

Tuscola High School

Band Handbook

2025-2026



Student Name: _____

Ensemble: _____

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Dear Tuscola band students and parents,

Welcome to the THS Band Program. The goal of this program is to provide the most enriching and fulfilling music education possible for our students and to instill a true appreciation and love for music. The enrichment provided by a strong music education is something that will stay with each student for their entire lives. Music is often called “the universal language”, through which many differing cultures are ultimately brought together.

This handbook will act as a contract between the THS Band Program and each student. Please be sure to read through this handbook thoroughly as students will be held accountable for the information contained within. After reading through the handbook, please be sure to sign and return the final pages in this packet. Students will need to keep a copy of the Handbook as a reminder of what is expected of them each day during class.

It is my belief that the success of our program depends both upon my dedication as director and your student’s dedication as a member of our ensembles. The experiences students will have in our ensembles will aid them in developing a better sense of leadership, commitment, critical thinking skills, and overall, allow their creativity to soar. The goal is to leave the department as a better student and person.

I also believe in stating clear, concise expectations for both students and myself. Below are several personal expectations that myself and other music educators globally have for themselves over the course of a school year:

- 1. Expand the knowledge and skill of one’s instrument.**
- 2. Teach the students about goal setting and how to meet their goals.**
- 3. Teach self-discipline and intrinsic motivation.**
- 4. Build self-confidence and leadership skills.**
- 5. Develop teamwork among all students in the classroom.**

Communication is the key to success in this department. Contact must be done through email if a concern arises. I will respond to any and all emails at the earliest convenience. I look forward to an exciting school year. Thank you for all your support. Go Mountaineers!

Sincerely,
Tyler Reese
Band Director
Tuscola High School
treese@haywood.k12.nc.us

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”

STUDENT HANDBOOK

(2025-2026)

A STATEMENT OF POLICY

In order to assist band members and parents in understanding areas of responsibility, a statement of band policy is herein set forth. Becoming familiar with this policy will enable each individual to make the most of this great opportunity to be a member of the Tuscola High School band program, becoming a better person and a better musician.

We firmly believe that the student should improve through regular practice. In the Tuscola band program, we feel that when the student has lost the will to improve themselves or make a better contribution to the band, he is wasting the time and efforts of their fellow members and the community by continuing in this program. The HAPPIEST student is the one who is improving through regular habits of practice and daily progress. They must not only know right from wrong, but must be able to stand for principles. They must develop a high sense of purpose toward which they are willing to work. RESPONSIBILITY is the focus behind any level of achievement within this program. We intend to conduct ourselves in a manner that will facilitate all students in learning and bettering themselves.

OBJECTIVES OF THE BAND PROGRAM

- To teach music by its actual performance
- To develop performance skills of the various wind and percussion instruments
- To provide for the musical needs of the school and the community
- To develop a lifelong love: of music, self and each other
- To acquaint the students with Music Theory / History and how history and musical composition relate to students' current life and musical experiences
- To provide all students with the opportunity for worthy use of their time, a means for self expression, and a healthy social experience
- To develop the ability to function as a responsible member of a group, enhance interaction, and develop Esprit de Corps
- To foster leadership skills within each student

Band Curriculum in Brief

Concert Band

The Concert Band curriculum is designed to help students develop a confident sound and techniques on their instrument and perform at various events at our school, community, and our district. The Concert Band in the spring semester performs at the WNC Music Performance Adjudication Festival.

Marching Band

Membership in the marching band requires strenuous physical exercise and the ability to play the difficult literature encountered in the activity. Students can choose to be in the marching band for the fall semester only. Students will be responsible for learning music related to the show, Friday night football games, pep rallies, parades, and any other performance per request of school administration and community leaders.

Percussion Ensemble

Percussion Ensemble class is designed to make percussionists more well rounded musicians. Assignments will be based on mallets, timpani, multi-perc, rudimental snare, and concert music.

Jazz Band

Students may elect to audition for the Jazz band. The jazz band plays for community events and performs throughout the spring. Jazz band is held in winter and spring. Recommendation is required.

Winterguard

Students who are interested in dance, choreography, and movement may choose to audition for our winterguard. The winterguard is an extension of the marching band program and is coached by Ashley Cole.

Summer Camps

Various summer music camps are hosted around the region and state. Students are encouraged to attend these camps to get specialized training on their instrument, and experience band outside of THS. Examples include Mars Hill University Summer Music Camp, Western Carolina Summer Symposium, and Appalachian State Cannon Music Camp.

Private Lessons

Private lessons on a musical instrument are one of the best ways to improve performance skills. The one-on-one attention allows the student to benefit from individual attention as opposed to a teacher monitoring a class of fifty. Students are generally more inclined to practice diligently for a weekly music assignment and this discipline increases the student's enjoyment with their instrument. Please consult with the band director if you want to pursue lessons.

All District and All State Bands

Members of the band program are eligible to audition for the NC All State and WNC All District Bands. Regional Auditions are held in January, with All State Auditions in the proceeding months. All-District is typically held at Western Carolina University, and All-State is typically held at University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Information regarding this can be found at <https://www.ncbandmasters.org/>

THS Band Scheduling Conflict Resolution Policy

If you are in a school sponsored activity that runs concurrently during the same season as any after school band activity, here are FAIR and REASONABLE guidelines to resolve any scheduling conflicts that may occur:

- If you have a **Band practice** and an **activity practice** - **Action:** Communicate with the directors from both groups o **Resolution:** Split time with each 50/50
- If you have a **Band practice** and a **Varsity activity game/event** - **Action:** Communicate with the directors from both groups o **Resolution:** Attend the varsity game/event
- If you have a **Band performance** and an **activity practice** - **Action:** Communicate with the directors from both groups o **Resolution:** Attend the Band performance
- If you have a **Band performance** and a **Varsity activity game/event** - **Action:** Communicate with the directors from both groups o **Resolution:** You must objectively determine where you believe you are most needed and which situation will allow you to make the greatest contribution to your peers. We will respect and support whatever thoughtful decision you make.

As you can see, COMMUNICATION is the key to successfully resolving scheduling conflicts.

Attendance Policy

THE ONLY EXCUSABLE ABSENCES ARE PRE-ARRANGED* SCHOOL CONFLICTS AND THOSE THAT WOULD BE EXCUSED BY THE SCHOOL FOR REGULAR ATTENDANCE RECORDS, I.E. ILLNESS, DEATH IN THE FAMILY, RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY.

*Individual needs will be addressed as they occur. This system is subject to modification by the director.

For ALL absences, the following procedure must be followed by the student and parent:
Director must be notified in advance by email.

4 Weeks for Concerts and Competitions.

8 Hours for Rehearsals

- For illness, a physical documentation must be submitted. If missing school, file the illness absence through the school.
- Although cleared by the school office, absences from a band activity that same day must be cleared with the director as well – please email Mr. Reese.
- Follow-up is the sole responsibility of the student!

Financial Obligations

Each student has a specific financial obligation to the band program to some extent. This is available in a program we use called MyMusicOffice. Specifics are created on a yearly basis at the end of the spring semester. Information will be distributed from the director and/or Band Booster President. Dues for the following ensembles are:

- Marching Band: \$200
- Concert Band (semesterly): \$20
- Symphonic Band: \$20
- Jazz Band: \$15

Equipment Recommendations

Every music educator has their opinion and recommendations for what equipment their students should be playing on. Here are suggested guidelines for all students to take into consideration.

- Flute/Piccolo
 - Brand: Yamaha/Gemeinhert/Azumi
 - Open hole models by Junior year
- Oboe
 - Brand: Fox Renard
 - Reeds: Consult private teacher
- Bassoon
 - Brand: Fox Renard
 - Reeds: Consult private teacher
- Clarinet
 - Brand: Yamaha/Buffet/Backun
 - Mouthpieces: Vandoren M13 Lyre or Backun Vocalise
 - Ligature: Rovner Dark/Rovner Versa/ Vandoren M/O
 - Reeds: Vandoren Traditional/D'addario Reserve/Legere Classic or Signature Cut
 - Strength 3 or 3 ½ ideally
- Saxophone
 - Brand: Yamaha/Selmer
 - Classical Mouthpieces: Selmer S80 C*/Backun TM1
 - Jazz Mouthpieces: Meyer 5M, Otto Link HR
 - Ligature: Rovner Dark/Rovner Versa/D'addario H/Vandoren M/O
 - Reeds: Vandoren Traditional/Legere Signature or French Cut
 - Strength 3 or 3 ½ ideally
- Trumpet
 - Brand: Yamaha/Bach
 - Mouthpieces: Yamaha/Bach 3C or 5C
- French Horn
 - Brand: Conn 8D

- Mouthpieces: Farkas
- Trombone/Euphonium
 - Brand: Yamaha
 - Mouthpieces: Dennis Wick/Yamaha 6 ½ AL/48/5G
 - F-Trigger trombones recommended
 - Compensating system Euphoniums recommended
- Tuba
 - Brand: Yamaha/Conn
 - Mouthpieces: Helleberg/RobertTucci PT-50
- Percussion
 - Brands: Vic Firth/Innovative Percussion/Salyers
 - Percussionist should have a variety of the following at a minimum:
 - Concert Snare Sticks
 - Timpani Mallets
 - Medium Yarn Mallets
 - Hard Rubber Mallets
 - Practice Pad w/ Rim

Concert Dress

Each student is responsible for their own concert attire.

- All black, including socks and belt. Specific options:
 - Option 1
 - Black suit jacket, black dress shirt, black dress pants, formal black shoes with black socks.
 - Option 2
 - Floor-length black skirt, black pants (no denim), or black dress. Long sleeve black blouse. Simple jewelry. No décolletage, bare shoulders, or midriffs. Open-toed sandals are acceptable with dark stockings or pantyhose.

Grading Policy

Participation (60%) - coming to class with all materials and being an active participant.

Performance (40%) - attend and play in all concerts for specific classes.

MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS WILL INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Writing papers about music
- Completing practice logs
- Community Service

BAND TRAVEL/TRANSPORTATION

BAND TRAVELING

- If a conversation can be heard in the front of the bus, it is TOO LOUD!
- There will be no hanging out of or talking out of bus windows.
- Please lower the volume level considerably when entering towns or stadium. This is for your safety, is courteous to the bus driver, and an act of class!
- Please keep the bus clean; pick up after yourselves and always thank the chaperones and driver!

HOTEL SITUATIONS

- Parents and students will be responsible for paying for any incurred charges, including lost room keys.
- Rooms are to be locked at all times.
- There will be no one of the opposite sex in your room, unless accompanied by a chaperone – this is school district policy!
- Please refrain from playing instruments in the room.
- All school rules will be enforced on trips.
- All students should realize that any personal desires or uniqueness may have to be put aside for the duration of the trip in order to facilitate large group control and management.
- No one is to leave the hotel alone. Any student found leaving the premises without permission will be dealt with severely.
- Profanity is not a part of our organization! Make sure your language is not offensive.
- Band members are expected to be at the right place, at the right time, ready to go!

COMPETITIONS

Competitions are special events where we get to perform for a sophisticated audience and very competent judges. WE ARE THERE TO COMPETE WITH OURSELVES, NOT OTHER BANDS!! If we do our best, then everything will take care of itself. Specific information is given prior to competitions as to directions, departure and anticipated return time. All parents are encouraged to attend competitions and support the band. Parents will be notified by text as to the return time of the band. Please come and retrieve your child promptly after competitions.

Duties of the Band Member

- Be on time to all rehearsals and performances. EARLY IS ON TIME – ON TIME IS LATE.
- Upon entering the rehearsal setting, acquire your instrument and go directly to your seat.

- When the director or staff member steps on the podium or asks for your attention, all talking should cease.
- Come to rehearsal with a GOOD ATTITUDE.
- Make a real effort to improve on a daily basis and establish a good practice routine.
- At the end of rehearsal, put all materials in their proper place.
- Maintain a strong academic standing in all course work.
- Become responsible for and assume responsibility for your own actions. Admit when you are wrong.
- Have a proper respect for yourself and those in authority.
- Read and play music with insight – have musical expectations.
- Represent the program with pride and respect.

HOW TO PRACTICE

If a band member only played their instrument during the class, the threshold for how much improvement can be made is not great. It is the band members responsibility to practice for a minimum of 15 minutes per song assigned in class. Below is a general guideline for a band member to follow when practicing:

- Think about goals for the practice session.
 - Goals should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound. (SMART Goals)
 - Specific: Think of the 5 Ws (Who, What, When, Where, Why) about your practice session. You can also think with the end in mind.
 - Measurable: Think of phrases such as “I’m going to work on measures 22-32” or “I’m going to focus on my lyrical phrases in my music”.
 - Achievable: Do you have everything you need to achieve your goal? Metronome, Tuner, Pencil, working instrument, etc.
 - Realistic: Is the goal reachable with the allotted time and resources?
 - Time-Bound: Set timers on your phone. Spend your allotted time evenly on what needs to be accomplished in the practice session.
- Warm Up
 - Students should play through the warm ups we do in class every time they practice.
 - Breathing, Long Tones, Flexibility, Scales, Articulation, etc.
- Listen
 - Listen to the piece you are about to work on.
 - Make notes about anything you notice that would be helpful to reach your goals.
- Record
 - Record your practice session and listen back to it. You might be surprised with

the difference of how you feel versus how you actually sound.

- Focus
 - Work on specific parts of the section at a time.
 - Work them slow, then fast.
 - Work in 7 minute increments on things if you are getting bogged down.
- Take breaks
 - Put your instrument down and set a timer for a break.
 - Go for a walk, play a round of video games, eat a snack, etc.
- Ask for help
 - Students should consult the director or staff member with any questions regarding the practicing method. We don't know you need help unless you ask.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTITUDE

The greatest single factor that will determine the success of any individual or organization is **attitude**. The kind of person that you are is an individual choice and how we feel about something, which involves attitude, is one of the few actual independent choices that we have in life. It takes intense dedication to reach goals. Students should learn to discipline themselves to daily practice on fundamentals. The “right attitude” must be present along with sincerity, concentration, and dedication as the basic foundation. Such an attitude makes an artistic performance inevitable and is the difference between a winning organization and a mediocre group. The band can do much for you. Make the most of it in every rehearsal and performance.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLINE

Because of the nature of the organization, band discipline must be strict! Band students and parents must believe in the ideals, principles, and philosophy of the organization. Each member must always be aware of good behavior and think for themselves. Any misconduct casts a bad light on the school, community, and band program. Any member who casts discredit to the organization by his/her conduct or actions in band, in another class, or on a trip, shall be subject to dismissal from the band program or may lose a privilege within the program. This may include the chance to go on trips. This decision will be at the director's discretion.

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY TO THE BAND

It is the responsibility of every parent and guardian to see that the policies outlined in the HANDBOOK are followed and that the form in the back is signed and returned. This states that you UNDERSTAND the policies as set within, and that any questions are to be directed to the band director by making an appointment. Each parent IS responsible for the attendance of his/her child at all band functions. It is the responsibility of each parent to see that their child practices their instrument daily. The hands of the directors are tied without the help of parents.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

When a “band question” arises, it is important that you get factual information before discussing it with others. We do more harm to ourselves, the band family, when we talk about things that contain one or more “falsehoods” but consider them facts. If questions arise, it is important to contact Mr. Reese whether dealing with Band Proper/fundraising/etc.

- Show an interest in the music study of your child.
- Arrange a regular time for your child to practice.
- Find a quiet place where they can practice without interruption.
- Listen to performances of practice material, when asked to do so.
- Help the student keep a DAILY RECORD of practicing.
- Come up with a reward system for DAILY practice.
- Keep the instrument in good repair and keep at least three reeds in the case, Valve and slide oil for brass. Sticks/mallets for percussion. Get a metronome!
- Be extra-careful with school-owned instruments. Repair costs are high!
- Teach your child to be prepared and on time to each rehearsal or lesson.
- If Possible, Provide private instruction.
- Keep the Handbook in a safe place and refer to it often.
- Notify the teacher if the student is to be absent for rehearsals or lessons.
- Double-check behind the student to make sure that they have their instrument.
- Visit rehearsals occasionally.
- Attend booster meetings, concerts, games, and contests.

STUDENTS’ RESPONSIBILITY TO THE BAND

As members of this organization, you have a great deal of responsibility. It is essential to any program that if certain expectations are to be met that they coordinate with the privileges, rewards, and duties of the band program.

TO OURSELVES

YOU have the primary responsibility of developing your own abilities. The benefits of a good instrument and private instruction can never be underestimated. What you put into it is what you will get out of it. The director is ALWAYS available for your guidance and encouragement – just ask!

TO THE SCHOOL

Haywood School County Schools provides us with the resources for rehearsals, performances, and equipment. The Band Program also provides a support network, both financially and philosophically. WE have the responsibility to provide the best possible services to our community.

TO MUSIC

Music has always been a part of our culture. We must take what we have and use it for the betterment of that culture. No one expects virtuoso musicians, only your very best! The great composer Gustav Mahler once said that only 10% of a piece of music is on the page. If that is the case, then we as musicians have the duty of creating and producing the other 90%. The joy of music is not in everything that is apparent. It must be discovered and created.

TO EACH OTHER

We must always do what is best for the WELFARE of the group. There can be no selfish acts solely for the benefit of the individual, but for all. Respect, care for and love each other. If there are conflicts, find a way to resolve them. Never insult another band member's integrity. The word "band" means that we are banded together and that there is no separation.

Performance Dates

Here are the dates for concerts and after school rehearsals/events for the 2025-2026 School Year.

Band Camp: July 21st-August 8th

Mountie Showcase: August 8th

WCU Percussion Festival: September 6th

Fall Band Concert: September 15th

Land of Sky MB Festival: September 27th

Cedar Cliffs Classic: October 11th

Tournament of Champions: October 18th

North Henderson Competition: October 25th

Parades: December 1st and 4th

Winter Band Concert: December 10th

Spring:

All District Auditions: January 10th and 15th (22nd and 24th snow dates)

Pre-MPA and MPA: March 4th and March 12th and 19th

Jazz and Percussion Concert: April 28th

Spring Band Concert: May 11th

Band Banquet: May 16th

Letter of Mutual Consent

I, the undersigned student, accept membership in the Tuscola High School band and understand that I am responsible for all the policies as set forth in the Band Handbook. I fully agree to carry out my responsibilities to the very best of my ability.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

I, the undersigned parent or guardian, have read and understand the policies as set forth in the Band Handbook. I also grant full permission for my child to be an active member of the Tuscola High School Band. In addition, my child has full permission to attend all band functions. Furthermore, I understand that I must meet all financial obligations.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

IF YOU ARE USING A SCHOOL OWNED INSTRUMENT, FILL OUT THE BOTTOM PORTION.

Type of Instrument (s) _____

Manufacturer _____

Serial Number _____

Parent email address _____