COCKRILL MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND

2026-27 BAND HANDBOOK

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Band Philosophy

The instrumental music program in our middle school is the first phase of a seven-year program of instruction. It is our hope that participation in the band program will foster better understanding and appreciation of music and help students carry with them the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will help them throughout their academic career.

Cockrill Middle School has been recognized as one of the truly outstanding music programs in the state and country. Through the dedicated work of many people, the tradition associated with this success has grown and flourished within the school and community.

While it is the individual student's achievement in music that is our primary goal, it is the commitment of all band members to each other that has allowed our program to achieve its unique position.

By signing the forms at the end of this handbook, you will be making a commitment that includes the following:

1. You will be a member of the band for the entire school year.
2. You will give your best effort to improve as a musician.
3. You will maintain a progressive, positive attitude toward band and school throughout the year.

Performances

Attendance is expected at all performances and all pre-scheduled rehearsals. Concerts are extensions of the classroom and are the highlights of the learning process. Please check the band calendar for the dates of the concerts and combined rehearsals.

Unexcused absences from performances can result in, at director discretion, zeros as grades, removal from current ensemble or the program, or other appropriate consequences.

Individual Competitions

The ultimate goal of our program is the development of the individual musician to the limit of his or her potential. To assist in reaching this goal, we strongly recommend participation in the individual competitions and festivals offered during the school year.

All-Region tryouts involve the finest students from schools in our region. The music is announced in August and the tryouts are in November for Honors Students and select other 7th and 8th graders.

Ensemble performances takes place in February, and the Solo competition takes place in May for all students. Both of these events will result in non-competitive ratings and medals or ribbons.

Band Classes

All members of the Band Program are assigned by audition to one of four band classes that meet as academic classes. Auditions are held at the end of each school year. Students may be re-evaluated again at the end of the Fall Semester. Balanced instrumentation within each band is an integral part of the selection process. Private Lessons are highly encouraged for each student in the Cockrill Band Program.

Honors Band (Lead Teacher, Kyle Wiechmann) 5th period

The Honors Band is an advanced performing group with preparation for the high school band program as a primary objective. Students will perform at concerts and contests throughout the school year. Students will also have the opportunity to perform at the solo and ensemble contests provided they have met the eligibility requirements. Instrumentation is limited to those who show advanced performance abilities and superior attitudes. Members are selected by audition.

Uniform:

- Cockrill Band shirt (will be ordered through the school)
- Solid black dress pants, solid black socks and shoes (purchase on your own)
- Long sleeved, button up, collared solid black dress shirt (purchased as part of fees.)

Symphonic Band (Lead Teacher, Matthew Harp) 3rd period

The Symphonic Band is an advanced performing group with preparation for the Honors Band and the high school band program as primary objectives. Students will perform at concerts and contests throughout the school year. Students will also have the opportunity to perform at the solo and ensemble contests provided they have met the eligibility requirements. Instrumentation is limited to those who show advanced performance abilities and superior attitudes. Members are selected by audition.

Uniform:

- Cockrill Band shirt (will be ordered through the school)
- Solid black dress pants, solid black socks and shoes (purchase on your own)
- Long sleeved, button up, collared solid black dress shirt (purchased as part of fees.)

Concert Band (Lead Teacher, Kyle Wiechmann) 6th period

The Concert Band is an advanced performing group with preparation for the Honors and Symphonic Bands as well as the high school band program as primary objectives. Students will perform at concerts and contests throughout the school year. Students will also have the opportunity to perform at the solo and ensemble contests provided they have met the eligibility requirements. Instrumentation is limited to those who show advanced performance abilities and superior attitudes. Members are selected by audition.

Uniform:

- Cockrill Band shirt (will be ordered through the school)
- Solid black dress pants, solid black socks and shoes (purchase on your own)
- Long sleeved, button up, collared solid black dress shirt (purchased as part of fees.)

Band Classes continued,
6th Grade (Beginner Band)

6th Grade band members are placed into like instrument beginner classes. The goal of the 6th grade band classes are to take each student from knowing nothing about their instrument, and through a detail oriented approach, grow them into wonderful musicians.

While the band staff collaborates with each other and shares an office, if there is an academic question or concern, please ensure that you direct it to the correct teacher of your student's class.

Class Period	Beginner Instrument	Teacher
1st Period	Trombone	Kyle Wiechmann
1st Period	Tuba/Euphonium	Matt Harp
2nd Period	Trumpet	Kyle Wiechmann
2nd Period	French Horn	Matt Harp
4th Period	Percussion	Caleb Brown
4th Period	Saxophone	Matt Harp
6th Period	Oboe / Bassoon	Matt Harp
7th Period	Clarinet	Kyle Wiechmann
7th Period	Flute	Matt Harp

Communication

The main priority of each director on the band staff is to instruct our students to achieve at their highest levels. The vast majority of our day is spent in the classroom and instructing. Because of that, email is the best and most efficient way to reach a band director. It is a goal of the band staff to reply to all parent emails within 48 hours (2 business days), if not sooner when feasible.

Section Rehearsals for Honors, Symphonic, and Concert Bands

Section rehearsals will be scheduled one day per week, either before or after school. Attendance is absolutely required to be a member of the Honors, Symphonic, and Concert Bands. The section rehearsals will be graded and are part of the student's average. Every effort will be made to work around the schedule needs for each student. It is the student's responsibility to arrange transportation. If a section rehearsal needs to be made up, it must be completed within one week of the missed rehearsal.

Check Your Calendars! Routine doctor appointments are not considered excused and therefore should not be scheduled during your regular sectional time.

Grades and Attendance

Work schedules and other activities must not interfere with the rehearsal and performance schedules that are given at the beginning of the school year. Students who enroll in other school activities, such as athletics, choir, drama, etc., need to plan ahead to avoid conflicts that cannot be resolved. The band directors will work with other teachers, coaches, and directors of various activities to give each student every opportunity to be part of other groups. We want our kids to be active in multiple activities! Non-school sponsored activities, teams, organizations, and student jobs must not conflict in any way with the practice/performance schedule of the band.

The following attendance policies will affect student grades:

1. An unexcused absence from a rehearsal or performance. Excuses are only accepted in the event of absence from school or family emergency.
2. Section rehearsals (7th/8thGrade) missed for any reason can only be made up within one week of the missed sectional, at the discretion of the director. Excused absences (see above) may be made up for full credit, while unexcused absences may be made up for 70% credit only (Symphonic/Concert) or 50% (Honors).

In determining the band grade each nine weeks, two areas will comprise the average:

1. Performance Grade - Summative - (70%) - including class assignments, section rehearsal assignments, nine-week assignments and objectives, and playoffs of performance music.
2. Formative Grades - (30%) - including correct marking of music, care and maintenance of instruments, punctuality at rehearsals and performances, and attendance at rehearsals and performances, informal assessment, and practice reports. Practice reports and MakeMusic MUST be submitted using the online submission tool at every practice session.

Eligibility

Most of the work that our students do is either curricular or co-curricular and not subject to eligibility. Curricular and co-curricular activities are free concerts, section rehearsals, concert rehearsals, and private lessons.

Students who participate in extracurricular activities must meet T.E.A. (Texas Education Association) and U.I.L. (University Interscholastic League) eligibility requirements. Students who fail any single class at the end of a nine-week period will become ineligible seven days later. Ineligible students do not regain eligibility immediately. They must wait seven calendar days after the end of the grading period. Students may regain eligibility seven calendar days after the end of the three-week grade evaluation period provided the principal and teachers have determined the student is passing all courses. Semester grades are never used for eligibility. Activities that are classified as extracurricular for which T.E.A., U.I.L., and M.I.S.D. eligibility requirements apply include:

1. Any event for which admission is charged.
2. Any event that is inter-school competitive.
3. Any event where ratings are awarded - With the exception of UIL Concert and Sight Reading due to its status as a State Mandated Year End Assessment.

Should a band student become ineligible for an extracurricular function, he or she will still be eligible for curricular or co-curricular functions. Ineligible students will be given alternate assignments during contest preparation time. Students who have chronic eligibility problems will be assigned to a non-performing class where performances will not be affected.

Student Discipline and Behavior

Discipline is a quality that must come from within the individual. As such, each student is responsible for his or her own actions as a member of the Cockrill Band. Any student who shows an inability to work effectively in class may be reassigned to another class at the discretion of the band director.

As a school group, band members are governed by school and school board policies anytime they are together for any band function whether it involves all students or only one. The General Release form you sign as a part of your Beginning of Year Digital Paperwork will be in effect throughout the year for functions and trips related to the band. Any student who violates school rules while with the Cockrill Band will be subject to all usual school disciplinary procedures. In addition, those students will be subject to dismissal and will not continue to perform or travel with the band. Also, students who receive assignment to the Alternative School for disciplinary action outside of band activities are in danger of not performing with the Band in any extracurricular functions for the remainder of the school year.

Use of School Owned Instruments

A limited number of the more expensive instruments are owned by the MISD for the purpose of balancing the instrumentation district-wide and maintaining performing bands at every level. There is an annual fee of $100 for each student playing a school-owned instrument. Depending on availability, we will be able to check out instruments for home use for certain instruments (Tuba, Euphonium, French horn, Bari Sax). There is an additional $50 fee for students who choose to have a stay at home instrument as well.

A checkout form will be sent home for parent/guardian signature each Fall which describes the condition of the instrument at that time. It is the responsibility of the student/parent to check over the instrument at that time and understand that the instrument must be returned in the same condition at the end of the year. If repairs are necessary during the year, it is the responsibility of the student and parent to deliver the instrument to a repair facility as instructed by the band director.

Recommended Instrument List

Below is a list of recommended advanced instruments. In most cases, beginner instruments are adequate for junior high bands; however, better quality instruments enable students to learn more quickly and with greater ease. While there are several brands and models of advanced instruments, those listed are recommended by the MISD staff as the best quality:

Flute	Miyazawa 95SR, Miyazawa (Lyric 2 model) Yamaha models 584 or 684 -H Sonare PS601
Clarinet	Buffet R-13
Alto Saxophone	Selmer SA-80 Series 2 Yamaha YAS-875 EX Custom Series
Trumpet	Bach Stradivarius LT180S37 Yamaha Xeno
Trombone	Bach42BO Getzen Custom 3047 AFR Conn 88H

These can be purchased at many retail stores. The so-called "pro-model" instruments are often discounted as much as 35%-40% for cash purchases. **Parents are encouraged to seek the help of a private instructor or director before purchasing one of these instruments.**

Performance Uniforms and Attire

All band students are required to have a current band shirt as part of their uniform. Band shirts will be worn at all pep rallies and other less formal performances throughout the year. The cost of the shirt will be $17, and paid as part of your band fees. Shirts will be distributed as shipments arrive (expected in September).

All 7th and 8th Grade students are also responsible for owning a formal concert black uniform. Regardless of gender, all students must obtain Solid Black Dress Shoes (no heels), Solid black long socks (no ankle socks), Black Dress Slacks to be purchased on your own. As a part of our band fees, students will be sized by a tailor and then receive a collared black concert shirt.

Private Lessons

The McKinney I.S.D. Fine Arts Department offers each student a chance to study privately with the finest graduate and professional musicians in the Dallas area. These opportunities are called private lessons.

Private lessons are not tutoring. They are for students who are already doing well and gives them the opportunity to further their musical development in a one-on-one setting. One of the pitfalls of teaching a large class of musicians is the lack of individual attention needed for student growth and private lessons aid in meeting this need.

Lessons are 30-minute sessions taught once a week for $25 each. This program is supported by the individual's parents who cover the cost of the program. Lessons may be taken during band class or after school. Lesson money is to be paid directly to the lesson teacher and should be paid one month in advance.

For the most up to date list of private teachers, please visit www.cockrillband.org.

Student and Parent Responsibilities to the Private Teacher

1. Be fully prepared for each lesson.
2. Bring a pencil, method books, and any other required materials to each lesson.
3. Keep a written assignment for each lesson.
4. Notify the private teacher 24 hours or more in advance in the event a lesson must be missed. Failure to do this will result in an unexcused absence and the lesson must still be paid for. Excused absences by the student or the teacher shall be rescheduled or the money credited or refunded.
5. The cost for each lesson is $25 and is payable to the private teacher. Lessons should be paid for one month in advance.

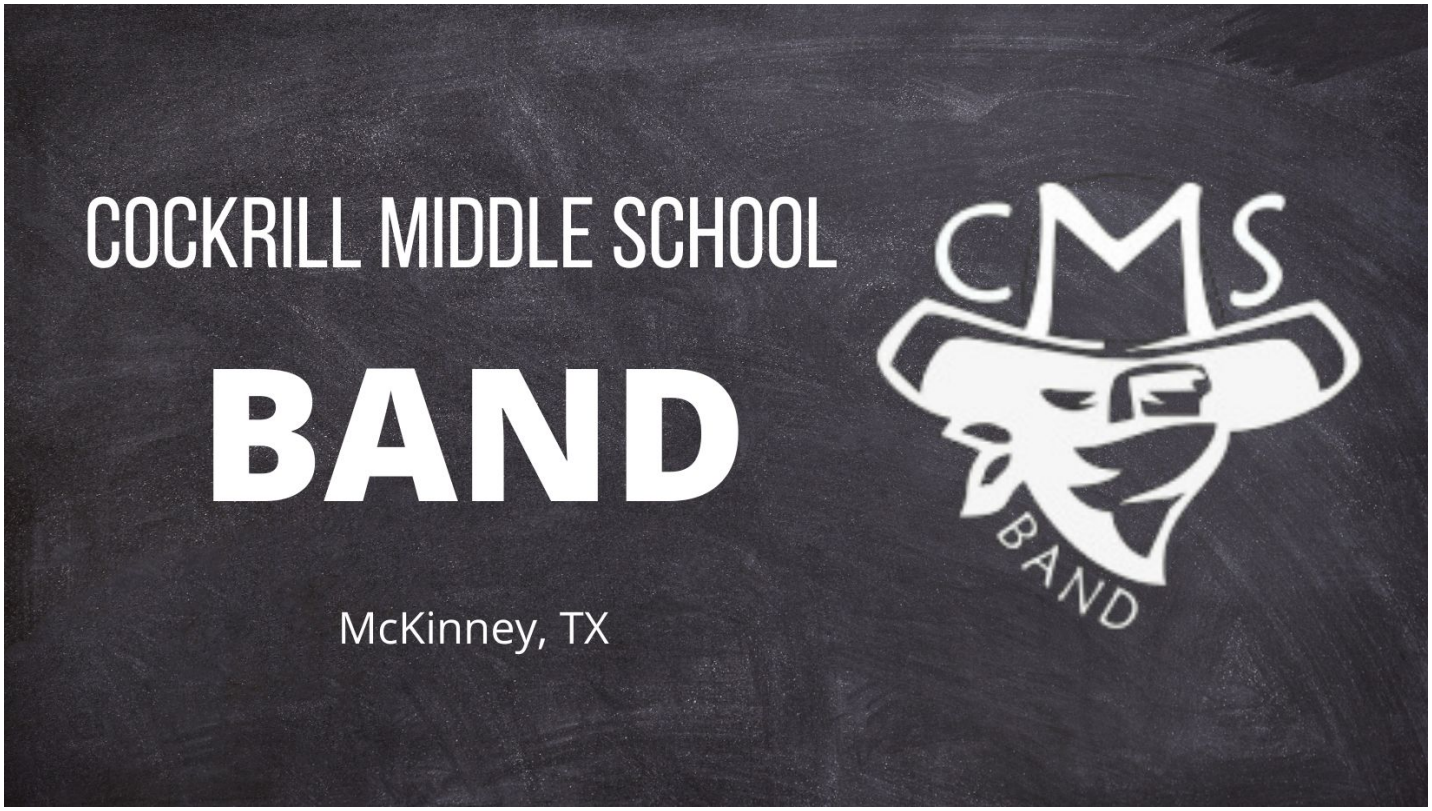
Fundraiser Information

There could be a minimum of one fundraiser this school year. All information pertaining to it and other possible fundraisers will be communicated as they approach. Fundraising allows for us to offset entry fees for performances, provides busses, and provided extra enrichment opportunities like clinicians, composer visits, extra performances, and master classes to our students. This money goes a long way and is directly spent on student opportunities and enhancement.

The support of every family during a fundraising event is appreciated!

Digital Receipt

This concludes the band handbook. Please visit the link and/or communication from which you accessed this to find directions on how to electronically sign to acknowledge your receipt of this document.

All students and families will be held to the standards and guidelines laid out in this handbook.

Thank you!