

PHILOSOPHY

The Monacan High School Band is an organization of students and staff who pride themselves on excellence - excellence in our personal performance, our section's performance, our band's performance, and in the way we represent ourselves and our school. Excellence is a choice people make, just as mediocrity is a choice. Excellence is not a gift you're born with, but something you strive for out of the conviction that being as good as you can be is what life is all about. We know that the road to excellence is not always going to be an easy one, but if we work together then excellence is an attainable goal. This handbook outlines our policies that are necessary to achieve the goals that we set for ourselves - to have pride in ourselves and others, to always perform as winners, and to work together to be truly excellent in everything that we do. Excellent bands differ not in what they do, but how they do it.

ORGANIZATION

Symphonic Band

The Symphonic Band is open to advanced students by audition or by recommendation of the band director. Because this is an advanced ensemble, the requirements for participation are of the highest caliber. Students should be able to display a high level of playing ability and should exemplify the standards of the Monacan Band program. Students are expected to show a higher understanding of music theory, music history, and concepts of basic musicianship. Instruction will be designed to further enhance the individual and ensemble performance skills through the performance and study of some of the more advanced band literature. This class meets during the school day and occasionally rehearses after school in preparation for performances, which include concerts, District Concert Band Festival, and other events that may be scheduled as opportunities arise. Instrumentation is limited based on the needs of the ensemble as determined by the director.

Concert Band (Advanced Band)

The Concert Band is open to students who have had instrumental music experience and have been recommended by the middle or high school band directors. Concert performance skills are developed through group and individualized instruction. Students learn basic music theory and vocabulary as well as continuing to improve playing fundamentals and sight-reading skills. This class meets during the school day and occasionally rehearses after school in preparation for performances, which include concerts, District Concert Band Festival, and other events that may be scheduled as opportunities arrive.

Jazz Band

The Jazz Band is open to students with advanced musical skills either through audition or by the recommendation of the director. Students in the jazz band are expected to participate in one of the other band classes as well. This select group performs for special occasions as well as for Monacan band concerts. Instrumentation is limited based on the needs of the ensemble as determined by the director. This year the jazz band will also play with the competition show choirs.

Percussion Ensemble (Instrumental Ensemble)

The Percussion Ensemble is open to students who have prior percussion experience in middle or high school band, including some skill on keyboard instruments, by recommendation of the band director. Concert performance skills are developed on a wide variety of percussion instruments through groups and individualized instruction. Students learn basic music theory and vocabulary as well as basic playing fundamentals and sight-reading skills. This group performs for all Monacan concerts.

Marching Band (extra-curricular)

The Marching Band is open to students who are enrolled in a band class and who have had previous musical experience by recommendation of the band director. Performance skills are developed through group and individualized instruction. Students learn basic music skills as well as marching fundamentals. The Marching Band performs at all home football games, some away football games, band competitions during the fall, and some local parades.

The Marching Band meets after school during the fall. Band camp is held during the last three weeks of August, and attendance at camp is mandatory. Students will be notified of band camp dates early in the fall semester so that vacations can be planned around camp.

Color Guard (extra-curricular)

The Color Guard functions as one of the most important visual elements of the marching band show. Guard members undergo rigorous training in dance and equipment work. All equipment will be provided by the school. Guard members may be responsible for paying part or all of the cost of their own uniforms which change yearly based on the type of show performed. The members of the Color Guard are selected by audition in the spring for participation in the group the following year.

Other Activities

- **Chesterfield All-County Band:** Students are selected to participate in this ensemble by the band director based on ability level and placement in All-District Band auditions. The event is held in January.
- **All-District Band:** The Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors' Association District III Concert and Symphonic Bands are selected by audition according to requirements published in the VBODA manual. Students selected through the audition process will participate in a weekend clinic with a noted composer or band director and present a public performance at the conclusion of the weekend. Students attaining exceptional placement in the District Symphonic Band may be eligible to audition for the All-Virginia Band and Orchestra. Auditions for All-District Band are held in December, and the event is held in February.

Monacan High School Band Boosters

The Monacan High School Band Program could not exist without the support of the Band Boosters. This organization is made up of parents who are taking an active and concerned role in the education of their children. This organization provides the bulk of the financial stability that allows the program to grow and to provide the students with the highest quality education possible. All parents are invited and encouraged to come and be a part of this crucial element of the Monacan Band program. Participation in this group is not just work - there is a great deal of fun to be had while working closely with the students and staff. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 7:30 PM in the band room. Come and see what you might be able to do!

FACILITIES

The Band Facility is located in the Music wing of the school, to the right of the auditorium. The area includes a large rehearsal room, an instrument storage room, and office space. The Band area is open to all students currently participating in an activity sponsored by the Band. **Other students not participating in Band activities are not to be in the area at any time without the direct permission of the director.**

Expectations while in the band room or band area:

- No food, drink, or gum is allowed in the band facility.
- There is no running or "horseplay" allowed in the band facility.
- Do not touch other people's instruments or equipment.
- Do not touch or play any percussion equipment at any time. Only percussionists may do so, and only during rehearsals.

Band Room

The Band Room will be open by 7:00 AM and from 1:45 - 2:15 PM each day for the proper storage and removal of instruments. Notices and calendars will be posted on the bulletin board in the front of the room. It will be the student's responsibility to check the bulletin board regularly and also make calendar changes as noted there.

Instrument Storage Room

The Instrument Storage Room is for the proper storage of instruments and cases. Personal belongings should not be left in this area as they present a safety hazard to people and instruments. All students are required to have their name on the outside of their instrument case, including school instruments. Students will be assigned a storage locker or an area for their instrument. Marching band members will be given first priority for locker assignments. **Any student caught opening or tampering with another student's instrument will be referred to the office for disciplinary action.**

Neither Monacan High School nor the Monacan Band Program is responsible for items that may be stolen from the storage areas or from the band room. These areas will be locked when they are not in use; however, this may not prevent theft from occurring. Take the appropriate precautions in securing your belongings.

Band Director's Office

The Band Director's Office will be locked when not in use. Students may use the office phone after school hours with the director's permission. Students are not to be in this area without permission of the director.

Stage

The Stage is off limits to students unless participating in an approved rehearsal or performance. Students in this area without permission are subject to disciplinary action.

The Band Room is used by a large number of people each day and each student is expected to take responsibility for the disposal of trash and the proper storage and maintenance of materials.

EQUIPMENT

School-Owned Instruments

Students using school-owned instruments are required to sign a contract with the school. The instrument is to be used only by the person to whom it is assigned. That person is responsible for any damages that occur. The school will assume responsibility for routine wear; **however, if the instrument is dropped or abused, the person assigned the instrument is responsible for the cost of the repairs.** The school shall determine which company will make authorized repairs. If the instrument is stolen while in the possession of the student, that student is responsible for restitution. The student using a school instrument is responsible for obtaining any supplies used to maintain the instrument (oil, grease, etc.).

Music

The student will be provided with appropriate music and a folder. Folders should be stored in the appropriate slot in the storage cabinet and not in areas such as the instrument storage room. Students will be given sheet music and will be checked off when returning it. Any lost, damaged, or stolen music must be promptly replaced at the student's expense. Music is to be marked with pencil only, never ink. All pencil marks must be erased before music is turned in.

Uniforms

For all performances of the Concert, Symphonic, and Jazz Bands, the only acceptable attire is as follows:

- Ladies: long black dress.
- Gentlemen: black tux pants, white tux shirt, black tie and cummerbund, black socks and shoes.

Any student arriving at a performance not properly attired will be sent home and will receive a grade of zero for that performance.

PROCEDURES

Class Procedures

Students are expected to enter the band room in an orderly and timely fashion. Gum, food, and drinks (except water) are not allowed in the band room. Students are expected to be in their seats ready to play by the time the director takes the podium (two or three minutes after the late bell). Students who are not in their seats will be counted tardy.

All students are to have a pencil, music, and all other materials necessary for a successful learning experience on a daily basis. Failure to have these materials will result in a reduction of the Daily Class Grade.

Behavior expectations are based on one thing, RESPECT. Each student must possess a high level of respect for himself or herself, other members of the class, and the director. Out of respect, students should maintain a level of discipline that allows everyone in the class to reap the full benefits of instruction. Talking during rehearsal is acceptable only at appropriate times. Questions and comments will only be acknowledged when a student raises his or her hand. Excessive talking will result in a reduction of the grade and may lead to further disciplinary action. To achieve excellence, we must have an environment conducive to learning. Respecting each other is the key to achieving this goal.

Students should always show respect for the facilities and equipment of Monacan High School. **Any student caught destroying school property will be referred to the office for disciplinary action.**

Attendance

The success of any organization depends on the commitment of each of its members and the absence of any member adversely affects the entire group. Therefore, all band activities are mandatory. Students will be excused from rehearsal only if they complete an excuse form, have a parent sign it, and return it to the band director prior to the absence. Turning in a form does not guarantee that an absence will be excused. This, of course, does not include special situations such as extreme illness, death in the family, or circumstances beyond the control of the parties involved. However, if an emergency does arise, please make every effort to contact the director so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Any student who incurs an unexcused absence will have their grade lowered. In the case of Marching Band, students may risk losing their eligibility to letter for that season. Students may also be dismissed from the Marching Band. **Having to work is never an acceptable excuse for missing a band activity.**

Extra-Curricular Activities

Students may participate in other activities while involved in band. This may cause a time conflict. However, this conflict will be worked out if the student is capable of doing both activities well. Most conflicts are avoided through cooperation and communication. It is best to limit the number of activities in which you are involved, but any situation that is able to be worked out will be given consideration. If you have any questions, please speak with the director.

Grade Evaluation

A complete list of classroom expectations will be provided to the students on a course syllabus that will be distributed on the first day of class. The grades for all band classes will be determined as follows:

- 50% Daily Class Grade
- 50% Playing and written tests and performance (concerts count twice as much)

The Daily Class Grade shall be based on the following criteria:

- Possession of ALL class materials (music, pencil, instrument, etc.)
- Punctuality
- Positive participation in the class

Extra credit may be earned through participation in outside musical activities such as GRYWE, GRYSO, Greater Richmond High School Jazz Band, performing in church, musicals, studying with an approved private teacher, and other activities deemed acceptable by the director.

Philosophy of Practice

In order to improve on his or her instrument and contribute positively to the band rehearsal, students should practice a minimum of 1/2 hour every night. The rehearsal is not the time for students to learn their individual parts; rather it is the time for the parts to be put together to create music. This means that every student must take his or her instrument home on a regular basis. Students who consistently leave their instruments at school may have their grade reduced. Every effort will be made to see that students who use large school instruments will have an instrument at home and one at school.

Pep Band

Band members may choose to participate in pep band for basketball games. Rehearsals will be held after school and announced during the school year.

Travel

While traveling, band members represent not only themselves but their band and their school as well. We should conduct ourselves in such a way that everyone who sees us will know the pride and respect we feel for each other and for our band and our school. Therefore, all school rules apply and take precedence.

At the director's discretion, students may be permitted to ride home from local events with their parents. Parents should send a note prior to the event and must be present at the designated area to pick up the student. Students may not be picked up by anyone other than their parents.

Buses

Students will be assigned to buses prior to any trip away from school and will be expected to remain on their respective buses throughout the trip. The director reserves the right to make seating changes at any time. Anyone causing damage to a bus will be held accountable. Proper and courteous behavior is expected from all students at all times.

Fees

Each year, students will be required to pay a band fee for participation in the marching band. This fee will be used to help defray the cost of instructional staff, purchase of music, transportation, uniforms, instrument repair and replacement, and other items associated with the marching program. This fee is not intended to exclude anyone from participation in the marching band - any student with a financial concern is encouraged to speak to the director about it. There will be additional costs for all students pertaining to any trips taken during the spring. There will be adequate notice of such expenses and the students will have the opportunity to raise some of the money for these trips through various fundraisers.

All students who participate in a band class will be assessed a county fee of \$10 per band class. This money will be applied towards the purchase of music and equipment for the band classes. It will be collected at Fee Night before school starts. All marching band members will also be assessed a \$30 Uniform Cleaning fee that is collected at Fee Night.

Fundraising

Throughout the course of the year, all students will be asked to participate in fundraising activities. These activities may range from assistance with the Fall Craft Fair to the selling of items through a designated fundraising company. A large portion of our annual budget is determined by the success of our fundraising efforts.

All money must be turned in at the designated time in a sealed envelope with the name of the student and amount and description of the payment on the outside of the envelope. All payments and fundraising monies must be turned in on the date requested. Money should be given to a designated representative of the band boosters. Do not give money to the director unless instructed to do so.

Medical Information

Students are required to have a medical form properly filled out and signed by their parents before they will be allowed to participate in band activities. Students are also required to provide proof of hospitalization insurance coverage. This proof can be a photocopy of the parents' health insurance card or school insurance card. This can be copied directly onto the back of the medical form that is provided. If the student is not covered, the parents will be required to attach a letter stating that the school will not be held responsible for charges incurred due to medical emergency and that the parent assumes legal responsibility for all such charges.

Auditions

Auditions for the Concert Bands will occur in two phases. Phase one will occur in the spring semester prior to scheduling to determine which band (Concert, Symphonic, Jazz) the student will participate in the following year. Students currently participating in selected (auditioned) groups may not have to audition from year to year. Phase two will occur in the fall of the following year. This audition will determine seating within the student's respective band. Audition materials will be determined by the director.

Awards

A number of awards are presented to band students at the Band Banquet in the spring, including the John Philip Sousa award (presented to the most outstanding senior), the Louis Armstrong Jazz Award (presented to the most outstanding senior musician in jazz), and several Band Booster Scholarships.

Please sign and return to Ms. Ryan by Friday, September 15 for a grade.

I have read and understood the policies and regulations as stated in the Monacan High School Band Handbook. I will abide by all regulations and policies indicated therein.

Student signature

Date

Parent/guardian signature

Date