



BIG BLUE BAND

HANDBOOK

2023-2024

NORTH MESQUITE BIG BLUE BAND HANDBOOK 2023-2024

FORWARD

CONGRATULATIONS on your decision to be part of the fine tradition of the **AWESOME NORTH MESQUITE BIG BLUE BAND!** This booklet is designed as a guide to provide specific details concerning all aspects of the band program to parents and students. For any further information, please feel free to call the North Mesquite High School Band office at 972-882-7935. Additionally, please check the website for updates throughout the year at **www.gobigblueband.com**.

WHAT IS BAND REALLY ALL ABOUT?

As we begin this year together, it is important to discuss and understand the effect that band can have on your life and the scope in which band can have an impact. Of course, as a body of musicians, we desire to produce beautiful music together, but as you already know, band is so much more than just a music class. As you identify and evaluate members of our community, you would be pleased to find that leaders in every field received their start, and often times credit their success, to the time they spent in their high school band programs. Band is a unique experience that allows us to learn not ONLY music, but also the traits sought after by employers, universities, and your future spouses! Band teaches discipline, work ethic, responsibility, punctuality, communication skills, and leadership. If you were to poll recruiters at any major university, you would find that most, if not all, would tell you that being in band sets you apart from the rest. Recruiters seek out high achieving students who have given their time and energy to band because they KNOW that these students will succeed amongst the rigors of university life.

So, “WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO ME,” you ask? It means that if you can make it here, you can make it anywhere! Your hard work and dedication to our program makes you extremely desirable to potential employers and major universities. Above all else, band is designed to teach you the life leadership skills that will allow you to be successful in your future endeavors!

DO I (AND MY PARENTS) REALLY NEED TO READ THIS HANDBOOK?!?

In a word, YES!!! Although you have been bombarded with countless handouts this week, the information included in this document guides our program. It protects you and the Big Blue Band. It is in your best interest to be familiar with the policies outlined in the next several pages, as they will guide the operation and decision making process that determine how band placements are made, who receives private lesson scholarships, how grades are determined, and much, much more. By signing the forms at the end of this handbook, both you, and your parents, are agreeing to all aspects included in the handbook. Like any binding document, it is important to read and understand BEFORE you sign!

Thanks for taking the time to familiarize yourself with our policies. Please understand that this is not an all inclusive list; individual situations will be assessed on a case by case basis, taking into consideration the overall good of the group and then its individual members. The following policies were drawn up not to punish anyone or restrict your personal freedoms, but rather to allow us to be aware of the rules necessary for keeping the North Mesquite Band functioning in a smooth and positive manner, protecting the rich history and tradition of the Big Blue Band!

So WHAT IS IN A NAME? **BIG BLUE BAND**

B – Better (Everything better than the time before)

I – Intense (Maintain intensity and focus in all we do. Work with a purpose.)

G – Great (Great things are not accomplished by magic or accident...it takes **HARD WORK!**)

B – Brotherhood/Family (We are family, a home away from home. We look out for each other.)

L – Leadership (We first lead ourselves before we are able to lead others.)

U – Unity (We must work as one group toward a common goal.)

E – Energy (Progress takes work, energy, and focus at **EVERY** rehearsal.)

B – Beauty (Music is a work of art.)

A – Attitude (YOUR attitude determines OUR altitude.)

N – Never Give UP (We must believe to keep the dream alive. Some days will be hard, but we must strive together.)

D – Desire (Know what we want and work together to get it.)

**What is right in the middle of it all?
U (YOU)...we cannot do it without you!**

ARE YOU GIVING YOUR BEST TODAY?!?!

THREE BASIC RULES

of the

BIG BLUE BAND:

- 1. The “Do Right” Rule – always do what’s right and avoid what’s wrong.**
- 2. Demand excellence (first from yourself and then those around you).**
- 3. Treat others with the respect you desire.**

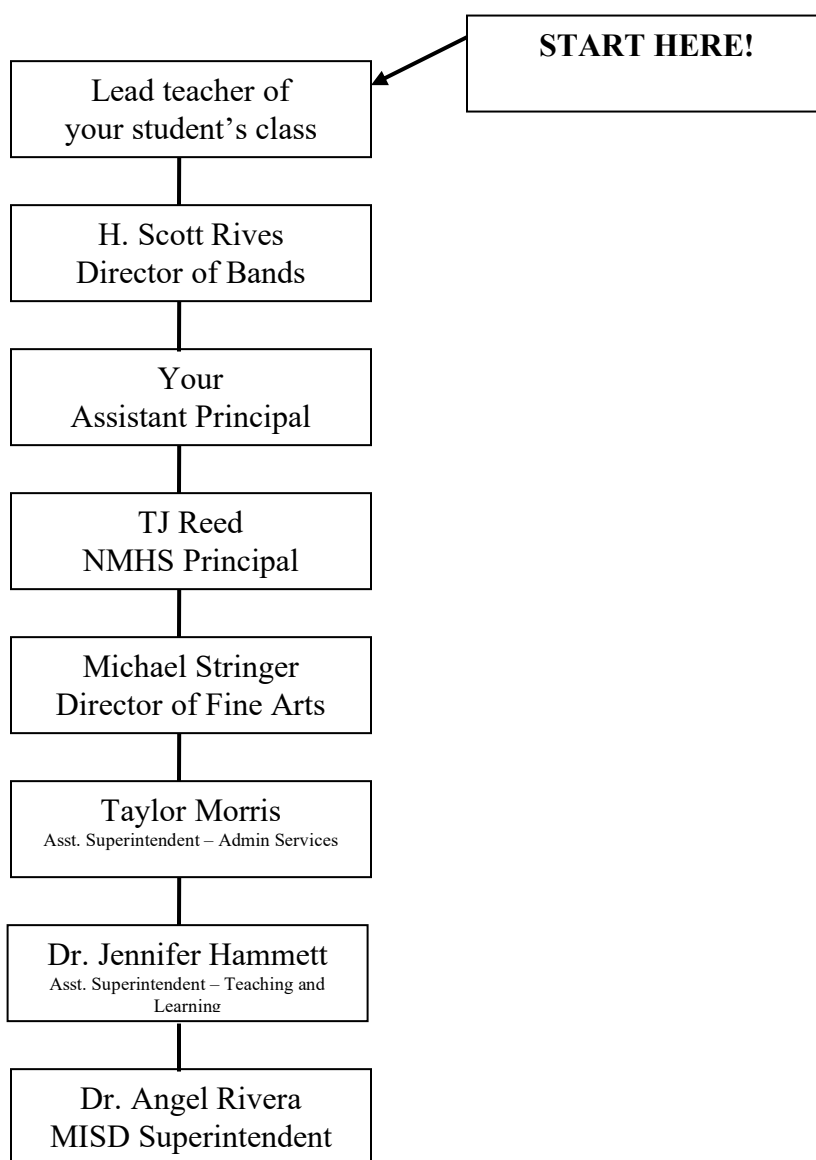
Courtesy of Lou Holtz

BIG BLUE BAND FACULTY AND STAFF

Mr. H. Scott Rives	Director of Bands	srives@mesquiteisd.org	(972) 882-7935 Ext. 1
Mr. Ben Elwell	Associate Director	belwell@mesquiteisd.org	(972) 882-7935 Ext. 2
Ms. Ashlyn Bruns	Assistant Director	abrun@mesquiteisd.org	(972) 882-7935 Ext. 3
Ms. Reagan Hall	Director of Percussion	rhall5@mesquiteisd.org	(972) 882-7935 Ext. 4
Mr. Jake McClain	Assistant Director	jmccclain2@mesquiteisd.org	(972) 882-7935 Ext. 5
Mr. James Thomas	Colorguard Director		(972) 882-7935 Ext. 3

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

We know from time to time parents and students may have concerns and questions in regard to policies and procedures. To assist you in resolving any concerns, please follow the organizational chart as listed below:



BAND ORGANIZATIONS

Band is a full year course consisting of two distinct semesters or “seasons”. The fall semester is primarily considered the marching season while the spring semester is considered the concert season. The following is a brief description of the various groups that are associated with the North Mesquite High School band program:

MARCHING BAND

Directors: H. Scott Rives, Ben Elwell, Jake McClain, Ashlyn Bruns
and Reagan Hall

The Big Blue Marching Band is made up of students from **all** concert bands. The Big Blue Band has a long history of great traditions, pride and excellence. The marching band performs at all NMHS pep rallies, at all NMHS football games, and at marching contests and exhibitions. **Membership in the Marching Band is required of all band students.** The Marching Band rehearses from 7:00 a.m.- 8:00 a.m. daily on the North parking lot (at Memorial on Thursday mornings) and 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday evenings. On **THURSDAY MORNINGS, the band will rehearse at Memorial Stadium. STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE THEIR OWN TRANSPORTATION TO MEMORIAL STADIUM.** Additionally, students should wear the dry-fit, grey Big Blue Practice Shirt and black shorts to all Thursday Memorial rehearsals. **Failure to do so will result in an A-day grade deduction.** A bus will be provided to return students to NMHS after this rehearsal. Marching Band students are eligible to receive a physical education credit for membership in Marching Band.

CONCERT BAND

There are five concert ensembles at North Mesquite High School. Every student who is signed up for band must audition to be placed in a band class. Placement in Concert Band I & II, Symphonic Band, Wind Symphony, and Wind Ensemble is based on a series of criteria. Some of these criteria are: the audition itself, participation in All-Region and Solo/Ensemble contest, participation in private lessons, conduct, attitude, dependability, eligibility, attendance for rehearsals and performances, and the student's demonstrated ability to perform the level of the music for the band in which they are placed.

Auditions will be held at the end of each semester. Students will play a short audition for the band staff and will be placed in a performing ensemble that best suits their current ability and level of maturity. It is important to understand that the selection criteria for each ensemble is NOT based solely upon the audition. The criteria listed above plays a large role in the student's band placement.

WIND ENSEMBLE

Director: H. Scott Rives

The Wind Ensemble is the top performing ensemble at North Mesquite High School. The band is scheduled 1st period both A and B days. This band performs college level literature and performs numerous concerts during the year. Wind Ensemble students are required to attend sectionals outside of school time each week; moreover, they are required to audition by way of the All-State Band process and participate in the Solo and Ensemble Contests. Members of the Wind Ensemble are strongly encouraged to participate in the Private Lesson Program. These students are quite serious about improving their musical abilities; therefore, most of these students have invested in professional quality musical instruments. The Wind Ensemble performs at the U.I.L. Concert and Sightreading Contest and attends a major music festival each spring, competing against the best concert bands from across the state and the nation. This group will be comprised of students in grades 9 – 12.

WIND SYMPHONY

Director: Ben Elwell

The Wind Symphony is the second performing ensemble at North Mesquite High School. The band is scheduled 2nd period both A and B days. This band performs upper-level high school concert band literature. Wind Symphony students are required to attend sectionals outside of school time each week. Students are required to audition by way of the All-State Band process and participate in the Solo and Ensemble Contests. A majority of Wind Symphony members participate in the private lesson program. The Wind Symphony performs at the U.I.L. Concert and Sightreading Contest and may attend a major music festival each spring, competing against the best concert bands from across the state and the nation. This group will be comprised of students in grades 9 – 12.

SYMPHONIC BAND

Director: Jake McClain

The Symphonic Band is the third performing ensemble at North Mesquite High School. The band is scheduled 3rd period both A and B days. This band performs upper-level high school concert band literature. Symphonic Band students are required to attend sectionals outside of school time each week. Freshmen Symphonic members are required to audition for the 9th Grade Region band. Upperclassmen students are highly encouraged to audition for All-Region band, and each member will participate in the Solo and Ensemble Contest. A large number of Symphonic Band members participate in the private lesson program. The Symphonic Band performs at the U.I.L. Concert and Sightreading Contest and may attend a major music festival each spring, competing against the best concert bands from across the state and the nation. This group will be comprised of students in grades 9 – 12.

CONCERT BAND I

Director: Ashlyn Bruns

Concert Band I is the fourth performing ensemble at North Mesquite High School. The band is scheduled 4th period both A and B days. This band performs high school level concert literature. A considerable amount of time is spent in class on technical exercises in order to improve the musical abilities of these students. Concert Band I students are required to attend sectionals outside of school time each week. Students are encouraged to audition for All-Region band, and each member will participate in the Solo and Ensemble Contest. Many Concert Band I members participate in the private lesson program. Concert Band I performs at the U.I.L. Concert and Sightreading Contest. This group will be comprised of students in grades 9 – 12.

CONCERT BAND II

Director: Ben Elwell

Concert Band II is the fifth performing ensemble at North Mesquite High School. The band is scheduled 4th period both A and B days. This band performs high school level concert literature. A considerable amount of time is spent in class on technical exercises in order to improve the musical abilities of these students. Concert Band II students are required to attend sectionals outside of school time each week. Students are encouraged to audition for All-Region band, and each member will participate in the Solo and Ensemble Contest. Many Concert Band II members participate in the private lesson program. Concert Band II performs at the U.I.L. Concert and Sightreading Contest.. This group will be comprised of students in grades 9 – 12.

JAZZ ENSEMBLE

Director: Jake McClain

The Jazz Ensemble will meet during the late fall and spring semester. Unlike the Concert Bands, Jazz Band will meet before and/or after school to meet the needs of the students. Membership in the Jazz Ensemble is by audition/interview, and students will be expected to sign and uphold a Jazz Band Contract.

The Jazz Ensemble may perform at U.I.L. Solo & Ensemble, the Jazz Concert, and the Senior Honor Concert, as well as other civic events. This group will be comprised of students in grades 9 – 12.

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLES

Director: Reagan Hall

The Percussion Ensembles meet during the late fall and spring semester. A considerable amount of time is spent in class working on the ensembles but there will be sectionals outside of class that the students will be required to attend. The Percussion Ensembles perform at Solo & Ensemble, the Percussion Concert, and the Senior Honor Concert. This group will be comprised of students in grades 9 – 12.

COLORGUARD

Director: Ashlyn Bruns/James Thomas

The Colorguard meets during the fall as an essential piece to the Big Blue Band Marching Band and in the spring as its own entity as the NMHS Winterguard. During the fall, the Colorguard rehearses and performs at all NMHS pep rallies, at all NMHS football games, and at marching contests and exhibitions. During the spring, the Winterguard is divided into two competitive groups which rehearse after school and compete at select NTCA Regional competitions.

During the fall, Colorguard students who also play a wind instrument will enroll for both Colorguard as their first period B-Day class and their corresponding class period to their assigned band placement. However, during the spring, wind-playing Colorguard students are required to double-block band and attend all afterschool Winterguard practices. **Wind-playing Colorguard students are required to perform in a concert ensemble to maintain membership in the Big Blue Band.** This group will be comprised of students in grades 9 – 12.

REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS

In band rehearsals, not only do we deal with a creative process, but also with a much larger number of students than the traditional classroom setting. Because of this, it is imperative that band students be **organized** and **prepared** for every rehearsal. When an individual is not able to play his musical instrument during a rehearsal, it hurts the GROUP as well as the individual. It is important that the student's musical instrument is in good working condition, that (s)he has a pencil to mark his/her music, and that (s)he has important accessories such as tuners/pickups, mutes, reeds, and valve oil for **EVERY** rehearsal. The creative process we are involved in cannot take place unless there is a quiet, attentive atmosphere in the classroom. Students who do not live up to the high rehearsal expectations of the Big Blue Band will be counseled, applied disciplinary action complying with the MISD Code of Conduct, and, if necessary, moved to a lower band or removed from the band program.

PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS

A yearly band calendar is enclosed for use in planning your family schedule for the 2023-2024 school year. **Each** band student is important to the success of our many activities. We **must** be able to count on 100% attendance at these performances. If a family emergency occurs unexpectedly, PARENTS please call the band office at (972) 882-7935 Ext. 5 to relay that information via Mr. McClain. Occasionally, there may be family commitments (weddings, graduations, etc.); we will **try** to be flexible and work with you on an individual basis. **This must be discussed in detail well in advance (a month or more!). NON-EMERGENCY excuse requests less than 2 BUSINESS DAYS before an event will not be considered.**

Student job commitments and various other appointments are **NOT** reasons for an excused absence from band performances or rehearsals! Many band students work and successfully participate in band. We suggest that all working band students take a copy of the "Yearly Band Calendar" to his/her employer and clear all band performances and rehearsals. Almost all employers are very understanding and are flexible **if** they know of band commitments well in advance, and they understand that band performances are a **required** and vital part of the course work.

Work with employers to clear the Tuesday night rehearsals from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. **These extra rehearsals do not last all year.** (We are glad to talk to employers to validate student commitment.) If a band student has an **unexcused** absence from a performance/required function, they are subject to immediate removal from the band performance program. Continued unexcused absences may result in immediate dismissal from the band program.

MESQUITE RODEO PARADE and GRADUATION BAND

Each year the Big Blue Band is honored to participate in the annual Mesquite Rodeo Parade, as well as the graduation ceremonies for North Mesquite High School. All members of the Big Blue Band are required to attend the Rodeo Parade. The Rodeo Parade date is set by the Mesquite Chamber of Commerce for a Saturday in late March or early April (with the following Sunday as a rain date). Graduation will be on Saturday, May 25th, 2024, or Sunday, May 26th, 2024. Times are still set “TO BE DETERMINED.”

We recognize that Graduation Band is a time-consuming process at the end of a long school year. However, we consider it the final act of honor and support to our band seniors and the NMHS graduating class. All students in Wind Ensemble and Wind Symphony are required to attend.

Students who miss graduation will receive a 30-point deduction from their A and B Day grades as well as may be moved to last chair in last band to begin the next school year. (Please understand that although these changes may not be seen on your final report card, they ARE reflected in your transcript.)

Occasionally students must miss graduation band for circumstances outside their control (i.e.—weddings, funerals, a close family member’s graduation in another portion of the state, etc). Mr. Rives will entertain WRITTEN requests [to miss graduation] from May 1st through May 15th each year. Requests must be made by the legal guardian and should include specific information regarding the conflict. Please understand that requests will be handled on an individual basis and that not all requests can be granted.

GRADING

Symphonic Winds, Symphonic, Concert, and Intermediate Band (A-day: Periods 1-4), grades will be determined by the following: rehearsal attendance, class participation, performance attendance, and daily test grades.

The following items **subtract** points from your weekly attendance grade:

Tardy to rehearsal (before or after school)	unexcused-loss of instruction	results in a 20 point deduction
Excessive Tardy (more than 15 min)	unexcused-loss of instruction	results in a 30 point deduction
Missing rehearsals	unexcused-loss of instruction	results in a 50 point deduction
Missing performances	unexcused-loss of valuable performance time (comparable to missing a major test)	results in 70 point deduction
Forgetting/not having horn or equipment	causes loss of instruction (this includes: pencils, music, reeds, etc.)	results in a 10 point deduction
Not having horn in working order		results in a 5 point deduction
	All deductions are from your weekly rehearsal grade	

Daily tests: A test will be given at the beginning of each rehearsal worth 1/30th of your daily average.

In addition: All Wind Ensemble, Wind Symphony, and FRESHMEN students in Symphonic Band will be required to prepare and audition for the All-Region Band. All band students will be expected to prepare and perform a solo at the U.I.L. Solo and Ensemble Competition. The grade for this will be determined by the amount of preparation put into each event and the results of each performance.

For **Honors, Symphonic, Concert, and Intermediate Ensemble**, grades will also be determined by the following: completion of Objective Sheets, test grades including memory tests, chair tests, and/or written tests. Although there are only two to three major tests per nine weeks, you may retake the tests to improve your grade.

The following items **add** points to your average:

Holding a position of responsibility	Trying out for All-Region band (Symphonic or Concert only)
Being selected to the All-Region band, Area Wind Ensemble, and the All-State Band	Any additional work, practice, etc. that would enhance individual performance
Taking private lessons	Being section or squad leader

Additionally, students are required to attend all rehearsals with appropriate supplies. Students requiring additional copies of music will be charged \$.25 per page (lost coordinate sheets are \$1). If music needs to be replaced, it is the STUDENT'S responsibility to find a drum major or librarian PRIOR to rehearsal for copies.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

All musical organizations adhere to the eligibility rules and regulations as stated by TEA and MISD. Any student whose recorded six and nine weeks grade average **in any course** is lower than 70 at the end of a six-weeks or nine-weeks period shall be suspended from participation during the next nine-weeks period. However, a student may regain eligibility seven calendar days after the three-week and six-week evaluation period if the student is passing **all courses** on the last day of the three-school-week period. Students enrolled in certain upper-level courses may be exempt from these eligibility requirements for those classes ONLY. The district provides a list of the courses that are exempt from the *Texas No Pass, No Play Law*.

The North Mesquite Band Staff will enforce all eligibility rules and regulations. Students who are ineligible may continue to attend all rehearsals as well as participate in curricular performances to earn his/her band grade. Ineligible students may not travel with the band or participate in extracurricular performances. An example of a curricular performance would be a spring concert and an extracurricular performance would be a football halftime or any type of contest. Be advised that excessive absences from school may also result in a student being declared ineligible.

The band staff and North Mesquite High School staff work hard to assist and encourage band students to perform up to their potential in **ALL** classes. Since both Marching Band and Concert Band are group activities, each individual band student plays an important part in the success of the group. The band staff consults both with teachers and students for strategies for improving individual student performance. Obviously, we cannot achieve success as an ensemble unless our students are successfully passing **ALL** classes.

TUTORING

Peer tutoring lists will be available to all students in the Big Blue Band. Students who are struggling in an academic pursuit should contact Mr. Elwell as soon as possible so we can help you find fellow students for help with their academic pursuits. **It is the belief of the NMHS Band Staff that ALL students can succeed in their course work if they: are attentive in class, treat teachers with respect, show interest in their subjects, study hard, attend tutoring when necessary, and, MOST IMPORTANTLY, TURN WORK IN COMPLETE AND ON TIME!**

Additionally, students may be allowed to attend teacher-led tutoring during morning marching rehearsals IF THEIR TEACHER DOES NOT OFFER TUTORING TIMES OTHER THAN DURING REHEARSAL. **Incomplete homework DOES NOT create a need for morning tutoring.** Students will be expected to clear tutoring during band rehearsal with a director BEFORE rehearsal begins. Students who have cleared a tutoring session with a director will be allowed to leave morning rehearsal at 8:00 a.m. Additionally, students will be expected to return their tutoring pass, SIGNED BY THE TEACHER, to the band office prior to the beginning of their band class. Failure to do this will be considered as skipping rehearsal and will result in a 10-POINT deduction from the student's A-Day grade. Students and parents must also recognize that during certain times of the year no tutoring passes will be allowed (i.e. Thursday mornings—Memorial Stadium, the last rehearsals leading to a major performance or contest, etc). Students who abuse these privileges WILL NOT be allowed to leave rehearsal for tutoring. During the Concert Band season, students MUST schedule their tutoring times AROUND their weekly sectional. This instrument specific content is presented ONE TIME per week and students are expected to attend.

PRIVATE LESSONS

All Big Blue Band students are strongly encouraged to take private lessons in order to improve their individual playing skills, and all top band students are expected to be involved in some way in the private lesson program. Individual instruction from a qualified specialist on an individual musical instrument can make ‘all the difference’ in a student’s progress on his/her musical instrument, thus making for a more enjoyable experience in band. While we, as directors, are skilled instructors on the various instruments in the band, there is simply no substitution for private instruction received from someone who is considered to be a professional performer on a particular instrument. Private lessons help students develop individually as musicians, as well as provide specific instruction for band music, region/area/state auditions, solo literature, technique and tone exercises, and much more. The Big Blue Band directors will assist band students in scheduling lessons with the qualified teachers; however, we suggest you be aggressive in ‘locking in’ with a teacher as soon as possible. A complete listing of our private music instructors are listed on the Big Blue Band website.

USE OF BAND HALL FACILITIES

Students are **welcome** to use the band hall practice rooms for practice either before or after school. Sometimes, however, the number of available places is limited, since both sectionals and private lessons take place before and after school. Due to the many **thousands** of dollars worth of musical instruments that are in the band hall, we do ask that **ONLY** band students come into the band hall during the school day **and** before or after school. Students must ask their friends who are not in the band to wait for them either in the school hallway or outside. The Band Hall is a “safe haven.” We stress that all band students be responsible and keep their equipment **PUT UP** in their lockers at all times. Many times “clean-up” duty is assigned to “untidy” band members to help develop orderly skills.

SCHOOL INSTRUMENTS

Mesquite ISD provides school owned instruments in the double reed, low woodwind, selected low brass, and percussion sections. These instruments are quite costly (example: concert Tuba - \$8,000) and are not normally owned by individuals. All of these instruments are sent to the repair shop and reconditioned during the summer. **Any damage or normal adjustment during the year is the responsibility of the band student who has signed for the instrument.** We expect the instrument to be returned in the same condition as when issued. Dings, dents, and other damage will be repaired at the student’s expense. Mesquite ISD carries **NO** insurance on school instruments. If the instrument is stolen while checked out to a student, it is the **student’s responsibility** to replace the instrument. Many parents choose to carry an insurance rider to cover a checked-out school musical instrument.

CONDUCT

The conduct of each band member should be above reproach. By the time a student reaches high school, he/she should know how to show appropriate behavior. The high standards set by the Big Blue Band will be strictly enforced. Poor behavior is a sign of lack of pride and a lack of concern for the band. If a student's conduct grade falls below a "C" in band or in any other class, he/she could be removed from their current band assignment. During marching season, the student could be removed from the marching band formation as well. Members who continually display inappropriate conduct or violate the policies of the school could be removed from the band program. Students assigned to Challenge are subject to immediate removal from the program.

BAND LETTER JACKETS

The Big Blue Band uses a point system to earn a Band Letter Jacket. A Letter Jacket Rubric will be used to keep track of points earned toward a Letter Jacket. Students have an opportunity to earn a Letter Jacket starting their 9th grade year. To earn a jacket, a student must earn 10 points on the rubric in a single school year. A jacket will be presented to senior students who have served the high school band program well if they have not earned one prior. Students not adhering to written disciplinary policies of the school and band will forfeit their eligibility for the jacket. Any violation of these rules during their senior year may result in the forfeiture of the jacket. The student must uphold the goals and standards of the band. It is understood that withdrawal or dismissal from the band prior to graduation of his/her senior year results in forfeiture of the jacket.

OFF CAMPUS TRAVEL POLICIES – GENERAL

Students who represent the Mesquite ISD on out-of-town trips are expected to maintain very high standards in every respect at all times. They are expected to attend and be on time for all sessions and activities scheduled for them. In the event of overnight trips, they are expected to be in their rooms at the times designated by their chaperones.

Each student will be responsible to one or more chaperones who will supervise the activities of the student for the trip. Negligence in attending required events, in meeting curfew requirements, or in failing to maintain our standards of conduct may make it necessary for the director to send the student home at his/her own expense. Student conduct on school-related trips: Self-discipline is the key element for a pleasant experience for both the adults and the student when the student is on a school-related trip. Students who are involved in a serious disciplinary offense on a school-related trip, such as the use, possession of, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol, stealing, fighting, going in the room of a member of the opposite sex, or some other serious offense will face disciplinary action which may include one or more of the following:

1. The student will be sent home from the trip at the parents' expense.
2. The student will be held liable for damages to property.
3. The student may be removed from this school activity as well as other school co-curricular activities.
4. The student may be placed in In-School-Suspension (ISS), Off-Campus-Suspension, or Alternative Education Placement.

Students' attire during school activities outside the school day should be in good taste. If there is any question of taste, the director's decision is final. Students will be expected to treat chaperones with respect at all times. In the event a parent chaperone gives needed supervision, band students must honor that with utmost respect.

IN GENERAL – Even though you will not always have a band shirt on, people will find out where you are from. You have the opportunity to make a tremendous name for North Mesquite and for yourself. Be courteous and polite at all times. There is no way we can anticipate every possible scenario, so we ask for good judgment. Please use common sense. **RULE OF THUMB:** If there is any question in your mind as to whether you should do something or not...DON'T DO IT! It is better to be safe than sorry.

Students who are ineligible to participate at UIL Marching, Concert/Sightreading Contest, or Spring Concert Band contests (ie UIL, Festivals, etc) will not be allowed to attend the Spring Trip. Additional details will be provided on your annual trip contract.

**WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THERE WILL BE NO PROBLEMS.
IF WE ANTICIPATED A PROBLEM, WE WOULD NOT TRAVEL.**

FOOTBALL GAME POLICY

Big Blue Band policy dictates that band students ride to and return from all off-campus performances as a group using transportation provided by the district. On **rare** occasions, an emergency or conflict with other school-sponsored events necessitates that parents provide transportation to or from an off-campus performance. In such a situation a **STUDENT TRAVEL RELEASE FORM** signed by a guardian must be presented to Mr. Rives **PRIOR TO DEPARTURE** of the trip, and one of the directors or chaperones must physically see the parent take the student. This protects both the parents and the school.

Football games are fun, and we are there to support the team. However, we must maintain a class act at all times. Band members can stand up and YELL and SCREAM in support of the team throughout the game, but should always remain in his/her "spot." It is important to remain alert concerning all of the expensive equipment around you as well as the need to be ready to play at a moment's notice. **Only band students are allowed in the band section.** Life-time members of the Big Blue Band will be allowed to visit the band block during the 3rd quarter.

MARCHING BAND UNIFORMS

It is a **privilege** to wear the North Mesquite High School Band uniform. Make sure you have all parts of the uniform at each performance. If your uniform does not meet the high standard required in the Big Blue Band, you are subject to being removed from a performance or not traveling with the band. This uniform is a symbol of pride and will be worn accordingly. **You must wear all of the uniform or none of the uniform!** Students should wear black athletic shorts with an approved Band T-shirt under their uniform, giving them the option to remove their jacket at appropriate times. The only hats (other than the uniform hat) that may be worn with the uniform are North Mesquite High School caps.

Here are some do's and don'ts that will help you and your uniform look great at all times:

- ♪ **DO:** remember your black band t-shirt, black athletic shorts, solid black (calf length) TUBE socks, and marching shoes each time you will be wearing your uniform.
- ♪ **DO NOT:** alter your uniform. Any necessary alterations will be completed at the beginning of the year.
- ♪ **DO:** take extra time and care when hanging up your uniform. Pants hang folded on the crease, not the seat.
- ♪ **DO NOT:** wear any additional jewelry with your uniform. This includes: watches, bracelets, necklaces that can be seen above coat neck-line, earrings or other piercings (girls can wear SMALL round studs ONLY).
- ♪ **DO:** Always store your hat in its hat box.
- ♪ **DO:** remember to bring your instrument in spite of your excitement over your uniform!

Some reminders regarding makeup and other fashion restrictions while wearing your uniform:

- ♪ Acceptable colors for fingernail polish include: blue, silver, and white french-tipped
- ♪ No makeup, **including foundation or cover-up**, may be applied below the jawline.
- ♪ Longer hair must be kept in a tight bun while in uniform.

UNIFORM ACCESSORIES

The Big Blue Band uniform and major accessories are provided by MISD. Band students will need to provide:

- ♪ A pair of **black Super Drillmaster Band Shoes**. (Tennis shoes or dress shoes are not acceptable.)
- ♪ A pair of **solid black (calf length) TUBE socks**
- ♪ An approved **band t-shirt** to be worn under the marching jacket.
(NO sleeveless or muscle shirts will be allowed)
- ♪ Official Big Blue Band Garment Bag (used for long trips and contests).

Shoe fitting and cost information will be provided during uniform fitting at the beginning of each year. Shoes will be ordered in bulk to insure low cost and uniformity of style.

EARNING YOUR UNIFORM – A SYMBOL OF PERSONAL PRIDE

Earning your uniform consists of THREE components: (see the Earning your Uniform Handout for additional information)

- 1) You must show competency on a standard set of marching fundamentals to a band director. Fundamental pass-off sheets will be available on or before August 1st in the band hall. You may attempt to pass off these items once each day until you have completed the process. Each student will sign up for a specific time to make their attempt and attempts may be limited based on the student's level of experience.
- 2) You must perform your part to the School Song, Fight Song, and Star-Spangled Banner for your SECTION LEADER (or approved Squad Leader) by memory to a satisfactory level. You may attempt to pass off these items once each day until you have completed the process.
- 3) Complete and turn in all band forms, as well as, place your fee deposit for 2023-2024. (Upperclassmen Members must also have a ZERO BALANCE from previous year's band fees).

Once you have completed both sides of the "Earning Your Uniform Form," you may return it to Mr. McClain. This signifies that you have earned the right to don the uniform of the North Mesquite Big Blue Band. Students who do NOT complete this task by the appointed date prior to each game will attend that game in their band polo shirt and khaki pants (complying with the MISD Dress Code). Students who do not complete this task by the 4th week of school will be removed from the band program and may not return.

DO NOT LOSE YOUR PASSOFF SHEET FORM. IF YOU DO, YOU WILL HAVE TO BEGIN ALL OVER AGAIN IN THE PROCESS!!!

Earning your uniform is a matter of PRIDE in our organization. Each of our 450 uniforms was handmade over the period of hundreds, if not thousands, of hours. **It is not just another piece of clothing.** We honor those who lovingly crafted them for performance as well as those who donned it before you by going through the process of each member earning their right to wear it before each and every season.

Members that you see wearing our uniform have earned the right to march as a part of the Big Blue Band. This shows their hard work and dedication to constantly strive for the highest level of personal performance.

CONCERT BAND UNIFORMS

All concert bands wear formal concert attire at concerts and competitions. All boys are required to purchase their own tuxedo shirt (the school will provide the tuxedo). All girls are required to purchase their own formal black dress, which must be approved by Ms. Bruns or Ms. Hall. Specific guidelines regarding appropriate styles and lengths for the formal dresses and tux shirts will be discussed in early November. These uniforms will be worn during all concert band performances.

SPRING TRIPS

It is the policy of the Mesquite Independent School District that students will receive the opportunity to travel as a member of their instrumental music program every other year. These trips constitute an excellent performance opportunity for our band and are considered a major performance. This is a valuable opportunity for students to travel with friends and perform outside the state of Texas. Numerous fundraisers will be held throughout a trip year. Students are STRONGLY encouraged to utilize these events to help defray the costs of the trip. Students who are unable to attend the Spring Trip will be required to complete a make-up assignment comparable to 30% of that nine-weeks grade. In addition, these trips are a reward for hard work and dedication throughout the year. **Any student who is ineligible to perform in U.I.L. Concert/Sightreading contest (or Spring Festival) or UIL Marching Contest WILL NOT be allowed to attend the Spring Trip.**

WWW.GOBIGBLUEBAND.COM

WWW.GOBIGBLUEBAND.COM is the official home of the Big Blue Band on the web! Students and parents should check the website OFTEN for current information and updated handouts. Every handout that you receive in class is placed on our website for you and your family to have immediate access to additional copies. Also, check the *UPDATES* page often to find reminders of changes to the schedule, departure times for upcoming events, maps to performances, and SO MUCH MORE!

Occasionally student names and pictures are displayed via the band's social media outlets to recognize academic and musical achievements. Your guardian's signature on the *Handbook Acknowledgment Form* signifies their consent to this policy. Parents who do not want their students displayed should contact Mr. Elwell and notate this request on their *Handbook Acknowledgment Form*.

REMIND, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter

The Big Blue Band can also be found on Remind, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. Remind is a free text-based service that acts as a one-way text conversation. We use this service to offer last-minute reminders, updates, changes, etc. in real time. The band staff will provide you information on joining our Remind feeds at the annual summer meetings in August. Additionally, you can find the Big Blue Band on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. Our official accounts are: www.Facebook.com/BigBlueBand, Instagram/Twitter/Snapchat: @BigBlueBand. Please "Like"/Follow us today to receive updates and entertainment via Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. The accounts listed above are the **ONLY AUTHORIZED SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS OF THE BIG BLUE BAND**. The Big Blue Band DOES NOT authorize or monitor creation or usage of additional accounts and therefore cannot be responsible for those accounts or their content. Signing the Handbook Acknowledgement Form indicates consent to use these services.

CONCLUSION

This document is meant to guide the decision-making process of students, parents, and directors of the Big Blue Band. It is not, however, designed to be an all-inclusive list of rules and regulations. It is impossible to discuss each and every scenario that could face our band. The directors will use their best judgment to evaluate and interpret each situation and make decisions that are in the best interest of the Big Blue Band and its membership. By signing the attached forms, you agree to uphold the rules and responsibilities of a Big Blue Band member to the best of your ability. Please remember that the purpose of a handbook is to provide information and create a framework within which important decisions can be made. Diligent adherence to these ideals will allow our program to continue to prosper. Thanks in advance for your dedication to our program.

FORMS TO BE RETURNED

Please return the following attached forms to Mr. Elwell by **Friday, August 18:**

- **U.I.L. 8-Hour Rule Acknowledgment Form (new members only)**
- **Activity Release Form/Field Trip Permit** (notarized—there will be a Notary Public available free of charge on Thursday, August 3, 2023, at the Parent meeting).
- **Handbook/Fee Acknowledgment Form**

All forms must be completed and returned before your student will be allowed to attend performances with the band.