work. Our focus will be on improving musicianship as individuals and gaining skills to play well together as a team. These students should know how to read music and figure out the notes and rhythms on their own at home using online tools and will spend time in class learning to blend and play as a group. The pieces will be accessible for the average student that is practicing regularly at home.

The Honors band will take the students into the early High School level by teaching more advanced musical techniques and playing more advanced music in a small ensemble environment while focusing on listening and blending as a group. This group will also provide an opportunity to participate in All Region as well as TMEA Solo competition outside of regular band rehearsal.

### **Competition Policy**

Those students wishing to compete at Region and Solo and Ensemble competitions must take private lessons outside of band, either with Mrs. Kosa or another music teacher, in order to be sufficiently prepared for those outside competitions. These competitions will require an extra fee charged outside of TACHE band to cover Mrs. Kosa's time and efforts. This opportunity would be conducted outside the normal band activity and will require significant extra effort, coordination, and time commitment by the student and family.

### **Student Absence and Tardy policy**

Please prioritize our weekly band meetings. This is a team "sport", not individual lessons. Notify us via email as soon as possible if your student will miss class. Note absence in the subject and include the student's name and date of expected absence in the body. More than two absences of any type per semester will result in your student being unable to play in the end of semester concert.

We understand that there are instances when rehearsals will need to be missed due to illness or other obligations, but if your child is not going to be able to attend a significant number of rehearsals or is unable to participate in performances then they may be more suited for private lessons instead of a band organization. If our rehearsal times are not convenient for your family and you are unable to arrive on time and stay through the end of class, then our program may not be a good fit for your family. We understand occasional schedule conflicts requiring a late arrival or early pick up, but it is distracting to have students arrive late or leave early on a consistent basis.

### **Communication guidelines**

Parents are to communicate with the team through our [bandtache@gmail.com](mailto:bandtache@gmail.com) email address or GroupMe account. The email is checked regularly by the leadership team and responded to within 48 hours. For issues that require a quick response please use Group Me. This ensures that all communication is available to the whole team and helps protect our time so that this communication doesn't interfere with our personal email and texts. We will not respond to band communication that doesn't come through our email or GroupMe accounts. We may occasionally initiate conversations through our personal accounts due to a need for expediency or timeliness, but this will be at our discretion.

## **Photo/Video Policy**

Per our TACHE rules, we have several families that opted out of photo/video release so during our practices we must ask that parents not use devices to send video or audio. Performances are public events so this does not apply to those activities, but practices and rehearsals are TACHE events and we need to be respectful of our families wishes and will not allow video or audio to be taken.

## **Rehearsal Instruction Policy**

As homeschool families, we are accustomed to taking the initiative in instructing our children. Having other teachers in their lives may be a new and different experience for both the students and parents. We must ask parents to refrain from disrupting instruction from the band teachers and to resist the urge to step in to help their children during band class. This is an opportunity for the students to learn some independence and responsibility and to learn to respond to instruction from non-parental authority. When parents step in to coach or help their children it not only distracts the other students it undermines the authority of the band teachers and keeps the children from learning how to properly respond to outside authority. Students with special needs will be afforded accommodations that may require additional parental involvement.

All of our leadership team is empowered to instruct and redirect the band students when needed. While Mrs. Kosa is the director, we have a team in order to help share the load and when parents or students constantly appeal to Mrs. Kosa instead of listening to instructions from the other team members, this puts an undue burden on her and undermines the authority of the other instructors.

## **Childcare Usage Policy**

Childcare is provided only for children with a parent volunteering onsite during band rehearsal. This is done as a service to those volunteering so that they can focus on serving in their assigned capacity while knowing that their children are safe and supervised. Students must be picked up after their band rehearsal even if a sibling is participating in a different rehearsal time. We understand this may not be convenient, but supervision of siblings is not consistent with the purpose of childcare. The waiver signed to allow students to be dropped off at band is only valid for their rehearsal time and does not cover staying in childcare when parents are not onsite. Additionally, all students should either be in band rehearsal (as a student or helper) or in childcare/study hall in order to ensure that all students are safe and supervised.

## **Music Selection Policy**

The Wind Band is not the same organization as an orchestra or a choir. Both of these organizations are much older and have a much larger repertoire containing religious themes. Given that the Wind Band is a relatively new type of ensemble, it has a smaller repertoire to choose from, more of which is secular in nature. Wind Band repertoire contains rich folk songs, marches, and symphonic-type music which gives our students many valuable opportunities to learn and grow their musical skills. Where possible, religious themed music that fits our needs will be chosen.

As a Christian organization, we strive to provide our band students with high quality musical experiences that align with our Christian beliefs. Music selection will adhere to the following guidelines and be made at the sole discretion of the directors.

- Music will be chosen to fit the level/ability of our groups
- Music will be chosen to fit the theme of the concert or venue such as football games, popular music, world music, folk songs, religious music, celebratory music (for TACHE graduation), etc.
- Music will not glorify evil or give the appearance of evil (except in light of the struggle between good versus evil where God is victorious)
- Music will include a variety of styles, keys, difficulty, and appeal based on the needs of the organization
- Should an issue arise with the selection of a piece of music, we ask that our parents and members would communicate with us as soon as it arises so we can seek a positive, mutual resolution

### **Tuition Policy**

Tuition will be billed through the TACHE website and should be paid online by the first regular band rehearsal in the Fall and Spring semester. Payment can also be made by check at the first meeting of each semester. Students who participate in more than one band rehearsal will pay full tuition for the first rehearsal and \$50 per semester for the additional rehearsal. Fees for competitions (Region and Solo and Ensemble) will be set by the director and will be paid directly to her prior to the competition.

No refunds will be issued.

Limited need-based financial scholarships can be made available to families experiencing financial difficulties. Please contact the leadership team via email to request a scholarship application. Applications will be reviewed and awarded at the discretion of the leadership team based on the reported need and available funding.

Leadership and volunteers who serve during rehearsals each week, as opposed to on a rotation basis, may be granted free or reduced tuition for their students.

### **Director Stipend Policy**

In order to remain a healthy program with a bright future, we feel it is important to transition from an all volunteer led organization to a volunteer supported program. We will be providing our head director (Mrs. Valerie Kosa) and director emeritus (Mr. Howard Galletly) with stipends each semester to show our appreciation for their hard work. We will do this without a tuition increase. Now that the program is up and running and we have procured equipment and a good collection of music, we can transition to maintaining our equipment and compensating our lead directors. This change will help allow Mrs. Kosa to continue to dedicate her time and talents to our program and ensure that we can continue to support Mr. Galletly's music missions. Thank you for your understanding and support.

# Parent Volunteer Expectations

We need you and are grateful for your help in volunteering for this cooperative learning environment for your students. In order to ensure student and parent safety we follow a 2-deep adult supervision policy as required by TACHE. This means no students should be in a space with only one adult. Additionally, no student should be unsupervised during rehearsals or TACHE band events. In order to allow instructors to work with students by specific instruments or to conduct targeted lessons for those needing more assistance, we need parent volunteers. We also need volunteers to watch younger siblings of our volunteers and assist with some administrative tasks. The more volunteers we have the more assistance our leaders can give to students on an individual basis. There may be times when the lesson plan changes and we will not need as many volunteers as we have scheduled. Please be patient with us and use the opportunity to sit in the rehearsal and enjoy listening to the students make music.

We provide volunteer rotation schedules several weeks in advance so that parents can plan ahead in order to ensure that they are available to serve. Childcare will be provided by volunteers in order to allow parents with younger siblings to volunteer as well. We will make allowances for those with conflicting job responsibilities or other extenuating circumstances as those are communicated to us. Just as students must be in attendance to participate, parent volunteers must serve when requested in order for the family to participate in band. Please notify us promptly via e-mail if you are unable to fulfill your assigned volunteer sessions. If a family consistently misses their volunteer shift or does not notify us in advance of an absence, leadership will discuss the issue with the family and attempt to resolve the situation. If no resolution is found the family may be asked to leave the band.

We will attempt to consider your preferred volunteer position, but if the band needs a parent to serve in a particular capacity, we ask that you please remember that these roles need to be filled as a service to the band program. We will be rotating available parents through the needed roles during weekly rehearsals and those who can't serve during the rehearsals will be asked to serve during special events such as concerts.

## Descriptions and Expectations

**Room/Hall Monitor** – This position assists during rehearsals in providing 2-deep adult coverage. They will also assist in ensuring that students are not unsupervised in the hallways. No music experience is necessary for this position.

**Childcare Helper** – This position will supervise the children of other volunteers. Younger children will be in a nursery type room with toys available. Feel free to bring additional toys or games to help occupy these children. When the weather is nice, they enjoy playing outside on the playground. Older students will be in “study hall” when they are not in their rehearsal time. These children should be working on homework or

quietly playing tabletop games. Please remain with the children and wait for the next team of volunteers when your shift is over. At the end of the final rehearsal please bring the children to the directors so that you can leave.

**Instrument Helper** – If you have experience with an instrument, we will welcome your help in assisting during sectionals, particularly at the beginning of the year. You will act as a 2-deep adult as well as be able to assist with demonstrating the proper use of the instrument.

**The following roles take place outside of regular rehearsals but are still vital positions that can help take some of the burden off of the directors and regular weekly volunteers. If you have indicated that you would like to help with special events we will contact you and plug you into one of these roles.**

**Event helper** – Coordinate and execute the delivery, set-up, and tear-down of chairs and stands for concerts and other performances. Other preparation, crowd control, and clean-up work may also be required.

**Social helper** – Plan and execute social get togethers for the band students outside of regular rehearsal. The band will fund an end of year party, and also would welcome additional get togethers for our students throughout the year.

**Community Outreach Helper** – We perform at HEAT football games, with Tyler Community Band, in parades and at nursing homes as part of our community outreach. We need individuals who are willing to be our point of contact for these events in order to coordinate times, places, and other details with the organizations we will be performing for and then communicating these specifics to the band leadership.

**Fund-raising Helper** – We have an annual fundraiser called a Scale-a-thon which is a full day event involving playing many scales and other music. This event requires significant preparation and coordination of volunteers which could be performed by a dedicated volunteer.

**Music librarian** – If you understand a little bit about band and are organized, we could use your help in keeping our music scores and copies organized. This position helps to pass out new music and provide replacement copies if students misplace them. Students will be charged \$1/copy for lost music.

## Make Music Overview

We utilize Make Music to help our students practice effectively during the week. This is truly what makes once-a-week rehearsals possible. We try to select most of our music from what is available in interactive form on this tool. It enables students to hear their instrument's part alone or with the rest of the band. This will help them learn their part and then know in advance what it will sound like when playing with the whole band. It also has a metronome and tuner built in.

### Tips and tricks

- ▶ Don't sit too close to the computer, especially brass
- ▶ Ensure microphone is working properly
- ▶ If the student has done their best, send the recording in for grading anyway even if the computer-generated score seems low.
- ▶ The instructors will review recordings and can update grades and provide feedback.
- ▶ Bonus features: Tuning, Metronome, Finding extra practice songs
- ▶ System issues – Please contact Make Music via the online contact form. Do not contact the instructors. We cannot solve technical issues.

## Practice Considerations

### Practice Policy

- ▶ Practice is what helps students learn and improve (they aren't always going to enjoy it)
- ▶ Practice time needs to be built into your daily school routine.
- ▶ Students will have lessons assigned in Make Music.
- ▶ They will also have skills, drills and sheet music to practice. The skills and drills are as important as the songs and should be played each practice session.

### Practice Expectations

- ▶ Practice Warm-ups and Scales before Make Music
- ▶ Make Music practice should be conducted in several different "modes" to help the students hear their parts and what it will sound like with the whole band.
  - ▶ Your instrument and metronome turned on, accompaniment off (This allows the student to hear their part)
  - ▶ Everything turned on (They can hear how their part will sound with the band)
  - ▶ Accompaniment on and instrument off (They can hear themselves playing with the band)
  - ▶ Record
  - ▶ Submit when 80% or above
- ▶ Concert music will be played without Make Music so after the notes and rhythms are learned it should be practiced while reading the sheet music.

- ▶ Practice using sheet music while Make Music accompaniment is on in the background. Make Music has a “follow the bouncing ball” interface showing where the student is in the music, but the students need to practice playing without this for the concerts.