

The Mt. Enterprise High School  
Wildcat Band Handbook  
2025-2026



Mr. Jeff Bellgardt, Director  
Ms. Miaoqian Liu, JH Director

# FORWARD

Welcome to the Mt. Enterprise High School Wildcat Band! This booklet is designed as a guide for both parents and students to give specific details concerning all aspects of the band program. For any further information, please feel free to contact Mr. Bellgardt in the Band office at 903-822-1313. Please check the website for updates throughout the year at [wildcatband.webstarts.com](http://wildcatband.webstarts.com).

## UNDERSTANDING THE COMMITMENT

One of the fundamental aspects of adulthood that we teach in band is commitment. We want our students to fully comprehend what commitment means and therefore understand how it directly impacts their character and reputation. We have high expectations of our students, and we expect them to honor their commitments to the band program. Students need to be well versed in the expectations of the organization and be prepared to meet those expectations in every way possible. Students should not be a part of this organization if they are not prepared to commit 100%.

## PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS

A yearly band calendar will be provided for use in planning your family schedule for the school year. Each band student is important to the success of our many activities. We must be able to count on 100% attendance at these rehearsals and performances. If a family emergency occurs unexpectedly, PARENTS, please call the band office at 903-822-1313. Occasionally, there may be family commitments (weddings, graduations, etc.); in which case, we will try to be flexible and work with you on an individual basis. This must be discussed in detail well in advance (a month or more!).

Student job commitments and “select sports” are NOT reasons for an excused absence from band performances or rehearsals! Many band students work and participate in “select sports” and participate successfully in band. We suggest that these students take a copy of the yearly band calendar to his/her employer and/or coach and clear all band performances and rehearsals. Ninety-nine percent of employers are very understanding and are flexible if they know of band commitments well in advance, and they understand that band performances are a required and vital part of the course work. ***If a band student has an unexcused absence from a performance/rehearsal, they are subject to immediate removal from the band program.*** Again, we will work

with conflicts that are brought up in a timely manner, but due to the increasing number of students taking advantage of our leniency, we will be adopting a less tolerant stance.

## **REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS**

In band rehearsals, we not only deal with a creative process, but with a great deal more students at one time than do other classroom teachers. Because of this, it is imperative that band students be organized, prepared and orderly for every rehearsal. When an individual is not able to play his musical instrument during a rehearsal, it hurts the GROUP as well as the individual. It is important that the student's musical instrument is in good working condition, that (s)he has a pencil to mark his music, and that (s)he has important accessories such as drill books, mutes, reeds, etc. for EVERY rehearsal. It is also obvious that the creative process in which we are involved cannot take place unless there is a quiet, attentive atmosphere in the classroom. Any disruption, which includes but is not limited to excessive talking, talking out of turn, cracking loud jokes, making noises, etc., destroys the flow and concentration needed for a successful rehearsal, and will not be tolerated. Students who do not live up to the high rehearsal expectations of the Wildcat Band will be counseled, and, if necessary, removed from the band program completely.

## **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY**

All music organizations adhere to the eligibility rules and regulations as stated by TEA and MEISD. Any student whose recorded six weeks grade average in any course is lower than 70 at the end of a six-week period shall be suspended from participation during the next six-week period. However, a student may regain eligibility seven calendar days after the three-week evaluation period if the student is passing all courses on the last day of the three-school-week period. A one week grace period follows each grading and progress period.

The band director will enforce all eligibility rules and regulations. Students who are ineligible will continue to rehearse during his/her band class, before and after school, and participate in curricular performances to earn his/her band grade. Ineligible students may not travel with the band or participate in extracurricular performances. An example of a curricular performance would be a spring concert and an extracurricular performance would be a football halftime or any type of contest. Students should always check on an event if there is a question of their participation. Be advised that excessive absences from school may also result in a student being declared ineligible.

The band director along with the faculty at Mt. Enterprise work hard to assist and encourage band students to perform up to their potential in ALL classes. Since both Marching Band and Concert Band are group activities, each individual band student plays an important part in the success of the group. The band director consults both

with teachers and students for strategies for improving individual student performance. Obviously, we cannot be successful as a band unless our students are successfully passing ALL classes.

Students who are ineligible for 2 consecutive 6 week grading periods will be put on academic probation. If they do not become eligible the following 6 week grading period, they will be removed from the band program. This will allow the student to focus on passing academic classes during the next semester. Students wishing to be considered for reinstatement in band following this probation must bring documentation (report card) to the band director proving academic success during each grading period of the succeeding semester for all classes. Academic success is defined as passing all subjects during every grading period. Students must also maintain a clean discipline record with the school. This process is set up to help the academic success of the individual student.

## **PRIVATE LESSONS**

All students are encouraged to take private lessons in order to improve their individual playing skills. While directors are skilled instructors on the various instruments in the band, there is simply no substitution for private instruction received from someone who is a professional performer on a particular instrument. We are extremely fortunate at Mt. Enterprise to be so close to Stephen F. Austin University, which gives us access to numerous private lesson teachers available to help students reach that “next level” of performance. We have created a private lesson program at Mt. Enterprise, in where will bring private instructors up to the school, so your students can easily fit in a private lesson after school, or in the early evening. Lessons will be \$20.00 for a thirty-minute lesson, once a week. Students will pay the instructors directly. This is a tremendous investment in the student's talent and future, so it is so important that students make use of this great opportunity.

## **USE OF BAND HALL FACILITIES**

Students are welcome to use the band hall for practice either before or after school. Sometimes, however, the number of available places is limited, since both sectionals and private lessons take place before and after school. Due to the many thousands of dollars worth of musical instruments that are in the band hall, we do ask that ONLY band students come into the band hall during the school day and before or after school. Students must ask their friends who are not in the band to wait for them either in the school hallway or outside. The Band Room is to be kept clean and tidy at all times. Many times clean-up duty is assigned to those untidy housekeepers to help develop orderly skills.

# MARCHING BAND UNIFORMS

It is a privilege to wear the Mt. Enterprise Wildcat Band uniform. Make sure you have all parts of the uniform at each performance. **KEEP YOUR UNIFORM CLEAN AND PRESSED!** They ARE machine washable. Be sure to follow the washing instructions on the uniform. If your uniform does not meet the high standard required in the Wildcat Band, you are subject to being removed from a performance or not traveling with the band. This uniform is a symbol of pride and will be worn accordingly. You must wear all of the uniform (minus the hat) or none of the uniform! Most students choose to wear lightweight “white” shorts with a plain white T-shirt under their uniform, giving them the option to remove it at appropriate times. Band uniforms are not to be worn at eating establishments, after games or performances, or at social functions. Eating and drinking soft drinks should be done before you put on or after you remove your uniform. Here are some do’s and do not’s that will always help you and your uniform look great:

- ☐ DO: remember your t-shirt, black socks, and marching shoes each time you will be wearing your uniform.
- ☐ DO NOT: remove any material from the uniform if alterations are necessary.
- ☐ DO: transport your uniform in a garment bag and your hat in the hat box. Every time!
- ☐ DO NOT: store your uniform in the garment bag. This will cause it to mildew and get that “funny” smell. This odor will never leave the garment. EVER!
- ☐ DO: take extra time and care when hanging up your uniform. Pants hang folded on the crease, not the seat.
- ☐ DO: machine wash your uniform. Your uniform and the people you sit by will thank you.
- ☐ DO: remember to bring your instrument in spite of your excitement over your uniform!

## UNIFORM ACCESSORIES

The Wildcat Band uniform and all the major accessories are provided by MEISD. Band students will need to provide:

- ☐ A pair of black socks

## CONCERT BAND UNIFORMS

We have a specific uniform dress code for all concerts and contests that are not related to marching band. This uniform is required and students must have them ready starting in November. They are as follows:

- o Solid Black Dress Shirt (Must be button up with long sleeves. Women can wear a fitted style).

- o Solid Black Slacks (For Men and Women. Must be ankle length.)
- o Solid Black Belt (silver or black buckle only)
- o Solid Black Socks or Black Hose
- o Solid Black Dress Shoes (Loafers and pumps allowed as long as they are solid black. Absolutely no tennis shoes or sandals.)

We are striving to look modest, professional and uniform. When we perform, people should not be distracted by excess skin! Starting in 2022 there will be NO EXCEPTIONS to this uniform.

## **BAND FEES**

Each student will be required to pay a band fee of **\$40.00** each year, due by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year. This fee will cover many general expenses, including, but not limited to, yearly band t-shirt, instrument rental and maintenance, and a portion of the food and drinks we provide for the band.

Due to the increase in members and costs, reeds will NO LONGER be free. Any student needing a reed will need to pay \$2.00 to a director to receive one. This is still a HUGE discount and is cheaper than students would be able to purchase one on their own. All fees will be collected and used to purchase more reeds.

## **FOOTBALL GAME POLICY**

Band policy dictates that band students ride to, and return from, all off-campus performances as a group using transportation provided by the district. On rare occasions, an emergency or conflict with other school-sponsored events necessitates that parents provide transportation to or from an off-campus performance. In such a situation a note signed by the parent should be presented to a director, and one of the directors must physically see the parent take the student. This protects both the parents and the school. Any other types of releases from a performance must be cleared in advance through the band director.

Football games are fun, and we are there to support the team. However, we must maintain a class act at all times. Band members can stand up and YELL and SCREAM in support of the team throughout the game but should always remain in his/her "spot." It is important to remain alert concerning all the expensive equipment around you as well as the need to be ready to play at a moment's notice. Only band students are allowed in the band section.

Football games are mandatory and will count as a part of the student's participation grade.

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

All scheduled rehearsals, performances, camps and football games are absolutely mandatory. Our calendar is carefully designed to prevent conflicts with any other activity. The calendar is released early enough so conflicts with vacations, summer camps, etc. can be avoided. All non-illness or non-emergency absences must be reported to Mr. Bellgardt no later than one month prior to the event to be subject to being excused. Illness or emergency related absences will be excused with a doctor's note, or an immediate parent phone call. The Wildcat Band adheres to the following policies for **all band performances** (including football games, concerts, contests and pep rallies).

2 Tardies = 1 Unexcused Absence

1 Unexcused Absence = Conference with director and parents, and possible removal from program

2 Unexcused Absences = Immediate removal from program

All rehearsals will begin precisely at the stated time. For marching rehearsals, students are to be standing in their attendance spot, ready to play at the designated time. For music rehearsals, students are to be in their chair, ready to play at the designated time. Anything else will be considered a tardy. The Wildcat Band adheres to the following policy for **all band rehearsals** (including band camp and during the school day):

3 Tardies = 1 Unexcused Absence

1 Unexcused Absence = Conference with director

2 Unexcused Absences = Parent conference and office referral

3 Unexcused Absences = Immediate removal from the program

# **RULES AND CONSEQUENCES**

In addition to the Student Code of Conduct as mandated by MEISD, the Wildcat Band will adhere to the following rules:

**In the Band Hall, on the Marching Field and in the stands:**

- 1. No Food, Gum, Candy, Coffee or Soft Drink of any kind.**
- 2. Do not touch any instrument that does not belong to you.**
- 3. Do not enter the band office without permission.**
- 4. If you make a mess, please clean it up.**
- 5. Be respectful and courteous to everyone at all times.**
- 6. Do not talk while the director is talking.**
- 7. Do not play your instrument unless instructed to do so.**
- 8. Only store your instrument in its designated area.**
- 9. Do not lean on or against the music stands.**
- 10. Do not get out of your seat or leave the classroom (or stands) without permission.**
- 11. Be ready to play at a moment's notice.**

Any infraction will result in an immediate conference with the director to discuss the violation and consequence. Repeated offenses will result in removal from the organization.

If a student is removed from the band program, whether by choice or by the band director, it will be on a permanent basis. The Wildcat Band will not be a "revolving door" for students who can't decide whether they want to be committed to the program and follow the given rules and expectations.



# OFF CAMPUS TRAVEL POLICIES

Students who represent the Wildcat Band on out-of-town trips are expected to maintain very high standards in every respect at all times. They are expected to attend and be on time for all sessions and activities scheduled for them. In the event of overnight trips, they are expected to be in their rooms at the times designated by their sponsors.

Each student will be responsible to one or more faculty sponsors who will supervise the activities of the student for the trip. Negligence in attending sessions, in meeting curfew requirements, or in failing to maintain our standards of conduct may make it necessary for the sponsor to send the student home at his/her own expense.

Student conduct on school-related trips: Self-discipline is the key element for a pleasant experience for both the sponsor and the student when the student is on a school-related trip. Students who are involved in a serious disciplinary offense on a school-related trip, such as the use, possession of, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol, stealing, fighting, going in the room of a member of the opposite sex, or some other serious offense will face disciplinary action which may include one or more of the following:

1. The student will be sent home from the trip at the parents' expense.
2. The student will be held liable for damages to property.
3. The student may be removed from this school activity as well as other school co-curricular activities.
4. The student may be placed in In-School-Suspension (ISS), Off-Campus-Suspension, or Alternative Education Placement.

Students' attire during school activities outside the school day should be in good taste. If there is any question of taste, the director's decision is final. All adults on trips serve as sponsors. Students will be expected to treat them with respect at all times. In the event a parent sponsor gives needed supervision, band students must honor that with utmost respect.

GENERAL – Even though you will not always have a band shirt on, people will find out where you are from. You have the opportunity to make a tremendous name for Mt. Enterprise and for yourself. Be courteous and polite at all times. There is no way we can anticipate every possible scenario, so we ask for good judgment. Please use common sense.

RULE OF THUMB: If there is any question in your mind as to whether you should do something or not...DON'T DO IT! It is better to be safe than sorry.

**WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THERE WILL BE NO PROBLEMS. IF WE ANTICIPATED A PROBLEM, WE WOULD NOT TRAVEL.**



# HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have read the 2024-2025 Wildcat Band Handbook, and agree to comply with all the rules and expectations stated within. I understand that failure to do so can result in my immediate and permanent removal from the Mt. Enterprise Band Program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date