



**PAREDES**  
MIDDLE SCHOOL  
**BAND**  
[PAREDESBAND.ORG](http://PAREDESBAND.ORG)

**2018-2019**  
**BEGINNER BAND**  
**HANDBOOK**

Dear Students and Parents:

The 2018–2019 school year is here and we are very excited to be working with your students. We are thrilled that you have chosen to be a part of our organization. By becoming a member of the Paredes Middle School Puma Band you are making a commitment to be a part of one of the most successful, rewarding and exciting activities available. The band program at Paredes consists of over 300 band members as well as countless parents, teachers and staff.

Band is a valuable and enjoyable activity that provides students with many educational, musical, and social opportunities. Band is an activity that benefits students far beyond the band hall. Instrumental music instills the values of focus, responsibility, cooperation, discipline, and constructive work ethic. We work together and rely on each other in a way that is unmatched in any other organization. Band engages students in a communal activity that allows them to use free time constructively. It fosters creativity and teaches the appreciation of music as an art form.

All of the involved parents, teachers and staff here at Paredes are committed to helping all students achieve new heights of success. We will encourage your success not only as a band member, but also as an individual and Paredes community member. We have three simple goals:

- 1) For all of our members to invest the time and effort needed to ensure success
- 2) For all of our band members to collaborate in a meaningful, successful program
- 3) For all of our members to have fun while learning of the many benefits of music

This handbook outlines your responsibilities and rights as band members and parents. Please read the handbook with your parents and return the forms on the last page (front & back). If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us; we are here to help you. We look forward to the year to come.

Sincerely,  
Jeff Hefler, Nick Conte, and Nancy English  
Band Department, Paredes Middle School

# Band Classes

All beginners, regardless of grade, take part in our beginning band class. This class consists of students that are beginning their first year of playing an instrument. All students will take part in three yearly school concerts, our spring ensemble recital, our end of year trip to 6 flags, and other events as scheduled. All band classes at Paredes Middle School are full year courses. Dropping the course mid-year will not be an option for students enrolled in any of our band classes unless approved by a director.

## Office Hours

The Band Hall is open daily from 7:20 am until at least 5:30 pm. Students are encouraged to take advantage of this time to practice, get specific help on material, or make up low/missing grades. All Paredes students have the opportunity to take the late bus home, leaving campus at 5:40 pm daily. Students will be able to use their advisory class time (8:04 to 8:28) to rehearse their music if permitted by their advisory teacher.

## Grading Procedures and Practice Guidelines

Grades for band classes are determined in the following manner:

1. Practice Logs, sectional attendance, daily preparation/participation- 50%
2. Performance attendance and playing tests- 50%

### Participation

Participation is an essential component of the band program. Participation/daily grade is based primarily on daily effort and performance. Points will be deducted for the following:

1. Failure to bring required materials to band
2. Continued lack of preparation and little or no effort in class

### Practice Logs

**All Students are expected to be practicing outside of the school day.** Students will be expected to practice 30 minutes per day, 6 days a week outside of the school day. Students are encouraged to practice more than this. Extra credit will be given to those students who practice more than 180 minutes a week. Practice Logs are due every Tuesday, signed off on by a parent. No credit will be given to practice logs without a parent signature. Late practice logs will be accepted through Friday of the same week. If practicing at home is not a reasonable option, we welcome students to make use of the band hall for before or after school practice.

The following scale will be used to grade practice logs:

<u>Minutes of practice per week</u>	<u>Grade received</u>
180 minutes or more	100%
150 minutes	90%
120 minutes	80%
90 minutes	70%
Less than 90 minutes/missing log	Failing

### **Practice Guidelines for Students**

Incorrect habits are sometimes more easily developed than correct habits, and a habit is hard to change. Students need to avoid simply going through the motions and make sure to engage themselves in their practice by doing the following:

1. Warm up correctly. Students should have a daily warm-up routine to begin practice every day. Directors are happy to assist any student in establishing an effective daily routine. Students should focus on tone quality and embouchure during warm-up. Even the best musicians need to consistently focus on fundamentals.
2. Set a specific, tangible goal for the practice session. The regular setting of and accomplishment of goals builds strong practice habits.
3. Isolate a problem or section in a piece of music. Repeat it over and over many times. Practice it slowly first and then gradually build up the speed using a metronome. Repetition of a problem area reinforces both muscle and mental memory.
4. Don't just practice the parts of the piece that you know. Practice the parts of the piece that are giving you difficulty in performing. With a little bit of practice, all parts will become the parts that you know.

### **Chair Tests**

Chair tests are weekly assessments of student performance. Testing assignments will be given one week in advance. Students will be heard by a director and given a grade based on their performance ability. Tests will often take place privately but will occasionally be a part of the classroom experience. Appropriate practice will ensure adequate student preparation. These tests may result in a change in chair order at the director's discretion.

## **Performances**

Performance attendance is mandatory for all band members and will count as test grades. A calendar of dates and times will be sent home the first week of school so that parents and students may reserve those dates and times. Parents will be notified well in advance of any performances. Exceptions can be made through the consent of the directors in emergency situations. Lack of transportation to a performance will not be considered as an excused absence. Unexcused absences will result in a grade of 0 for the event. Concerts are a vital function of the band and count as a considerable part of student grades. Students will be informed of concerts well in advance, and it is their responsibility to communicate to their parents. **ANY UNEXCUSED ABSENCE FROM A PERFORMANCE WILL RESULT IN INELIGIBILITY FOR OUR SPRING TRIP.**

### **Solo/Ensemble Recital**

All band members will learn a piece of music to perform either by themselves or in a small group. Preparations will begin in March and continue during the spring semester. This recital enables students to become better individual players, which in turn improves the overall quality of the band. Performances will take place at our Solo and Ensemble Fundraiser Recital in April.

### **Other performances/potential conflicts**

Performance opportunities often arise throughout the school year, and we will make every effort to communicate these to parents as soon as possible. As one of Paredes' largest organizations, we are often called upon to represent our school to our community. Directors will communicate with other teachers, coaches, and the sponsors of other activities to give each student every opportunity to be a part of other groups. We understand that many of our students are involved with multiple extracurricular activities and want to see all students engage in all interests. Please ask to receive a complete semester calendar from all your activities so that any potential conflicts may be communicated and resolved early. If a conflict exists, please contact a director as soon as possible to make arrangements.

## **Band Performance Dress Code**

Every student must own a Paredes Band T Shirt to wear at various events and performances including pep rallies, football games, and in-school performances. Shirts are \$10. Beginning Band students will wear their band shirt for all band performances.

## **Instruments**

**NO STUDENT WILL BE DENIED PARTICIPATION IN OUR PROGRAM DUE TO LACK OF AN INSTRUMENT.** However, we would suggest that students and parents purchase an instrument of their own or at least a mouthpiece, as they will likely be of a higher quality than those used by the school. Akins High school, our big brother campus, will not be providing smaller instruments for students.

### **Student-Owned instruments**

Proper instrument care and storage is the student's responsibility. Cases should be clearly marked with the student's name. If needed, ask a director for a free name tag. No instrument should be used or handled by anyone other than the owner. Parents should keep record of the make, model, and serial number of their child's instrument. Insurance is recommended.

1. Students need to take instruments home each day to practice.
2. Any instrument left in the band hall is left at the student's risk.
3. Students are provided with lockers in order to keep their materials safe and organized

### **School-Owned instruments**

French Horns, Baritones, Tubas, Oboes, Bass Clarinets, Tenor Saxophones, Baritone Saxophones, and Bassoons are expensive instruments provided to students by Austin ISD. Students using smaller instruments (flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, trombone, percussion) are encouraged to purchase their own instrument, but school owned instruments are available on an as-needed basis. There is an enrichment fee of \$25 per semester, totaling \$50 for the school year for school owned instruments. **Any damage resulting from careless or abusive behavior to instruments or cases will be charged to the student(s) responsible for the damage.** Students using school instruments should purchase their own mouthpiece

and will have documentation signed by the parent accepting responsibility for the use of that instrument. Austin ISD is not responsible for instruments that are lost, stolen or damaged.

### **Repairs**

If an instrument is not performing properly, please consult the director first. Many repairs are simple enough for the directors to fix. If a director cannot fix the instrument, it can be brought to a repair shop. Most instruments rented through an outside business have specific repair plans included in the price of the rental. We will try provide a loaner school owned instrument whenever available. If you are repairing an instrument on your own, please send a note signed by a parent verifying that the instrument is in for repairs. School owned instruments can only be repaired through the band department. Repairs to school owned instruments must be communicated to and supervised by a band director.

### **Band Supplies**

The Paredes Band will provide a binder and sheet protectors for all students, which will be required for every class. These binders keep all music and documents received in band class looking professional and organized, and are required for every rehearsal. Additional supplies are mandatory for all students for every rehearsal and performance:

**Woodwind:** Instrument, 3 to 5 good reeds, swab, binder/music (book), pencil

**Brass:** Instrument, valve oil, slide grease, binder/music (book), pencil

**Percussion:** snare sticks, hard rubber/PVC mallets, stick bag, binder/music, pencil  
**(optional):** Yarn marimba mallets, timpani mallets

## **Behavior Expectations**

Appropriate discipline is an expectation for all students who are members of the Paredes Middle School Band program. To continue our tradition of success the band program demands the very best from our students both inside and outside the classroom. The band has a responsibility as a representative of our school and community. The public form their opinion about our band, school, and community from the level of behavior we exhibit as a group. The band directors will show all students respect and expect the same from each and every student. The following list outlines our expectations of students:

1. Students will display proper podium procedures, displaying respect to one another as well as their director.
2. Students will be courteous and polite to everyone, especially other school groups.
3. When on bus trips, students will engage in safe and appropriate behavior. Inappropriate behavior includes loud voices, standing, using the emergency exit, and putting body parts or anything else outside of bus windows.

Consequences for refusal to follow appropriate procedures may include verbal reprimands, parent conferences, detention hall, loss of privileges, and referrals to the office. Students displaying repeated problematic behavior may be denied performance and/or activity privileges with the band and face possible dismissal from the band program. All discipline will be in accordance with both campus and AISD policies.

# Concert Etiquette

1. Students and parents are expected to stay for the entire length of the concert. Students need to listen and be supportive of all groups in the concert.
2. If it is necessary for a student (or parent) to leave during the performance, please leave between musical selections or between the different bands performing.
3. If a student arrives late, they must wait until the selection ends to find a seat.
4. Students will not walk around or talk during a performance. Please stay seated and quiet when a group is performing. Each performing group has worked very hard, and deserves the respect of all that are in attendance
5. Whistling and cheering is not appropriate for a concert performance. Show appreciation for a band performance by clapping. An exceptional performance can be recognized by extended applause and/or standing while applauding.
6. Do not take off any part of your uniform until the entire concert is over. It is important to look proud, project a positive first and lasting impression, and portray a sincere respect for the audience and public. We want to represent Paredes Middle School with a professional, organized appearance in concert situations.
7. It is not appropriate to roam around the back or sides of the performance area during a performance!

# Communication

Many problems can be easily avoided with communication. Students are expected to communicate with the band directors in advance if a conflict arises. Any absence without communication will be considered unexcused. As a general rule, written communication from a parent is best for documentation and grade purposes. Other factors to consider are:

1. Never communicate through another student regarding attendance – only through parents.
2. Please do not ask the band directors to contradict band policies by asking to be excused for a reason that has been clearly defined unexcused.

## **Absences**

Students will be given a copy of the yearly calendar of performances and rehearsals at the beginning of the school year. Some performance dates might change due to extenuating circumstances. Every effort will be made to give students at least two weeks' notice of calendar changes. Absences will be classified as excused for the following reasons ONLY:

1. Student's personal illness/excused absence from school
2. Extenuating circumstances determined by the directors
3. School related conflicts cleared by the director prior to the absence

## **Rides and Student Pick Up Before & After Band Events**

When the band travels to a performance all band students are expected to ride the bus. Students will not be allowed to ride to and from a band performance in a private vehicle except in the case of a conflict with another school activity or an urgent family emergency. Students are expected to arrange for a ride home from the school after all scheduled band events, performances, and rehearsals. This is an issue that directly impacts the safety of our students. The band staff will comply with all school policies regarding this subject. This includes notifying

AISD Police when a student has been left unattended and his/her safety is in question. Every effort will be made to stay on schedule, but schedules don't always go completely according to plan due to a number of circumstances beyond our control. All students must be picked up within 15 minutes after the group returns.

## Band Student Fees

Students will not be denied participation in the band program due to financial difficulties. Every student has the right to fully participate in our program regardless of financial situation. However, band students will have small expenses for fees and supplies. These supplies include solo contest fees, transportation, audition fees and other performance related expenses. The band directors have made their best effort to keep these costs as small as possible. If there are any concerns over financial circumstances, please contact a band director as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made.

Whenever it is necessary to send money please follow the guidelines listed below:

- Cash or checks should be placed in an envelope with the student's name clearly marked and what the payment is for on the front of the envelope.
- Checks are made payable to "PMS Band" with the student's name listed on the memo.
- All payment must be placed in the safe outside of the Directors office.
- All students will be provided with a receipt upon payment to the Band program

### Band Trips

Fundraising profits CANNOT be refunded under any circumstances. To be eligible for trips, including the end of the year field trip, a student must meet the UIL academic standard for eligibility, be a band member in good standing, attend all concert performances, and fulfill the monetary requirements. Any refusal of trip participation will be in line with Paredes Middle School's campus code of conduct. Any unexcused absence from an event will result in ineligibility from our band trip.

## End of Year Awards

**Outstanding Sectional Awards**– These students show exceptional ability on their instruments. These awards go to one member of each class.

**Puma Spirit Award** – This student displays exemplary improvement in and out of the band hall.



**PAREDES MIDDLE SCHOOL  
STUDENT INFO AND BAND TRIP AUTHORIZATION FORM  
2018 – 2019 SCHOOL YEAR**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

“I hereby give consent for the above named student to go on school sponsored trips (e.g. football games, contests, concerts, music festivals, etc) with the band, band director, and/or approved volunteers. I also give my consent for school employees to secure emergency first aid or medical services for the above named student. I release Austin Independent School District and all accompanying school authorities and chaperones from all responsibility pertaining to claims and expenses in the case of accident, injury, or loss of life that might occur. I understand that all reasonable precautions will be taken to insure the safety of my child during this activity.”

Student Information (Please print)

**Parent/Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Allergies** (drug and/or food) \_\_\_\_\_

**Medications taken regularly** \_\_\_\_\_

**If a parent cannot be reached, who should we contact?**

<b>Name</b> _____	<b>Relation</b> _____	<b>Phone</b> _____
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<b>X</b> _____ Signature of Parent or Guardian	 Date
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<b>X</b> _____ Signature of Parent or Guardian	 Date
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**Please turn the page over and sign the opposite side!**

I have read the Paredes MS Band Handbook. I agree to follow the policies and procedures outlined in this manual.

StudentName: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### **Parent Volunteers Needed**

All of the Paredes MS Band activities run much more smoothly with the help of our wonderful parent volunteers. If you would be willing to help the band program and your child by volunteering for various activities, please check the appropriate spaces below.

\_\_\_\_ Bus Chaperone (for festivals, trips, etc...)

\_\_\_\_ Chaperone for band social activities

\_\_\_\_ Provide food or drink for various activities

\_\_\_\_ Available during school hours to assist the band program with uniform fittings, alterations, money collection, paperwork, etc.

If available, what day/time is best for you? \_\_\_\_\_