MATTIE T. BLOUNT HIGH SCHOOL Department of Bands

Official Band Handbook



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Foreword

The purpose of this handbook is to provide valuable information about the band program. Each student involved in this band is to achieve and maintain a high standard of excellence that is indicative of this program. All members should familiarize themselves with the rules, regulations, procedures, standards, and traditions of Mattie Thomas Blount High School and the band program. Band is considered a full year activity and all students are required to participate in both Fall and Spring ensembles. The only exceptions are academic conflicts for maintaining honors status, HCAP enrollment, graduation requirements, and BHS Spring athletics which must be approved by the band director prior to involvement. Students withdrawing from band in the Spring will not be eligible to participate the following year.

It is the hope of this band staff that some of the questions that are always prevalent will be addressed and answered within this handbook. If you have issues that are not discussed in this informational, please make them known to the appropriate member of the band staff.

Marching Band

The *BHS Leopard Marching Band* is the most recognizable performing group on the campus of Blount High School. It is comprised of instrumentalist, dancers, and twirlers who perform for citizens throughout the Southeast region in an effort to provide positive community activities for all who are involved. This ensemble is open to all students of Blount High School who have successfully completed an audition process conducted by a member of the band staff and are academically eligible as determined by the Alabama High School Athletic Association. Transfer students are also required to complete an audition to acquire membership in the BHS Band. All students must complete a physical evaluation performed by a physician and provide documentation to the band department prior to the beginning of band camp. Membership requires total dedication, involvement, and maximum effort in all aspects of marching, playing, and performing.

Incoming freshman must audition for membership into the band. The audition will include the playing of at least five (5) major scales, a chromatic scale, a solo prepared piece, and sight-reading to display musicianship and ability. All new members (and some returning members) are required to attend Rookie Camp which is held during the beginning of the Summer Break. Leopard Band Camp will be held for all marching band members during the end of the Summer Break

All marching band students must be enrolled in **Marching Band I, II, III, or IV** during the Fall semester. The marching band rehearses everyday during the 4th Block and continues after school. It is to be assumed by all members that band rehearsal will be held and can only be cancelled by the band director. Indoor rehearsals for inclement weather will be held in lieu of our regular outdoor activities. Mandatory sectional rehearsals may be held as needed and will be posted at least two (2) days in advance.

Incoming freshman students who require additional assistance to complete the audition requirements should enroll in the **Pre-Marching Band** course. This course is designed to provide individual instruction as well as promote group learning opportunities that may not be available in the regular marching band class. The students enrolled in this class will be allowed to audition again for the marching band when adequate improvement and enrichment has been received.

Band Auxiliary students are required to enroll in the **Band/Rifle/Flag I, II, or III** during the Fall semester. These students are also required to attend all after school rehearsals and must report to the band room immediately following dismissal.

Symphonic / Concert Band

The *BHS Symphonic Band* is the premier performing ensemble at Blount High School. The members of this ensemble have demonstrated outstanding musical abilities and are assigned to this ensemble by the band director. The Symphonic Band consists of Woodwind, Brass, and Percussion instrumentalists who are determined to provide only the highest level of musical performances possible while maintaining a standard of excellence that is indicative of Mattie T. Blount High School. The Symphonic Band has reached unprecedented accomplishments in the history of Mobile County Public Schools System being the first predominantly African-American High School to receive All-Superior Ratings at the ABA District VII Concert Band Assessment. This ensemble has also most recently received Excellent Ratings at the Alabama Bandmasters Association State Music Performance Assessment in 2018.

The BHS Concert Band is the comprised of beginning and intermediate level musicians who should eventually matriculate into the Symphonic Band. Both ensembles perform annually at the Band Department's Winter Showcase and Spring Concert, as well as other on and off-campus events throughout the community. There is currently no specific audition process for membership into these ensembles other than the marching band audition. All instrumentalists are required to participate in one of these spring ensembles as determined by the director.

Other Ensembles

The *BHS Jazz Ensemble* is a Spring semester ensemble dedicated to performing jazz music throughout the Mobile Community. This ensemble has made major accomplishments since its inception and has earned respect among other jazz ensembles in its class. The Jazz Ensemble consists of Woodwind, Brass, Percussion, Strings, and Keyboard instruments as well as Vocalists. The band director will select the participants of this group based from informal evaluations throughout the course of the semester. This group performs annually at the Fine Arts Showcases, as well as other events throughout Mobile County.

The *BHS Pep Band* is a small group of band members who perform at specific events throughout the area in order to provide positive relationships between schools and communities. Members are selected and compiled on an "as needed" basis by the band director. The Pep Band also performs at certain home basketball games during the Spring semester.

The *BHS Percussion Ensemble* is a Spring Semester ensemble that includes all percussion students that are not enrolled in another band class. This group also performs for community based events as determined by the band director.

Grading, Rehearsal, and Performance Procedures

Grading

Band is a unique course at Blount High School. It has curricular requirements, just as other academic discipline, but it also has out-of-class time requirements. The strength of the band program is the consolidation of these requirements into one performance based, academic course of study. The level of commitment from each individual student is the driving force behind the organization and is reflected in the level of achievement reached by the individual and the program.

Rehearsals

Band is a learning activity. Rehearsals, whether during or after school, are the means by which students learn, and by their very nature cannot be reproduced or made-up. Therefore, it is imperative that students be present unless the absence is absolutely unavoidable. In the event of having to miss a rehearsal, for any reason, the student or parent should notify a member of the band staff and explain the nature of the conflict. Students absent for medical reasons must provide documentation from a physician upon their return to practice. Rehearsals are not optional and therefore attendance is reflected in the student's daily grade, which accounts for 40% of a student's overall grade.

Performances

Performances are viewed as major tests. A performance is a learning experience that cannot be duplicated in rehearsal; the level of concentration required in a public performance assists students to develop an insight into their own level of performance. A performance is an important evaluation tool allowing comparison of a student's performance in relation to classroom objectives presented, and with past performances. It is the responsibility of the student to make plans to be in attendance for all performances. Absences from performances are only excused in the event of an extreme emergency, serious illness or hospitalization of the student, death in the immediate family, or other reasons deemed excusable by the band director. In the event of an emergency and a student will not be in attendance, the student or parent should notify the band director immediately. The band director must approve all other absences from performances in advance. Performances will account for 60% of a student's overall grade.

Cell Phones

The MCPSS prohibits the use of cell phones at school functions. All cell phones are to be turned **off** during rehearsals. Students caught using cell phones during rehearsals will turn them over to the director, who will return them to the parents. Students using them at performances are subject to suspension from band events.

Summer Band Activities

Summer Workouts

Summer Workouts are designed to assist incoming BHS Band students to become familiar with Blount High School and school songs. It is also a time where the band director can work one-on-one with beginning music students in order to give basic fundamentals and also general marching techniques.

Rookie Camp

Rookie Camp is a summer band camp designed to properly introduce new BHS Band students to the traditions, music, marching techniques, and drill procedures of the marching band. This camp is usually held immediately following each school year. There is an audition held on the last day of camp for all new band students.

Leopard Camp

The BHS Leopard Band Camp is held during the summer every year and includes all current and new members of the BHS Marching Band. Camp begins at 6:00 am and ends around 12:00 noon. The camp includes outdoor activities such as conditioning, marching techniques, drill procedures, commands, and proper playing positions. The indoor activities include scale studies, instrumental fundamentals, and playing techniques as well as music rehearsals, memorization, and sectional practices. Participating students are encouraged to wear light, loose fitting clothes and hats to protect from the sun. Also, water should be brought to camp daily instead of any sodas, fruit drinks, or flavored beverages. Girls are not allowed to wear dresses or skirts to camp. Students are not allowed to wear sandals or jeans to camp or after school band practices. All members must be present each day of band camp in order to be included in the field show.

Auxiliary Clinics

Auxiliary Clinics are also held during the summer for all members of the BHS Band Auxiliary. Clinicians are obtained during this process in order to promote a higher level of performance for all squads. These clinics usually last a week and vary in terms of the times. All auxiliary members are strongly encouraged to participate as game routines will be taught. There will be **NO FEE WAIVERS** due to absences.

Student Employment

Members of the marching band are discouraged from maintaining jobs during the Fall marching season. Students are required to attend all marching band practices, sectional rehearsals, and performances, while maintaining a high level of scholastic achievement. This in itself is a full-time responsibility. Adding a job to this schedule would surely lead to the neglect of one of these important aspects of being a productive student-musician. However, students who feel the necessity to be employed are not allowed to miss any rehearsals, performances, or band related activities due to work schedules. Practice and performance dates and times will be made available to all students in order to prevent scheduling conflicts. It is the position of the Mobile County Public School System that students be allowed to participate in all school related functions as long as appropriate prior notice has been given to the employer.

Band Room Rules

- 1. No Profanity, Period!
- 2. No Eating or Drinking at any time in the band room or in band uniform.
- 3. Be On Time for scheduled events.
- 4. No Horse-Playing!!!
- 5. Keep the band room clean. No other students are allowed in the band room unless they are members of the band.
- 6. No Talking while a member of the band staff or drum major is on the podium.
- 7. Do Not Remove any parts of your uniform until you are instructed to do so by authorized personnel.
- 8. No Hats are to be worn inside the building; Males are not permitted to wear earrings during performances.
- 9. Follow all directions within reason given by your Drum Major, Section Leader, or Captain.
- 10.Do Not Touch items that don't belong to you.

Consequences

- 1. Verbal Warning
- 2. Physical Activity (Given by your Section Leader)
- 3. Report actions to Drum Major for supervised pre-approved consequences
- 4. Report actions to appropriate member of the band staff for review

Band Fees

Band Fees

The purpose of band fees is to assist in the day to day operations of the Blount High School Band. These fees are collected once a year and must be paid in full in order to receive all merchandise and items needed to perform with the BHS Band. All monies paid for band fees should be submitted in a **money order** made payable to Blount High School Band.

Auxiliary Fees

Auxiliary fees serve the same purpose as band fees but are managed by the Auxiliary Coordinator. All auxiliary fees should be paid to her. These two fees should never be combined into one single payment, they should always be separate. Any items purchased with auxiliary fees or monies generated under the name of Blount High School remain the property of the school and must remain with the school's inventory.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parents are an important part of the BHS Band, and have a vital role to play. Without the assistance and cooperation of band parents, there would be no chance for the level of success we want the band to reach. There are many things parents can do. Be supportive of the band program and your child's participation by:

- Assisting your child to be prepared and punctual for every rehearsal and performance.
- Notifying the appropriate member of the band staff if your child is to be absent or late for a performance or rehearsal. This should be done in advance unless in absolute emergency situations.
- Encouraging your child to practice at home and help them find a quiet place to do so.
- Showing your interest and support in your child's music study by enthusiastically attending every performance possible.
- Discussing with staff members anything that will help them understand and better serve your child.
- Arranging for private lessons for you child, if at all possible.
- Upgrading to a better instrument for your child.
- Make sure to arrange appropriate and prompt pick up for students after designated rehearsals and performances. (30 minutes after dismissal maximum)
- Join the BHS Band Booster Club.
- Volunteer for booster committees. There are many different tasks which need your assistance and everyone can find the niche that best suits their skills.

Band Staff and Chaperones

Band Staff

Everyone on the staff of Blount High School Band has been selected due to the skills and qualities they possess and for the benefit they can bring the band program, and should be considered an extension of the director. They are to be treated with the highest level of courtesy and respect.

Chaperones

Chaperones are also extensions of the authority of the directors. Without the dedication of our chaperones and other adults that assist with the band, we could not travel or perform in the way we do. These people work hard, and the only payment they receive is our appreciation. Be respectful, polite, cooperative, and remember that the words "Thank You" cost you nothing but are highly valued by the recipient.

If you disagree with something a chaperone asks you to do, you are **NOT** to argue with the chaperone. You are to do as you are asked and then inform a director as soon as possible. This policy will be strictly enforced. In the extremely unlikely event that a chaperone's instruction would cause you to violate civil law, moral standards, or bodily harm, the student should ask to be taken by that chaperone to a director immediately. If a chaperone has to report a student for being uncooperative or for any other reason, that student is subject to disciplinary actions.

BHS Band Booster Club

The BHS Band Booster Club exists for the sole purpose of enhancing the Blount High School Band Dept. and all of its entities. This group of dedicated adults serves in many capacities to benefit the program.

- Fundraising as a means of supporting the band program and booster club itself.
- Security provided for students involved in off-campus events with the band.
- Mentoring students who may not feel comfortable speaking with other students concerning personal issues.
- Transporting equipment during off-campus events.
- Uniform maintenance, distribution, and collection before and after band events.
- Chaperoning off-campus band events.

Membership

Membership in the BHS Band Booster is open to any parent or adult 18 years of age or older who is not currently enrolled as a student in MCPSS. This individual must be willing to support the band program in any way deemed necessary by the Booster Club and its president. All members are also required to purchase the designated Booster Club attire each year for active status club membership. Booster club attire will be agreed upon and purchased as a group at the beginning of each school year. Any parent wishing to accompany the BHS Band on off-campus events as well as work in the concession stands for home football games must be an active member of the booster club. However, all parents whether active club members or not, may participate in fundraising activities. All funds generated under the name of Blount High School must be placed in a school-based account.

Officers

Officers of the BHS Band Booster Club are voted on during the end of each school year for the upcoming year. There are four elected positions and three appointed positions.

Elected Positions

President – Presides over all meetings and delegates responsibilities

of members

Vice-President – Presides over meetings in the absence of the president

and serves as ex-officio of all booster club committees

Secretary – Records the proceedings of each meeting, also reports all

correspondences to the general body

Treasurer – Manages all financial business of the club, also delivers

financial reports at each meeting

Appointed Positions

Committee Chairperson – Serves as coordinator and spokesperson for their appointed committee

Concession Stand Coordinator – Manages all aspects of the BHS Booster

Club concession stand, also reports all information and

financial records at each meeting

Chaplain – Serves as spiritual advisor for the organization

All offices of the BHS Band Booster Club are vacated and re-elected at the end of each school year. The office of president can only be held by the same individual for two (2) consecutive years. The president delegates all appointed positions for the upcoming year.

Uniform Policies

Students who are members of the BHS Band must be in appropriate uniform in order to participate in band events. There are a variety of uniforms used by the band and are designated by the band director before each event.

Maintenance

All band uniforms are the property of Blount High School and must remain in on-campus storage at all times. All band students are assigned a uniform with a designated number. Each student is responsible for the upkeep of that uniform for the duration of the school year. Students are responsible for repairing/replacing any uniform that is damaged during this time period. There is to be absolutely NO EATTING or DRINKING while wearing a band uniform. Allowable beverages will be issued by the band staff.

Uniform Types

Band is a full year activity; therefore, uniform items must not be worn outside of band performances until permission is obtained from the band director. The BHS Band uses a variety of uniforms throughout the course of a year. Any item purchased for the purpose of performance attire is to be considered a uniform item and must **NOT** be worn by anyone (students/parents/friends/etc.) during the school year. These items include but are not limited to: T-Shirts, Wind suits, Shorts, Pep-Rally items, Concert Band Attire, band shoes, hats, hoods, and all parts of the BHS band/auxiliary uniform. Each student and parent is responsible for strictly adhering to this policy. Violations to this rule are subject to having the uniform item confiscated and/or band student being removed from active band status. **After** each school year, items that are purchased individually by students may be worn outside of band activities.

Uniform Wear

The BHS Band has a deep tradition of pride that must be displayed by all students while wearing their band uniform. All students must adhere to the uniform guidelines while in uniform.

- All parts of the uniform must remain on at all times until the entire uniform is to be removed.
- No student is allowed to wear make-up or excessive jewelry while in uniform. No colored jewelry!
- Girls are permitted to wear stud earrings only; No bracelets, large rings, large or colored hair clips (black only).
- Boys are not allowed to wear earrings at any time.

Band Instrument Information

School-Owned Instruments

It is the responsibility of each band member to acquire and maintain their own personal instrument. The Band Department will provide instruments for those students who play large instruments. An Instrumental Rental and Care Agreement should be filled out and signed by the student and their parents at the beginning of the school year. Each band member is responsible for the proper care, condition, and repair costs of this instrument for the duration of the agreement. Any damages or serious malfunctions should be reported to the Director immediately. Damages due to negligence of the student will be charged to the student. If the instrument is lost or stolen, the student must reimburse the band dept. for the cost of the instrument.

Privately-Owned Instruments

Any privately owned instrument is the responsibility of the student who owns it. Students should check with their parents to see that the instrument is included on their homeowner's insurance policy. Before purchasing an instrument, students should consult with the band director regarding manufacture and brand name. No student is allowed to touch any instrument that does not belong to them. Students violating this rule may be removed from the band.

All instruments should be kept in excellent playing condition and should be cleaned and polished before every performance. Inspections will be held periodically before games and concerts. Instruments not in playing condition can not be used during performances.

Private Lessons

Private lessons are a tremendous aid in the development of a student's musical knowledge and improve the overall quality of the band. Any student interested in studying privately should see the band director for recommendations.

Student Supervision

It is the responsibility of the BHS Band Director and staff to monitor and supervise all band students during rehearsals and performances. We will be diligent and confident in maintaining a safe and securing environment for all students associated with the band department. It is the responsibility of each student to adhere to the rules and procedures expressed in this manual and all directions given by the band staff. There are specific areas in which students are to remain during practices and following dismissal which will be monitored by an adult. Failure to comply to these directives will result in the student being suspended from the program and subject to further disciplinary actions by school administration.

Band Travel Procedures

All members of the BHS Band will be provided with transportation to and from all band activities. All away football games, parades, concerts, band competitions, and community service events are included as transported events. There are rules that must be followed to ensure the safety of everyone who is involved in the complex operation of transporting the BHS Band.

- All students must ride their designated bus to and from all band activities.
 No Exceptions!
- In the rare event that transportation is not available, parents are responsible for providing transportation to the event. The band staff and directors may not organize this nor are they permitted to arrange carpools.
- Band members must return with the band unless they have permission from their parent as noted on a signed travel release form with approval from the band director prior to departure.
- There are to be at least two (2) chaperones on each bus in use.
- There is not to be any horse-playing or confrontations on the bus by anyone at any time.
- No loud talking or screaming.
- No music devices should be used without headphones and must be kept at an appropriate volume level as to not disturb others.
- All students must remain seated while buses are in motion.
- No eating or drinking on the buses while in band uniform.
- Only specified booster club personnel and active band members will be allowed to ride band buses to events.
- No minors who are not band members are allowed to ride buses even if they are accompanied by an adult.
- Upon dismissal, all students must remain in the loading dock area (outside the weight room) until their transportation has arrived. STUDENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO LEAVE THAT AREA!
- The band staff will be required to wait no more than 30 minutes following dismissal for students to be clear from the campus.

Out of Town Travel

Occasionally, the BHS Band travels out of town for football games, parades, competitions, festivals, and our annual Spring Trip using charter buses. **Charter buses require an extra fee not included in the band fees**. Monies for these trips will be collected by the booster club treasurer or the band director. On these excursions, travel arrangements and details will be provided to each student and parent at least a month in advance (The Spring Trip will be announced at the beginning of each school year). It is the responsibility of each parent that your student arrives on time and is picked up at least thirty minutes following our return from all events.

Band Council

The Band Council is comprised of student leaders who serve as the voice between the band and the band staff. Included in this group are the Band President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Historian. The Drum Major, Assistant Drum Major, Auxiliary Captains, and Section Leaders also serve as members of the band council. The Band Director and Auxiliary Coordinator serve as advisors to the band council. The council members also present new ideas to the band staff and implement new rules in order to promote the welfare of the band as a whole.

Elected Positions

- President This person should be a senior. He or She serves as a student representative and communicates major problems to the band director. The President presides at all meetings and appoints heads of any Band Council committees. The president also assists the section leaders with uniform inspections and collections.
- Vice-President This person should be a junior or senior. He or she works closely with the president and the director. The Vice-President presides over band council meetings when the president is absent. The VP also aids the president in uniform inspections and collections.
- Secretary-Treasurer This person should be a sophomore, junior, or senior. He or she takes minutes during meetings and records attendance. The Secretary-Treasurer is also responsible for managing receipts and records of money spent or earned by the band council. The S/T also collects the rolls from section leaders weekly and documents them in the roll book.
- Chaplain This person should be a sophomore, junior, or senior who has a spiritually oriented disposition. This person should be a member of and attend church regularly and they will lead corporate prayer before & after band activities.

Other Council Members

- Drum Major This person must be a third or fourth year band member and is selected through a judged audition. The Drum Major must display strong leadership and motivational qualities and have knowledge of conducting, drill techniques, and marching fundamentals. He or she is in charge of the band at all marching functions and is responsible only to the band director. Appearance and confidence are of the utmost importance. All candidates should realize before auditioning the amount of responsibilities and time that goes along with this position. The Drum Major's personality is directly displayed by the band that they represent and by that token, the band is judged according to the Drum Major's merits. Each candidate should remember that they are representing a first class organization and should always conduct themselves accordingly.
- Asst. Drum Major This person must be a third or fourth year band member and is selected through a judged audition. The Asst. Drum Major aids the Drum Major and presides over the band in the absence of the Drum Major. This student also must be an excellent musician and motivator. The ADM may also serve as a Section Leader.

Section Leaders – These persons are selected by the Band Director and are usually not 1st year band members. Section Leaders must display superb musicianship and a working knowledge of marching fundamentals. They lead their section during sectional music/marching rehearsals. They are responsible for teaching BHS Band techniques, conducting uniform inspection and collection, recording band practice attendance, maintaining sectional rehearsal areas, and handling all minor discipline problems within their section. A Section Leader must set a good example at all times. Failure to do so will result in removal from the position. Section Leaders will make sure everyone in their respective sections know their music. Section Leaders have the authority to handle minor discipline problems in their section, but must report all major infractions to the Director. They will eliminate talking in their sections at both indoor and outdoor rehearsals. Section Leaders may also break attention at appropriate times to handle their sections. Section Leaders will also set up telephone committees to contact section members in case of special announcements or changes in plans for events.

Aux. Captain & Co-Captain – Theses persons should be second or third year auxiliary members and are selected through an audition or appointed by the Band Director and Auxiliary Coordinator. Auxiliary Captains and Co-Captains are responsible for aiding the Auxiliary Coordinator. They assume the same responsibilities as Section Leaders in attendance, uniform inspection and collection, rehearsals, leadership, and minor discipline.

Librarian – This position is appointed by the Band Director. He or she supervises and manages all library operations including reproducing, distributing, collecting, and cataloging of all band music. Duties also include keeping the library clean, repairing music, passing out music and sight-reading material, collecting music fines, and filing music taken from folders. This person should always notify the Director of music needs when music is lost or destroyed.

BHS Band Banquet

The Band Banquet is an awards ceremony sponsored by the band dept. and booster club in an effort to reward various band students for outstanding achievements and service rendered to the BHS Band program. This banquet is held during the Spring Semester and is open to all active BHS Band members, booster club members, and the student's family members.

Spring Concert

The BHS Spring Concert is an annual event that showcases the various ensembles of the BHS Band program. It is scheduled during the 4th Quarter and usually includes other Blount High School performing arts ensembles such as the choir, dance, and art dept. This showcase is open to the public and mandatory for all spring ensemble participants.

<u>Violations of the rules set forth in this handbook will result in disciplinary</u> action that could include removal from this band organization.

BLOUNT HIGH SCHOOL BAND AGREEMENT

In becoming a member of the Blount High School Band, I agree to do my personal best to carry on the tradition of excellence and success both musically and personally. I realize that conscientious attendance and preparation for rehearsals and performances are essential for the BHS Band to operate successfully. I fully understand the conditions set forth in this handbook, and agree to abide by them.

Student's Signature	Date
Parent's Signature	Date
Student's Name (Please Print)	

This agreement must be signed by both student and parent and turned in

Other forms that must be turned in as well are as follows:

- AHSAA Physical Evaluation Form
- Emergency Medical Consent /Release Waiver
- "Yes to the Test" Voluntary Drug Screening Form
- Band Handbook Agreement Form (This Page Only)