



# George West High School Band Handbook

2022 – 2023

Ella Lowrance – Head Band Director

[elowrance@gwisd.us](mailto:elowrance@gwisd.us)

(361) 449-1914 ext. 1026

Angie Villarreal – Assistant Band Director

[avillarreal@gwisd.us](mailto:avillarreal@gwisd.us)

(361) 449-1914 ext. 1079

George West ISD  
913 Houston Street  
George West, TX 78022

## The Band's Goal

Here at George West ISD we believe that music can play a pivotal role in a student's life. Music has the ability to open up countless opportunities students hadn't thought achievable, it can broaden perspective, and teaches teamwork and responsibility. We aim to show these to our students and to boost their confidence moving forward.

Band is a demanding and competitive program. Students will be expected to compete against people from around the state, both individually and as a group. Because of this, accountability and responsibility are vital, and students will be held to a high expectation for this. Playing and chair tests will be frequent and individual attention and feedback will be given.

Because of the competitive spirit of band, there may be instances where students are dropped to a lower chair in their section, or didn't get a spot in the competition they competed in. We want to emphasize that these and mistakes made during performances do not define a student. Mistakes are normal and common, it's how we learn from them and grow that defines us. This program's goal is to instill this mindset and in doing so boosting students' confidence and opening them up to new opportunities.

## Discipline Policy

Rules for band are as follows:

**1. Always be courteous and respectful of parents, directors, staff, and fellow students.**

The band is a team, and a team can't be at their best when there's conflict between teammates. What we say and do can affect others far more than we consider and can even directly affect the morale of the entire band.

**2. Respect the equipment and items of the band hall.**

There wouldn't be a band program without the band hall and its available resources. Repairs and replacements take valuable time and money, and if too many items from the band hall are damaged beyond use, the program will be *heavily* hit, effecting all students and the schools.

**3. Come to class ready for rehearsal.**

Like with any other class in school, it is unacceptable to show up without the materials needed for the day. Students will typically need a pencil, their functioning instrument, and their music. If a student lacks these, alternate worksheets will be available for a replacement daily grade. However, too many alternate worksheets will progress to further disciplinary action.

**4. Absolutely NO food or drinks are allowed in the band hall (except water bottles).**

Food and drinks are detrimental to instruments. There are many occasions where crumbs and drips of a student's snack accumulates and either damages the instrument, brings ants into the instrument's case, or both.

Order of disciplinary action:

- Verbal warning
- Second verbal warning
- Student conference
- Parent conference
- Office referral
- Principal's office

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Attendance**

Attendance plays a major role in your grade. Band is a performance/participation based course. Attendance for rehearsals and performances are mandatory. Only those with excused absences may miss any of these, and even then those will have to be made up at a later date. When performance dates are given, plan accordingly.

Excused absences include:

- Illness with a doctor's note (or an absence from school)
- Family emergencies verified by family
- Approved academic or extra-curricular conflicts (with notice)
- Religious observances (with notice)

Communication with the director is VITAL for absences **and must be given a week in advance, and no less than one day**. If the director is informed of an absence within less than 24 hours there is no guarantee it will be excused.

Email is the preferred method of contact.

### **Tardies**

Like with absences, the directors must be notified over tardies preferably within 24 hours before rehearsal. In the case of sudden incidents, let the director know as soon as possible. Notifications minutes before class starts will no guarantee an excused tardy.

High school band is first period. Attendance is taken during announcements. Students will be expected to have their instrument put together and music out in the correct order as announcements are being made. Failure to do so will result in a tardy.

## **Performance Attendance**

In any performing arts course, a performance is the culmination of weeks and/or months of learning. Because concerts are the final step in this educational process, it is essential that students fully participate in all performances.

Students receive a grade for each concert. Full participation in the concert results in the student receiving full credit. If a student misses a concert, not only will he or she have missed an educational experience that cannot be replaced or made up, they will have to make up the grade via written exam.

## **UIL Concert and Sightreading**

UIL Concert and Sightreading is an evaluation that serves as the STAAR test for band. It is absolutely mandatory that students attend this.

Because of the recent rule update that considers this an evaluation, students do not need to be **academically eligible** in order to go, but they must still fall within the **other forms of eligibility (tardies and absences, district rulings, etc.)**.

## **Instrument and Item Policy**

### **Music Stores and Instrument Purchases**

It is highly encouraged for a student to purchase their own instrument for band. There are two stores we work with that offer a rent-to-own payment option where parents may rent one of their instruments for a monthly payment (price depends on the instrument) until it is fully paid for. If the student is no longer in band or does not want the instrument for any reason, parents may contact the music store to stop payment and return the instrument.

These music stores are:

South Texas Music Mart: (361) 993-7866

Melhart Music: (956) 682-6147

Both stores come to the school weekly to drop off music supplies or instrument repairs. If you have purchased an instrument and it needs items (reeds, oil, cleaning kit, etc.) or repairs, contact the directors so they may give it to the representatives. Personal instrument repairs will not be paid for by the school.

Lockers are checked out to students with personal instruments to store in the band hall if preferred.

### **Instrument Rentals**

In the case that a student is unable to obtain an instrument of their own, the school has a limited stock of instruments that they may loan out. The directors will provide a form for the student and

parent to sign before an instrument can be theirs. This contract will leave the student responsible for the instrument—**if the instrument is damaged to the point of being unplayable, the student and parent will be financially responsible for repairs or replacement.**

Lockers are checked out to rented instruments to store in the band hall if preferred.

Some instruments such as alto saxophones, baritones, and clarinets are limited and may be unavailable for a student to check out so that it can be shared between all bands. These instruments are sanitized between classes. Students are expected to maintain these instruments when they have them and are responsible for them if they are damaged when with them.

### **Items**

Every instrument needs certain items to function. Brass needs valve oil and woodwinds need reeds. South Texas Music Mart and Melhart Music both come down weekly to provide these supplies. Students are able to buy their own, or may use the ones available at the band hall for shared use (except for reeds).

Saxophone and clarinet players are heavily encouraged to have at least two reeds on them at all times in the event that one breaks. The directors will have individual reeds available for 2 dollars each.

### **Grading Policy**

Grades are split into major and minor percentages throughout the semester. Students will be graded accordingly.

#### **Attendance (minor)**

When even one person is missing the entire band is impacted. **This includes concert and contest performances.** If unable to attend a concert, the student will receive an alternate written exam.

#### **Participation (major)**

Active participation means more than just sitting in a chair. In order to be counted as participating you must be actively listening to instructions and playing your instrument with your peers.

#### **Tests (minor)**

There are several tests throughout the semester:

Playing/Chair Tests – Always told in advance so students have time to practice. Students will be given a phrase of music to perform for the directors, deciding the order of the section. Students are not graded on quality of how they play, **but if they play to the end.**

Pencil/Reed Check – Students are expected to have their pencils and reeds at the ready for class. At random times the directors will check by calling for a check.

Concerts – Concerts serve as a final for band. If a student is unable to attend, they will take an alternate written exam.

## **Private Lessons and Band Hall**

The band hall is open after school for an hour for students that would either like to practice on their own or with help.

### **Student Leadership**

Students grade eight and above may teach lessons to the beginner band students or any in band that need help with a part. This encourages a mentorship relationship that fosters growth and acceptance among students. Student leaders that teach lessons may also use this as volunteer hours.

### **Private Lessons**

The directors will be around to help work with students individually, though their time will be split compared to the time student leaders can give.

Private lessons information with professional musicians can be provided upon request, but will have to be paid for by the parents/guardians.

### **Band Hall**

If a student would prefer practicing on their own, the band hall will be available for up to an hour after school. Practice rooms are also open for students to use.

The band hall must be respected by those that use it. **Damage to band hall property will result in the student being financially responsible.**

## **Band Booster Club**

Our band is fortunate to have a supportive organization comprised of parents and other members of the community. There are no dues. The group meets on a monthly basis during the school year. They support the band in many ways. It is highly encouraged that every adult family member be part of the booster club and regularly attend meetings.

### **Reward Program**

During both home varsity and non-varsity the band boosters run the concession stands at the football field. Those that come to help for a band student are given a credit of \$5 each that can be used for supplies/repairs/clothing from the music stores that stop by weekly. This credit can stack (i.e. a student's brother and grandmother working a concession stand would give them a \$10 credit).

Those interested in helping at the concession stands must have a food handling license. For help getting on or more information on the boosters in general, please contact Candi Repka at [crepka@gwbandboosters.com](mailto:crepka@gwbandboosters.com).

## Marching Policy

Upon entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade, all high school band students are required to join marching band. This will be enforced starting the 2023-2024 year—students not enrolled in marching band will not be allowed to join band.

## Athletics and Physicals

Students that are in marching band are encouraged to join athletic programs if they are interested. They will still be expected to come to marching rehearsals, however if there are conflicts with athletic program schedules then it will be adjusted so they may be able to go to each practice a certain amount of times per week.

Physicals are **mandatory** for joining marching band and are needed every year. Please let one of the directors know if there is one on file already with the athletic department.

## Letterman Jackets

Letter jackets can be earned through the band program either through the years or participation in the program. It works as a point system as below:

Four Years in High School Band – 30	Class 2 Solo – Division 1 Rating – 10
All-Region Auditions – 5	Class 1 Solo – Division 1 Rating – 15
All-Region Band – 5	State Solo – Division 1 Rating – 30
Advance to Area – 10	Section Leader/Band Captain – 10
All-State Band – 30	Librarian/Loading/Uniform Crew – 10
UIL Solo and Ensemble Performance (Solo Only) – 5	Color Guard Captain – 10
Class 3 Solo – Division 1 Rating – 5	Drum Major – 30

A jacket may be ordered after a student has accumulated 30 points.  
All events must be done while in high school band.

## Important Dates

Please be sure to save these dates:

**August 29** – South Texas Music Mart Instrument Drive – 5:00 pm in the band hall

**September 24** – Odem Pre-UIL Marching Competition

**October 15** – Marching UIL Competition –AC Jones Stadium, Beeville

**October 22** – Area Marching Competition (if advancing from UIL) –AC Jones Stadium, Beeville

**November 29** – Middle School Woodwinds and Brass Region Auditions – West Oso HS

**December 3** – High School Region Auditions (and Middle School Percussion) – Alice HS

**December 9 and 10** – High School and Middle School All-Region Concert (for those that advance from the auditions) – TAMUK, Kingsville

**January 7** – Area Auditions (for those advancing from region auditions) – Alice HS

**February 23** – UIL Solo and Ensemble – Robstown HS

**April 5 and 6** – UIL Concert and Sightreading – Alice HS

Dates and times are subject to change.

Updates will always be communicated, though you can get them instantly through the Band App (free in the app store). It gives a calendar of events along with reminders and instant updates over schedule changes, attire, etc.

Use your phone to scan this code and join.



**George West ISD Band**