

**BECK JUNIOR HIGH
BEGINNING BAND**



HANDBOOK

Updated August 2016

BECK JUNIOR HIGH BEGINNING BAND HANDBOOK

This handbook contains important information for both students and parents. Please take time to read each page carefully together, and keep for reference throughout the school year. The last page must be signed and returned.

PHILOSOPHY

The study and performance of music is an opportunity that young people of today truly need! It is not our goal to make professional musicians of our students, but rather, to enable them to fully enjoy the life-long benefits of music. Recent studies prove that students who participate in music are among the strongest academically in their schools. The skills learned through a successful experience in a school band program - self-discipline, increased self-esteem, time management, commitment, responsibility, and teamwork - will be reflected in a successful adult life. The opportunity to enjoy a new level of communication and self-expression is the goal for every young musician. Creativity is within all of us, and the language of music serves as a perfect vehicle to allow this personal growth and development.

CLASS STRUCTURE

We are fortunate at Beck JH that the Beginning Band is divided into like-instrument classes (all of the clarinets students are in one class, etc.). Each class meets everyday for 45 minutes; therefore, most all of the regular instruction will take place during the school day. There is a very limited number of after-school rehearsals scheduled for the entire school year: prior to the Winter Concert in December and prior to the Spring Concert in May.

A calendar with the year's events will be published at the beginning of the school year. We ask that you mark your calendars with these events so that you can avoid these dates when planning family activities and other non-school related events.

ATTENDANCE AND GRADING POLICY

Major Grades: Performances and Tests - 50%

Attendance and participation in performances and clinics
Playing and written tests over pre-assigned material

Minor Grades: Participation, Quizzes and Daily Grades - 35%

Active participation in class and after-school rehearsals with all necessary equipment
Daily playing and written assignments

Other Grades: Weekly practice records - 15%

Students are responsible for turning in weekly practice records.

An **unexcused** absence from a required rehearsal or performance may result in the suspension of that student from any other extra-curricular band activities for the remainder of the school year. The student's band grade would also be affected. The band directors and principal will be responsible for determining the penalty to be assessed. Students who have an **excused** absence from a rehearsal or performance will be given an appropriate make-up assignment.

Students can be excused from a performance only after interactive contact between the director and parent prior to the event. The band director is the only individual who can determine whether an absence is consider excused or unexcused.

AT-HOME PRACTICE

Playing a musical instrument is an acquired skill; therefore, developing wholesome practice habits is essential. With appropriate practice habits, band will be a successful and gratifying experience. Parent support and guidance will be key factors in establishing a regular practice schedule insuring the attainment of musical goals. The most effective home rehearsal programs are based on daily quality practice. Some ways that parents can help their children include:

- Decide with your child the best time and place where they should practice. This place should be quiet and free from distractions.
- Make sure that your child has a sturdy chair and a music stand in the practice area. Having these materials will help promote good posture and instrument carriage, essential skills in playing the instrument well.
- Monitor student practice and give positive reinforcement. This is the single most effective communication that a parent and other siblings can share in this quest.

Home practice is expected! The physical requirements of producing a quality sound, playing with clean technical accuracy and the reading of music notation will strengthen over time only if regular, daily practice is performed. No instrument should spend the night in the band hall.

Students will receive a practice record for each six-weeks grading period. The student will fill out the practice record daily, a parent or guardian will sign at the end of each week confirming that the listed practice is accurate, and the student will turn in the practice record each week.

PRIVATE LESSON PROGRAM

The special attention of a private study plan gives the student confidence and a more thorough understanding of the instrument. The private lesson curriculum is designed for the more rapid advancement of the individual student. The instructors we recommend are highly-qualified professional musicians, degreed specialists on their instrument or area university music students who have been carefully screened at both the district and campus levels before they are hired.

Lessons are held once a week, after school, for thirty minutes. Tuition fees for lessons held at a Katy ISD school are currently \$17.50 per half-hour lesson - this fee may be subject to change as per the Katy ISD Fine Arts Office. Once students have enrolled in the program, private teachers for our program are contacted with enrollment information. The private teacher for each particular instrument will then contact assigned students and schedule convenient lesson times. Parents and students are expected to follow the Katy ISD Private Lesson Program Guidelines which are sent from the Fine Arts Office after enrollment.

Private lessons are designed to benefit **all** band students - students having any difficulties with fundamentals can receive the extra attention and tutoring needed to become successful. Students already performing well will gain great strength from the advanced pace and more challenging material the lesson teacher can provide. The benefit of private lessons is invaluable to **all** students' musical progress. Students receive weekly "one-on-one" attention that is not possible in a large band class. They learn more about their instrument, are challenged further, and tend to gain immense self-confidence from the private lesson experience.

The private lesson program has become an integral part of the Beck JH Band. We encourage you to take advantage of this outstanding program. To enroll in private lessons, fill out the Private Lesson Application that is distributed at the beginning of the school year or contact a band director.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

Most of the work that our students do is considered curricular, and is not subject to eligibility restrictions. Curricular band activities include free concerts, full-band rehearsals and private lessons.

Activities such as an event where admission is charged, an event that is inter-school competitive or an event where ratings are awarded are subject to eligibility restrictions. For students to participate in these extra-curricular activities, they must meet TEA

(Texas Education Association) and UIL (University Interscholastic League) eligibility requirements.

Students who fail any one class at the end of a six-week grading period will become ineligible. Ineligible students can regain eligibility at the three-week progress report period provided the teacher determines the student is passing all classes. Semester grades are never used for eligibility. A student who receives an "I" (incomplete) will also be considered ineligible. Students have a minimal time to clear an incomplete to regain eligibility. For your convenience, we have marked on the band calendar which events require academic eligibility.

For more information regarding eligibility for extra-curricular activities, contact the band directors. You can also check out the "UIL-TEA Side by Side" on the web: <http://www.uiltexas.org/policy/tea-uil-side-by-side>

NECESSARY EQUIPMENT FOR CLASS

- ♪ Instrument and instrument accessories (as published at the Instrument Selection Meetings last May)
- ♪ 1" Black binder with pencil pouch – purchased through band dept.
- ♪ Locker-style mirror – purchased through band dept.
- ♪ Pencil and other binder materials – purchased through the band dept.

UNIFORM

Beginning band members are asked to have two uniforms: a "formal" uniform and an "informal" uniform.

Formal Uniform

The formal uniform for beginning band students will be "Sunday best", as outlined below:

Boys

- Long-sleeved button-down shirt, solid color, must have a collar
- Tie optional
- Dress pants or khakis (no jeans or athletic pants)
- Long dress socks
- Dress shoes (no athletic shoes or sandals)

Girls

- One of the following
 - Full-length dress
 - Blouse and full-length skirt
 - Blouse and dress pants

- Note - all hems must be past mid-calf when seated; please check that the silhouette is full enough that she may sit appropriately when playing her instrument
- Stockings or dress socks
- Closed-toe dress shoes

Informal Uniform

The informal uniform will be worn at special school functions and social events. When wearing the band t-shirt in conjunction with a performance, the t-shirt is always to be tucked in.

- Beck band t-shirt (new design each year) - purchased through the school
- Blue jeans
- Tennis shoes

The purpose of a uniform is for everyone in the band to look as similar as possible so the listeners are not visually distracted from the performance. Accessories should be kept to a minimum. Hair should be natural in color and groomed in a way that is not visually distracting. If a student is unsure about either, please see your band director prior to the performance for guidance.

PERSONAL PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

Katy ISD does not provide insurance for individually-owned equipment. Some insurance companies allow you to purchase an additional or “rider” policy to cover musical instruments. These policies are usually inexpensive and are more than sufficient. Separate musical instrument insurance can be obtained through Music Agency, Inc. For your convenience, brochures for Music Agency, Inc. will be distributed at the beginning of the year. For more information, contact a band director or check out their website at www.musicagencyinc.com

Students will have a place within the band hall to store their instrument and binder during the school day. It is the responsibility of each student to place his or her instrument in the assigned location each morning and to take it home after school. Many instrument cases look the same, so students are required to clearly label the instrument with their name on the outside of the case.

USE OF SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS

Students who play a school-owned instrument will pay a maintenance fee of \$100 per instrument per school year. This fee covers normal wear-and-tear and upkeep of the instrument. This fee does not cover negligence or misuse in which the student, parent or guardian will be responsible for the cost of repair and/or replacement if damage is beyond repair. A Maintenance/Usage Form will be sent home at the beginning of the school year detailing this information.

Be aware that Percussion students in performing bands (not in the Beginning Band) will also pay a \$100 maintenance fee which covers the cost of equipment repair and maintenance.

BAND CODE OF CONDUCT

The success of all band classes is determined by individual and group efforts. The discipline required to achieve this success must be of the highest standard. Band classes at Beck are conducted in a very positive, motivating manner in which all students have the opportunity to become successful. **Proper student behavior is expected at all times!** One student's poor conduct affects the entire class and will not be tolerated.

Katy ISD discipline management code, dress code, and bus rules apply on all trips - Beck Band members are expected to be respectful of bus drivers and sponsors. Poor conduct by a Beck Band member during rehearsals, band functions or trips may result in the suspension of that individual from extra-curricular band activities for the remainder of school year, and possible dismissal from the band program. The directors reserve the right to make these decisions.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Each student must have a current medical form on file when traveling with the band. These forms accompany the band when the band travels to any off-campus event.

TRAVEL

Katy ISD policy states that all students are required to ride to and from school-sponsored activities in District-provided transportation. An exception may be granted for a student to be released to the custody of his/her parent at the completion of the activity if a written request is received and approved prior to the trip. A *Request for Post-Activity Student Release* (found on the Beck Band Webpage) must be turned in in advance if your child will not be riding District-provided transportation from this band event. Students can only be released to his/her parent or guardian. Relatives, siblings, neighbors, etc. may not take your son/daughter home early from a band trip. Parents may be asked to show a photo ID to the band directors and/or chaperones, if necessary, before a student is released, and will have to "sign out" the student.

BRACES

Woodwind and Brass players only - If there are plans for braces or other orthodontics, please be mindful of the timing involved in getting them. Braces are a fact of life for many students. It does take some time to get used to playing your instrument with braces, and, for this reason, we ask that you kindly consider not getting them put on (or removed, for that matter) in close proximity to major performances.

If a student does get braces, they can be rest assured that they will continue to enjoy the same level of success that they had before braces once the initial period of adjustment has passed.

FUNDRAISING

The Beck Band participates in two fundraisers throughout the school year. The first is a Coca-Cola Fundraiser, which will take place in the fall. The second is a Pasta Dinner Concert, which will take place in spring. Although participation in fundraisers is optional, we encourage all students/families to participate. More details regarding each fundraiser will be distributed prior to each event.

FRIENDS OF MUSIC

To partner with the Beck Band and provide on-going support of the high standards of music education at Beck Junior High, we would like to introduce you to a support organization created specifically for the band program, called *Friends of Music*.

Friends of Music is set up to help provide financial support to the music education endeavors associated with the Beck Junior High Band Program. The Beck Band is only as strong as the support behind it. We hope that you will help us to continue the tradition of excellence that has been established at Beck Junior High. Detailed information will be sent home at the beginning of the school year and will also be available on the band webpage.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parents, we need your help! From chaperoning a band function to coordinating an event, no task is too small. A parent volunteer letter will go home at the beginning of the year where you can indicate your areas of interest. Thanks in advance for your support and willingness to help the Beck JH Band program.

BAND WEBPAGE

For the most up-to-date information for the Beck Band, please refer to the Beck Band Webpage. News, handouts and current calendar information will be available. Visit the Beck Band Webpage at <http://staff.katyisd.org/sites/bjhb主and>.

FINAL THOUGHTS

We believe that band is seven-year process that teaches discipline, responsibility, individual achievement, team spirit, and an appreciation for music that will continue through junior high, high school and into adult life.

We believe that open communication between students, parents and directors is critical in achieving our common goal of student success. If you ever have a question or a concern, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We look forward to working with your child this year. Thank you for your support in your child's musical endeavors.

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BeckJHBand



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<http://staff.katyisd.org/sites/bjhbband>

Beck Junior High Band Handbook Return Page

In an effort to "Go Green", the band handbook is available on the Beck Band Webpage. Please refer to the band webpage for many student and parent resources throughout the year.

<http://staff.katyisd.org/sites/bjhband>

We have read the Beck Junior High Band Handbook and are aware of all components, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The grading procedures that will be used for grading progress in band.
- That I am responsible for informing directors within a reasonable amount of time when conflicts arise that might prevent the student from being in attendance at a required event.
- That students are required to attend all after-school rehearsals as outlined in the master calendar and in detailed calendars sent home throughout the year, and that failure to do so will negatively affect the student's grade and could ultimately jeopardize the student's future band placement and/or participation in ALL activities.
- What constitutes an excused absence from a required band event.
- That I recognize the necessity of quality practice in order to be successful as a musician and to fulfill my obligation to my peers within my ensemble.
- That I understand academic eligibility requirements and the consequences for not maintaining passing grades in all classes.
- That I understand the importance in the timing of getting or removing of braces as it relates to the proximity of performances.

Student Name _____ Period _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____