

BLANCHARD
MIDDLE SCHOOL BANDS
HANDBOOK



2022-2023

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Blanchard Bands

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Hello, MS Band Students and Parents!

Welcome to the Blanchard Bands (6th-8th) and another exciting year! As a member of the Blanchard Band program you have the honor and responsibility of participating in an organization with high standards of excellence both in performance and personal conduct. The main emphasis of our band program is on musicianship and pride of accomplishment, followed closely by citizenship, tradition, spirit, and loyalty. It is the pride of a job well done and the accomplishments achieved that make the sacrifice worthwhile. The success of the individual will lead to the success of the organization and vice versa. I don't know why anyone would not want to be involved in a successful band program like the one here in Blanchard!

Everyone should read the information in the handbook. This is our "band bible" that keeps us running smoothly and efficiently. Most questions can be answered by consulting the handbook which is always available on Cut Time, which will be explained later for newcomers. Cut Time and the band website are incredible resources that include a wealth of knowledge, so bookmark both sites and check them regularly.

Pay special attention to the calendar, which is only available online (Cut Time). It will assist you in balancing your schedule for the year. We believe that it is possible to have successful band, academic, and athletic careers at the same time.

The **2021-2022** year was full of successes by our students. In all areas of the program we saw growth and indications that things are only going to continue to prosper. We are looking ahead to some wonderful opportunities for the coming year!

After reading the handbook, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact us. All contact information can be found on the letterhead, Cut Time, or the band website. If you do not have internet access and are unable to access the online tools, please let us know immediately so we can make alternate arrangements with you.

We are extremely fortunate to have parents, faculty, administrators, and school board members that are committed and dedicated to a quality band program. We look forward to you and your family being a part of our band! We are honored to be your band directors and we're looking forward to an incredible year!

AFTER READING THESE MATERIALS, PLEASE FILL OUT, SIGN, AND RETURN THE HANDBOOK AGREEMENT, FOUND ON CUT TIME, **BEFORE FRIDAY, AUGUST 26th, 2022.**

Sincerely,

Jenn Kauffman

Kara VanVickle

Why Band?

It has been proven time and time again that participation in school music programs, particularly band, has immense positive effects on students' other academic areas. Test scores go up dramatically, high school and college graduation rates are higher, and band students in general enjoy a higher level of success than non-band members. The only group in school with better academic numbers is the National Honor Society, which includes many band members. More students are accepted into medical school who have a bachelor's degree in music than students who have bachelor's degrees in pre-med. Besides the academic benefits, it is shown that students who participate in band have lower rates of drug and alcohol abuse, not just during high school, but throughout life.

While we believe completely in making our students the best musicians possible, it is even more important to us to shape our students into the best people they can be. We teach students to be good people, not just good musicians, and encourage them to be the best they can be.

We have three foundations from which we teach that we believe are not taught anywhere else:

- **The more you give, the more you get, and the more you get, the more you give**
 - **It is a win/win world**
 - **Don't quit until it's perfect**

The more you give, the more you get- We give our students an objective and when they achieve it, we congratulate them and turn around and give them more to achieve. We are constantly dangling a carrot in front of them, pushing them to do more and be more. In order to keep improving, students must continue to give more of themselves and work harder. Schools are struggling to deal with students who won't give of themselves, so those students are learning that if you give less, you'll get more. When they don't turn in homework, they get extra make-up assignments; when they have too many tardies or absences, they get Saturday school; when they fail a class, they get summer school. We try and keep our goals focused on everyone giving and encouraging each other.

It is a win/win world- All of our students, no matter their level of talent, participate in band at all times. There is no bench for anyone to sit out, so the students who are more talented have a vested interest in helping out those students who need extra attention. At our contests, if everyone is perfect and one person is not, we are judged on that one person. In a regular class, if someone gets a 94% and someone gets a 54%, the student with the lower grade doesn't negatively affect the student with the higher grade. In fact, the lower grade lowers the curve and makes the higher grade even better. There is no incentive for students to help each other achieve. This is the opposite of band. The first chair student doesn't win until the last chair student wins. We are all in this together and we work as a family to achieve success as a group, not as individuals.

Don't quit until it's perfect- Because everything must be uniform, lined up, and perfectly together in time, we believe in repetition until we are the best we can be. In other classes when a student gets a 94% on a test and earns an "A", that's the end. It's a great grade. In band, when we get a 94%, we know we can do better and we expect ourselves to do better. While being perfect is virtually impossible, this relates directly to the more you give, the more you get. We will always try harder to be better because we are capable of more.

Our students deserve the best shot at success in life and we believe with all of our hearts that band sets them up for success and also gives them amazing opportunities and creates friendships for life. We believe in teaching content and curriculum, but those areas change continuously as time goes on. We believe even more in teaching character, which will last forever.

BLANCHARD MIDDLE SCHOOL BANDS

CURRICULUM

Concert Band-

- The Blanchard Beginning Band is focused on giving every student a solid foundation in music. The ensemble stresses musical and performance excellence through the performance of a variety of band literature. Students are periodically asked to come to after school help. Students who are struggling may be asked to come in more frequently. The Beginning Band will compete in their first contest in April, at the Blanchard Middle School Band Festival, or another similar event.
- The Blanchard Intermediate Band is where we start expanding upon the fundamentals we laid in beginning band. Students focus on a higher level of musical achievement, both personally and as an ensemble. Students are periodically asked to come to before or after school help. Students who are struggling may be asked to come in more frequently. The Intermediate Band will compete at Pre-District contest in February and OSSAA District contest in March.
- The Blanchard Advanced Band consistently receives top awards. The ensemble stresses musical and performance excellence through the performance of a wide variety of band literature. Students are periodically asked to come to before or after school help. Students who are struggling may be asked to come in more frequently. The Advanced Band will compete at Pre-District contest in February and OSSAA District contest in March. The Advanced Band will learn how to march for a parade in April.
- The Blanchard Prep Band is focused on giving every student a solid foundation in music, and catching him/her up to students in their grade level. Students are able to switch into a regular band class, if they have progressed appropriately, at the semester. We are fortunate to have this class in Blanchard so that every student who wants to be a part of band has the opportunity to do so. Students are periodically asked to come to after school help. Students who are struggling may be asked to come in more frequently. The Prep Band does not participate in any outside of school activities: concerts, honor bands, contests, etc. Prep Band students will participate in these activities when they are moved to a regular band class.

Private Lessons- Just like most activities that require a high degree of skill, private lessons on a musical instrument are the best way to improve performance skills. The one-on-one approach allows the student to benefit from individual, specialized attention. We are lucky to live so close to many universities with excellent music programs, and even have teachers who come to Blanchard weekly to teach lessons. We have many students who study with advanced college students and some even with university professors. Visit the "Private Lessons" section of the band website or contact a band director to find a suitable private teacher.

Chamber Music Ensembles- The Blanchard Bands offer a variety of chamber ensembles including woodwind, brass, and percussion groups for students in grades 6-12. Rehearsals are generally held before or after school starting in December for Intermediate and Advanced Band and starting in February for Beginning Band. The Intermediate and Advanced Band ensembles have the option to compete at the District Solo & Ensemble contest and are often asked to perform in the community at various events and social gatherings. If students decide to compete in district competition, there is a fee that varies from \$4-8, depending on the size of the ensemble.

Tri-City Honor Band- Beginning Band students may earn a place in the Tri-City Honor Band by meeting their music goals and having excellent work ethic and attitude. Students who earn a place in the band will rehearse and perform under a guest conductor in March or April. It is a one-day event where students go learn all new music and perform a concert in the evening. This honor band is comprised of musically gifted students representing our

Tri-City Schools. There is a participation fee of approximately \$15. This is a great experience for all students involved.

All-Region (SWOBDA) Honor Band- Students in grades 7-12 may audition for a place in one of the Southwestern Oklahoma Band Director's Association (SWOBDA) Honor Bands, also known as All-Region. There is a 7th grade band, an 8th grade band, a 9th grade band, and two high school bands (grades 10-12). Students who earn a place in a band will rehearse and perform under a guest conductor in February in Weatherford. These honor bands are comprised of musically gifted students representing the top talent in the southwest region of Oklahoma. There is an audition fee of approximately \$15.

Shortgrass Honor Band- Students in grades 7-8 may audition for a place in the Shortgrass Honor Band. There is one 7th grade band and one junior high band (grades 8-9). Students who earn a place in a band will rehearse and perform under a guest conductor in January in Elk City.

District Solo & Ensemble Competitions- Students in grades 7-12 may choose to participate in District Solo & Ensemble competitions, which take place in February. Students prepare a solo or ensemble (duet, trio, quartet, etc.) and perform, often with an accompanist, for a judge. There are a few evening rehearsals required for students using the accompanist. While extra help is always available, most of the preparation of this music is student-driven. Students in grades 7-8 are not eligible for state. Participation fees range from \$5-10, depending on the type of group. Accompanist fees apply if necessary.

Marching Band- During the fall, 8th Grade students will join the HS band at a home football game. This gives the students an introduction to marching band, which starts in their freshman year. A band t-shirt will be ordered for use at the football game and pep assemblies for a cost of around \$12.

GENERAL BAND INFORMATION

EXPECTATIONS

Band is a year-long commitment.

Each member of the band is required to practice the music regularly, learn his/her part, and come well prepared to rehearsal. Home practice is absolutely essential to our pursuit of excellence. Insufficient practice and preparation of music will affect the student's grade.

Each member of the band will be expected to attend and participate in all rehearsals and performances called by the directors.

Punctuality at all events is critical. All students must arrive on time unless they have spoken with the director and received permission to be late. On time means that events begin at the stated time; students are not just arriving. Band is a team effort and it hinders the entire group when people are late. Time is a valuable resource and ours as a band is limited. To make the most of the time we have, all students need to be ready to begin promptly.

Band members are expected to follow the rules of Blanchard schools' student handbook as well as the band handbook while present at any band function. Failure to abide by the rules may result in removal of a student from a performance, not allowing the student to travel with the band, or removal from the band program at the directors' discretion.

Cell phones are unacceptable during rehearsals. If there is a recurring issue, the phone will be confiscated by a director and returned at the director's discretion.

Percussionists are expected to assist in moving, setting up, dismantling, loading/unloading the trailers, and putting away all percussion instruments for rehearsals and performances. Percussionists must arrive to rehearsal at least 15 minutes early to set up the section, and should plan to stay at least 15 minutes after a rehearsal or performance ends to properly store the instruments.

ATTENDANCE

Prompt attendance is EXPECTED and REQUIRED at all rehearsals and performances.

Students will perform numerous times during the year. All performances are expected and mandatory. Excuses for missing a performance must be turned in on an absence excuse form prior to the event. A performance absence excuse form can be found on Cut Time. The excuse must be made on the online form or it will not be valid. The director will determine if the reason for the absence is excusable. Just because a form is submitted does not automatically make the absence excused. If an absence is deemed excused, an alternate make-up assignment will be assigned and must be completed within one week for the student to receive credit for the missed activity. An unexcused absence from a performance, concert, or contest will result in the deduction of one letter grade from the nine weeks grade or failure for the nine weeks and possible expulsion from the band. A calendar is online and updated regularly to keep you informed of scheduled events. Plan around performances. *Work, student or parent, is not an excuse for a student to miss a performance.*

INSTRUMENTS AND SUPPLIES

Be prepared! Have all equipment, instrument, music, pencil, four useable reeds, oil, grease, sticks, etc. Take what you might need to your seat. This will eliminate disruptions during rehearsal. Some supplies are available for purchase before and after band rehearsal begins - not in the middle of class. There will be no credit on supplies. You must have money to buy them.

Instruments and music must be taken home every day. Instruments and music that are not taken home will go to "Band Jail". Students get two "Get Out of Jail Free" cards per 9 weeks that should be used for emergencies only. The third time an instrument and/or music are not taken home, for any reason, a half an hour after school detention will be required within a week.

All instruments must be marked with a name tag. If you do not have one, they are available for \$1.00.

8th graders will order a band t-shirt that will be used for various band functions including pep assemblies and a football game. The price will be approximately \$12.

If a student's instrument is in need of repair, the instrument can be sent to the music store (Ada Music) through the school. The roadman from the music store comes once a week and would be able to pick up any repair that might be needed. You are also welcome to take it to the store yourself. Repair time is usually one to two weeks. The school will not be responsible for the bill.

Some school instruments will be issued to students. The instruments are always working properly when they are issued. If an instrument is damaged or broken while it is checked out to a student, the student will be responsible for its repair. The fee to use a school instrument is **\$50.00** a year, due in full at the beginning of the year.

We will be doing business with **Ada Music**, at 215 N. Francis St. in Ada. The phone number is 580-436-0838.

PRACTICING

Home practice is required. Middle school students should be practicing for a minimum of two hours per week (20 minutes a day/6 days a week). The best way to steadily improve is to practice 15-20 minutes a day, six days a week. An entire week of practice is not to be done in one day.

Practicing should be treated like homework. Set aside a time and place for daily practice to occur. It is very important for parents to be involved in student's practice and progress. As a parent, you are paying for an instrument and supplies, so when your student is practicing and achieving at a high level because of their efforts and your support, your money is well spent.

CHAIR TESTS

Students will have chair tests on a regular basis. Students who are properly practicing the appropriate material at home will have no problem passing these tests. A majority of chair tests will be recorded and submitted on Google Classroom.

If a student receives an unsatisfactory grade (70% or less) on a chair test, he/she will be given the opportunity to make up that test grade within a week. If the redone test does not reflect significant improvement then he/she will be required to sign up for after school help in order to improve the student's level of achievement. If a student receives a third unsatisfactory grade, a parent-teacher conference will be called.

If a student is absent for any reason or a test does not record, excused or unexcused, the test may be taken for full credit but will only count as a grade and the student will automatically be seated in the last chair of the section.

PRIVATE LESSONS AND AFTER SCHOOL HELP

Students have the opportunity for private lessons. Blanchard is in a very good location. We are close enough to the University of Oklahoma and to Oklahoma City to take advantage of opportunities not available to most small school systems. We even have teachers who come to Blanchard weekly to teach lessons. We have many students who study with advanced college students and some even with university professors. If you are interested in taking private lessons we will get you set up with an expert on your instrument.

After school help is available to help students, such as on an upcoming test or an honor band audition. After school help is not to be used weekly as a private lesson.

PERFORMANCES

Students will perform numerous times during the year at various events. All performances are expected and mandatory. Excuses for missing a performance must be turned in on an absence excuse form prior to the event. An absence excuse form can be found on Cut Time. The excuse must be made on the online form or it will not be valid. The director will determine if the reason for the absence is excusable. Just because a form is submitted does not automatically make the absence excused. If an absence is deemed excused, an alternate make-up assignment will be assigned and must be completed within one week for the student to receive credit for the missed activity. An unexcused absence from a performance, concert, or contest will result in the deduction of one letter grade from the nine weeks grade or failure for the nine weeks. A calendar is online and updated regularly to keep you informed of scheduled events. Plan around practices, performances, and work schedules.

Hair must be a natural color for all performances. Directors have the final say if hair color is appropriate. When in doubt, ask first.

Prep band students will not participate in performances or extra-curricular activities until they have been moved into a regular band class.

EVENT CHECK OUT

All students must ride to and from band events on school approved transportation. Students may leave after events with their own parent/guardian by signing out with a band director. To leave with anyone else, a 3rd Party Student Transport Form, found on Cut Time, is required. It gives permission for the band director to release the student to that person, and they must then sign the student out with a band director. Emails, text messages, and phone calls **will not** be accepted in lieu of a Student Transport Form with a parent signature. The form can be found on Cut Time.

ELIGIBILITY

In order to participate in an extra-curricular activity, you cannot be failing any of your classes. Any student deemed to be ineligible will not be allowed to miss school for a band activity (honor bands, auditions, etc.). Concerts that are outside of school hours are not affected and all students are expected to attend and perform.

Students who show a history of eligibility problems may be removed from the band program for a period of no less than one semester. If during this time grades improve to an acceptable level, the student may be evaluated for possible reinstatement at the discretion of the directors.

We offer help for students in any subject through band tutors. We need everyone for every performance, so we do our best to help all of our students in every class. If you need help, just ask!

GRADING

Students' grades will be determined in several ways. Throughout the year a daily grade will be given. Students who are prepared will get 100%. Memory tests and chair tests will all count as test grades. Missing a contest, performance, rehearsal, or having excessive absences/tardies will lower a student's grade. A progress report will be sent home with students who are making a "C" or below. The progress report must be signed by a parent and returned to the director. This will help keep you informed of your student's progress and keep the student accountable.

The grading breakdown is as follows:

- Test grades (40%)
Concerts, performances, contests, playing tests, and chair tests will count as test grades.
- Daily grades (50%)
Daily points are earned by being present, having all required materials, and participating in class. Students who do not have their instrument, music, or supplies will earn zero points for that day.
- Newsletters (10%)
A newsletter is sent home at the beginning of each month. The bottom of each newsletter has a section that must be signed and returned to school (or responded to via email) for a grade.

FUNDRAISERS

We will be doing several fundraisers throughout the year. Students are expected to help and participate in all fundraisers.

BAND BOOSTERS

The Blanchard Band Booster Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation organized and operated to support the instrumental music and performance ensemble programs at Blanchard High School. All parents of the band students are

automatically members of this organization. The elected executive board directs the meetings and business of the group. The Booster's primary role is to provide volunteer and financial support to permit the band to prosper, both inside and outside the classroom setting. There are many opportunities for parents and family members to serve and get involved. All parents are encouraged to attend the booster meetings, which are usually held on the last Tuesday of each month (exact dates are listed in the calendar). Our next meeting is **Tuesday, August 30th, at 7:00 PM** in the High School Band Room. A current list of booster officers and their contact information can be found on the band website, www.blanchardbands.com.

Parent Volunteer Needs- There are many opportunities for parents to volunteer in support of the program, and the success of the program depends upon the willingness of parents to step up and do their part. The more people we have help means less work for everyone! Students need to know that we think what they do is important! Your participation shows them this and you play a vital role in the success of our band family! See how you can volunteer by looking at the calendar on Cut Time and checking out the available volunteer opportunities.

As a safety precaution, all parents who want to volunteer directly with the students (chaperoning, trailer pulling, etc.) will need to pass a background check. The cost will be **\$15.00** and these will be done through the school. You will need to make arrangements with a band director to have one done at least one week prior to when you want to volunteer, though earlier is better. You will need to bring your social security card and driver's license. This background check will be valid for the duration of your time as a volunteer with the Blanchard Bands unless a director has a concern and requests another, which will then be done at a cost to the band.

CONCERT BAND

GENERAL RULES & GUIDELINES

These rules will apply in addition to all school and district policies.

1. Students will attend all rehearsals and performances on time with the correct equipment.
2. Food, drinks, gum, or candy is not allowed at any time in the band room. Water will always be allowed in all circumstances.
3. Students will remain quiet and attentive to instructions given from directors, student teachers, and other instructors during all rehearsals. Water/restroom breaks, supply purchases, and other errands should be taken care of BEFORE the rehearsal begins. However, if a personal emergency arises the student may take care of it as promptly as possible without distracting others from the rehearsal. If a student abuses this policy they will lose this privilege.
4. Students will not have other homework, books, or other distractions of any kind in rehearsal without specific permission from the director.
5. Students will store all instruments, mallets, music, etc. in the correct location after rehearsals and performances. All storage containers (cases, drawers, bags, etc.) must be closed and latched.
6. Storage areas will be kept neat and clean at all times. The directors will confiscate any personal property not stored correctly.

CONCERT UNIFORM

A separate uniform is used for concert season called concert black. The purpose of concert black is uniformity and blend. We want the focus to be on the music and the ensemble, not the individual. Any jewelry needs to be modest (no bright colors) and not draw attention to itself (no bright colors). Hair must be a natural color for all performances. Directors have the final say if hair color is appropriate. When in doubt, ask first.

Guys need to wear black dress slacks, long, black socks, black dress shoes, and a black, long sleeve, collared, button down dress shirt (black or white buttons are acceptable). A black belt is recommended but not required. Girls need to

wear black dress slacks, black socks or hose, black dress shoes (closed toe and heels one inch or shorter), and a black dress shirt with sleeves. Sleeveless shirts are not acceptable. Girls may wear dresses or skirts but they must be ankle length. Skirts/dresses that are knee length must be worn with black, non-see through tights.

If you are at all concerned about your student's attire, please have him/her bring it in or email pictures before a performance. We also have files on Cut Time that show examples of appropriate and inappropriate concert black. We are glad to help your student get everything he/she needs regarding concert black attire so if you have any issues getting these items, notify a director as early as possible and we will provide anything you need. Any students not appropriately dressed may be removed from a performance and for grading purposes, this will be treated as a missed performance.

