

Veterans High School



BAND HANDBOOK



www.veteransband.org



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|----------------------------------|----|
| Our Identity | 1 |
| From Our Directors | 2 |
| General Guidelines | 3 |
| Class Band Syllabus | 4 |
| Classroom Procedures | 8 |
| Attendance Policy | 10 |
| Marching Band Procedures | 12 |
| Additional Information | 13 |
| Out of School Band Opportunities | 14 |
| Misc Band Information | 15 |
| Band Awards | 16 |
| Program Directory | 17 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS



OUR IDENTITY



Our Mission

To produce hardworking, compassionate, and determined students of character and integrity through the medium of music

Our Vision

To create outstanding performances for the enjoyment of our students, school, and community

Our Rules

1. Work Hard and give your BEST
2. Be understanding of those around you

Our Expectations

1. Be prepared, and follow instructions
2. Put in the time and put in the effort
3. Learn to love the process!
4. When mistakes happen, be ready to learn from them

FROM OUR DIRECTORS



Dear Parents & Students,
Welcome back for another exciting year of music making at Veterans High School! The 2025-2026 school year promises to be one of excitement and hard work for all of our Band Family! It is our goal to make this school year as successful as possible for our students!

To the parents, thank you for letting your child participate in the musical arts. Without support from parents and the community, there could be no band program. The Veterans High School Instrumental Music Department will be entertaining for you and emotionally fulfilling for your child. It takes three parts to make a great band program: the students, the staff, and the parents. It is our sincere hope you choose to get involved with our fantastic band booster program to help continue moving this band forward.

To the band members, we hope that you are ready to jump right in to all of our fantastic activities offered throughout the year! Whether you are joining us as a member of the Warhawk Squadron, or if you will be making music with us in one of our Concert groups, or anywhere in between, we are so excited to have you as a part of our program! Keep in mind that everything we do in the band room is applicable to the rest of your life, and we hope to use the magical medium of MUSIC to help you grow as a musician, student, and person!

Achieving the goals set before us will not always be an easy feat, but we can say with absolute certainty that it will be a rewarding one! As you read through this handbook, and prepare for the upcoming school year, never lose sight of the fact that we make incredible things happen through our EFFORT and PROCESS! Nobody gets to “sit on the bench” in band, so we are expecting for 100% of our students to put in the necessary work!

Let's Go Band! Let's Go Warhawks!

Grayson Mullis
Director of Bands

Katie Griffin
Associate Director of Bands





GENERAL GUIDELINES

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure the most productive band atmosphere for our students

1. Work hard at all times, and don't be afraid to make a mistake!
2. Make intelligent decisions
3. Students will respect all Directors, Staff, School Personnel, Booster Personnel, Peers, and Community Members
4. Students will follow instructions and directions given by the Directors, Staff, School Personnel, Booster Personnel, and other adults
5. Attendance is mandatory at all events. Never assume an event or rehearsal is cancelled due to inclement weather
6. To be early is on time, on time is late, and to be late is unacceptable
7. All Veterans High School and Houston County Board of Education Policies will be enforced at all times during band and school events



CLASS BAND SYLLABUS

Course Goal: The primary objective of our band classes is to foster a meaningful and educational understanding of music and the performance of quality band literature. We aim to improve the musical literacy of each student through focused repetition of fundamental musical concepts such as technique, characteristic sound development, balance and blend, and the performance of outstanding band music.

Chromebook Statement:

All students are issued a district-provided chrome book for instructional purposes, student engagement, and student learning. Chromebook use is at the direction and discretion of the classroom teacher.

Expected Outcomes: The students will be able to

1. Perform major scales
2. Perform alone and with others
3. Read and notate music
4. Evaluate music and music performances
5. Understand music in relationship to history and culture
6. Listen to, analyze, and describe music





CLASS BAND SYLLABUS, CON'T

Grading Method & Descriptions:

A 90-100

B 80-89

C 70-79

F 0-69

15% Daily participation/Written Assessments and Homework

45% Performances & Major Playing Assessments

20% Minor playing and written assessments

20% Cumulative final exam

Performances:

Georgia Music Standard 53.03810 states:

“Participation in concert performances outside of regular class hours is expected.” Students are made aware of upcoming performances and band events in plenty of time. Because this is a performance based class, students are required to be at ALL performances. Veterans does not offer a non-performance band class. You have been provided a performance calendar in a timely manner to assist you in avoiding conflicts. If the student misses an extra rehearsal or performance with a valid excuse (see attendance policies), it is the individual student’s responsibility to coordinate an individualized make up assignment. In addition to this handbook, we will follow school guidelines for excused and unexcused absences. Any exception must be cleared by the Directors at least **two weeks** in advance.





CLASS BAND SYLLABUS, CON'T

Performance Attire: Students in the Concert and Symphonic Band (4th & 5th Periods) will be required to wear all black dress clothes for every performance. For gentlemen: black pants, shirt, belt, black socks and black dress shoes. For ladies: black skirt, dress or pants, black shoes, shirt, blouse, etc. Please make arrangements to have the appropriate clothing at the concerts. Failure to be in dress will negatively affect the students' performance grade. IF IT'S NOT BLACK, DON'T WEAR IT. Additionally, all concert black must also fall within the guidelines of the VHS Dress Code in the VHS Student Handbook.

Students in Wind Ensemble as well as Wind Symphony will be required to wear concert black: gentlemen in tuxedos and ladies in long black dresses, as well as black dress shoes and socks. Both of these items will be ordered through the band boosters. The cost is a one-time expense of \$105 for tuxedos and \$80 for dresses. It will be the students' responsibility to maintain and keep these items.

Participation: Every student is expected to be prepared for class every day and to play at appropriate times. A daily grade will be assigned and the average will be logged in the grade book at the end of every week. Loss of points include but are not limited to:

- The student does not have the required materials for class.
- The student refuses to play their instrument.
- The student talks excessively during class at inappropriate times
- The student engages in any behavior that disrupts the learning environment.





CLASS BAND SYLLABUS, CON'T

Playing Tests: Periodically, there will be playing tests to evaluate student's mastery of skills and/or repertoire. Students will have options for completing the playing assessment: schedule a time before or after school, during SOAR time or via Google Classroom. Students will be assessed based on the GMEA score Rubric including:

- correct rhythms
- correct notes
- correct articulations
- correct musicianship (dynamics, phrasing, etc.)

Written Assignments, Canvas Assignments, and Homework: From time to time, students will be required to do brief writing assignments on various topics. Both grammar and content will be graded. Additionally, we will use student Chromebooks on a weekly basis to complete assignments in Canvas during class.

Final Exam: This course includes a cumulative exam at the end of each semester. The final exam during first semester and second semester is worth 20% of the semester grade.

Veterans High School Retake Policy: Students are permitted to retake two major assessments per semester provided they complete the necessary undertakings (ie. tutoring, extra practice, etc).



CLASSROOM PROCEDURES



Morning Band Room Procedures:

The band room will be opened in the morning at 7:40am for students needing to drop off instruments, practice, or take care of any additional band-related business. Spinning is not allowed during the mornings.

Entering the Room for Rehearsal:

Students will quickly and quietly enter the room and retrieve their instruments from their assigned lockers, their chair for rehearsal, and any other needed items. Once the bell rings, students will have two and a half minutes to assemble their instruments, be in a chair, have music out and in order for the day's rehearsal. Failure to be prepared when class starts will negatively affect their participation points.

Bathroom Policy:

Students are to use the bathroom before and after class. Only extreme emergencies (vomiting, bleeding, etc.) will be allowed during instructional time. Students that abuse the bathroom policy will be referred to administration.

Dismissal from Class:

Students will be allowed between three to five minutes at the end of class to put their instruments up, put away their chair and stand, and clean their area. Once the dismissal bell rings, students will quickly and quietly exit the room.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES, CON'T



Broken Instrument!:

The VHS Band Program is fortunate to benefit from traveling repair companies that are able to perform basic maintenance on personal and school-owned instrument. We are visited weekly by representatives from Portman's Music Superstore and Big Note Music. If your instrument is in need of repair, please fill out the "Broken Instrument" form found on the home page of your Canvas Class and leave your instrument in your locker until it has been repaired. Please note that if your instrument is being rented through a program that includes repair, or if your instrument has a separate repair program, please notate as much on the "Broken Instrument" form. Most importantly, please be aware that if fill out a repair request with the form, and it is worked on by a repair technician, the cost of that repair will be charged to the student's CutTime account. Please feel free to reach out to a director for any further inquiries on instrument repair

Lost or Missing Music:

Students are expected to keep up with all items issued to them in the band program, including music used for any rehearsals or performances. However, in the event that replacement copies are needed, students must fill out the Music Request Form located on the front page of your Canvas class.

Discipline Procedure

While it is expected that members of the Veterans High School Instrumental Music Department act professionally and with maturity at all times, there are some instances where consequences to inappropriate behavior are warranted:

First Offence: Verbal warning

Second Offence: Student / Teacher conference.

Third Offence: Alternate assignment and/or Parent contact

Fourth Offence: Disciplinary referral

*Excessive offences could result in dismissal from the band program. Any major infraction, fighting, cursing, etc will result in an immediate disciplinary referral.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is mandatory at all events including performances and rehearsals. Band is one of only a few organizations that require 100% participation by every individual for the success of the whole. With that said, there will be situations where a student will have to miss a rehearsal or performance. When these events occur, a Director must be notified ASAP. All absences will be logged as "excused" or "unexcused"

Excused Absences:

Emergency: These absences are the result of unforeseen circumstances such as sudden illness, family illness, or death in family. Contact the directors immediately if an emergency should occur. A note acknowledging the absence is required upon return.

Non-Emergency: The following are acceptable non-emergency excused absences:

- religious observances
- medical appointments (please try to schedule around rehearsals)
- legal obligations
- family visitation

Documentation: When presenting a doctors' note, please have the doctor be specific with his or her orders so the band staff can follow them. Please drop them off in Mr. Mullis' office.

****All non-emergency excused absences MUST be submitted prior to the missed event. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence.****

Following any EXCUSED absence, the member will be allowed to return to the band in good standing immediately. Any missed drill, music, or choreography will be required to be made up before the next performance. Only when the student has demonstrated the ability to perform all material, at the discretion of the directors, will they be allowed to perform with the band.

ATTENDANCE POLICY, CON'T

Unexcused Absences:

An unexcused absence is defined as failure to show up to a Veterans Band event without prior approval and/or an absence for any reason other than the excused absences listed above. Understand that just because a note or email is provided, that does not mean it will be coded as "unexcused." This will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Consequences for unexcused absences are listed below.

Following any UNEXCUSED absence students will be required to make up missed time outside of regularly scheduled rehearsals, and WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PERFORM UNTIL ALL REHEARSAL TIME HAS BEEN ACCOUNTED FOR. Only when the student has made up all missed time and demonstrated the ability to perform all material, at the discretion of the directors, will they be allowed to perform with the band.

Tardiness:

Rehearsals and performances BEGIN at the time indicated on the calendar; therefore, students are expected to arrive early in order to get their instrument ready and into proper formation. Students who are tardy to concert rehearsals must check in with the director upon arrival. Students who are tardy to marching rehearsals must check in with the Directors. Failure to check in will result in the student being counted absent.

Class Band extracurricular attendance expectations:

- From time to time, after school rehearsals will be required for concert preparation.
- If 2 or more rehearsals are missed, the student runs the risk of not being allowed to perform in the concert performance.
- Students who miss 1 performance with no excuse may be removed from the program
- If an after-school/out of regular school day rehearsal is missed, that time must be made up prior to the student being allowed to participate in the next concert performance. In addition to the above, the Directors also have the right to assign an additional or alternative consequence as needed

MARCHING BAND PROCEDURES



Marching Band rehearsals will take place every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday after school from 3:30 to 5:30pm on our Practice Field behind the school. Attendance at every rehearsal is expected. Refer to the attendance policy regarding questions about this. After the bell, students will gather needed items from the band room, and report immediately to the practice field. Inspection will begin promptly at 3:30. Students are required to wear appropriate athletic clothing (no black or dark sun-absorbing clothing, no long sleeves or long pants, unless approved by a Director). In cooler weather, this may be amended to include jeans, hoodies, etc, by Director Announcement only. Students must have all required materials for rehearsal including, but not limited to: Drill Cards, Dot Books, Marking Chips, Music, Water Bottle, etc. Missing any of these items will result in "time owed" back to the Band, meaning that the students must stay after that current rehearsal to serve their owed time due to failing inspection. 5 minutes extra time will be assigned PER item missing

Student are expected to maintain good personal hygiene practices during and after rehearsal or performance events.

Practice Dismissal: When picking up your student from practice, please use the parent pick up lane in front of the school. DO NOT park next to the school adjacent to the band room. This is for safety purposes. Parents and students need to be punctual when leaving practice/games/competitions. It is unacceptable for students to have to wait more than 15 minutes after practice is over for a ride.

MARCHING BAND PROCEDURES, CON'T



Itineraries of Events: Itineraries for Games, Competitions, Parades, and other events are sent on a regular basis throughout the year. These itineraries are made to be as detailed as possible, and give a minute-to-minute breakdown of the event. It is the responsibility of the student to keep up with all itineraries and ensure that they know where to be, what do to, and when to do it.

Public Conduct: When we are in public, the Warhawk Squadron is representing the entire VHS Band Program, Veterans High School, and the Houston County School District. To that end, public conduct is expected to be outstanding. There should be no roughhousing, violent, or rude behavior. Students will show respect to all community members and other associated attendees of our events. Failure to follow this procedure will result in disciplinary conduct, and possible removal from the activity or program based on Director/Parent follow-up meeting. Furthermore, we will always stay to clean our area and leave locations **BETTER THAN WE FOUND THEM** at all times.

Third Quarter Break: During most football games, the Band is given the Third Quarter off to visit the concession stand, use the restroom, and visit with friends and family. This break is a privilege, and not a right, and the Directors maintain the right to remove a student's Third Quarter Break for pertinent reasons. These include, but are not limited to, disrespect to students or staff, excessive absences, excessive issues in passing off music or choreography, or other behavior infractions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Parent/Teacher Conferences:

We at Veterans High School welcome parents' questions and concerns. We advise contacting us by email because that will generate the most prompt and thoughtful response. If a face to face meeting is necessary, we welcome you! We want to maintain the integrity of the rehearsal schedule so your student receives quality instruction. Therefore, we kindly request that any desired meetings be scheduled through the VHS Counselor's Office to be put on our daily schedule for a future time. Please understand that we may not be available if you show up unannounced.

Recommended Woodwind Mouthpieces

Clarinet: Vandoren BD5

Bass Clarinet: Vandoren B45

Alto Sax: Vandoren AL3

Tenor Sax: Vandoren TL3

Bari Sax: Vandoren BL4

Recommended Brass Mouthpieces

Trumpet: Bach 3C

French Horn: Holton Farkas MC

Trombone: Bach 6.5 AL or Bach 5G (large bore)

Euphonium: Schilke 51D (large bore)

Tuba: Conn Helleberg

Instrument and Equipment Care:

School-owned instruments and equipment become the responsibility of the student to whom they are assigned. Any damage other than normal wear and tear will need to be repaired at the student's expense. A \$55 instrument rental fee for marching students using school-owned instruments will be assessed as needed. This includes instruments used in band class, and covers BASIC repair. Note that any repair cost PAST this initial fee will be charged to the student's CutTime Account. Personal instruments must always be maintained in top playing condition. Students are expected to have all necessary items to make their instrument play. Always show the director your instrument before taking it in for repairs. Remember that horseplay can cause damage to instruments and equipment. Be careful with your own instrument, place it out of harm's way if it is necessary for you to put it down, and never play around with or play on anyone else's instrument. Please see the procedure for fixing broken instruments for more information!

OUT OF SCHOOL BAND OPPORTUNITIES

District Honor Band / Region Band / All-State:

Students are highly encouraged to audition for the GMEA District 11 Honor Band and the Georgia All- State Band. These ensembles are comprised of the most talented musicians in the district and state. To be selected for these ensembles is a great honor. District Honor Band Auditions, which serve as the first round of All-State auditions, are held in early December every year. If a student passes the first round, they move to the final round of All-State auditions in January. Region Band is determined by the second round scores.

Solo & Ensemble:

Students are highly encouraged to participate in solo and ensemble. Solo and Ensemble is an opportunity for students to be rated on a solo or a small ensemble performance. Small ensembles consist of brass quintet, woodwind quintet/quartet, trios, duets, etc.

University of Georgia Janfest:

Students that have performed above and beyond the duties of a band member will have the opportunity to attend The University of Georgia Janfest. There will be two rounds to get accepted: one at the high school level the other at the University level. Students will write a one-page essay as to why they believe they should be nominated. The names of the students that pass the essay round will be sent to UGA; at that point the University will pick students based on instrument needs. Please watch the board for the specific dates in January.

Southeastern United States Honor Band:

Students who have demonstrated excellence in performance and attitude within the VHS Bad Program will be given the opportunity to attend the Southeastern United States (SEUS) Honor Band at Troy University in Troy, Alabama. There will be two rounds to get accepted: one at the high school level the other at the University level. Students will write a one-page essay as to why they believe they should be nominated. The names of the students that pass the essay round will be sent to Troy University; at that point, the University will pick students based on instrument needs and a recorded audition. Please watch the board for the specific dates in February.

Please note that JanFest and SEUS will alternate years, and will not be offered both in the same semester

MISCELLANEOUS BAND INFORMATION

Large Group Performance Evaluation:

Each year, the Georgia Music Educators Association sponsors a Large Group Performance Evaluation for high schools and middle schools in GMEA's districts. The class band concert groups will be rated by qualified adjudicators from across the state.

Band Lockers:

Each band student will be issued a band locker. Students will be required to use the lock provided. You may not use a personal lock; it must be a school issued lock. Students will not be permitted to go to their band locker between classes. It is important to keep the lockers free and clear of trash.

• **Lost or Damaged Property:** The Veterans High School Band Program and the Houston County School System will not be held liable for any lost or damaged property in the band room, band bus, or band trips.

Lettering:

To letter in Concert Band, students must have been a part of the Veterans Band Program for 3 years or 6 consecutive semesters. To letter in marching band, students must have marched in one full season, pass off all music/choreography by the given deadlines, and have no more than 3 losses of 3rd quarter break.

Honor Cords:

• In order to receive honor cords for graduation, a band member must do the following:

1. Be a graduating senior
2. Have auditioned and been accepted to the South Georgia Region Honor Band.

BAND AWARDS AND HONORS

Fine Arts Diploma Seal:

Graduating seniors are eligible for the Georgia Fine Arts Diploma Seal. The requirements are as follows:

1. At least 3 Fine Arts classes in the same subject area during high school (with “B” or higher average in each).
2. Participation in at least two fine arts events.
3. Twenty hours of fine arts related community service.
4. Completion of a capstone project.
5. Written Musicianship Statement

The John Philip Sousa Award: This award is given to the graduating Senior who has had the most significant contribution on the band program during their time at VHS

The Director’s Award: This award is given to a junior or senior who, in the eyes of the directors, has proven themselves to be an outstanding band member both in musical ability and character.

The Leonard Bernstein Musicianship Award: This award is meant to honor students whose musical contributions, dedication, and creativity set them apart as deserving of the highest recognition for their achievements.

The Louis Armstrong Jazz Award: This award is given to the most outstanding jazz band student in the program.

The National School Marching Award: This award recognizes outstanding contributions on the field. It honors the musical contributions and dedication of student leaders whose example inspires others.

The National School Color Guard Award: This award is meant to honor the outstanding contributions of members of the color guard. It honors the musical contributions and dedication of student leaders whose example inspires others.

The following awards are given to students in each concert band ensemble

Most Improved: Awarded to the student who has shown the greatest growth over their year of class band

Most Spirited: Awarded to the student who shows the most positive attitude towards our activity on a day in, day out basis

Most Valuable Player (MVP): Awarded to the most outstanding student in each ensemble for their musical contributions, attitude, and general demeanor as a band member in the VHS Band Program



PROGRAM DIRECTORY

Grayson Mullis, Director of Bands, grayson.mullis@hcbe.net

Katie Griffin, Associate Director of Bands, kaitlyn.griffin@hcbe.net

Instructional Staff:

TJ Hudgens - Color Guard Instructor

Alyssa Manrique - Front Ensemble Instructor

Lonnie Jacobs - Batterie Percussion Instructor

Noah Sigler - Woodwind Instructor and Band Assistant

Band Booster Officers:

President: Stephanie Bramblett, vhsbandpres@gmail.com

Vice President: Jessica Ford, vhsbandvp@gmail.com

Treasurers: Cathy Culpepper vhsbandtreasurer@gmail.com

Secretary: Emily Loretz

Color Guard Coordinator: Veronica Smith