**ABOUT THE DIRECTOR OF BANDS**

Hello! My name is Becky Keisling, and I am the Band Director in Grapeland I.S.D. I have been the Assistant Band Director and Elementary/Intermediate Music Instructor in Elkhart I.S.D. for five years prior to coming to Grapeland. Before Elkhart, I taught in the sunny town of Pensacola, Florida. I have played the French Horn and Trumpet for over twenty-five years in bands, orchestras, and ensembles from Florida to Kentucky to Texas. I am excited to see how far the Grapeland Sandie Band can go this year!

**INTRODUCTION**

It is my great pleasure to welcome you this year to the Grapeland Sandie Band. The purpose of this handbook is to provide a written policy on the organization and operation of our band program. It contains information of great importance for both students and parents. Knowledge of the material contained in this plan is essential to the smooth operation and success of the band.

By accepting membership in the Grapeland Sandie Band, you agree to the best of your ability, to work with the Band Director in making this year’s band the finest musical organization that our combined efforts can produce. I do expect responsible attitudes and actions – and lots of hard work! Practice sufficiently, to be able to perform your part well and to give it your “best shot” every time, all the time.

**PHILOSOPHY**

Music is a universal language, a pure and unique method of communication. Through music a person can achieve an understanding of beauty, expression and the appreciation of the finer things in life through actual participation in them.

In addition to the cultural values, there are many non-musical values taught in band, including personal, physiological and vocational reasons. Music is an important and continuing factor in fulfilling the philosophy of general education.

I thoroughly believe that Music is an outlet through which we can express our feelings. After the events of this summer, Music will become a vastly important part of each band students’ life as they seek to express their emotions and become a better player through the use of Music.

I am here to help each student strive reach their full potential on their instrument, and am available to help individual students before and after school as needed. My door is always open to discuss anything that needs to be discussed. You are more than welcome to call the band hall to set up a conference at any time should the need arise.

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

All of these objectives and goals lead to broadening the musical experiences.

In the Grapeland Sandie Band, the student will:

\*Strive to ensure proper conduct, consideration and courtesy both in the band hall and in the

public arena.

\*Develop self-control and group discipline through preparation and practice.

\*Develop an ability to make musical value judgments through critical listening.

\*Be provided opportunities to recognize quality of sound, pitch, style, tempo, rhythm, blend,

balance, phrasing, dynamics and articulation.

\*Develop skill in using and understanding note values, rests, key signatures, scales, musical

terms, signs and symbols.

\*Develop proper instrument technique, care for the instrument, correct posture, playing

position and rhythmic skills.

\*Further develop instrumental technique in finger/tongue coordination, intonation, musical

phrasing, dynamic control and articulation.

\*Further develop music reading skills, improve hand-eye coordination and the ability to

interpret in sound, musical symbols and terms from the printed page.

\*Develop musical sensitivity through performing and listening to music. The student shall be

provided opportunities to internalize generally accepted authentic performance styles and

techniques in music played and heard.

\*Develop creative self-expression in every performance experience and explore careers in

music.

\*Develop physical discipline and coordination through instrument performance, marching

fundamentals and drill sequencing.

\*Achieve mental discipline through memorizing instrument fingerings, music theory essentials,

music selections and marching drill movements.

\*Develop self-discipline and self-confidence through group pride and working as a team

member.

**BAND HALL RULES AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

Students will obey all school rules and regulations.

Students will obey all applicable local, state and federal laws. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the band program.

Restroom breaks and water breaks will be limited to before and after class.

Music stands are for your music. They are NOT for instruments, textbooks, cell phones, etc… Do not lean on them!

Stay out of the office and practice rooms unless you have permission from the director.

No hats will be worn in the band hall.

**All band students will be expected to adhere to the following rules (notice the acronym the rules spell to help you remember them):**

**Mind your Manners—**All band students are expected to be respectful of other people and their property. You are NOT to touch an instrument that does not belong to you.

**Use Your Hand to Speak**—During rehearsal, students will be expected to sit quietly and pay attention to the lesson. Relevant questions may be asked at any time, but must first be preceded by raising your hand to gain the band director’s acknowledgement before proceeding with the question. When speaking, there will be absolutely NO use of profanity at any rehearsal or performance.

**Stay in Your Seat**—All band students are expected to stay in their seat during class in the band hall, or be in their proper spot at all times while practicing outside for marching band season. There will be NO running, “cutting up,” or “horseplay” of any kind.

**Involve Yourself Correctly—**All band students are expected to be attentive during rehearsal without doing anything to cause others to be distracted from the lesson or practice. Each student is expected to actively involve himself or herself in the lesson to best improve their playing abilities. Talking may happen before or after the rehearsal, but from the time the practice or class starts until the time it ends, any talking must be relevant to the rehearsal we are currently in, and the student must be acknowledged by the band director, drum major, or section leader before speaking. There will be no “blurting out” irrelevant information during rehearsals.

**Carefully Use All Instruments—**All band students are expected to store their instrument, music and case in the proper place before and after class. All cases must be latched when not in use to avoid instruments being damaged when accidentally dropped from the case. Instruments must be used carefully and in their proper manner when not in the case.

**CONSEQUENCES FOR BREAKING CODE OF CONDUCT OR RULES**

(These are in addition to the GISD Secondary Schools Code of Conduct Handbook.)

Verbal warning (and push-ups during marching band season)

Written warning to be signed by parents

Band Hall Detention

Phone conversation with parents

Office Referral

Parent conference with Band Director

Dismissal from band as determined by Band Director and School Administration

**BAND LEVELS OF CONSEQUENCES (GOOD AND BAD)**

Every student will begin the year with 100 POINTS FOR A GRADE. Misbehavior will get you a verbal warning or pushups to increase mental awareness. Persistent misbehavior will get you to a Level I, plus a call to a parent. Students are allowed to earn good consequence grade points by outstanding performance and extra work.

**Level I** – Band Hall Detention. (Working after school in the band hall, cleaning, library work, mandatory practice). Detention must be another day than section rehearsal day.

**Level II** – Office Referral.

If a student consistently misbehaves after receiving a band hall detention, the band director may refer the student to the principal’s office for further consequences.

**Level III** – Removal from Band.

Persistent offenses after the student has been referred to the principal may result in removal from the band program. This will be at the discretion of the band director and the school administration.

**GRADE REDUCTION CONSEQUENCES**

Grading is based on attitude, discipline, participation and improvement, which is subjective for each student. These additional rules are more objective.

Deduct three points from 6 weeks grade for every hour of unexcused absence from night rehearsals and sectionals.

Deduct three points from 6 weeks grade for 2 unexcused tardies.

Deduct full letter grade from 6 weeks grade for 3 unexcused tardies.

Zero for a weekly grade for unexcused absence to extra rehearsals.

Zero for a major grade for unexcused absence from a game or other performance.

**The severity of the offense will determine which punishment to administer.**

**BAND HALL PROCEDURES**

The band hall will be open before and after school every day for students to practice, to drop off instruments or to pick them up for home practice. The band hall will also be open 30 minutes before and after any scheduled rehearsal outside of school hours. NON-BAND STUDENTS ARE **NOT** ALLOWED IN THE BAND HALL.

Students will come to each rehearsal with ALL necessary materials: instruments, music, etc. During concert season a pencil will be required. Leave instrument cases in their slots. Any instrument maintenance, music replacement, or other concerns need to be taken care of before or after school, NOT in the few minutes before class begins or during class.

Students will leave all personal belongings (backpacks, purses, cases, non-band material) in their instrument slot or by the front door during rehearsal. No personal items (especially cell phones) will be permitted within the rehearsal seating area.

Students will come into class quietly, get set up quickly and be seated properly with all instruments and necessary equipment, ready to play when the bell rings. Do not wait until the bell rings to be seated. Warm up softly.

Remember: we are here TO MAKE MUSIC. Always strive to play with your best sound; do not interrupt other students’ efforts to do so.

**DAILY PROCEDURES**

You are expected to be in place and ready to play, whether in the band hall or on the practice field at the beginning of the period. Do not blast or make obnoxious noises with your instrument. You may warm up with scales or other warm up material.

**ABSOLUTELY NO GUM, FOOD or DRINKS IN THE BAND HALL**. Besides being a hygiene problem and a health hazard, this can seriously damage your instrument.

When band rehearsal is over, clean your instrument and put it back in the storage area. No instruments are to be left on the floor or in the band hall. All instrument cases are to be latched at all times. You may then quietly leave the rehearsal area when dismissed.

You may practice your instrument when the band hall is open. Remember, the band hall is for practice, anyone playing around will be instructed to leave. You may also take your instrument home with you to practice!! **Practice every day on your own time. It is your homework.** Our new and challenging music will require individual practice.

Conflicts with other school functions will try to be avoided. If you have a doctor’s appointment, please try to arrange it so as not to conflict with scheduled rehearsals and regular band class. If other unavoidable conflicts are brought to the director’s attention in advance, they can usually be excused with a written note or face to face meeting with parent or guardian.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class and scheduled rehearsals. Anyone arriving after the tardy bell rings will be counted tardy. Then two or more tardies will result in band detention. All excused absences and tardies MUST be cleared through the band office.

Performance attendance will be taken at an appropriate time before the performance. Tardies will result in a reduction of the performance grade, and in the case of football games, lead to revoking of third quarter privileges. Failure to appear at all will result in a zero for the performance grade. Rest room breaks are limited to 5 minutes, returning late will get the consequence of no third quarter off, plus a demerit.

**GRADING POLICY**

Individual evaluation (grading) is based upon the **improvement rate** of skills at rehearsals, performances and selected music tests. **Attitude** and **behavior** play an important role in the rate of skill improvement, performance quality and willingness to **participate.** This is weighed as objectively as possible according to the student’s natural abilities.

The following procedures and penalties will be observed in determining a student’s six weeks and semester grade.

Three points cut from six weeks grade for every hour of unexcused absence from rehearsal. (Night rehearsal counts for 2 hours.)

Another three points cut from six weeks grade for the second unexcused tardy from rehearsal.

One full letter grade cut from six weeks grade for every three unexcused tardies.

Three points cut from six weeks for forgetting your instrument, music or other equipment for rehearsal. **Again, good consequence points can be earned back with outstanding performance and extra work.**

**PERFORMANCES AND INSPECTIONS**

At all performances where the band uniform is worn an inspection will be conducted by the band director or drum major prior to the performance. Three demerits will be deducted from the performance grade for every infraction during inspection. Inspection will be completed 10 minutes prior to warm up. Uniforms will be cleaned by the school at the beginning and end of the year. Cleaning due to the wearer’s negligence will be the responsibility of the student and parent.

**Hot Weather Uniform for football games**:

The hot weather band uniform will be a Sandie Band official T shirt, plain blue jeans (with no designs) and tennis shoes. NO sandals or boots will be worn. Tennis shoes can either be black or white.

**Concert Uniform:**

Men: The concert uniform will be a white button down shirt, black pants, black shoes, with a maroon bow tie and cumber bund.

Ladies: The concert uniform will be a black or white button down blouse with black

slacks or a black skirt. A black dress may also be worn. All skirt and dress lengths

MUST come no shorter than three inches from the top of the kneecap.

**Marching Band Uniform**.

All uniform parts intact, nothing missing.

Clean, **solid black socks** (you must buy your own socks) and black band shoes.

Long hair worn up in hats; hats worn and treated properly.

Official band shirt worn under the uniform (unless otherwise instructed by the band director) and light weight gym shorts under uniform pants, no blue jeans or other long pants.

No lipstick or jewelry may be worn with the uniform.

Pant leg length should be at the top of the band shoe. This is to prevent ragged hems.

When at a performance, you will remain in full uniform until told otherwise by the band director. When jackets are removed, they need to be removed completely and set down properly. Do not let them hang open on your body. ALWAYS LOOK SHARP!

There will be no “I’ll change this part later.” Full uniforms will be worn at all times.

No hats are to be worn in the stands when the marching uniform is worn.

**INSTRUMENTS**

Outside of instruments cleaned and shined.

All parts in EXCELLENT working order.

All necessary equipment in place (percussion).

Music secured in proper order and in place with proper equipment.

At performances and football games the following rules are to be followed:

At games and competitions, you will sit in your section in neat rows. No one is to get up from their seats without permission from the director.

During performances, **non-band members are not permitted in the band area.**

Students are not permitted to drive to performances. Students may be checked out by their parents after the game or performance has concluded with permission from the band director.

The parent or guardian will have to sign the student out with the band director.

Students must return to the band seating area **before** the beginning of the fourth quarter when given a third quarter concession break. Consistent failure to do so may result in third quarter breaks being withheld from the student.

**BUS TRIPS**

All students will ride to an event in a school vehicle. Parents may check out their student with the band director after the game or performance has concluded. Parents ONLY are to check students out with the director. If a need arises for another relative to check a student out from a performance, permission must be gained from school administration at least one day prior to the performance.

**SPRING TRIPS**

The high school band may take a performance trip each year if approved by school administration. The type of trip and length is largely dependent on the administration and school board and also the amount of funds available. Trip funds are accumulated through student fund raising, cash payment by the student, band booster contributions or a combination of all of these. This is a total high school and junior high school endeavor, and is only accomplished by the participation of ALL BAND STUDENTS!!

**STUDENT FUNDRAISERS**

The purposes of fundraising are to pay for the cost of the band trip AND to fund music department activities for the development and enrichment of the student’s musical experience. Fundraising events will be classified as full band profit or individual profit for each student based on participation. Students will have INDIVIDUAL trip accounts in which their credit from participation in fund raiser efforts will go toward their individual trip costs. If a student does not participate in fundraising, then he/she will have to come up with personal funds to pay for their portion of the trip expenses. All full fund profit/funds will be used to benefit the entire band as a whole, and will not be divided among band members’ accounts.

**BAND BOOSTERS**

Band Boosters is an organization that works to assist and support the band. **All parents, grand-parents and guardians of band students in grades 6 thru 12 are band boosters** and are encouraged to attend meetings and participate in activities. Community members are also encouraged to be band boosters. **Parents please come to our meetings!**

**DRUM MAJOR TRY OUTS**

Try-outs for Drum Major will be held during the Spring Semester. You must be passing all classes in the grading period prior to try-outs. Those trying out must not owe anything to the school district. Drum Major candidates must have at least one year of experience in marching band and be willing to go to Drum Major Camp for one week in the summer. Also, Drum Major candidates should understand the basic rules of football and be able to follow the game in order to direct the Band properly.

**SUPPLIES**

Students are responsible for purchasing reeds, cork grease, valve oil, drumsticks, etc. as needed for performance beyond the NORMAL amount provided by the music department. Woodwinds will be given **one reed per calendar month at no charge**; brass players can use the community valve oil and grease or buy their own. Percussion will be **provided one pair of drumsticks per semester**; extras beyond that must be purchased by the student, with payment made beforehand. There will be certain small fees for other supplies such as band shoes, t-shirts, and other necessities. These fees will be discussed at the opening meeting before each school year.

**EVERYDAY SUPPLIES**

Instrument (with all necessary parts)

Music (in its folder)

Lyre (Only if wanted to use in stands during the football games)

Water (Marching Field)

Hat (Only during marching season for outdoor rehearsals)

**INSTRUMENT REPAIR**

School-owned instruments will be maintained and repaired by the music department for situations developing through normal wear and tear. Personal instruments can be sent for repair through the band program, but any costs will be the responsibility of the student. Any personal instruments that have been repaired will not be released to the student until payment is received OR acceptable payment arrangements have been made. If a student displays negligent treatment of a school –owned instrument, or there is proof of such treatment, any resulting damage will be paid for by the student and parent.

**COMMUNICATION**

It is extremely important to have good communication between the director and parent and guardians. The band office can be reached by calling 936-687-4661. Personal visits are encouraged when outside of rehearsal time. My e-mail is bkeisling@grapelandisd.net. Please call or email me if you have any questions or concerns, or if you need to set up a conference.

**CLOSING THOUGHTS**

We are in for what I hope will be the best year ever in Grapeland! I know that this has been a ROUGH summer, but I truly believe that all of our bands will be very successful. I believe that our students are the best and will give their best effort to build what will be a quality band that everyone will be proud of for years to come! As Winston Churchill said, “Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.” I look forward to seeing how our Sandie bands will overcome the events of the summer to continue the success of the new year!

Sincerely,

Becky Keisling

Grapeland I.S.D. Director of Bands