# PREFACE

Welcome to the Shepherd High School Royal Blue Band! This band handbook will clarify all of the expectations that go with being in potentially one of the most outstanding high school bands in Texas. Every attempt has been made to answer all of the most often asked questions about the band program. All Band and Color Guard members and their parents should read this entire handbook, and sign and return the last page to the director by the due date. Please keep the remainder of the handbook as a reference when questions arise during the school year.

# INTRODUCTION

Being a member of a band can be one of the most rewarding and enjoyable experiences you will ever have. Just how enjoyable depends on how much effort you, your fellow band members, and your director are willing to give. It is more fun to be in a good band than to be in a poor one. It is more fun to play your instrument well than to consistently struggle. Band members are constantly on display and because of this, each member must always be aware of the importance of good behavior. Band discipline must be strict, and band members and their parents must be willing to accept the goals, principles, rules and consequences of the organization. You should keep in mind that you represent this band, school, and community whenever you perform publicly. Any misconduct can cast a negative reflection on our band, school and community. This can undo the great work of hundreds of students before you. You’re in a band that is building an outstanding reputation. Have pride in it, and do your part to make it even better!

# MAKING A COMMITMENT

In order to be a member of a successful performing group, each person must decide if he or she wants to make the commitment of time and dedication. A quality band program is built upon the consistent attendance of all band members at all rehearsals and performances. The faculty and administration of Shepherd ISD work together to ensure that all students are able to participate in all school sponsored activities. However, non-school sponsored events, and recurring doctor’s appointments (i.e. monthly orthodontist appointments, etc.) should be scheduled so as not to interfere with the rehearsals and performances of the band. Please do not register for Band or Color Guard unless you are willing to make this commitment.

# ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

In most cases, Band/Color Guard are considered a full year course, and students who participate during the first semester must also participate during the second. Students will not be allowed to enroll in band for only the first semester or only the second semester. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the band director and the campus principal.

Quality in a program is built upon the continuous participation and dedication of its members over a long period of time. Each individual in the organization relies on all of the others to do their part in making the group the best it can be. From the moment a student starts band as a sixth grade beginner until they graduate high school, their degree of musicianship and understanding of dedication and teamwork increase dramatically each year. Color Guard will work the same way. A large amount of scholarship money is available for a graduating high school senior who wishes to continue performing while in college, in both Band and Color Guard.

For a student to miss participating in these organizations for even as little as one semester will put them extremely far behind and greatly jeopardize the overall quality of the Royal Blue Band/Color Guard upon their return. Therefore, any student who chooses not to participate in band during a school year or who is dismissed from the program by the director for disciplinary reasons will not be allowed to rejoin the organization at any time during the remainder of their school career. Only in rare cases (scheduling conflict, illness, etc.) will an exception to this rule be considered. Any exception must be approved by the director and the campus principal, and will only occur following a conference between the director, the student wishing to rejoin band, and their parents. If the director and the campus principal choose to grant the exception, a substantial amount of make-up work may be assigned to bring the student back up to the performance level required in the Royal Blue Band/Color Guard.

# STRUCTURE

The Shepherd High School Band Director(s) are to be obeyed completely. In addition, the Royal Blue Band contains a group of student leaders who are delegated certain responsibilities within the organization by the director. These leaders are students who have displayed outstanding characteristics in performance, attitude, and leadership, and are selected through an audition, interview, or election process each year. Among the student leaders could be the Drum Major(s), Section Leaders, Squad Leaders, Quartermaster, Band Officers and Color Guard Leaders. Student leaders are instructed to carry out their duties as much as they are able, but they are not to abuse their positions. All members are instructed to accept the help and guidance of these leaders in order to keep the program running smoothly. All conflicts should be brought to the directors’ attention before any hostility arises.

# GENERAL BAND HALL CONDUCT

Discipline is extremely important. By the time students reach high school, class time should not and will not be taken to teach them proper behavior. Failure to comply with the following rules could result in disciplinary actions such as assignment of alternate status, demerits, grade reduction, and/or office referral depending on the severity of the infraction. Continuous problems could result in dismissal from the band program.

1. No food, drink, or chewing gum is allowed in the band hall at any time. Water would be an exception to this rule. Directors will let you know of other exceptions.
2. Students will be in their chairs (or in their spots on the field) with their instruments, music, and pencils ready to begin warm-up at the announced starting time of the rehearsal. Any student not ready at the time rehearsal is to start will be counted tardy.
3. Always be ON TIME for class, rehearsals, and performances! Excessive tardiness in one six week period could result in disciplinary action.
4. If it’s not yours, don’t touch it! Do not play on or handle someone else’s instrument or equipment.
5. Do not talk, pass notes or do homework during rehearsal.
6. Listen carefully and follow all directions given by the directors or student leaders.
7. Put your instrument, music and equipment in its proper place before and after rehearsal every day. Do not leave your things lying out on the floor.
8. The instruments and equipment in the band hall are very expensive. Take proper care of both your instrument and of all school owned items. You will be held liable for any equipment that you lose or damage.
9. Any music or music books issued should be written on in pencil only.
10. Charges for supplies and fines listed in “Charms” must be paid in full at the end of each semester.

**LAST, BUT NOT LEAST**: ***DO NOT*** use cell phones or electronic devices during scheduled rehearsal time or performance time! Turn them off and put them away! You can check your messages during break, after rehearsals or after the games. Do not have them out, or answer them during scheduled rehearsal/game time!!

# REHEARSAL ATTENDANCE POLICIES

In an effort to achieve the highest standards possible, extra rehearsals are necessary. Members of the Royal Blue Marching Band/Guard can expect rehearsals after-school or in the evening until marching competition is over. Band will also have night rehearsals or sectionals in the spring for the four to six weeks prior to Concert and Sight-Reading contest. Guard will also have after-school or night rehearsals in the spring for Winter-Guard competition. Notice will be given well in advance of any extra rehearsals so that transportation and work schedule arrangements can be made.

Because of our pressing schedule throughout the year, each of these extra practices is extremely important. To miss even one of these practices will put you far behind and will greatly jeopardize the quality of our band and guard performances. Therefore all members of the Royal Blue Band and Royal Guard (both performing members and alternates) are required to attend all extra rehearsals. Excuses for missing rehearsals are accepted in advance of the rehearsal and only in the event of illness, extreme family emergency, or for participation in other approved school activities. Your parents must contact the band director before any absence will be excused. Please email Mike Wilson, Director at [mwilson@shepherdisd.net](mailto:mwilson@shepherdisd.net) Please note that such non-school activities as listed in the above “Making a Commitment” section are not valid reasons for missing a rehearsal. Multiple unexcused absences from an extra rehearsal/practice may cause the student to become an alternate or receive appropriate disciplinary action within the guidelines of this handbook. Excessive unexcused absences could result in the student’s dismissal from the Shepherd Band program.

# PERFORMANCE ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Performance is the primary objective of being a band/guard member.

All of our rehearsal time, both during band class and outside of school, is geared toward preparing for public performances. The Royal Blue Band and Royal Guard perform in competitions, concerts, half-time shows, parades, and other special events throughout the year. Many hours of preparation go into each performance, and each member relies on all the others to do their part to make the performance the best it can be. It is extremely important to the success of the entire program that EVERY MEMBER participates in some way during EVERY performance. Although unscheduled last minute performances shall be kept to an absolute minimum, often they are unavoidable. For example, performances for play-off football games can only be scheduled a week in advance; however, attendance is still required.

An absence by any individual hurts the entire group. As a result, we must be very strict with these performance guidelines:

1. Only in the case of extreme personal illness, death in the immediate family, or other reasons pre-approved by the band director, will absences be excused. Your parents/guardians should contact the director prior to the performance you are to miss, and it still may not be excused.
2. An unexcused absence from a co-curricular performance may result in a disciplinary action within the guidelines of this handbook.
3. Repeated problems may cause the student to be dismissed from the band program.

# ALTERNATES

During all rehearsals, the director will constantly evaluate each student’s performance. Students identified as needing extra help with their marching, playing or guard skills will become alternates. The director will provide these students with the extra instruction they need so they can work at earning back their positions in the performing group. Students who continually fail to follow band/guard rules, who fail to give their best effort during practice, or who miss rehearsals or performances for unexcused reasons may also become alternates or receive disciplinary action within the guidelines of this handbook. These students must prove their level of commitment by following proper procedures and exhibiting proper behavior before they may earn back their positions. All members of the band/guard must attend all rehearsals whether or not they are alternates.

# ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITIY

In order to participate in extra-curricular activities such as band, guard or athletics, Texas state law requires students to maintain passing grades in every class in which they are enrolled. **EACH STUDENT MUST PASS ALL CLASSES WITH AT LEAST A GRADE OF 70 EACH SIX WEEKS TO PARTICIPATE IN EXTRACURRICULAR BAND/COLOR GUARD PERFORMANCES** (holiday concerts and spring concerts do not fall into this category and, therefore, must be attended by **ALL** band members regardless of grades). All Band/Color Guard members are expected to maintain passing grades in all of their classes. Each member is important, and to prepare a high quality performance, all of us must be able to count on each member to do his/her job. To have even as few as one or two students lose their eligibility to participate because of failing grades at the end of a six-weeks grading period has devastating effects upon the entire program. Please keep this in mind throughout the year so that all of the hours you have spent rehearsing do not become wasted time! Excessive ineligibility due to failing grades could result in removal from the Shepherd Band or Color Guard program.

Throughout marching season, and at different times during the school year, we will have tutorial sessions on Thursdays for those students who are not making acceptable progress in academic classes. Throughout the school year, specific subject tutorial sessions will be made available from the teachers within our school district.

# HOME PRACTICE

Generally, students earn very high grades in band. They deserve them! A grade of 100 is clearly attainable; however, a “blanket” grade of 100 will not be given. It is important to realize that high expectations go hand-in-hand with a fine performing organization, and students who do the necessary work to be contributing members will receive high grades. 50% of the nine-week grade is comprised of Performance Grades and Test grades while the other 50% is Daily Grades. A student must practice at home in order to achieve all the goals set by the band directors.

**PERFORMANCE GRADES**: Musical assignments or routines (scales, contest music, etudes, choreography etc.) are made periodically each six-week period. The students will “play off” or “perform” these assignments as instructed by the directors. These assignments often will determine chair placement and order within the program. Consistent lack of preparation on these assignments could have a great impact on the six-week grade. Students performing poorly on an assignment involving performance music or routines may be made an alternate until they perform the assignment up to the level expected in the Shepherd Band program. These grades may also include the winter and spring band concerts, or non-competitive performances. A performance grade will be used as a test grade.

**DAILY GRADES**: Daily grades will be given based on participation at rehearsals/practices, on the student’s willingness to follow band rules and procedures, on periodic instrument and uniform inspections, any written assignments and on whether the student brings all necessary materials and equipment (instruments, reeds, music, pencils, etc.) to rehearsal/practice each day.

# INSTRUMENTS/EQUIPMENT

Shepherd ISD provides many students with quality instruments and equipment. Proper care and maintenance will ensure good performance and long life for you and future Royal Blue Bandsmen/Guard members. All members and parents/guardians will be responsible for the care, maintenance, and storage of their instruments/equipment.

1. Brass players will have instruments cleaned and polished, mouthpieces cleaned, valves oiled, and valve oil in the case. Slides should be greased and in good working condition.

2. Woodwind players will have instruments polished, mouthpieces cleaned, and joints greased. Each player should have three working reeds at all times.

3. Percussionists will be provided with some sticks or mallets, but they may also need to purchase any additional sticks thereafter. All percussionists will polish and tape their equipment as necessary. Any school owned sticks, mallets, or other percussion equipment that is damaged through negligence will be replaced at the student’s expense.

4. Color Guard will use school equipment and flags. If the flags are destroyed or the equipment broken by student negligence, then the Color Guard member will need to replace that item at the student’s expense.

5. Brass and Woodwind students, in cases of negligence, will pay for repairs and/or fines on school owned instruments/equipment. (Example: dropping the instrument, knocking the instrument over, stepping on the instrument, defacing the instrument, etc). At the end of the school year, instruments/equipment must be returned in near equal condition as when issued.

6. Periodic unannounced inspections of instruments/equipment will be held to check for proper maintenance and care. Students could receive disciplinary action within the guidelines of this handbook for the purpose of correcting problems found during inspections.

7. Instrument/equipment not taken home will be stored in their proper place in the storage rooms of the Band Hall.

# UNIFORMS

All band uniforms are cleaned prior to distribution at the start of each year. Periodic unannounced inspections of uniforms will be held to check for proper maintenance and care. Uniforms should be in good condition when returned. Students will be charged for any lost or damaged uniform parts to possibly including hangers and uniform bags at the end of the year. Required uniform accessories include clean black shoes and shoe laces, clean black socks with no stripes or designs, and a band t-shirt to be purchased by the student yearly. We will also have a short sleeve polo shirt to be purchased that will serve as an alternate uniform worn with black dress pants and the black marching shoes/socks.

The uniform will be worn with pride in its entirety throughout all performances unless the director specifies otherwise. Shoes will be polished, and shoelaces will be clean. Long hair should be pinned up and worn underneath the hat. No long hair should be exposed for both male and female students. No exposed jewelry will be worn during any field or stage performance. Band shirts will be worn tucked into clean jeans/pants with no holes or worn places. All school owned band uniforms and hats will be stored in the uniform room at the band hall between performances.

Some color guard uniforms and shoes will be at an extra expense to the guard member. A Contest performance uniform will be provided, but a pep-rally or alternate outfit may need to be purchased along with other item needed for practice or performance.

# BAND TRIPS/CONDUCT

Student should arrive at the band hall with all equipment and uniforms at the stated time. STUDENTS MUST BE ON TIME FOR TRIP DEPARTURES! Missing the bus is not an excuse for absence from a performance. Band members are responsible for making sure their own instrument/equipment and uniform are loaded and unloaded on all trips. You will be told where your instrument/equipment and/or uniform should be placed for loading. You are responsible for putting your instrument/equipment in its proper place upon returning to the Band Hall, as well as helping to unload the bus and trailer. DO NOT rely on someone else to take care of this for you. While on the bus, students must stay in their seats with arms and legs inside at all times. Talking must be kept at a low level. Electronic devices will be allowed with headphones only. The directors, chaperones, and bus drivers should be obeyed at all times. No student will be allowed off the bus at any stop without the permission of the directors or chaperones. There will be no public displays of affection. When given permission to leave the bus, do not exit out the emergency door. Band members must also clear all busses of personal items and trash upon arrival home. No band member will be dismissed until the above duties are performed. All students must take school provided transportation to performances. If after a performance has concluded you wish to return home with your parents, they must sign you out. If you are going with someone else other that your parents, you must present the band director with a note stating your intentions signed by your parent or legal guardian. You will not be released to a minor. In addition, at the time you leave the group, your parent must tell a director in person that you are leaving. All school policies pertaining to conduct and dress at school are in effect on all band trips.

# AWARD JACKETS

Any current Band/Guard student may earn their award jacket once the below criteria are met.

**one year criteria**:

1. Student must participate in all football games (10 + playoffs)

2. Student must participate in all scheduled marching contest

3. Student must try out for All-Region Band (color guard exception)

4. Student must participate in all scheduled public performances/concert (fall & spring)

5. Student must march in the SJC Fair parade and the Shepherd Blue & White Christmas/Holiday parade or other scheduled parades

6. Student must participate in regional solo & ensemble as a soloist or ensemble member (color guard exception)

7. Student must participate in the U.I.L. concert & sight-reading contest

(color guard exception)

8. Color Guard students must also participate in all scheduled TCGC winter guard performances.

9. If the above 8 criteria are not met within one year, you must start over the next school year.

10. If you have not met criteria 1-8 above by the end of your Junior year, a jacket will be awarded for 3 years of service to the HS Band.

11. This system encourages effort and participation within the band and requires the student to stay academically eligible throughout the school year, or this achievement cannot be attained.

EXCEPTIONS:

Modifications to the above rules may be made by the directors on an as-needed or individual basis.

Any student, who at any time during their band career, participates in the All-State Band or receives a 1st divison at the Texas State Solo & Ensemble Contest as a soloist, will be eligible to receive their jacket at the end of the corresponding semester.

**DISCIPLINE SYSTEM**

Conditioning (including; laps, attention, 8 to 5’s or other) may happen for the following reasons and happens on the students time, not the bands time:

- Not addressing your director or student leaders with respect

- Disruption of practice or performance due to talking or horseplay

- Delaying the start of a practice or performance

- Any other action deemed inappropriate by directors or student leaders

Loss of privileges:

- Tardy to any practice, rehearsal or performance

- Inappropriate attire (wrong clothes worn during a set expectation)

- Wearing of jewelry during any marching performance

- Failure to turn in items requested by directors or leaders on time (money or paperwork for example)

- Failure to perform assigned duties by directors or leaders

- Any reported disciplinary action from any class in which the student is

written up or sent to the office

- Unacceptable conduct grades from any other class

- Unexcused missed performances or practices

- Inappropriate behavior or attitude exhibited at any performance or practice

- Each day assigned to ISS from any teacher

- Conduct unbecoming of a band/guard member at any time at any activity,

band related or not

Loss of performance privileges:

- failing a 9 week period or progress report thereafter

- Not completing assignments to a set expectation by due date

If performance privileges have been suspended, the eligible student must still attend all activities in proper attire, sit where directed by leaders or directors and perform any duties designated by such

# TRY-OUTS

Try-outs will be held each spring semester for positions in the next year’s Band/Color guard leadership corp. A panel of three or more qualified judges will determine your scores. No pre-determined number of leaders and Color Guard members will be set, but a maximum of two (2) Drum Majors will be selected. A teacher evaluation may be used to help to determine solid candidates for these areas, and grade checks will occur throughout the year. If a leader fails a class during any six weeks during his/her leadership status, that status will be forfeited. If you fail any portion of any year, prior to auditions, you will not be allowed to try-out. The number of leaders can be determined by two things:

1. The need basis for the Band during the next season.

OR

1. A natural break in the scoring system.

For the Color Guard, a natural break in the scoring system will determine who makes and becomes eligible for the guard class. The Officers of the guard could be determined in July/August after camps, leadership training and some summer band have occurred, if needed. If a Color Guard leader fails a class during any nine weeks during his/her leadership status, that status will be forfeited. Any incoming sophomore with experience, thru senior may try out for a leadership position in the Guard, but only a junior or senior will be eligible for the Captain status.

After all color guard and leadership positions have been obtained, all those personnel must attend a Summer Camp that the Director will inform you of, and this is at the cost of the student. Average cost is $350.00.

Color Guard officers and leaders **must** attend all practices and rehearsals. Unexcused absence may also result in loss of leadership status. Other Band/Guard members will be subject to the aforementioned policies.

If a leader misses 3 practices, rehearsals or performances they will be stripped of their leadership status.

# SUMMER BAND

Full summer band begins each year during the last week in July. Summer band is an important time to prepare for the upcoming marching season. Learning music, marching fundamentals, guard choreography and our halftime show are all parts of the summer band process. Missing only one of these rehearsals will put a student far behind. Therefore, it is imperative that all students are in attendance for all of the summer band practices. Non-school activities such as doctor’s appointments, work, and family vacations need to be scheduled to allow you to be in attendance for all summer rehearsals. There is also Guard/Percussion weeks in through June or July that need to be attended.

Failure to attend summer band may result in the student becoming an alternate. All summer band rehearsals that are missed or you arrive tardy to, could require the student to do make-up sessions or follow other policy as noted in this handbook. Some make-up time may occur before or after a scheduled rehearsal.

# SPECIAL NOTE

In addition to all regulations stated in this handbook, Royal Blue Bandsmen and Color Guard are also subject to all rules, polices, and procedures of Shepherd ISD.