

Newman Smith High School
Band Handbook

2011 – 2012

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Activities and Goals

The Newman Smith Band Program has a long and distinguished history of excellence. It is the job of each current member to see that this tradition is continued and advanced each year. The success of the Newman Smith Trojan Bands will only be determined by the dedication, discipline, and character displayed by its members and the collective staff, parents, and community. It is important to remember that each member represents what is best about young people, our community, and involvement in a quality organization. The goal of the band staff is to provide students with the best music education possible, as well as directing students to develop their character to the fullest extent through hard work, goal setting, cooperation, and responsibility. Through these efforts the Newman Smith Trojan Band can become a premier music program in the State of Texas and an example of success accomplished the “right way”.

The high school band program consists of several ensembles, including the Trojan Marching Band, the Wind Symphony, the Symphonic Band, two Concert Bands, two Jazz Ensembles, and numerous chamber groups. The membership of the marching band includes all members of the high school band program. The activities of the marching band include playing at all Trojan football games and pep-rallies, community parades, area marching festivals including our own Tournament of Champions Marching Festival, and UIL Marching Contest. Placement in the Wind Symphony, the Symphonic Band, and the Concert Bands is determined through audition and each group performs quality literature from the wind band idiom. These bands perform winter, and spring concerts, as well as UIL Concert and Sight Reading Contest and various area and out-of-state festivals. The jazz ensembles are determined through audition and are only open to students who are members of one of the concert bands. The jazz ensembles perform for community functions, school district concerts, fall and spring concerts, and various area and out-of-state jazz festivals.

Individually, members have the opportunity to perform solo literature for their instruments and participate in various chamber ensembles. These individuals and groups will perform at UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest. In addition, members who attain a high level of proficiency will be encouraged to audition for the various TMEA honor groups, such as the All-Region Band, All-Region Jazz Ensemble, All-Region Orchestra, and All-State Band. Being selected as a member of these organizations is among the highest honor a high school musician can achieve.

Socially, members have the opportunity to serve in leadership positions as section leaders, drum majors, music librarians, uniform assistants, and officers, as well as interact in a variety of outlets, such as parties and picnics, holiday celebrations, the spring trip, and the annual spring band banquet.

Rehearsals and Performances

Rehearsal time is limited and with a demanding performance schedule it is extremely important to utilize each rehearsal opportunity to the fullest extent. Only through quality rehearsal time is a quality performance achieved. Guidelines are established so each member can be sure to understand fully what is expected of them by the staff. **The guidelines are as follows:**

1. Be present and on time to each rehearsal and performance.
2. Have all materials/equipment at each rehearsal/performance.
3. No rough or rowdy behavior in the band hall
4. Keep track of all personal materials and store properly.
5. Have uniform clean and properly worn at all times.
6. Follow directions of staff, as well as all school policy.
7. No damage or defacing of school or others' property

Consequences for not following these guidelines are as follows:

1. Personal warning.
2. Removal from rehearsal, conference with director.
3. Loss of band placement, conference with parents and director.
4. Removal from organization.

*****Due to repeated or severe offenses, students may be moved ahead in consequences at the discretion of the director.**

Performances are the tangible outcome of all the hard work and effort expended by the students and staff. The only outcome sought is that of excellence. When performing students should always remember that they represent our school and community and act accordingly. Any actions that could even remotely detract from the image that we strive to display will not be tolerated. In addition to the above guidelines, students should thoroughly read and understand the following guidelines pertaining specifically to performances:

1. Be early.
2. Be courteous and polite to everyone, even the other school groups.
3. Maintain a performance atmosphere in the stands and on stage.
4. Ride buses in a mature manner, voices at conversational level, remain seated, music with headphones only, no shouting or body parts out of the window.
5. Follow all directions of staff, chaperones, drum majors, section leaders, and officers.

*****Deviation from these guidelines will result in the consequences stated above or in immediate removal from the organization.**

Attendance and Grading

Attendance at all rehearsals and performances is a must if the band is to maintain any semblance of organization, discipline, and consistency. Read the following guidelines referring to attendance in order to understand the staff's expectations.

1. School policy will be followed regarding tardies and absences during the school day.
2. Tardies and absences should be cleared in advance whenever possible.
3. An unexcused tardy or absence from a rehearsal will result in the forfeiture of that individual's marching spot and/or concert band chair.
4. Two unexcused absences from rehearsal per semester will result in removal from the organization.
5. Any unexcused absence from a performance will result in immediate removal from the organization.

In order to have a tardy or absence excused, the following guidelines must be met:

1. A phone call to the director (or message) in advance from the parent.
2. Student brings a note explaining the tardy or absence signed by a parent, either before or immediately following the tardy or absence.

Approved reasons for tardies or absences:

1. Illness.
2. Out of town with family.
3. Family emergency.
4. NSHS school activity

***School conflicts are handled on an individual basis.

*****Work, club sports, boy/girl scouts are never excuses for missing a rehearsal or performance.**

Grading is accomplished each six weeks through a simple formula consisting of two parts:

1. Participation. 2. Performance

The **participation grade** is an automatic 100 minus any points accumulated for rules infractions throughout the nine weeks for each activity. Extra credit can be obtained for outside musical performances attended. The **performance grade** consists of graded playing assignments each nine weeks. **Great emphasis is placed on student effort. Failure to attempt the nine weeks**

playing grade is cause for immediate removal from the group. In addition, students will take a written final exam each semester.

Uniforms and Instruments

Each student will be issued a marching uniform that is the property of the Carrollton- Farmers Branch Independent School District and is *valued in excess of \$250.00*. Each student will be allowed to take home their uniform and will be expected to maintain it to performance standards each week. Students' fees include cleaning of the uniforms each week and students are expected to keep their uniform cleaned and pressed while it is in their possession. **Students will undergo an inspection before each performance to make sure these requirements are met.** In addition, students must purchase a pair of black Drillmaster marching shoes, an athletic bag, a garment bag, gloves, black socks, a band t-shirt, and a band ball cap. These items are ordered during summer rehearsals and are paid for with the students' activity fees (except socks).

During concert season, each student is furnished a concert uniform that is the property of the CFBISD. Boys will need to furnish a white dress shirt, black bow tie, black slacks, black socks, and black dress shoes. Girls will need black dress shoes. Jazz ensemble members will purchase shirts for casual performances and will wear nice dress clothes (i.e.coat, tie, slacks, dresses) in formal situations.

*****The directors will put a great deal of stress on personal and collective pride in our appearance at all performances. We always intend to "stand-out" from the crowd.**

School-owned instruments are available to members who play those specific instruments or have been asked to switch by the directors due to instrumentation problems. The following instruments are available:

piccolo	baritone saxophone
oboe	french horn
bassoon	euphonium
bass clarinet	bass trombone
tenor saxophone	tuba

In addition, quality percussion equipment is available, as well as all electronic equipment used by the jazz ensembles.

Fee Structure:	band activity	\$150
	uniform cleaning fee	\$50
	percussion use fee	\$50
	school instrument rental	\$100

***All fees will be paid during the first week of summer band.

Checks are made out to... **'NSABC'**

Auditions and Eligibility

Auditions are held each semester in order to seat the different ensembles in the band program. Auditions are competitive in nature and stress playing proficiency on the students' respective instruments. Priority is given to **characteristic sound, technique, and musicality**. Students must demonstrate the ability to **prepare required material** as well as **sight-read** and **perform scales by memory**. While there is a spot for each member of the band program regardless of playing ability, membership in the jazz ensembles is limited to a specific number. **Although competition for chair placement is encouraged, the emphasis is stressed on positive, constructive criticism and each individual's improvement at their own pace. It is the individual that is important, and their development and growth is the primary concern of the directors regardless of chair or band placement.**

The primary objective of each student in school should be to obtain the highest quality education possible. No other area of the band program is stressed as much as academic performance. Ineligibility prohibits a student from receiving all the benefits of being in band as well as damaging the performance level of the group. The band program takes pride in the fact that band students are among the highest achieving students academically in the school and are also among the most active in other organizations. Educational research has shown that students who are involved in extra and co-curricular activities perform at a consistently higher academic level and have higher levels of self-esteem.

Students who are having problems academically are encouraged to take part in departmental tutoring from the high school faculty. It is imperative that the band maintain the highest eligibility rate possible in order to perform at a superior level.

Students who are consistently ineligible will not be considered for chair placement in the top performing groups or the jazz program, as well as not being allowed to participate in the spring trip. In addition, students who fail twice in a given year will automatically be moved down to the next lowest group and replaced with an eligible student in order to maintain the performance integrity of the ensemble.

Private Lessons

The private lesson program is offered to all CFBISD music students grades 6-12. This program is **absolutely** the most important facet in improving the quality of individual student musicianship and thus, the level of ensemble performance. Parents are highly encouraged to consider private lessons for their student in order to facilitate the most improvement and enhance the participation of their student in the band program. **Here are some specifics on private lessons:**

1. Private lessons are offered to all band students grades 6-12 on a voluntary basis.
2. Lessons are taught during the school day, as well as after school once per week for 30 minutes.
3. No student will ever be dismissed from an academic subject for a lesson.
4. The private teachers will be qualified people screened by the directors.
5. Lessons will be scheduled to accommodate both the student's and teacher's schedule.

Purposes of the private lesson program:

1. To continue to improve the quality of music education in the CFBISD.
2. To provide for individual differences of music students.
3. To boost the achievement level of all music students.
4. To aid the student in attaining the musical goals forth in the Texas Education Agency's Essential Knowledge and Skills.
5. To provide private lessons in the school building allowing students to take advantage of the convenience and expense factors lost by traveling elsewhere for instruction.
6. To provide the school with control over the quality and cost of private instruction.
7. To provide the student with one-on-one guidance by a specialist on the student's instrument.

Financing:

The cost of the lessons will be \$16.00 per 30 minute lesson once per week. Advance payment will be made once a month directly to the private teacher with checks made payable directly to the private instructor. It is the responsibility of the teacher to keep accurate records of the transactions and furnish proper receipts to the student. Teachers must be notified 24 hours in advance if a student will be unable to attend their lesson or the student will be liable for the cost of the lesson.

Guide to the Art of Practicing

The purpose of this guide is to provide information on exactly what each student should be doing at home on their instrument.

When to Practice:

1. Approximately the same time every day in 30-60 minute intervals.
2. At a time when you are physically and mentally alert.
3. At a time when there will be the least amount of distractions.

Practicing at the same time every day helps establish a set routine. Also, there are fewer interruptions if both family and friends know that a certain time has been set aside for practicing.

Where to Practice:

1. In a place as free as possible from TV, phone, stereo, other people, etc...
2. In a place that is neither too "live" or too "dead" acoustically.
3. In a place where the student feels comfortable.

***It is important that each student have a comfortable, distraction free environment in which to learn.

Equipment:

1. A chair with a straight back and no arms.
2. A music stand.
3. A mirror.
4. A metronome.
5. A cassette recorder.

***In order for the student to develop good posture, it is important for a good chair and music stand to be provided. The mirror is for viewing hand, embouchure, and body position. The metronome will develop and reinforce good rhythm and pulse while the tape recorder will show the student what they really sounds like.

What to Practice:

1. Warm-up materials - long tones, slurs, scales, etc.
2. Band music - band pieces, test material, All-District/Region music, etc...

3. Private lesson music - assigned by private lesson teacher.
4. Sight-reading - use an etude or song book.
5. Student music - play anything for enjoyment.

***Practicing consistently at 60 minutes per day is optimum.

A Note to Parents

Parent involvement and interest in their student's musical growth can be the single most important factor in their total music education. When parents are actively involved in their student's musical endeavors, the chances for success are exponentially greater than for the student whose parents show little or no interest at all.

Students are learning more in the band hall than how to just blow a horn and beat a drum. They are developing "life skills" such as discipline, team work, responsibility, self-confidence, social skills, and critical-thinking skills. It is the directors' goal to help each student develop in these areas and we know if we work with you as a team we can be successful.

Many times parents say things like: "The only thing I ever learned to play was the radio;" or "I couldn't carry a tune in a bucket!" For those of you who feel you fit in this category here's some good news... it doesn't matter! What is important is that through your actions, you show your student that you care about their musical development.

There are many ways to do this. You can show your support by attending concerts and contests and by attending civic and community or professional performances with your student. As much as possible, try to provide equipment and or accessories that they may need and give them a productive place in which to practice. Praise your student when they practice regularly and offer a little positive reinforcement when they don't. Ask your student how things are going in band class and have them play for you what they are working on. Parents do not need any prior musical experience in order to effectively support their student's development.

The directors, through this handbook, phone calls, and the newsletter, want to improve communication between the staff and parents. The goal is to keep you informed about your student's band activities so as to facilitate your involvement in their musical education. Remember, you can be the most important figure in you student's musical growth, and if we work together we can make your student's experience in the Newman Smith Band a success!

Handbook Acknowledgment Form

I/we have read and understand all the rules and guidelines pertaining to membership in the Newman Smith High School Band Program for the 2011-2012 school year. My/our student has permission to participate in the activities and performances as outlined in the online handbook.

Student Name _____

Student Signature _____

Parent(s) Name _____

Parent(s) Signature _____

***Please feel free to contact the directors any time...

NSHS Band Office 972-968-5327
e-mail..... reina@cfbisd.edu

www.nshsband.org