



2023-2024

BLUFFTON  
BAND HANDBOOK

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## **Philosophy of the Bluffton High School Band Department**

The primary purpose of band is to provide students with a means to develop themselves through music education. The immediate objective is not to produce musicians, but rather to create awareness in the students that will enable them to assume a responsible role in society.

Band should develop the mental and physical aspects of the students. These aspects can be fulfilled by giving the student a chance to participate in varied activities which will contribute to the development of a sound character, along with providing a medium for self-expression.

Like any art, band is experiential. Therefore, the quality of the musical experience is foremost in the study of music. This will increase the musical sensitivity of the student that in turn will enhance their enjoyment of music, their understanding and appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of music, and provide them the encouragement and guidance necessary to lead them to respectable levels of performance.

## **Member Code of Conduct**

### ENFORCEMENT OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The principal or the band director will enforce all rules and regulations as described in the Code of Conduct for band members. Parents and band members are asked to sign an acknowledgement document stating they understand the Code and the band member is subject to disciplinary measures should he/she violate the Code.

The Code is in force twelve (12) months of the year, grades seven through twelve (7-12).

Any alleged violation of the Code shall be reported first to the principal or designee and the band director, followed by an investigation.

### CODE OF CONDUCT

Rule #1        Band members (this includes student conductors, instrumentalist, guard and prop people) shall not knowingly possess, use, transmit or be under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, stimulant, depressant, anabolic steroids, marijuana, counterfeit caffeine pills or possess, use or transmit paraphernalia for use of such substances. (Use of

- an authorized drug as prescribed by a registered physician shall not constitute a violation of this rule.)
- Rule #2 Band members shall not partake in any degree or be in possession of alcoholic beverages or tobacco products.
- Rule #3 Any band member **convicted** of a **felony** at any time shall be excluded from band activities for **one full year (12 months)** from time of conviction. Conviction of a **misdemeanor** shall be subject to suspension from band activities for the band member. Continuation in a band activity until a conviction is brought forth is contingent upon the decision of the band director and principal. Any band member determined to have committed a delinquent act may be subject to suspension.
- Rule #4 Committing acts of vandalism, theft, conversion, receiving stolen goods, or gross disrespect will result in suspensions.
- Rule #5 Any band member that is in **violation of school rules** such as truancy, suspension, classroom disruption or other punishable acts will be disciplined by the already established school rules. The band member may further be dealt with within the policies outlined in the band handbook. If a band member is suspended out of school for any reason he/she will be ineligible for all contests during the term of his/her suspension. Out-of-school suspension band members cannot practice during the suspension time. Practice is at the discretion of the band director for any in-school or alternative school suspension.
- Rule #6 No attendance at parties or gatherings where alcoholic beverages or drugs are being used. If this situation arises unexpectedly, the individual shall leave the premises immediately. Band members should be accompanied by their parents at adult functions where alcohol is being served.
- Rule #7 Specific rules for each band activity are outlined in the band handbook.
- Rule #8 Realizing that band members represent their school and student body, it is their duty to conduct themselves in and out of band activities in a manner that is becoming to them, their team, the Bluffton High School or Bluffton Middle School student body, and the community. Any act that the band director, principal or designee determines is unbecoming of a BHS or BMS band member may be cause for suspension.
- Rule #9 Failing to completely and truthfully respond to questions from a staff member regarding school-related matters including potential violations of the Band Code or state or federal law. This may result in additional punishment.
- Rule #10 No band member shall participate in, permit, condone or tolerate hazing to another band member or any other student.

OTHER VIOLATIONS: Other situations not covered above would be handled at the discretion of the band director or principal. This involves any violation the school may deem necessary to enforce (burglary, theft, vandalism, shoplifting, etc.)

## SELF-REPORT CLAUSE

It is the intent of Bluffton High School and Bluffton Middle School to assist students with developing responsibility for their actions and to encourage honesty. Therefore, any student who voluntarily reports on himself/herself as to a violation of the Code of Conduct may be permitted leniency. This report must be student-initiated and without school officials being able to learn about the incident by any other means. This means that once the student is caught, it is too late to use the self-report clause to lessen the penalty. The student may pay a lesser penalty for the infraction than stated; he/she will not be permitted to participate in a number of contests equal to 10% of scheduled contests or at least one contest of the band activity he/she is in or will be in. In cases of substance abuse, the self-reporting student must participate in a substance abuse awareness session with a qualified professional. This Self- Report Clause can be used only once during the student's six year career and may be used only for the first offense.

## NOTES

1. The band activity is defined as commencing with the first practice and ending with the final event of that activity. Penalties for violations do take effect immediately upon verification of any violation and will include performances in succession, i.e. season schedule and competitions, in order of performance.
2. If the violation of the Code occurs in the last part of a band activity and the violator cannot fulfill the terms of his/her violation in that activity, the suspension does carry-over until the suspension is fulfilled. This includes his/her next band activity or the same activity next year. I.e., if the suspension is for two marching performance with only one remaining, the band member must also miss his/her first pep band performance in order to complete the suspension. If a typically one-activity band member elects to participate in a new band activity in order to serve a suspension, he/she will be required to complete this season in good standing.
3. When serving a suspension, the band member is expected to be present at all contests and practices involving his/her band activity. The student is a member of the band and is expected to fulfill this responsibility. If the band member does not attend the performance, credit will not be given toward fulfilling the requirements of the suspension. The director's discretion can excuse the band member.

## CONSEQUENCES

**Consequences** are based on a band member's four-year high school career.

1. The **first offense** will result in automatic suspension from participation in band and from the band activities for **25%** of the performances for such activity. Practice for a band member who is under suspension is still required but could be

excused at the director's discretion.

2. The **second offense** will result in automatic suspension from participation in band and from the band activities for **50%** of the performances for such activity. Practice for a band member who is under suspension is still required but could be excused at the director's discretion.
3. The **third offense** will result in a suspension for the remainder of the student's high school band career. The band member will not practice or perform with any band during this suspension.

## **Parent Code of Conduct**

The Bluffton Band Program works to maintain a "Class Act" reputation. Students are held to high expectations while participating in band related activities. Being a parent volunteer with the band program is a privilege, not a right, which carries varying degrees of demeanor, responsibility and sacrifice.

### Enforcement of Parent Code of Conduct

The school administration and the band director are responsible for enforcing the parent code of conduct. During all band related activities, the band director will enforce the code of conduct and any violations will be reported to the school administration.

### Code of Conduct

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| Rule #1. | Parent volunteers must submit to a criminal background check prior to volunteering with the band program.   |
| Rule #2  | The use of tobacco and alcohol products is forbidden while volunteering with band activities.   |
| Rule #3  | Parent volunteers will display a positive attitude toward the band program and all students involved in the band activities. Parent volunteers will also refrain from making derogatory statements about or to any student, staff member, or band participant (including other school bands). |
| Rule #4  | Parents are not to discipline the students. If the conduct of a student is in question, parents are to report the behavior to a director. The only exception to this is if a parent is chaperoning a bus and immediate action is needed due to a violation of transportation rules.           |
| Rule #5  | Parents will use appropriate language while around the students. The use of profanity or explicit language is strictly forbidden.   |
| Rule #6  | Parent volunteers are to follow the instructions of the Bluffton band staff or those delegated as leadership. Parents are not to make procedural decisions without consulting with a director.  |
| Rule #7  | Parent attitudes and actions should reflect that the activity is for the good of the students.  |

## Consequences

- Violation #1 Director and/or administration will discuss the violation as well as expectations with the parent. If the severity of violations dictates, the maximum consequence may be pursued.
- Violation #2 Director and administration will meet with parent. Parent will be asked to support their child as a spectator. Involvement as a volunteer as well as participation in activities around other students will not be allowed.

## **Bluffton Band Boosters Inc.**

The band booster organization is an active part of the Bluffton Band Program. Members can be parents or guardians of Bluffton Band students, or other interested persons. The purpose of the organization as outlined in the by-laws is: “foster and perpetuate the betterment and understanding of the band program by raising funds, providing chaperones, and assisting with all other functions and activities deemed necessary and approved by the executive board and sanctioned by the band Director and Administration of the Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan School District.”

The responsibilities of the band boosters are:

1. Assist and cooperate with the director and staff to maintain the highest degree of achievement and teamwork.
2. Develop and maintain community interest in the events of the band program.
3. Build, maintain, and promote a positive relationship with each other, students, school administrators, and staff.
4. Be positive role models for our students.
5. Attend monthly meetings in order to keep informed of all business and events.
6. Help in working all projects and/or functions hosted by the booster organization for the benefit of the band members.
7. Be encouraging and supportive of all students regardless of the schools that they might represent.
8. Promote at every opportunity, the highest standard of integrity, sportsmanship, courtesy, hospitality, and cooperation. THE BAND PROGRAM IS A CLASS ACT AT ALL TIMES.

## **Contest/Competition**

The goal of the Bluffton Band Program is to educate and motivate students to do the best that they can do. Whenever we are rehearsing for or participating in contest/competitions we are striving for superior performances. Although fun and enjoyment are a factor in the educational experience, it is not and will not be the sole

reason for participation. Members are expected to enter the band program with the understanding that hard work is involved and attendance at all rehearsals and performances is important to the success of the total band program.

## **General Rules**

Whenever a band/color guard student is involved in any activity that is associated with the school (rehearsal, performance, field trip, etc.), the student is responsible for following all rules set forth in the Bluffton High Student Handbook, as well as all policies and rules set forth by the Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan School District. When traveling on a bus, whether it is school owned or charter, students will adhere to the rules set up for conduct on buses set forth by the school district. Any variation on the above rules will be set up and enforced by the band director. Any violation of the school rules or policies will be dealt with by the band director and school administration.

The Bluffton Band will be very visible and its members will be expected to maintain a “Class” reputation.

## **Attendance/Eligibility**

Students who miss school because of an illness must refrain from attending a practice, a concert or a contest on the day of the absence. A student is expected to attend school two periods (or half day for middle school students) to participate in a scheduled band practice, concert or contest. A pre-arranged excused absence may exempt the band member from this rule. Band members may not participate in a practice, a concert or a contest if any part of that school day was an unexcused absence.

## **Dress Code**

While participating in any band related activity (curricular, co-curricular or extra-curricular), band members must follow the school dress code. This includes piercings, hair color and make-up. The only exception will be for hats and coats when outdoor activities necessitate the change.



## **No Touch Policy**

The band program at Bluffton High School has a policy dealing with contact of band members. The “No Touch” policy states that “Members shall not hold hands, embrace, kiss, or show any other signs of public affection during band rehearsals, performances, contests, concerts or the travel to and from the above listed activities.” This policy allows the students to concentrate on their role as a member of the band, as well as give the overall group a mature, responsible demeanor at all times.

## **Cell Phones**

Cell phones are not to be on or used during any class or extra-curricular rehearsal unless approved by the band director or staff.

## **Performing Ensembles**

### **Concert Band**

Concert band is offered the second, third, and fourth nine week periods of the school year. The concert band splits a block with the jazz ensemble. The concert band performs at school concerts, band contests, graduation, and various community events. Since concert band is a part of the curricular class schedule, attendance at all performances is required. Exceptions will only be given for the following: Death in the Family or Illness (with doctor’s note). If the student is excused for one of the preceding reasons, the student will play all of their music (solo) for a grade in the first class following their absence. If the student is unexcused, their grade will follow the guidelines established in the section titled “Grades”.

Specific dates for all performances will be available at the beginning of the school year via the band calendar.

### **Jazz Ensemble**

The jazz ensemble is offered the second, third, and fourth nine week periods of the school year. The jazz ensemble splits a block with the concert band. Jazz ensemble is an audition ensemble, with tryouts held at the end of the marching season. Because of the complexity of the music played in the jazz ensemble, all jazz ensemble participants must be in class all three nine week periods. The jazz ensemble performs at school concerts, jazz festivals and contests, and various community events and activities. All performances are mandatory. You will be excused from a performance only with an excused reason. The director will have the final decision on any extenuating circumstances. Specific dates for all performances will be available at the beginning of

the school year via the band calendar.

### Marching Band

Marching band is offered the first nine-week block of the school year. Marching band starts during the summer with rehearsals and band camp. The marching band performs at all of the home football games, marching contests, parades, and various community events. Since marching band is a part of the curricular class schedule, attendance at all performances is required. Exceptions will be given for the following: Death in the Family or Illness (with doctor's note).

Attendance at all rehearsals (including band camp) is required. Missing more than two summer rehearsals (excused or unexcused) may result in removal from the group. Missing practices or performances during the season (unexcused) will affect the student's grade as outlined in the grading section. Missing one practice (excused or unexcused) may result in the person dressing in full uniform and standing on the sidelines for the next performance. Missing more than one practice (excused or unexcused) may result in removal from the group.

Specific dates for all performances and rehearsals will be available at the beginning of the summer band rehearsals via the band calendar. Mandatory practices may be scheduled or rescheduled provided a two-week (14 day) notice is given.

Uniforms are to be worn and treated with respect. Compression shorts and shirts (with sleeves) must be worn under the uniform at all times. When in public, the uniform is to be completely on (buttons buttoned, zippers zipped) unless otherwise instructed by a director due to weather conditions. Students must take responsibility to make sure shoes are clean and polished before all performances.

It is the students' responsibility to take care of all equipment. This includes personal instruments as well as band equipment. All students must help with moving and loading ALL equipment for both practice and performance. Students will not be dismissed from practice or after returning from a competition until all equipment has been put away.

### Color Guard

The Bluffton High School Color Guard is a very active and busy group. The guard is an integral part of the marching band. Because of this, every member of the color guard must be enrolled in the marching band class offered the first nine weeks of school. Rehearsals for the color guard will start during the summer and continue through the entire marching season.

The color guard performs with the marching band at all home football games, marching contests, parades, and various community events. Since color guard is a part of the curricular class schedule, attendance at all performances is required. Exceptions will be given for the following: Death in the Family or Illness (with doctor's note).

All color guard practices and performances during the marching season are required. Missing more than two summer rehearsal (excused or unexcused) may result in removal from the group. Missing practices or performances during the season

(unexcused) will affect the student's grade as outlined in the grading section. Missing one or more practice(s), excused, may result in the person dressing in full uniform and standing on the sidelines for the next performance. Missing one or more practice(s), unexcused, will result in the guard member being replaced with an alternate. The guard member would then become an alternate until such time that they are needed on the field or earn their spot back.

Specific dates for all performances and rehearsals will be available at the beginning of the summer band rehearsals via the band calendar. Mandatory practices may be scheduled or rescheduled provided a two week (14 day) notice is given.

Color guard members must audition for the group. Auditions will be held in late winter or early spring of the prior school year. Each member must audition every year. Being a member one year does not guarantee a position the following year. A guard captain(s) may also be selected by an audition and NOT on the merit of experience. If the guard captain(s) is not meeting the needs of the group, the director reserves the right to remove that person from the leadership position and put a new captain in place.

### Pep Band

Pep band is an extra-curricular activity. Rehearsals for the pep band will be held one night a week, immediately following school. To be a member of the pep band, you must be enrolled in at least one of the music courses offered in the school schedule for the entire time that you are a member of the pep band. Due to the fact that pep band is extra-curricular, everyone must be at all rehearsals if the ensemble is to perform at its top level. You will be excused from a pep band rehearsal for the following circumstances: Illness (with doctor's note), Death in the Family, or School sponsored activity. Anything not falling under the aforementioned will be considered as unexcused.

If you miss more than one game (excused), or one game (unexcused), you will be out of the group. Also, anyone not conforming to the rules of the Bluffton Band, Bluffton High School or the Bluffton-Harrison School Corporation will be removed from the group. (This includes discipline problems during rehearsals and games).

### Band Camp

All members of the marching band and color guard are required to attend band camp. Band camp is very important in that much time is spent teaching the fall marching show during this week.

Since band camp is required, only excused absences will be accepted. The

following will be accepted as excused absences: death in the family, student illness/medical emergency (with doctor's note), or family emergency (property or life threatening). All other reasons will be considered unexcused. Missing more than one day of band camp, excused or unexcused, may result in the removal from the group.

Band camp dates and daily schedule of the camp will be available by the end of February. Mandatory practices may be scheduled or rescheduled provided a two week (14 day) notice is given.

## **Marching Band Fees**

Each member of the marching band and color guard will be required to pay a yearly fee. This fee covers such things as the writing of the show, additional staff members, supplies, uniform cleaning etc. The fee will be set each year at the January band booster meeting when the director makes the marching budget proposal.

## **Staff**

Every summer additional staff members are hired to help with marching band. In accordance with school policy, each staff member must have a criminal background check every year. These staff members are compensated by the corporation and/or the band boosters. Band and color guard members are expected to treat each and every staff member with respect. There will be a zero tolerance policy for any member who disrespects and/or refuses to work for a staff member. This type of behavior will result in the student being sidelined or removed from the group.

## **Fund-Raisers**

Fund-raisers are held throughout the year to help finance items involved with the band program. Examples of fund-raisers include candy, cheese/sausage, car washes, dinners, "On the Banks of the Wabash" marching contest, and many others. Profits from the fund-raisers go to help purchase uniforms for the performing ensembles, entry fees, equipment, flags and props, awards, transportation, marching band staff, and to offset the cost of trips taken by the performing ensembles. All students and booster parents are encouraged to participate in the fund-raisers. Certain fund-raisers will be set that contribute all profits to the student's personal band accounts. Profits from other fund-raisers will go into the band booster account

## **Grades**

For the ensembles of marching band (including color guard), concert band, and jazz ensemble, the following grading scale will be used: 40 % - rehearsal and classroom evaluation, 40 % - performance evaluation, 20 % - attitude, behavior and conduct.

Since the three ensembles are curricular, all rehearsals and performances are required (see performing ensembles). A missed rehearsal unexcused will result in a one-half letter grade drop for the nine weeks. A missed performance unexcused will result in a two letter grade drop for the nine weeks. These cuts will be implemented after the nine week grade is figured using the aforementioned grading percentage.

## **Health Form**

Each student is required to fill out a health form before the beginning of each school year. This form contains information that would be important should the need arise for medical treatment of any student. All information (including insurance numbers) must be complete and up-to-date. Health forms are available during summer band.

## **School Instruments**

Students are responsible for all repairs that are caused by careless or irresponsible use of school instruments.

## **Trips**

Every four years, the band takes a major trip for the purpose of contest/parade performances. These trips usually last five to seven days, due to the distance of the trip and the activities involved. These trips occur around the time of Thanksgiving or Christmas break. Trips in the past have involved travel to Philadelphia, New York, and Florida with performances in nationally televised parades and bowl games, as well as performances at Walt Disney World and Epcot Center. Short weekend trips to contest are taken on a yearly or bi-yearly basis. These involve a short amount of travel and usually only one night's lodging.

Fund-raisers are offered to the students to help offset the cost of all trips.

## **Point System/Awards** – (new guidelines starting with class of 2022)

The basis for earning a letter in band is set up on a point system. A student will earn a

band letter by accumulating a set number of points. Point totals will be:

- 3.5 – 1<sup>st</sup> minor – Lyre or Numerals
- 7 – 1<sup>st</sup> major – Letter and Chevron
- 14 – 2<sup>nd</sup> minor – Star Pin and Chevron
- 21 – 2<sup>nd</sup> major – Chenille Star and Chevron
- 24 – 3<sup>rd</sup> minor – Chevron
- 28 – 3<sup>rd</sup> major – Senior Blanket (must complete all 4 yrs. in band)

Points are accumulated from the following activities:

summer band/band camp - 1 point   marching band (first nine weeks) - 1 point   concert band (each nine weeks) - 1 point   jazz ensemble (second, third, & fourth nine weeks together) - 1 point pep band - 1 point   solo/ensemble (instrumental) - 1 point

Guard members who participate in summer and marching band only will be awarded as follows:

- first year (Freshman) - Numerals
- second year (Sophomore) – Letter and Chevron
- third year (Junior) - Chevron
- fourth year (Senior) – Chevron

To earn points, each student must successfully complete all requirements set up for each school year (regular attendance at all practices and performances, positive attitude, practice at home, etc.). The director will establish requirements as needed. If a student's action results in disciplinary action by the band director or school, the loss of points will be justified. In severe cases, loss or delay of letters and other awards will result.

Awards are to be meaningful to those who receive them. Band letters will not be given, they must be earned. Earning a letter from the Bluffton High School Band means upholding the highest standards of performance and behavior. We hope all can wear the letter with dignity and pride.

Plaques and certificates are presented at the end of the marching season and at the end of the school year. The students vote on some awards. Awards presented are: class certificates, senior plaques, outstanding class members, outstanding instrumentalists, most improved player, Joseph Creek Service Award, Woody Herman Jazz Award (2), Louis Armstrong Jazz Award, and the John Philip Sousa Award. Awards given for points earned are: first minor - music lyre pin or numerals; first major - letter/chevron; second minor - star pin and chevron; second major – chenille star and chevron; third

minor - chevron; third major - blanket (blanket will be awarded on the following stipulations: the award will come once the point total of 28 has been reached **and** at the completion of the students senior year -spring- provided that they have been in the band program the entire four years).

Letter jackets will be ordered through the band director twice a year. The first time will be at the end of the marching season and the second will be after the spring awards. Students will only be allowed to order their letter jacket after they have received their letter. Students must also be current with their band fees (paid to the Band Booster account) before ordering a letter jacket.