

Bryan Viking
Band Handbook
2026 - 2027



FORWARD

Congratulations on your decision to be part of the fine tradition that is the “Pride of Bryan,” The Bryan Viking Band! Joining the legacy of the Bryan High School band program is a great honor and will be one of the most exciting times of your life. We are excited to embark on this journey with you.

This handbook is designed as a guide for both parents and students to give specific details concerning all aspects of the band program. For any further information, please feel free to reach out to Ms. Grems at laura.grems@bryanisd.org

BAND ORGANIZATIONS

Band is a full year course consisting of two distinct semesters or “seasons”. The fall semester is considered the marching season while the spring semester is considered the concert season. The following is a brief description of our ensembles:

Marching Band

Directors: Laura Grems, Zachary Spicker, Andrew Parham

The marching band is made up of students from all concert bands. The marching band performs at all BHS pep rallies, football games, parades, marching contests and community events as requested. Membership in the Marching Band is required of all band students. Marching band is a physical education credit for BHS. All students are required to be at all rehearsals and performances. Yes, even athletes can participate in marching band (including football players).

UIL requires that all members of the marching band have a pre-participation Physical completed and turned into the Bryan High School Field House before activity begins for summer band.

Concert Ensembles

There are several concert ensembles at Bryan High School. Students audition every year and are placed into a band according to their playing ability, attitude, participation, reliability and instrumentation needs. Each band covers a wide range of playing abilities and time commitment. With team teaching, students will have the opportunity to experience full band, sectionals, and individual attention.

A student may be added to or removed from a performing ensemble at the director’s discretion based on the ability or inability to meet the aforementioned requirements for participation and demeanor needed to be part of a group activity.

All band members must have all required materials at every rehearsal and performance.

Wind Symphony

The Wind Symphony is the most advanced concert band at BHS. This band performs high level literature and performs numerous concerts during the year. Wind Symphony students are required to attend sectionals outside of the school day each week and are expected to participate in the All-State Band process, District Band process, and UIL Solo and Ensemble Contests. Members of the Wind Symphony are highly encouraged to participate in private lessons. These students are very serious about refining their musical abilities and as such are willing to invest the time and focus necessary to achieve Varsity level performances. The Wind Symphony performs at all BHS band concerts, competitions & events.

Symphonic Band

The Symphonic Band is the intermediate concert band at BHS. This band performs upper and mid-level literature. Symphonic Band students are required to attend sectionals outside of the school day each week and are encouraged to participate in the All-State Band process, District Band process, and UIL Solo and Ensemble Contests. Members of the Symphonic Band are highly encouraged to participate in private lessons. These students are very serious about growing their musical abilities and are aiming towards moving to the Varsity ensemble. The Symphonic Band performs at all BHS band concerts, competitions & events.

Concert Band

The Concert Band is an ensemble that serves to build up the fundamental playing and reading techniques of developing band members while also creating performance and competition opportunities through full ensemble preparation. Concert Band students may be required to attend regular sectionals and or rehearsals outside of school when called upon. Depending on instrumentation, the Concert Band may compete in the spring UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Assessment on their own, or as a part of the Symphonic Band.

Jazz Band

The Jazz Band is an extracurricular ensemble that students may participate in with the prerequisite of also being enrolled in another BHS performing ensemble (band, choir, orchestra, mariachi). Exceptions to this may be made on a case by case basis for non traditional band/orchestral instruments. Depending on instrumentation, this ensemble performs concerts on their own, at BHS Band Concerts, other community events, and has the potential to perform at festivals or contests.

Full Symphony Orchestra

The Full Symphony Orchestra is an extracurricular ensemble that combines both band and orchestra. This ensemble will perform at least two concerts during the year. Members of this ensemble will be chosen by the directors from the Wind Symphony or potentially Symphonic Band, based on performance ability and rehearsal etiquette/behavior.

If a student is not meeting the class requirements or academic/behavioral standards for an ensemble, the band directors reserve the right to remove a student or move the student to a different ensemble.

PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS

A band calendar is provided for your use in planning your family schedule for the school year. This can be found on our website: www.bryanvikingband.com. We will also send weekly email updates through Cuttime, so please make sure you activate your account and are receiving these emails! It is important that you check your emails regularly.

Out of school rehearsals and performances are a requirement of the band courses. All band members are required to be at every rehearsal and concert for their designated ensembles. If a student must miss a rehearsal or concert for any reason, this must be communicated at least 24 hours in advance and in writing. All unexcused absences (no communication, work, forgot, etc) from concerts and practices/rehearsals will receive an M (missing=0) in the gradebook. Students will need to get with their band director to determine what the makeup assignment will be. Band is a team activity so the maximum grade that you will be able to earn for an unexcused absence will be a 70. Every band student is important to the success of our many activities. We must be able to count on 100% attendance at these rehearsals and performances.

If a family emergency occurs unexpectedly, students must contact the band directors quickly. Occasionally, there may be family commitments (weddings, graduations, funerals etc.), in which case we will try to be flexible and work with you on an individual basis. This must be discussed in detail well in advance (a month or more!).

Unexcused Absences

Student job commitments and club sports are NOT reasons for an excused absence from band performances or rehearsals. Many band students work and participate in club sports and participate successfully in band. We suggest that these students take a copy of the band calendar or weekly email to their employer and/or coach and clear all band performances and rehearsals in advance. Most employers are very understanding and are flexible if they know of band commitments well in advance, and they understand that band performances (football games, contests and concerts) are a required and vital part of the course work. Please work with

employers to clear the evening rehearsals. We are glad to talk to employers to validate student commitment as necessary.

Bryan ISD has consistently chosen a calendar which gives a week off of school in October. Because this is the middle of our competitive marching season, we will continue to have rehearsals this week. These are mandatory rehearsals for every student!

If a band student has recurring unexcused absences from and tardies to performances/rehearsals, they are subject to immediate removal from their position in an ensemble or the band program as a whole if the recurring issue is severe. This includes being pulled from a performance event.

Rehearsal Expectations

Band students are expected to come organized and prepared to every rehearsal. The expectation is that all students are individually warming up on their own at least 5 minutes before rehearsal or class starts. When an individual is not able to play their instrument during a rehearsal, it hurts the TEAM as well as the individual. It is important that the student's instrument is in good working condition, that they have a pencil, tuner, and all necessary music for inside rehearsals, and that they have important accessories such as drill charts/Ultimate Drill Book App and music for outside rehearsals. It is also required to have all necessary maintenance items for your instrument readily available to you at all times.

It is important to the rehearsal process that students are quiet and attentive in rehearsal spaces. If a student does meet these expectations, the student will be subject to a meeting with directors and possibly moved to a different ensemble or if necessary, removed from the program.

For marching band rehearsals, students are expected to come dressed for athletic activities. This includes but is not limited to wearing athletic clothing/footwear (in dress code), hats/sunglasses, and having the uniform water jug. These are all important and necessary items in order to be successful and SAFE during a marching band rehearsal. Marching band is an athletic activity, and students will be treated as athletes during this season. Failure to comply with these expectations may result in needing to stand on the sideline for practice until a resolution for their uniform/materials is found. Continued lack of full participation in rehearsals may lead to sitting out of a performance/event, or forfeiting a spot on the field.

The 5 Pillars: Building and Supporting our Success

Performing ensembles and students can only achieve so much when they are focused solely on the performance aspect. We strive as an organization to build not only the musician, but the whole person.

The 5 Pillars is a system designed to give students, parents, staff, and administrators a common language and goal setting strategy that goes beyond the classroom. With proper discussion and implementation of the 5 Pillars, we can grow as an organization in tremendous ways. We can improve not only the performance ability of the students, but also grow the hearts and minds of our team.

Pillar 1: Toughness and Grit

This pillar refers to the mental and emotional aspects of a person's life. Grit is a personality trait possessed by individuals who demonstrate passion and perseverance toward a goal despite being confronted by significant obstacles and distractions. Those who possess grit are able to self-regulate and postpone their need for positive reinforcement while working diligently on a task. Grit is the perseverance and passion to achieve long-term goals. Sometimes you will hear grit referred to as mental toughness, or a growth mindset. Angela Duckworth, a researcher at the University of Pennsylvania, suggests that grit is a strong predictor of success and ability to reach one's goals.

Pillar 2: Professionalism

Professionalism can mean many things to everyone. Professionalism does not necessarily mean wearing a suit or carrying a briefcase; rather, it means conducting oneself with responsibility, integrity, accountability, and excellence. It means communicating effectively and appropriately and always finding a way to be productive. Professionalism is the conduct, behavior and attitude of someone within a group environment.

Pillar 3: Pride

Some have viewed Pride as a negative trait over the years. Many feel like it is a "selfish" idea but it is quite the opposite. When considered in a virtuous way, Pride can be one of the most motivating traits to possess for individuals and a group. The pure definition of Pride is: a feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements, the achievements of those with whom one is closely associated, or from qualities or possessions that are widely admired. Showing Pride in our program through our actions will be the focus of this Pillar.

Pillar 4: Fundamentals

Each activity and organization has specific skill sets that are critical and universal to their success. These skills do not change based on the activity the group is participating in.

Fundamentals are central or primary sets of rules or principles on which something is based. Without the fundamental principles, the system as a whole will collapse. For us, how we hold an instrument, how we play concert F, breathing, marching, leg shape, posture, tone quality, etc. all have bearings on our final product in performance and life.

Pillar 5: Integrity

Respect, discipline, trustworthy, caring, honest. These may be some terms that come to mind when thinking about Character. In short, this pillar is all about one word: Character.

Integrity is essentially doing the right thing all the time, even when no one else is looking at your actions. But also, when everyone is looking at your actions.

Without this pillar, we do not have a band program that will achieve its goals in any meaningful way. Trustworthiness can only be built when someone demonstrates integrity. Often, we have to trust the students to do the right things in order to grow as a collective, so it is important to have this integrity always.

Student Code of Conduct

All students will be held accountable to the Bryan High School Student Code of Conduct. Any failure to comply with these guidelines will be addressed first and foremost with the school administrators. The band directors reserve the right to carry out any additional consequences as deemed necessary, such as sitting out from a performance, competition, or social event.

Grading

Grading in band is based upon participation and playing evaluations. Grades for band students are usually higher than other classes, which is understandable since band students are typically very committed individuals. Students belong to our program because they “want to,” not because they “have to!” Students will receive Major Grades for performances and major playing assignments. Students will receive Daily Grades for rehearsal etiquette, outside of school rehearsal attendance, music pass offs, and various other check ins. Students must also have equipment in good working order. If these expectations are not met, their grade will be affected.

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale/criteria and by director discretion.

0: Student did not attempt assignment.

50: Student attempted the assignment, but still has a lot of necessary work left to complete.

70: Student plays all correct notes and rhythms on the page, but still has some details to work out.

100: Student achieved all necessary requirements for the assignment to the highest quality possible.

The Bryan Viking Band program follows the late work policy of Bryan ISD. Students will have 10 school days to complete late work. The assignments will not be accepted after this time.

Academic Eligibility

All music organizations adhere to the eligibility rules and regulations as stated by UIL, TEA and BISD.

Any student whose recorded 6 weeks grade average in any course deems them ineligible shall be suspended from participation in band performances until all grades are proven passing at the next grading period. All students are still expected to attend any and all rehearsals so that they can jump back into the ensemble when they become eligible again. This is also important during marching season so that students can continue to earn their PE credit.

The Viking Band staff will enforce all eligibility rules and regulations. A student who is ineligible will continue to rehearse during their band class and participate in curricular performances to earn their band grade. Ineligible students may not travel with the band or participate in extracurricular performances. Students also may not attend the yearly spring band trip if they are ineligible. An example of a curricular performance would be a spring concert and an extracurricular performance would be a football halftime show or any type of contest. In the spring, UIL Concert and Sight Reading is considered a curricular activity, and though it takes place during the school day, all students may participate, whether they are eligible or not. Students should always check if they are not sure how their eligibility applies to a performance. Be advised that excessive absences from school may also result in a student being declared ineligible.

The band staff and BHS staff work hard to assist and encourage band students to perform up to their potential in all classes. Since both Marching Band and Concert Band are group activities, each individual band student plays an important part in the success of the group. The band staff consults both with teachers and students for strategies for improving individual student performance. We cannot be successful as a band unless our students are successfully passing all classes. We will regularly check student's grades and contact students, parents, and teachers when a student is failing any of their classes.

Students who are consistently ineligible may have their ensemble placement changed at the discretion of the directors. Academic success is defined as passing all subjects during every grading period. Students must also maintain a clean disciplinary record with the school. This process is set up to help the academic success of the individual student.

Part Assignments

Part assignments in all concert ensembles will be based on director discretion and ensemble needs. Students are placed on parts on the basis of their ability to perform the music, their rehearsal etiquette, and academic and disciplinary standings. Grade level of a student has no factor in these assignments.

Marching band drill spots are based on ability and reliability of each student and can be lost if those factors begin to suffer. We have “shadow/alternate” positions that are held by students who are eagerly waiting to fill a marching spot when one becomes available.

Private Lessons

All students are encouraged to take private lessons in order to improve their individual playing skills. While directors are skilled instructors on the various instruments in the band, there is simply no substitution for private instruction received from someone who is considered to be a professional performer on a particular instrument. The directors can assist band students in finding qualified lesson teachers. Private lessons are valuable for all band students. Individual instruction from a qualified lesson teacher can make a huge difference in a student's progress on their instrument, thus making for a more enjoyable experience in band. Students interested in private lessons should seek information from band directors. If a student enrolls in private lessons it is that student's responsibility to always pay their instructor at the beginning of each lesson. Lessons will be available during band class time, after school or before school based on a particular instructor's availability. Fees will be set with instructors and not with the band program.

Band Facilities

Students are welcome to use the band hall practice rooms for practice when time allows. Students need to meet with a director to get these rooms unlocked. Due to the highly expensive instruments and equipment in the band hall, we do ask that ONLY band students come into the band hall during the school day, before school, and after school. Students must ask their friends who are not in the band to wait for them either in the school hallway or outside. Students are required to keep their instruments locked up in their lockers when not in rehearsal. If lockers are left unlocked, the safety of your belongings are not guaranteed. Locks will be provided, but it is the student's responsibility to keep their locker locked at all times.

The only items allowed in band storage space are instruments and instrument accessories, music, method books, marching band water jugs, and on Fridays, your game day uniform. The directors reserve the right to clean out the lockers, percussion room, guard room and all ensemble rooms, and to throw away any out of place personal items left in communal spaces. Continued lack of cleanliness may result in room privileges being revoked.

We take the care and maintenance of our area very seriously as it is a direct reflection on our program. We always leave every location we occupy cleaner than it was when we arrived. That includes, but is not limited to: any rehearsal space, stadium seating, buses, and any other area that we inhabit.

School Instruments

Students should purchase standard instrument supplies such as: reeds, valve oils, slide creams, lyres, flip folders, tuners and music, at any of the music stores in town. BISD provides school owned instruments to students who play: tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, horn, euphonium, tuba, percussion, mellophones, marching baritones, and sousaphones for a fee of \$35/semester. These instruments are quite costly and are not typically owned by students. All of these instruments are sent to the repair shop and reconditioned during the summer. Any damage beyond normal wear and tear during the year is the responsibility of the band student who has signed for the instrument. We expect the instrument to be returned in the same condition as when it was issued. If the instrument is stolen while checked out to a student, it is the student's responsibility to replace the instrument. Parents may carry insurance to cover a checked-out school musical instrument. Check with your family's insurance provider for more information. There is a district wide rental fee associated with checking out and using school owned instruments. Students are also responsible for filling out an instrument contract for every instrument checked out to them.

Do NOT let anyone who is not YOU touch or play your instrument!

Do NOT touch or play other people's instruments!

Do NOT try to repair an instrument yourself! Come see a director as soon as possible if something is wrong with your instrument.

Do NOT modify your instrument in any way, including but not limited to any stickers, accessories, etc.

If a student comes to rehearsal unprepared and needs to use a consumable supply for their instrument, the student will need to purchase that supply from the school immediately, or be charged to their band statement.

Before purchasing an instrument or instrument supplies online please consult with a director so that one of us may review it for you and make sure that you are purchasing the best equipment for you and your instrument. Please only purchase instruments from reputable music stores, and not places like Amazon, Temu, etc.

Band Uniforms

It is a privilege to wear the various Bryan Viking Band uniforms. This includes, but is not limited to the formal uniform, athletic uniform, the yearly show based performance top, or any band labeled swag. These uniforms are a symbol of pride. Students are to make sure they have all parts of the uniform neat and clean at each performance. Please be sure to store your uniform properly in between performances. Performance grades may be affected if a student's uniform is disheveled or incomplete. As a part of the formal uniform, all students will wear their "performance blacks," the black dri fit V shirt and black dri fit V shorts, underneath their bibbers and jackets. If a band member is seen wearing the uniform incorrectly at any time, performance grades will be affected. Band uniforms are not to be worn at eating establishments, after games/performances, or to social functions. Only water may be consumed in uniform at any given time. Here are some dos and don'ts that will help you and your uniform look great at all times:

DO: Remember all uniform pieces for every performance.

DO NOT: Remove any material from the uniform. If alterations are necessary, directors will take care of this.

DO: transport your uniform in a garment bag and your Shako in the Shako box.

DO NOT: Store your uniform or shoes in the garment bag.

DO: Hang your uniform up in your garment bag as soon as you finish a performance.

DO NOT: attempt to wash and/or dry your uniform without consulting detailed instructions sent out by directors.

Uniform Accessories

The uniform and all the major accessories are provided by BISD. Band students will need to purchase a few additional items through registration day. This includes but is not limited to: black V shirt and shorts, show shirt, band jersey, marching shoes, gloves, etc.

It is important that everyone follows every part of the uniform exactly so that we are all matching in uniform. We can not remove jackets in the stands if not everyone has the same shirt on under neath.

Band Show Shirts

All band students are required to have a Band Show Shirt at the beginning of each school year. We will wear these shirts for various events to help us stay in uniform in less formal environments.

Band Letter Jackets

A jacket may be earned by students who have served or participated in the high school band program and have earned enough points to meet the requirements. Students not adhering to written disciplinary policies of the school and band will forfeit their eligibility for the jacket. The student must uphold the goals and standards of the band at all times. Students who do not continue with band may not earn a letter jacket. Once enough points are earned you may turn in a lettering sheet and place your order for your letter jacket. Directors will organize bringing in people to fit you for your jacket and help you figure out your order. The point system for earning a jacket and the lettering form can be found on the Bryan Viking Band Website: www.bryanvikingband.com. Once you have earned a jacket you may earn points again to receive multiple letters, chevrons, and stripes for your jacket.

It does not matter where you are - if you are wearing a Bryan Viking Band letterman jacket you are serving as an example of the citizenship and pride we exhibit for our band, school, district and community. Always behave appropriately while in any band spirit wear.

Football Game Policy

Football games are fun, and we are there to support our Bryan Viking Football team. We must remain on our best behavior at all times. Band members can verbally support the team throughout the game, but should always remain in their assigned spots and ready to perform. Failure to stay in your spot and ready to perform may result in the student needing to sit with the parent chaperones for the rest of the football game. It is important to remain alert to your surroundings due to the expensive equipment around you and the need to be ready to play at a moment's notice. Only band students, band staff and band parent chaperones are allowed in the band section of the stands.

Students are not allowed to have food or drinks in the bleachers EXCEPT for water in their Bryan Viking Band water jug. Parents are not allowed to bring snacks or beverages to students during the game. You will be given the opportunity to use the restroom before the game starts. If you need to use the restroom after that point you must be escorted by a band parent chaperone. There should never be more than one student from the same section missing at any given time.

Travel Policy

Whenever you travel as part of the Bryan Viking Band and Color Guard programs, you are expected to uphold the standards of behaviors and expectations laid out in this handbook. If you do not follow these policies, a meeting will be scheduled with the directors and administration if deemed necessary.

The Bryan Viking Band travels to out-of-town games and competitions throughout the fall, as well as various other community events throughout the year. By signing this handbook, you agree to travel with the band to events in a safe and responsible manner.

Transportation will be provided to and from off campus football games, competitions, and events. All students must ride to the events together on district provided transportation. After the completion of an event, students may choose to ride home with only their parent or guardian as long as a parent signed note is provided to a director the day before the day the event occurs. Upon dismissal, the student and parent must check in with the bus captain so that all attendance can be taken care of on buses. We must physically see you leave with your parent or guardian before you can leave the area. This protects the parents, students and the school.

Riding the bus is a privilege, not a right, and members are subject to suspension from travel on buses if expectations are violated. No external individual speakers will be permitted on the bus. No eating or drinking on the school buses (except water or otherwise specified foods by the band directors). Remain seated at all times. Talking is to be kept at a reasonable level. Screaming, yelling, etc. is not acceptable at any time. Keep all body parts and belongings inside the bus at all times. No public displays of affection. Bus lists will be made prior to the first competition and students must remain on their assigned bus and in their pre-assigned seat.

Fundraising

Band students will participate in various fundraising activities throughout the school year. These fundraisers help to supplement the budget allotted to the band so that we are able to give everyone in the band the best experience possible.

Student Leadership Team

The Student Leadership Team is vital to the success of the band program. The band staff selects all leaders through an audition and evaluation process based on a complete evaluation of a student from every aspect of their band experience including, but not limited to: playing ability, attendance/promptness, citizenship, academic achievement, discipline, initiative, and leadership skills/potential as it relates to the band program. While all students have an opportunity to be considered for one of these appointed leadership positions, only a limited number of positions can be filled and will vary from year to year. As a member of the Bryan

Viking Band there is an opportunity for ALL students to foster and develop positive leadership skills regardless of title.

Leadership positions are chosen each spring for the following school year. Interested students may receive more detailed information concerning these offices from the band staff. Band officers act in a service role coordinating and assisting in all band functions. The council also provides leadership in spirit activities and works to develop friendly relationships between the Bryan Viking Band and other school organizations.

Leadership students will be given a leadership contract that they will be held accountable for throughout the duration of the entire year. Leadership positions exist through the fall and spring semesters.

Color Guard and Winterguard

The Color Guard is a supportive visual component to the Bryan Viking Band as well as an individual performing ensemble in the winter. They maintain the highest standards of quality in membership and performance. These groups may consist of non-instrumental students of BHS. Band students may perform with the winterguard in the winter season. Color Guard and Winterguard members will have an additional handbook in order to participate properly and safely.

Band Boosters

The Bryan Viking Band has a very active, supportive parent organization. All parents are heavily encouraged to attend our monthly booster meetings as often as possible. You do not have to be a “registered member” or pay a membership fee. By being a parent of a band student, or invested community member, you are automatically a booster member. The booster association includes parents from band and color guard. Without the hard work and dedication of the parents, the band program could not be as successful and productive. There are numerous ways in which parents can be involved in supporting the band. General meetings of the boosters are held throughout the school year.

It is great to have parents available and willing to help our program, but it is even better for your children to see you at our events!

The dates of the booster meetings can be found on the band calendar on our website www.bryanvikingband.com

If you are interested in joining the Bryan Viking Band Boosters, please contact President Sonia Jenson at bryanvikingbandbooster@gmail.com

If you have any questions about any of this, please feel to reach out.

Laura Grems
Bryan High School, Director of Bands
laura.grems@bryanisd.org
979 - 209 - 2578