

Briscoe Middle School Band

Members Handbook

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Briscoe Middle School Band consists of several performing concert bands, Jazz Bands and Beginning Band. Furtherance of the Briscoe Bands' efforts toward excellence and accomplishment requires cooperation and dedication from the students, parents, directors and administration. The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint members and parents with the Briscoe Middle School Band Program and to provide information on its operation. If you have any questions or concerns about any information in this handbook or about the Band generally, you may contact any of the Band staff.

All Band members and their parents are requested to read this handbook and must sign the consent and agreement on the last page to indicate their consent to and commitment to comply with the Band rules and requirements, as a condition of participation in the Briscoe Band. The handbook can be found on www.BengalBand.org.

Some abbreviations and terms that will be used throughout this handbook and their meanings are as follows:

UIL University Interscholastic League

NISD Northside Independent School District

BMS Briscoe Middle School

Band functions Band functions are all official activities of the Band, both scheduled and called, and include all rehearsals (*including during class periods and after or before school*) sectionals, performances, competitions, exhibitions, required fundraisers and trips.

II. GOALS, RESPONSIBILITY AND COMMITMENT

BRISCOE BAND GOALS

NISD places a strong emphasis on individual musical awareness and enrichment. The Briscoe Band provides this awareness and enrichment through its various ensembles. The Band offers students all levels of music literature and musical skill that are both enhancing and challenging. The Briscoe Band will be an active part of the BMS campus life and SPIRIT!

The Briscoe Band will strive for excellence. Each individual Band member should develop and mature in character, loyalty, dependability, dedication, leadership and musical skills while substantially contributing to the success of the Briscoe Band. The Briscoe Band seeks to enhance each member's middle school experience, to provide each member the best possible music education and band experience, and to help develop character traits that will positively serve those members throughout their lives.

BAND MEMBER RESPONSIBILITY AND COMMITMENT

The opportunity to participate in co-curricular activities in NISD, such as band, is a privilege. Students who accept the privilege of participating in co-curricular activities must recognize that they are representatives of NISD and BMS and will be held to a higher standard of conduct in both school related and non-school related activities. Furthermore, the privilege of participating in the Briscoe Band requires that each member be fully committed to the goals of the Band and to do all that is necessary to achieve those goals.

All Band members must follow all applicable state laws, NISD policies, BMS rules, UIL rules and Band rules & requirements at all times. Those laws, policies and rules, however, establish only the minimally acceptable behavior. To achieve the goals of the Band, far more than minimally acceptable behavior and minimal effort is required. All Band members must strive to further the goals of the Band and to meet their responsibilities to the Band. All Band members must, at all times, assume personal responsibility for improving their individual musical skills and each of the bands of which they are members by their actions and attitude. Specifically, to those ends, all members should use every Band function, particularly rehearsals and sectionals, to further their knowledge and ability as much as possible and to promote the Band's excellence overall. In every performance, all members should strive to give their best possible individual performance and to make a significant and positive contribution to the best possible performance of the Band. Members must not undermine the efforts of the Band and the Band director, instructors and student leaders through poor attitude or effort, or disparagement of any individual or undertaking, but rather, at all times, all members must cooperate with the Band directors/instructors and approach every undertaking with a positive attitude and with a full and sincere effort.

III. RULES AND REQUIREMENTS

To achieve the Briscoe Band's goals, it is essential that all members comply with all Band rules and requirements. This section of the handbook sets out and explains, as necessary, the rules and requirements of Band membership and clearly identifies and gives notice of the conduct for which Band members may be disciplined and the possible disciplinary measures that may be imposed. There are specific rules and requirements applicable to certain circumstances. The general violations specified in the following section may be covered or explained elsewhere but are included in that section to provide a general overview of prohibited conduct. It is the intent to provide in this handbook notice that any improper conduct in any circumstance may subject a Band member to disciplinary action.

Under NISD policy, the Briscoe Band rules and requirements are independent of the student code of conduct of BMS and NISD. Violations of the Band rules and requirements that also constitute violations of the student code of conduct may subject a member to independent disciplinary action under both.

BAND DISCIPLINE PLAN (BDP)

For a violation of any State law, NISD policy, Briscoe MS rule, Briscoe MS Band rule, or UIL rule or requirement, the following disciplinary actions may be imposed:

- 1) Student correction and/or Student Conference
- 2) Parental notification and/or Parent Conference
- 3) Office referral and/or loss of a band privilege (*i.e. social events at directors discretion*)
- 4) Implementation of a Behavioral Contract
- 5) Exclusion or removal from the band program

The above information outlines the general plan for most disciplinary offenses. However, the disciplinary action imposed in each instance will be at the discretion of the Band director considering the nature and severity of the conduct, the circumstances of the conduct, its frequency and prior warnings or action, consistency of action considering other situations, and other relevant factors.

In addition to possible disciplinary action for violation of or failure to comply with these specific rules and requirements, disciplinary action under the BDP may be imposed for any of the following:

- 1) Violation of any state law, NISD policy, or BMS rules regarding drugs, alcohol or tobacco.
- 2) Unexcused tardy or absence from any Band function.
- 3) Failure to be properly prepared for any Band function.
- 4) Failure to properly care for or loss of any Band property including music, instrument or uniform.
- 5) Using, tampering with or improper treatment of another Band member's instrument, music, uniform, or other property.
- 6) Failure to timely check in equipment.
- 7) Poor participation in any Band function.
- 8) Improper behavior at any Band function.
- 9) Improper behavior in or treatment of the Band hall or any Band or school property.
- 10) Disrespectful or other improper treatment of directors, instructors, or Band members.

BAND HALL RULES

- 1) **READY TO PLAY** – Be at your band locker when the tardy bell rings. Electronic devices should be put away at all times. Use the restroom before or after class. Be ready to play 3 minutes after the tardy bell rings. Focus & Participate fully at all times.
- 2) **QUESTIONS/COMMENTS** - Please raise your hand to be recognized. Personal questions and other band requests (*music, lockers, makeup tests, etc*) are considered before or after school questions.
- 3) **AROUND THE ROOM** – Please use designated hand signals before leaving your seat. 10 x 10 - No bathroom breaks first 10 minutes or last 10 minutes.
- 4) **DISMISSAL** - Dismissal will be done by the director at the end of class. Return all chairs & stands to "READY" position and put away all equipment. Percussionists, please cover ALL instruments.
- 5) **FOOD & DRINK** – No food & drinks are allowed in the Band hall. Water bottles are permitted.
- 6) **GUM** – GUM is NEVER permitted.
- 7) **EQUIPMENT** - All personal equipment should be clearly labeled. Play only on your instrument & equipment. Only percussionists play on percussion equipment.
- 8) **LOCKERS** – Please lock all lockers at all times to guarantee safety of property.
- 9) **NON-BAND STUDENTS** - Non-Band students are not allowed in the Band hall.
- 10) **DESTRUCTION OF SCHOOL PROPERTY** - Do not deface walls, stands, equipment, furniture and/or any NISD property.

EVENT ATTENDANCE

Be there. Because the Briscoe Band functions as a "team" and counts on each member, each member's prompt attendance at all Band functions is crucial to the success of the Band. Each Band member is responsible to be in the required location, properly attired (in the full proper uniform as required), with his or her instrument and all necessary music, equipment, etc. at or before the appointed time and in sufficient time to answer Roll Call. Therefore, excessive absences can result in loss of band privileges. Excessive absences will be defined as more than 3 excused or unexcused absences in a performance preparation period. This is the period of time between the introductions of performance material to the final performance of that material. Also, rehearsals outside of school are considered assignments. Unexcused absences can result in a lowering of the student's weekly participation grade.

All absence notifications must be turned in at least 24 hours before the function to be missed. This must be submitted to the band director. In addition, if a student will be absent for more than one band function, a separate absence notification must be submitted for each function. Parent signatures are required on each. If a student is unable to attend a band function due to an unforeseen circumstance such as sickness, injury, or death in the family, a notification must be turned in upon that student's return to normal band participation. This process must be used to ensure proper record-keeping and student accountability.

IMPORTANT: A properly submitted notification form does not ensure that the absence is excused.

BAND CALENDAR

Please note that a Band Calendar is [posted on the Bengal Band website](#). All events are subject to change. Advance notice will be given.

SUPPLIES: Instrument, Music & Binders

Music is distributed in class as needed for band performances. **A binder is required.** Protective sheets are recommended. Students are responsible for keeping all music in their binder and bringing their own music to class every day. If a student needs a replacement copy of their music, that request needs to be done before or after school.

To fully participate in band class every day, each student needs:

1. An instrument in excellent working order
2. Instrument & supplies – reeds, oil, stick bag, etc...
3. All music/books as assigned
4. A Binder dedicated to Band
5. A pencil

GRADING POLICY

50% Class Participation/Sectionals & 50% Assessments/Performances

Class Participation concerns daily work and is one of the biggest reasons for student success. Students must have ALL supplies every day and participate fully. Grades are given on a daily basis. Sectionals are graded activities that take place outside of the school day that involve just a 'section' of the band.

Assessments /Performances is the grading category for weekly grades, concerts and contests. Performances are required, graded and co-curricular events. Performing with the Briscoe MS Band is a privilege and all students must meet the performance and/or behavioral expectations to be included in any given performance.

Types of Performances:

Concerts – (All Bands) are co-curricular, graded and not optional. Concert dates are on the band calendar provided (also available on Bengal Band website). In other words, failing academic grades do not affect whether a student plays at a concert.

Contests – (Int/Adv Bands) UIL Contest participation is an honor for all Int/Adv Band members and is not a requirement for Band students to pass the course. Only those students who adequately prepare the music and are eligible may participate. "No pass-No play" does apply. UIL Contest is held in the spring semester.

Special Performances – From time to time, the Briscoe Band will be asked to perform at special functions. These performances may be limited to the most prepared musicians in a given group and at the discretion of the Band Director.

LATE WORK POLICY

It is the student's responsibility to ask the Director for any late work or missed rehearsal. The appropriate time to speak to the Director is before or after school and immediately upon returning to school.

Students have until the end of the grading period to make up a missed assignment. If the student misses the make-up event, a grade of a 0 (Missing) will be recorded. A student will receive a grade of a 0 if a student misses a performance event without a valid excuse. A make-up assignment is per student request.

PRACTICE

Daily instrument practice outside of the band class is the single most important indicator of student success in band. Simply put, a student that practices consistently will succeed in their musical studies.

All band students are expected to practice a minimum of 20 minutes per day at home for a total of 140 minutes a week. A student's daily practice should include warm-up exercises, technical studies and concert band arrangements and other band assignments. Your child should never say "*I don't have anything to practice*".

Consistency is the key to ensuring good practice habits. Practice at the same time every day. Set aside a place for your student to practice every day that includes a good chair, music stand, metronome, and all other necessary materials for practice.

Get involved in your student's daily practice. Ask them questions about what they are doing. Have your student perform for you regularly. Private lessons are always recommended.

BRISCOE MS PRIVATE LESSON POLICY

We are excited about our N.I.S.D. approved private lesson program. Your students get the opportunity to work one-on-one with professional musicians and the benefits to your student is truly remarkable.

We have worked hard to acquire highly qualified musicians to teach lessons here at Briscoe Middle School and they are available to teach your child in a one-on-one setting. This can be done at Briscoe MS during class or before or after school.

These lessons are normally offered once per week. Prices are set by each individual lesson teacher and with district guidelines. It is the parent's obligation to contact, organize times, and pay the private teacher directly. Briscoe MS faculty will not accept payment for any private lesson personnel. All private lesson teachers in N.I.S.D. have been screened by the district, just like all Northside employees.

The benefits of private lessons are numerous. Private lesson students' progress 2 to 3 times faster than usual. The student also gets extra help with solos, tests for class, All-Region music, and any areas that the student needs improvement. [A list of private lesson instructors can be found here.](#)

SECTIONALS

Sectionals may be called by a Band director before or after school. Sectionals are small group tutoring sessions where directors cover material that is specific for a certain instrument. They are vital for the success of any ensemble!

ADVANCED BAND ENSEMBLES

The Briscoe MS Band is broken into 3 categories:

- Beginning
- Intermediate
- Advanced

The Int/Adv Band members are further broken down into 4 organizations – Honors, Symphonic, Concert, and Jazz Bands.

UNIFORMS FOR ENSEMBLES

Intermediate & Advanced Band members uniform

Formal attire:

The parts of the uniform provided by the school include:

Boys: **Tux (Black coat, black pants, white tuxedo shirt, bow tie)**

Some parts of the uniform are the responsibility of the student to purchase: black dress shoes (no sneakers or tennis shoes), full length black dress socks & white undershirt

Girls: **Black dress**

Some parts of the uniform are the responsibility of the student to purchase: black dress shoes

Band fees must be paid in order to receive a uniform. At the end of the school year, a \$10 cleaning fee will be collected for uniform dry cleaning.

Informal attire for performance:

In addition to the Formal Attire, all Intermediate and Advanced Band students must purchase the official Briscoe MS Band polo shirt. This shirt will be worn to informal functions of the band and is considered a Briscoe MS Band Spirit Shirt.

Uniform Replacement Costs

Tuxedo Packages

\$100.00

Tux Coat = \$50, Pants = \$45, Bow Tie=\$5

Formal Dresses

\$100.00

Beginning Band members uniform

Informal attire for performance: *The official Briscoe MS Fun Shirt, blue jeans and comfortable shoes*

Formal attire for performance: *The official Briscoe MS Band Polo Shirt, Black slacks, Black socks, Black dress shoes*

INSTRUMENT CARE & CHECKOUT

Instrument Care

The instruments you use in band class are expensive and require special care. Students should not let anyone else play, touch, or hold their instruments at any time. This is a classroom rule and expectation. Students who play reed instruments (clarinets, oboes, bassoons and saxophones) need to keep at least 3 working reeds in their case at all times. Reeds can be purchased at any local music store, or online

Instrument Check-out

School-owned instruments will be checked out at the beginning of the year. Students will be solely responsible for all repairs and damage that occur to the instrument while it is checked out. This policy applies regardless of the circumstances resulting in the damage.

School Owned Instrument Cleaning Fee & Percussion Fee Policy:

A yearly cleaning fee will be assessed to each student using a school owned instrument of \$60. This will be paid at the end of year in May. This policy applies to all students using school owned equipment. The percussion fee will be \$30.

LOCKERS AND LOCKS

Every student will be issued a band locker and lock for their band instrument and music. Lockers should remain locked at all times (even when empty). Students may not share lockers. Do not share your combination with any other student. Each student is solely responsible for the security and safety of his/her instrument. Any items left outside a locker or in an unlocked locker are at a very high risk of theft due to the large number of individuals that frequent the band hall each day. If a lock is stolen from a locker because it was left unlocked, the student will be responsible for replacement of the lock and all school-owned property inside the locker.

If a student loses or damages a lock, a charge of \$10.00 will be assessed before the lock is replaced. Abuse of locks and lockers may result in restriction from use, monetary fine, and/or disciplinary action. Students are expected to keep their lockers clean and free from any food.

It is in the student's best interest to **MAKE SURE THE LOCK IS LOCKED AT ALL TIMES**. The Briscoe band will not be responsible for property stolen from the Briscoe Band Hall.

GENERAL TRAVEL AND EVENT RULES

Activities away from BMS require particular responsibility and cooperation from Band members. In addition to other applicable laws, policies and rules, the following specific rules are in effect for and applicable to all members for all such activities, unless instructed otherwise by the Band director. Band Parent Organization chaperones usually accompany the Band on these trips. On trips in which chaperones are not present, the Band director or other supervising adult will perform the functions of chaperones specified in these rules and should be consulted accordingly. Failure to comply with any of the following rules may subject a member to discipline under the BDP. At any time while traveling to or at an event or Band Function, each member must:

1. immediately notify a chaperone of illness or injury.
2. refrain from loud or disruptive behavior
3. CHAPERONES, BUS DRIVERS, ETC. CANNOT AND WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY PERSONAL ITEMS LEFT ON BUSES.
4. stay with the Band at all times
5. act respectfully at all times.

MEDICAL, CONSENT AND OTHER FORMS REQUIREMENTS

To enjoy the privileges of engaging in certain Band functions, NISD policy requires that members turn in consent and medical forms and other commitments, permissions or other documents properly signed and promptly returned as required by the Band director. It is the responsibility of each Band member to timely obtain the proper documents, to provide *all* the required information, to properly sign and have his/her parent or guardian sign any such documents and to return such documents to the proper person, or place, in the proper manner and *by the specified time*.

The failure to timely return, properly and fully completed and signed, any form, consent, commitment, permission or other such document as required by the Band director may subject the member to discipline under the BDP, including particularly exclusion from a Band function or functions.

IV. OTHER INFORMATION

COMMUNICATION

Website and Emails

Please visit www.BengalBand.org for up to date information and a slew of band related information. All email communications will be sent out via HAC and posted on our website.

TMEA ALL REGION AUDITIONS (Int/Adv Band members)

Students from across our region participate in this audition. The audition material consists of scales and two prepared pieces. Students are judged by a panel(s) of five judges who sit behind a partition to listen to each student perform their music. This process protects student anonymity and the integrity of the audition process. The top students are selected from these auditions and receive the honor of participating in the All Region Band Clinic and Concert (see below). Selection to the All Region band is one of the highest honors a middle school student can achieve. The bands rehearse on a Friday evening and Saturday morning culminating with a concert performance early Saturday afternoon. The students may order a CD/DVD recording of the concert performance. T-shirts and plaques are also available for purchase. The concerts are performed at one of our local high schools and admission is free.

Band members are strongly encouraged, and some Band classes may be required, to prepare the prescribed music for these auditions, sponsored by the Texas Music Educators Association, to such a level that they may successfully compete and learn from the experience.

UIL CONCERT & SIGHTREADING CONTEST (Int/Adv Band members)

This is the staple competition for UIL, occurring every year in the spring in all regions of the state. Bands prepare a concert program of three pieces chosen from the Prescribed Music List and perform for a panel of three judges who rate the bands with one of five ratings. Again, the comparison is only with a standard of excellence, not with other bands in the contest. Immediately following the concert, bands move to another room to sightread a piece of music chosen by the band's classification. The music for sightreading is composed specifically for the contest and addresses certain fundamentals that are aligned with the curriculum for each classification. This is the musical equivalent of a statewide achievement test for Band.

SOLO & ENSEMBLE CONTEST (All Band members)

Band members are required to participate in this contest which is held during the second semester.

BAND BOOSTER ORGANIZATION

The Band Booster organization is a non-profit association that supports and assists the Briscoe Band's members, staff and Band directors. The organization provides direct helping to plan and coordinate the Band events. Another of the many roles of the organization is to raise funds to help cover the cost of clinicians, contest entry fees, transportation, awards, and special musical arrangements, to name just a few of the many costs that are not paid by NISD. All activities of the organization are carried out with the advice and consent of the Band directors and BMS administration.

V. Conclusion

It is our sincere wish that all present and future Bengal Band members cultivate and enjoy long-lasting friendships and a strong sense of pride in the efforts and accomplishments of the Band and its members and that these attributes will be passed down from year to year. We believe that these goals can be and will be achieved through the concerted effort of all toward "a job well done." All Bengal Band members have contributions to make. All members contribute by their actions but even more by their attitude. By contributing a positive attitude and dedication in the pursuit of excellence, together with strong parent, administrative, student, and community support, GREAT THINGS are possible!

WELCOME TO THE BRISCOE MS BAND!

[Here is the link to our Handbook Acknowledgement Form and Shirt Order Form.](#)