

2017-2018

Overton High School

Band Handbook



Director

Mr. Chase Christensen

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Students and Parents,

Welcome to an exciting year for the Overton band! While you have been enjoying a well-deserved summer break, I have been spending many hours preparing for your arrival back to school. I am eager to serve as your new band director, and I have worked closely with Mr. Brumm this summer to ensure this transition is as smooth as possible for everyone involved. I take very seriously my new responsibilities, and I hold myself and my students to high levels of expectation at all times. So, here are my promises to you:

My mission as band director at Overton Public Schools is to create and maintain a supportive atmosphere in which all participants are able to experience various styles of music, build meaningful relationships with one another, share their creativity, and grow as humans, students, and artists. To realize that mission, I've challenged myself with ten objectives to meet during the school year. These objectives are to:

1. Instill in students a respect for and appreciation of the creative process of music-making and performance preparation.
2. Provide students with support and opportunities to develop their creative potential inside and outside of the classroom.
3. Expose students to a variety of musical styles from a variety of world cultures through performance and listening.
4. Foster an environment in which students and teachers are equal contributors to the performance of a musical product.
5. Cultivate an atmosphere in which participants hold each other accountable for their responsibilities to the group.
6. Support students who struggle to meet the musical, academic, and social demands of the group.
7. Facilitate the growth and development of student leadership in a variety of roles.
8. Encourage teamwork, school pride, group identity, and tradition.
9. Respond appropriately to changes in student needs, interests, goals, and motivation.
10. Establish a network of symbiotic relationships between teachers, students, parents, administrators, and the community.

That's a lot for me to stay on top of in my first year as a teacher, but I am committed to providing all of you with a worthwhile experience. **In return**, I ask for your open-mindedness about new opportunities, your forgiveness when I (undoubtedly) make a mistake here or there, and your eager participation. You have signed up for band for a reason, and hopefully that reason is to make good music with good people.

Just like any sport or activity, when you sign up for band, you are making a commitment to something larger than yourself, and as a result, people are counting on you: classmates, teachers, family, athletes, the community. This handbook is full of useful information that, if adhered to, will allow you to be there for all of the people who need you to share your music with them. I hope this handbook will not be too boring, but all of the information is important, so **please read it!** Not only will you gain an understanding of what my expectations are, you'll also be well-prepared for the school year. I am so excited to get started! Please contact me with any questions or concerns you have. Let's have a great year!

Mr. Chase Christensen

The Overton High School Band takes many forms during the school year, and members **are required** to participate in all of them (with the exception of Jazz Band). **Attendance is required at all performances.**

OVERVIEW

For the first quarter, students will participate in **Marching Band**. As a part of this ensemble, students will find themselves traveling all over central Nebraska performing for potentially thousands of people by marching in parades. **This year, the marching band will attend three:**

1. Indian Marching Festival (Ogallala) Saturday, September 30, all day
2. Harvest of Harmony Parade (Grand Island) Saturday, October 7, all day
3. Minden Bandfest (Minden) Saturday, October 14, all day

As these dates near, more detailed information will be sent home. Parents are always invited to help set up, check uniforms, chaperone the bus, hand out water, and of course, cheer loud for the band!

During most of the school year, the high school band also functions as a **Pep Band** for home football, volleyball, and basketball games. After the first home football game, the high school pep band will be joined by the 7th/8th grade bands, since so many of our high schoolers might actually be playing in the game! In the event of post-season eligibility, the pep band may travel to away playoff and championship games. Please see the detailed performance schedule at the end of this handbook for pep band dates and times.

The most important part of a student's school band experience is their participation in **Concert Band**. The Overton High School Concert Band will perform at the following concerts:

1. 7-12 Winter Concert Monday, December 18, 7:00pm
2. FKC Quint Band (at SEM) Thursday, February 8, all-day (evening concert)
3. Spring Music Showcase Saturday, February 24, evening
4. FKC Music Contest (at Eustis-Farnam) Wednesday, March 21, ???
5. Spring Concert Thursday, April 26, 7:00pm

During the spring semester, students will be given the opportunity to study solo performance literature, or form a small chamber group (duet, trio, quartet, etc.). These groups can perform at the FKC Music Contest and may also be featured at school concerts.

On November 1, the **Jazz Band** will begin rehearsal at 7:15am in the music room. The jazz band is an optional performance group for students in grades 9-12. Jazz band students must participate in 9-12 band unless there is a confirmed class conflict. There will be no audition required to be member of the jazz band. Traditionally, jazz bands consist of saxophones, trumpets, trombones, guitar, bass, piano, and percussion. However, exceptions to this rule are common and welcome. Students who sign up for jazz band must commit to being a member for the entire school year. The jazz band will perform at the Winter Concert, the Spring Music Showcase, and the Spring Concert, with the possibility of additional performances.

Periodically throughout the school year, area schools, colleges, and universities will invite students to submit audition recordings to perform in honor bands, including All-State. These are optional, but highly motivated students should audition. In most cases, there is an audition fee, or a participation fee only if the student is selected. **As an incentive to represent our school at these events, every attempt will be made by the school to cover these fees.** If the school does cover fees, the student will be expected to prepare well for the audition, and if selected, will commit to attending and performing with the honor band.

As you can see, there is no shortage of performance opportunities for Overton band members. As mentioned, if students register for band, they will be required to participate in all aspects of its performance. This contributes to a well-rounded musical education, and though they may favor some aspects over others, they will reap the benefits if they participate with an open mind and a positive attitude.

General Rules

1. Each student will be present and on time to all rehearsals and required performances.
2. Each student is responsible for having the supplies they need for all rehearsals and performances. This includes having their instrument, sheet music, uniform, accessories, etc. in working condition.
3. Each student will treat all other students, teachers, staff, community members, and equipment with respect. **Overton band members are representatives of the school at all times.**
4. Each student is responsible for their own actions inside and outside of the classroom.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance

Punctual attendance is required at all rehearsals and performances. Upon receipt of this handbook and detailed performance schedule, students and parents are assumed to have been sufficiently informed of their responsibilities to the group. Students who are unable to attend a scheduled performance for any reason must notify the director as far in advance of the performance as possible. Because band is both a curricular *and* extra-curricular activity, attendance guidelines mirror those of both Section 2 and Section 6 of the Overton Middle & High School Student-Parent Handbook (pp. 21-24, 67).

Absences will be excused if one of the following situations is confirmed with the director by a parent/guardian (via phone, email, or signed note):

- Illness of the student
- Death or serious illness of the student's family member
- Attending a funeral or wedding
- Attending an event required by a conflicting activity of which the student is an eligible member
- Other reasonable circumstances on a case-by-case basis

Students who miss a scheduled performance for any reason may be required to complete an alternate assignment to prevent their grade from suffering.

The high school band rehearses every school day during 1st period, which begins at **8:05am**. Students who are not in the room, with their instrument, music, stand, and chair ready to go, **will be counted tardy**. On the **fifth** tardy during the course of a semester, the student will be issued a detention for that and every tardy thereafter. The music room will be open as early as 7:45am every day (7:00am on days in which the jazz band rehearses).

Beginning on November 1, every Wednesday, the jazz band will rehearse at 7:15am in the music room. Students will be counted tardy to jazz band if they are not in the room and ready to begin rehearsal at 7:15am. On the **third** tardy during the course of a semester, the student risks removal from jazz band for the rest of the semester.

Supplies

It is the philosophy of the director and the school that financial need should not preclude a student from participating in band. To that end, the school has purchased and maintains in good repair several instruments which are made available to students for whom renting or purchasing their own instrument is not a viable option. Please contact the director for more information about using a school instrument.

The school keeps on hand critical supplies such as reeds (\$3.00) and valve oil (\$5.00), which can be purchased at a discounted rate. Please seek out the professionals at Yandas Music & Pro Audio in Kearney for premium supplies and cleaning equipment. If your personal instrument needs a repair, the director is able to take instruments to and from Kearney for you, and may be able to obtain a discounted school rate.

Grades are a tool for students, teachers, and parents to track learning over time as it relates to specific, measurable skills. In band, learning is not as simple as how many notes were “right” and how many were “wrong.” Learning in band is not easily measurable, because band directors look for things like participation, effort, responsibility, respect, engagement, and growth. Students’ grades in band will reflect these things.

Growth as a *technician* (can you play the darn notes fast enough/high enough/loud enough/soft enough) is easily measurable, and it is critically important. **Four times per semester**, students will be assessed on their technical ability, by playing for the director a passage of music designed to challenge them in all the ways a musician can expect to be challenged. Students will be given the music and a rubric ahead of time.

To be successful musicians, students must also know about the language of music. Written music consists of multilingual vocabulary, graphic symbols, lines pointing in all directions, funny shapes, and confusing squiggles. In class, students will learn how to read and understand these, and **every two weeks**, they will be given a quiz to check for this understanding. These quizzes will be different each time, and hopefully quick, painless, and even fun.

GRADING

The band’s performances at large events such as concerts and parades are the most important “assessments” of the year. These performances are the culmination of daily preparation and practice. As such, attendance at these performances is reflected in the students’ grades. Unexcused absences will result in a forfeiture of all points from a performance. Students with an excused absence may be required to complete an assignment to earn back their points.

Pep band performances are an important part of Overton’s school culture and pride. All 9-12 band students are required to attend all pep band performances unless they have an excused absence. Yes, playing on the team is an excused absence, and no, student athletes will not have their grades penalized for not playing pep band for a game they should be on the field/court for.

Finally, a student’s daily participation and effort level has a direct impact on the artistry of their performances and the quality of their learning. Small homework assignments may be assigned periodically to check for understanding on specific topics. Because these two areas are so crucial to the daily functioning of this ensemble, they have been grouped together. This can be the most subjective of grading areas, so it is recommended that students make it painfully obvious that they are participating and contributing positively to the culture of the band. This does not require being a great player – it requires having a great attitude!

Each of these components figures into a student’s cumulative grade, and are weighted as follows:

Playing Tests (Technique)	10%
Quizzes (Theory)	10%
Concerts/Performances	30%
Pep Bands	25%
<u>Daily Participation/Homework</u>	<u>25%</u>
Total	100%

Concert Attire

For concert band and jazz band performances, students are required to wear **all black**. In the “biz” this is often called “concert black,” and refers to (for gents) black dress pants/slacks, black dress socks, black dress shoes, and a black collared shirt (tie optional); and for ladies, black dress pants and black shirt/blouse, or a black dress if it **covers the knees when sitting**, and black dress shoes. Please be aware that the school dress code will apply to all concert attire, and students in violation of the dress code will be asked to change, or will not be allowed to perform with the ensemble. Parents or students should contact the director if purchasing black dress clothes presents a financial hardship.

Uniforms

The school has invested thousands of dollars in the band program by purchasing high-quality uniforms. Students in grades 9-12 will be fitted for uniforms at the beginning of the school year. The uniform will be worn at all competition and festival performances. Individual students who participate in honor bands or All-State may be required to wear their uniform to these performances as well. Your pride in the Overton Band program (or lack thereof) is displayed in the way you wear your uniform and how you treat it.

- All parts of the uniform are to be worn together (you wear it all, or you wear none of it).
- Shakos (the band hat) may be removed, but must be carried upright in the right hand. Shakos should never be worn backwards or carried by the chin strap. Do not use an upside-down shako as a bucket to put things in!
- When in uniform, no jewelry is to be worn. This includes earrings, necklaces, bracelets, watches, or rings.
 - Hair is not allowed to touch the collar of the uniform. A sleeve may be used to hold long hair up inside the shako.
- No makeup is to be worn – except in the case of colorguard members and drum majorettes.
- Under the uniform, students are required to wear a short-sleeved t-shirt (preferably an Overton t-shirt), athletic shorts, and calf-length black dress socks. Long sleeved shirts are permitted if the sleeves are not visible when the arms are in playing position. Please do not wear bulky clothing underneath the uniform, including denim, cargo shorts, sweatshirts, etc.
- Black marching shoes are a requirement with the uniform.
- No buttons or pins are to be worn on the uniform.
- When in uniform, all jacket buttons and the neck hook must be fastened.

ATTIRE

Lettering in Band

Highly motivated and active students in the band are awarded letters for going **above and beyond** the minimum activity requirements. Students are eligible to letter in band each year of high school, and will be awarded bars every year after their first year. To letter, a student must earn **1000 points** in a given school year, by completing tasks on this list. If a student wishes to receive lettering points for an activity not on this list, please approach the director.

Audition for an honor band	100pts each
Participate in an honor band	200pts each
Perform a solo/ensemble piece at contest	200pts
Participate in jazz band (all year)	400pts
Perform for the community	100pts each
Attend a concert (w/ program)	50pts each
Take private lessons (per semester)	200pts
Participate in an instrumental camp	300pts each
Compose a piece (>2 min.) and share with class	200pts each
Other activities with approval of director	???

The Overton Pep Band will play at all home football, volleyball, and basketball games. For that reason, pep band is by far the most time-consuming of activities for Overton band members. In an effort to make these events fun and not tiring, performance duties will be fairly light. The Overton band's presence at school athletic events is primarily to support fellow Eagles and provide entertainment. **After Sept. 1, all 7th and 8th grade band members will be required to attend pep bands** to bolster the sound and fill gaps left by high school students who are competing. Guidelines and procedures for each sport's pep band are slightly different, so they are listed below.

Football Pep Band

The football pep band will play for the first half of every football game, through halftime, and for the start of the 3rd quarter. After the football team has taken the field for the second half, the band will return to the school to put instruments away, at which point they will be dismissed. All students are encouraged to return to the game to support the team for the second half, but this is not required. Additionally:

- **Be aware of what is happening in the game, and be ready to play at all times.** The band will play for every score, between the 1st and 2nd quarters, and during halftime.
- **Instruments are not to be played until the director begins a piece** – no noodling!
- **Students must have permission to leave the stands to get food or use the restroom.** Only two people are allowed to leave at the same time, and they may not both be from the same section.
- Being allowed to have food during the game is a privilege which can be revoked if abused.
- **Be ready to play at all times!**
- Always be attentive to the director and listen for which piece to play next. If students begin talking immediately after a piece finishes, they will not be able to hear the director.
- No matter the score, **cheer loudly for your Eagles!**
- **Be ready to play at all times!**

Volleyball Pep Band

At home volleyball games, the band will play during warm-ups prior to the start of the match, as well as in between sets. Students must ask permission to leave the stands during the course of the match, and only two will be allowed to leave at the same time. These students may not be from the same section. Instruments are not to be played until the director begins a piece.

During the game, no matter the score, **cheer loudly for your Eagles!**

Basketball Pep Band

The basketball pep band will play during warm-ups for both the girls' and boys' varsity home games. Guidelines are as follows:

- After tip-off of the first game, students are allowed to sit anywhere they would like **as long as it is in the gym.** This is because you must be able to see the scoreboard at all times.
- Students are required to be back in their spots with instruments/music ready to play **by 2 minutes remaining in the first game.**
- After tip-off of the second game, all band members will return all equipment to the music room, at which point they will be dismissed. All students are encouraged to return to the game to support the team, but this is not required.
- No matter the score, **cheer loudly for your Eagles!**

If any team makes conference, district, or state playoffs/championships, the band may be asked to travel to these games and play. These games will be required, but bonus points will be awarded. These dates are on the calendar now, so students and parents should make sure that there are no potential conflicts.

Opportunities for Parents

- Encourage your children to set aside time to practice their instrument (60+ min. a week).
- Advertise band concerts and other upcoming music events.
- Participate in fundraisers.
- Ensure that your child's instrument is in good working condition (get a yearly checkup).
- Become an active member of the Overton Music Boosters.
- Volunteer to help with parades, set-up, tear-down, etc.
- Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/overtonband
- Be proud of the Overton Band Program and brag about what your children are a part of.
- Contact Mr. Christensen with any questions or concerns.
- Contact Mr. Christensen with any suggestions or ideas you have to help.

Contacting the Director

I am generally very available, and no concern or question is too small to bring to me. As I mentioned in my welcome letter, this is my first year of teaching, so undoubtedly, I have a lot to learn from both students and parents. Your questions often help me re-think a situation or consider something I haven't previously considered. I will always engage in positive dialogue with students and parents, in an effort to serve all.

The best way for students and parents to get a hold of me is always through email. I will try to respond as quickly as possible, even if it is just to let you know I have received your message. I also have a Google Voice phone number which I can use to receive calls and text messages, and I can be reached at the music office phone as well. I can be contacted by messaging the Overton Band Facebook page, but I will not accept private messages to my personal Facebook page, and I will not add students or parents as Facebook friends until the student has graduated. I may use Remind 101 or a similar communication tool – more information on that will be communicated at a later date.

Mr. Chase Christensen
chase.christensen@overtoneagles.org
School: 308.987.2424 x 127
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**Please sign and return this handbook form to Mr. Christensen by 4:00pm on
Friday, August 25.**

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the guidelines in the band handbook. I agree to adhere to the policies and guidelines set forth in this handbook, and I agree to the consequences for failing to adhere to those policies and guidelines.

AGREEMENT

Student Name (print): _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____