

MCALLEN HIGH SCHOOL  
BAND HANDBOOK



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## MCALLEN HIGH SCHOOL BAND

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## **BAND PHILOSOPHY**

The Band Department at McAllen High School is charged with a great degree of responsibility through the standards of excellence that have been set through the rich tradition of the McHi Band. In order to help band members and parents understand their areas of responsibility, we have included a statement of band policy for your review and support. We hope that you find our Band Manual beneficial and informative.

The band provides an atmosphere for students to learn much about music and themselves. The band strives to produce in a positive way the discipline of proper performance, appearance, and behavior as young adults. This can only be achieved through pride, responsibility, initiative, determination, and perseverance. Attitude and effort are also displayed through cooperation and learning with their peers. It should also be realized that to develop a good performing band requires a great deal of time, effort, and desire.

The marching band fills an important need in the area of physical fitness. Outside of the physical education program in schools and universities, there is no other activity that students can be a part of, in such an organized fashion, which provides any more physical benefit.

It cannot be over emphasized that the band is made up of a group of individual people striving for one common goal. There are three attitudes these individuals must assume. (1) They achieve because they are respectful and obedient to authority, (2) they achieve because they are part of a larger group and are working as a team, and (3) they achieve because they want to achieve. Striving for excellence has true educational value, but if all individuals were to strive for excellence because they want to, positive and lasting results are achieved. All bands are similar in personal talent but the great bands are the ones that want to be great and will pay the price because they want to. All of us have been blessed with different talents, but it is up to each individual to develop these talents to the fullest.

If any of the band directing staff can be of any help, please don't hesitate to contact us. Remember, communication is a two way street. As directors, we give our best effort and are, of course, only human. In order to have any successful organization it is necessary that the directors have the final decision.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The code of conduct of the McHi Band is the same as that listed in the McHi Student Handbook. All students are expected to abide by these rules whether on campus or at any location where they are representing our band, our school, and our community.

There is absolutely no consumption of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs to be tolerated at a band function whether it be practice, performance or en route.

The same is true of profanity, abusive behavior or any conduct unbecoming to a lady or gentleman. Our band philosophy is based on pride, responsibility, initiative, determination, and perseverance. Those who can not abide by the school and band rules, do not have a place in the McHi Band Program.

### **GRADING POLICY**

Effort and Attitude go a long way in determining a student's grade. Each student receives a weekly participation grade which is based on the observation of the director in the student's class participation and any section or other practice rehearsals. During marching season this grade is based solely on the students attendance at marching practice. Every performance is a major grade. Each student is given a grade based on the preparation for the lessons (weekly in most cases) they receive from their individual teacher. Lessons are essential to the success of our band program and all students are expected to be sufficiently prepared.

**Weekly Participation:                    30%**

(During marching season, attendance at after school marching practice determines this grade.)

**Summative Grades include:        70%**

#### **Weekly lesson grades**

**Tests** (this also includes performances)

**During marching season, if the student receives a failing weekly participation grade, the student can only receive a NO GRADE or a 0 for the football game that week.**

### **ATTENDANCE**

Membership in the McHi Band automatically includes attendance at all rehearsals, sectionals, lessons, and performances. Schedules are given in advance along with a complete calendar of events for the whole year in August. Absence due to illness or accident will, of course, be excused, however, the director must be notified before performance or as soon as possible. Accurate records are kept by the directors in regard to attendance to all functions. When absent, all students must turn a written excuse (within 5 days) signed by their parents. **An unexcused absence from a performance can result in being removed from the McHi Band.**

## UIL EVENTS

All students that are scholastically eligible must perform at UIL contests. There are three main U.I.L. events each year: Marching Contest (Pigskin), Solo & Ensemble Contest, and Concert and Sight-Reading Contest. These will all count as a major grade for their perspective semester.

**PIGSKIN** - Marching Season points toward this contest. Everyone must set aside this day in advance.

**SOLO & ENSEMBLE** - Each student should select with the aid of a director a solo or ensemble to perform at this contest. If an ensemble is selected, it is advised that all members of the group be in the same class (or band) for easier rehearsal help. A student may also enter another solo or ensemble if they wish as long as it is a different event. **If a conflict arises and a student misses the contest, the student must reimburse the band program the entry and accompaniment fee.**

**CONCERT & SIGHT-READING** - This contest culminates the year and is the last major grade of the year (equivalent of a term paper).

## BAND JACKET AWARD

Each year, the McAllen I.S.D. awards to each senior member of the band in good standing A SENIOR BAND JACKET.

1. Seniors entering the band during the senior year must have the approval of the directors before receiving the jacket.
2. The jacket may be awarded regardless of which band the senior is in.
3. Seniors dropping band before the end of the year or after the awards have been received must return the jacket.
4. UIL rules state that a student may receive only one letter jacket during their high school career. Students who receive awards in athletics or other organizations must notify the band directors, coaches and sponsors of other organizations which award he/she would like to receive. A student may earn as many letters and other smaller awards as they can. Senior Jackets are given out early in the senior year so the seniors may enjoy them during the cooler months (usually September). The head band director has the final say so on which students have earned jackets.

**Only students performing with an All-State organization may receive jackets early.**

## **BAND AWARDS**

The **John Phillip Sousa Award** is presented annually to the top senior in the band (the decision is made by the directors). A scholarship for this award is given by the band booster club.

The **Arion Award** is presented annually to the second highest ranking senior. A scholarship for this award is given by the band booster club.

The **L.M. Snavely Award** goes to the senior most deserving by the directing staff. A scholarship for this award is given by the band booster club.

The **Art Ratley “Purple Heart” Award** goes to the senior who shows the most dedication to the McHi Bulldog Band.

The **Louis Armstrong Jazz Award** is given each year to the student most deserving in the jazz area. This is the choice of the director and is often a senior.

Other awards and recognition may be presented by the band directors and the McHi Band Booster Club as deemed appropriate.

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Election of officers is held in May or as announced by the directors. Band students are allowed to run for office provided they have, and maintain, an overall grade average of 80 (with at least 90 in band) at the end of the latest report period the election is held. A petition signed by at least ten students (band) must be presented to the director at a predetermined date as prescribed by the director, with a copy of student's latest report card attached. Officers that become ineligible may lose their positions. Election results are usually announced at the Band Banquet held in May.

### **BAND PRESIDENT (Senior)**

1. Commanding officer of the band (strong leadership and attitude)
2. Represents the band at various functions.
3. Checks with other officers periodically to see that everything is running smoothly and efficiently.

### **VICE-PRESIDENT (Senior)**

1. Senior representative.
2. Band hall monitor (responsible for care of the room and equipment)
3. Monitors Instrument Storage Room.

### **SECRETARY**

1. Assists directors with record keeping.
2. Assists directors with fund raising clerical work.
3. Does assigned secretarial work.

## **HISTORIAN**

1. Writes news releases, which must be approved by the directors.
2. Keeps the band scrap book and turns it in to the director at the end of the year for the band banquet.
3. Publicity officer for all band functions.

## **CHAPLAIN**

1. Prepares and presents devotionals when assigned.
2. Buys flowers and memorials and sends "get well" cards.
3. Serves as assistant secretary.

## **FRESHMAN, SOPHOMORE, & JUNIOR REPRESENTATIVE**

1. Is the voice of their class.
2. Maintains the bulletin board dedicated to their class.

## **APPOINTED BAND OFFICERS**

### **DRUM MAJOR**

1. Boy or girl with head director's approval.
2. A member of the Wind Ensemble or Symphonic Band at the time of tryouts.
3. Must be an exceptionally good marcher (2 years or more experience), musician and leader.
4. Must be academically eligible at the time of tryout with at least a grade of 90 in band.
5. Ten signatures or more on an officer's petition turned in at least one week before tryout.
6. Must attend a drum majoring camp at own expense. The tryout will be judged by an outside panel of band directors appointed by the directors.

### **QUARTERMASTER**

1. Superintendent of loading crews and set-up crews.
2. Responsible for various storage areas (kept neat and clean).

### **UNIFORM MANAGER**

1. Issues and keeps a record of all uniform equipment including an up-to-date inventory
2. Makes regular inspections and reports to directors on condition of uniforms.
3. Organizes check-out and check-in procedures, selecting uniform clerk assistants as needed.

### **LIBRARIANS**

Indexes, files, and sorts music. Issues music folders and keeps them up-to-date, trims, sorts, mends and takes up music.

## BASIC RULES

In general, never do anything that you are sure would not be approved by the directors. Use common sense and always ask first.

## MUSIC BUILDING RULES

1. **Practice Rooms** are for practice of band instruments only. Do not enter this area without your instrument, music, and permission from a director.
2. Students are expected to keep the band hall, storage areas, restrooms, and practice rooms clean and orderly. Keep music and horns in proper locker.
3. Do not enter any director's office without permission (however, please come and see us if you have a problem).
4. **Vandalism**--Report any criminal act immediately. Any person caught will be reported to the police. We will follow school policies concerning vandalism.
5. Use your instrument slots for your horn and musical equipment. Do not leave your cases and music anywhere else. Keep your slot neat.
6. **Music students only in the building.**
7. **Before and after school, the music building is for practice.**

**WE HAVE A BEAUTIFUL FACILITY. LET'S KEEP IT THAT WAY.**

## INSPECTIONS

Regular inspections will be held and a grade will be given. Instructions on proper procedures will be given by the directors. (Case in proper locker, proper reeds, swab, cork grease, slide oil & grease, valve oil, cleaning rag, clean case & horn, horn in good working order, etc.)

Students should check with the directors immediately if a school instrument assigned to them needs repair. Repairs will be paid for by the school unless the damage is a result of negligence on the part of the student, in which case, **the student will be expected to pay for the repairs.** Keep all horns in their cases when not in use.

## BAND AND ATHLETICS

Band students may participate in athletics at McHi under the following conditions:

1. Notify the band director as soon as band starts as to what sports you plan to participate.
2. Check the schedule of that sport and discuss with the director any conflicts that may arise in rehearsal schedule.
3. Lessons and assignments are expected of everyone regardless of which sport

you are playing. For sports other than varsity football, each student will be expected to attend a scheduled section rehearsal once a week. It is the student's responsibility to confer with his/her coach and band director and work out an agreeable schedule for both.

4. All U.I.L. contests are required in band. It is understood that any conflicts should be reported by the student in plenty of time to work out the problem in advance.

### **MARCHING SEASON**

Marching Band at McHi is composed of all band members. Every band member can and is expected to be at each game to participate with the band. Each band member is given as much exposure as possible depending on their ability and instrumentation. Those members who do not march at half-time still play in the stands and if possible help on the sidelines with equipment. We realize that not everyone will get to march every game but we also try our best to make sure that everyone gets on the field at least twice a season. Of course, those that march and play the best receive the most exposure.

The marching band performs at all half-times, usually two or three parades, and sometimes other special occasions.

During the fall or marching we are very busy. After Pigskin, the time load of each student is much easier. The weekly schedule for marching practice has been MONDAY and THURSDAY (4:30 - 6:30 p.m.) on the parking lot and TUESDAY evening (6:00-8:30 p.m.) at the stadium. Students are required to bring their McHi water bottle to all marching practices. Usually one sectional for each instrument is also required. Students must be passing all their classes in order to participate in most band activities. They must also earn five credits a year in order to be eligible the first six weeks. They can earn some credits in summer school if they failed the year before. Your school work comes first in order to participate in all band activities.

### **Reasons for being an alternate**

1. Inexperience - we use the most experienced marchers and players we can on the field. The most inexperienced marchers are naturally the freshmen.
2. Ability - the closer we get to Pigskin, we use the best marchers we have. Those students who march and play the best should be the ones that march the most. The upperclassmen in most cases should march and play better than the freshmen. Freshmen should take heart and realize that as long as they are trying, they should improve at both marching and playing and be a regular that much sooner.
3. Dependability - Those students who have unexcused absences and tardies will be replaced by alternates who are more dependable. If unexcused absences continue, the student's band grade will suffer. Anytime a student is absent from any practice for any reason, they can lose their position
4. Attitude - students with a good attitude that practice correctly, march well, and can play their parts should earn a marching spot.

5. Eligibility - if you do not pass all of your classes, you can not participate at football games and marching contests.
6. Playing ability and music play off.

### **MARCHING CLOTHING**

The early part of marching season is very hot. Students need to wear comfortable (cool) marching clothing. Shorts and tennis shoes are suggested (No boots, sandals, etc.). Students are required to wear their McHi Band practice shirts at every Tuesday night rehearsal. The students may keep their marching clothing in a sack in their locker. Use of a water bottle is encouraged.

### **UNIFORMS**

1. Uniforms are checked out to each student and are kept at school. It is very important that uniforms are hung properly on their hanger at all times. After each performance in uniform, hang up the uniform without the clothes bag so it may air out completely to prevent any mildew.
2. Keep uniforms in clothes bags to protect the uniform (except when airing).
3. Each student is to keep track of their uniform numbers and is responsible for all parts of the uniform issued.
4. **BLACK** band shoes and black socks are needed for all students. We will order shoes for you when we have received payment from you.
5. Every band student must have a music lyre and a flip folder with all music at every game and pep rally.
6. The black McHi band shirt must be worn under the band uniform.

### **COLOR GUARD**

Members of the Color Guard will be selected by the directors. Selection will be based on a tryout displaying the fundamentals with the use of Silks (Flag). Attitude, coordination, and the instrumentation needs of the marching band are also taken into consideration. Color Guard uniforms will be furnished with the accessories (boots, etc.) the responsibility of the student. Tryouts for the Color Guard are usually held in the Spring (April or May). Students need to realize that being in color guard requires extra practices outside of regular marching rehearsals. The COLOR GUARD CAPTAIN will be chosen by the directors on the tryout date. This person must show leadership qualities and loyalty to the organization. The Color Guard Captain will work closely under the director in charge of the group. The number chosen will depend on the size of the Color Guard. Fees will also be collected at the beginning of the year to cover individual expenses as they arise.

## FOOTBALL GAME GUIDELINES

1. Band Members must be present during pre game rehearsal in order to march at the game.
2. Alternates may take a persons spot on game night only if they have worked with that squad successfully during the week.
3. Anyone that is absent or tardy can and often will be replaced and must later challenge to get the spot back.

## OUT OF TOWN GAMES

### **DEPARTURE:**

1. Large instruments will be put on the instrument truck by the loading crew as long as each person puts their case in the designated area.
2. Make sure you have everything you need for the game (black shoes & socks, uniform, hat, band shirt, all music, lyre, and instrument).
3. Food is taken only on long trips where time is not available to stop and eat.  
**KEEP BUSES CLEAN!!!**
4. Shoes must be clean or polished for each game. You may want to bring polish for someone in your squad that may forget.

### **BUSES:**

1. **Students on bus trips may return in cars only with written permission from a parent and the approval of the director ahead of time.**
2. Students must have a parent permission form filled out for all band trips (one form will cover the year).

### **DURING GAME:**

1. Be ready to play at all times. This is our main responsibility.
2. While playing, everyone but flutes must have a lyre to play properly.
3. Watch the director or drum major carefully while playing. We must play our best at all times.
4. Do not play on your horns during the game unless you have been given permission from the director.
5. Yell and scream for your team, show spirit.
6. Do not stand on chairs, someone will get hurt and no one behind you can see.
7. After halftime, each student will be given a drink. **No student is allowed to eat or drink in uniform unless the food or drink is given to them by the boosters or directors.**

## **RETURNING GAME RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Make sure your bus is clean.
2. Give the loading crew room to unload the cases. Then you are to pick up your instrument and equipment and put it in the proper place in the band hall. **BE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN INSTRUMENT, DO NOT LEAVE UNTIL YOU HAVE YOUR INSTRUMENT.**
3. Tell your parents ahead of time what time we estimate getting back. We usually come close to the estimate.
4. Hang up your uniform properly before checking it into the uniform manager. You will be assessed a fee for any uniform infractions.
5. Please tell your parents not to park in the driveway by the band hall. We must unload the buses in this area.

## **BAND TRIPS**

Our principal approves or disapproves our trips. We usually have a trip every other year. This trip is usually an out-of-state trip. On all trips it is important for each student to realize that they are representing the band, McHi, and the community of McAllen.

## **BAND CURRICULUM**

1. **Wind Ensemble** - Membership is composed of the most outstanding musicians in the band program. These students are expected to represent McHi at the All-Valley Tryouts in November and December and to participate at the U.I.L. Solo & Ensemble Contest in February. These students must place band as top priority, attend all rehearsals and practice an average of 5 hours per week.
2. **Symphonic Band** - These students are expected to average at least 3 hours per week in practice and will also study a variety of musical experiences. These students are strongly encouraged to tryout for All-Valley. These students are also expected to participate at Solo & Ensemble Contest. Membership in this band will also include mandatory attendance at one section rehearsal per week after the football season.
3. **Concert Band** - Membership is for those students who would like to be in band and enjoy some musical experience. These students will learn, perform and practice at least 3 hours per week and may tryout for All-Valley if they are prepared. These students should also enter Solo & Ensemble contest.
4. **Orchestra** - Wind players enrolled in band may play with the high school orchestra by trying out and/or being accepted by the head band director. They will need to agree to attend the necessary rehearsals and performances held outside of school time.