

2006-2007

POWHATAN BANDS AND ENSEMBLES

Powhatan High School

Band Handbook

Welcome to the Powhatan Bands program

You've chosen to be a part of Virginia's most inventive and creative instrumental music department

Welcome to the Powhatan Bands program. This program consists of concert bands, marching band, stage ensembles, concert percussion ensembles, indoor guard, winter percussion, and various solo and small ensemble opportunities. This handbook outlines many of the policies and procedures of the Powhatan Bands and Ensembles (henceforth to be referred to as the Program). As with any handbook, policies may be added, deleted, or altered as necessary by the director, with advance notice to the members. Anything not specifically covered in this handbook will be handled on an individual basis.

About the Program

The Program exists to pursue musical and educational excellence in each student throughout his high school experience, with a primary focus on performance technique and aesthetic education. In addition, the band program is designed to strengthen critical thinking, language processing skills, mathematical-logical skills, fine motor development, historical relationships, and relationships with self and others. In order to achieve desired qualities, each student will be expected to put individual effort toward the collective goal. Each student will be charged with challenges relative to his current skill level, and as a result required to engage in hours of practice for growth and development. This is necessary to achieve the highest levels of excellence and precision, build stamina and endurance, and to develop a unified picture. Through the musical and visual arts, it is hoped that to each student a richer life will be given.

School Policy

During any time the Program is active (practice, performance, travel, etc.), all policies of the PHS Student Handbook and the PHS Code of Conduct are in force. This is also regardless of location. Any and all violations will be reported.

Attendance

Absences of convenience are not excusable (i.e. shopping). Absences for sickness are only excused if the student is absent for the school day. If a student attends school for a portion of the day, and must leave early due to illness or emergency, then that student must follow procedure for approval listed below.

All other absences/tardies are only excused if they are pre-approved by the director only, and only by the appropriate procedure.

Procedure for approving absences/tardies

To approve an absence/tardy, the student must give acceptable reason to the director in person and in writing beforehand. Both of these points must be satisfied in order for an absence to be considered for approval (this includes any planned absences from the classroom, as well). Each issue will be handled on an individual basis. We request appointments that must be made after school be scheduled around practice if possible. If this is not possible, then please check to make sure the student is not missing a vital rehearsal (i.e. the day before competition). *Not having a ride is NOT an excuse for missed rehearsal.*

Picking up your child from practice early out of convenience (i.e. coming home earlier than usual) is not acceptable and will be treated as an unexcused absence for your child. **NOTE: Please make arrangements to have your child picked up about fifteen minutes after the scheduled end of practice.** The director and staff must remain until all students are gone.

There are times when students may wish to be involved in an activity not a part of the Program. On occasion, there may be conflicts of time in regard to practice. Students with this difficulty may request excused absence on a limited basis. Every application of this nature will be dealt with on an individual basis. No performances may ever be missed for another activity.

Any unexcused absence or tardy may result in a student not being able to participate in an event, subsequent grade reflection, or removal from the Program.

A tentative schedule of events will be issued at the earliest available time.

Expense to the Member

Every year, it is necessary for each student to secure certain items for participation. This will vary according to which aspect of the Program a student joins.

Any student involved in concert bands or concert percussion ensemble will be required to own or have free access to a metronome and a tape recording device of some sort. It is highly encouraged, though not required, that each concert student be enrolled in private lessons. The director can assist with arrangements, if necessary.

Any student involved in the marching band will be required to participate in pre-season rehearsal. This is a summer intensive designed to prepare the fall show for competition. There is a marching band fee associated with this activity.

Typically, each marching/indoor student will be responsible for his/her own footwear. Sometimes, a student can secure used apparel from members who have outgrown items or have graduated. Other incidental items will arise season to season. A uniform of some sort will be issued to most students involved in the Program. Each student is responsible for the upkeep and whereabouts of this uniform, and to always have it hung and stored properly. Uniform care and washing instructions will be issued with the uniform; this is also student responsibility. Any mistreatment of the uniform will be handled with appropriate disciplinary

action as dealt with in the student handbook. Typically, guard members may have to purchase a leotard/unitard season to season.

Any student in the rifle/sabre line may be responsible for securing his/her own weapon.

Each student is responsible for the care and maintenance of the equipment he/she uses regardless of ownership. All school-owned equipment may be signed out on bond, and at the end of the year/season, all equipment will be re-inspected and turned in. Only at that time will the student be relieved of any responsibility regarding what is outlined in the bonding contract and/or school policies. Mistreatment will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Note to Parents

Do not take ANY instrument to a repair shop without bringing that instrument to the director first. Often, the director can make repairs himself. Also, certain times are very inconvenient for a student to be without anything. Please, always check first.

Fundraising and Student Accounts

If you don't want to write a check out of your own personal account, **then fundraise.** (otherwise, you're welcome to pay out of your own pocket). The band boosters have a few standing fundraisers that bring in the bulk of our capital. We also may carry on additional fundraisers throughout the year for various groups. We work hard to avoid selling things as fundraisers so our students can focus on learning (and we can avoid pushing \$28 tins of chocolate turtles on our friends and relatives).

It is vitally important that each parent help out in some way throughout the year to aid the program, as well as build up money in student accounts. There is **no way** individual families can pay for the amount of money the booster organization spends on each student.

CREDITS: Football concession will credit your account \$10.00. As you know, halftime is the busiest time of the evening. Although we realize how much you want to see your kids performing, we cannot give full credit for those of you who leave concession during halftime. The maximum amount of credits per football game is three per band member.

Junior Varsity Games will credit your account \$10.00. These are fairly easy nights, with slim crowds and an early evening. Again, the maximum amount of credits per football game is three per band member.

Bingo credits are divided monthly. We add the total amount sold in concession at Bingo, and divide this by the number of credits per month. For every member of your family/friends it represents one credit with a cap of three credits allowed per night per band member. This is the fastest way to build up your student account as it averages \$18.00 per credit for most months, which is normally a low estimate.

Depending on the event, the boosters have authorized the transfer of some money into individual accounts for working some annually hosted events.

DEDUCTIONS: Student Accounts may be used for all band and indoor fees, private lessons, instrument repairs, instrument rentals, equipment, theory books, uniform accessories, and other things directly related to your child's music education.

RULES: You must have the total amount available in your student account. We cannot issue credit extensions or allow a student account to go below zero, as these accounts are not available to be used in this way. If you do not have the funds in your account, the balance must be paid with cash or check (as applicable) to cover the expenses.

We cannot issue personal reimbursements from this account. For instrument rentals or repairs, please get the invoice to the PBB treasurer. The treasurer will pay it straight from the student account and record the deduction.

Due to the fact that we cannot do personal reimbursements from this account, we cannot refund any money earned when your student graduates. You may "will" an account to an upcoming band student **family member** by putting this in writing to the treasurer before graduation.

For any deductions for band fees, uniforms, books, and activities, please send a note with your student stating what is to be deducted. Notes as well as payments are to be put in the drop-box in the band office.

We have received envelopes from the box with cash and no name as to the student covering the expense. Please send a check whenever possible as it reduces the amount of confusion and mystery associated with payments received. As you can imagine, we do have quite a number of students in the band program, and you should know that we have no choice but to put any monies received with no name attached in the general fund as a donation.

**As a footnote, we need each and every one of you to pitch in and help with all the various duties in order to run this organization efficiently. The more parent involvement we have, the easier it is on all of us as far as time and commitment.

Being a Booster

Parents, if you have a student involved in any portion of the Program, then you are a booster for that whole year. A member in good standing, however, does not necessarily have a student in the Program. "A member in good standing constitutes a member who has been active in any of the ongoing activities of the [Powhatan Bands and Ensembles], such as: regular attendance of PBB (Powhatan Band Booster) meetings; participated in a committee and/or fund-raisers." -- PBB Policies & Procedures

"The PBB supports and seeks to further the goals and objectives of [the Program] by:

1. establishing and overseeing fund-raising activities
2. maintaining equipment and uniforms
3. supply monetary needs as approved by the membership, such as: bus trips, band camp, staff, equipment, uniforms, etc."

-- PBB Policies & Procedures

The booster organization exists only because of dedicated parents and friends wishing to better the Program by selfless donations of time and effort. Without the PBB, the Program would be far less accommodating than it is. Many people in the past have given untold amounts of time so that we may today reap the benefits. All parents are encouraged to be active boosters in order to support the reason we are all here: your children. Parents, please understand that the role of the PBB as an organization is one of support for the common good of the Program. Although there may be times when each of you disagree with a program decision made by the director, neither the organization nor the meetings/activities are an outlet for venting individual disagreement or concern toward the Program or any classroom-related issue. As parents, each of you should feel free to schedule an appointment with the director to discuss Program concerns in relation to your child.

The Individual Programs

- **CONCERT BAND** Concert band is primarily a classroom ensemble. It has been divided in such a means as to facilitate appropriate development and challenge to each section. Because the concert band may be broken into sections within the school day, it is a responsibility of the band to occasionally gather together as one unit outside the regular school day. Also, because this is a classroom activity, no extra-curricular activity may interfere with this necessity. Unexcused absence from a classroom ensemble performance will be reflected in the nine-weeks grade. Further details will be in the class syllabus given out on the first day of classes.
- **WIND ENSEMBLE** Wind ensemble is primarily a classroom ensemble. This class will have all the responsibilities of concert band, plus higher-level music and technique for the more advanced students. This is a select ensemble chosen by the director.
- **JAZZ BAND** Jazz band is primarily a classroom ensemble. This class may also have some responsibilities for concert band, as well as full curricular studies in the jazz medium. Certain students, based on director approval, may not be required to participate in the concert portion of the class. Further details will be in the class syllabus given out on the first day of classes.
- **CONCERT PERCUSSION ENSEMBLES** These classes are to better challenge those students who are a part of the percussion section. All members of these classes will have additional responsibilities with the concert band and/or wind ensemble.
- **MUSIC THEORY** This is a college preparatory course designed to teach the high school student the advanced tenets and structure of music. Students enrolled are expected to have performance experience and a basic high-school level knowledge of music. This class should be supplementary to an educational performance outlet.
- **MARCHING BAND** Marching band involves volunteer members of all performance classes, plus students selected to participate in color guard. This co-curricular activity usually takes place outside the regular school day. Marching band members are responsible for attending all rehearsals, competitions, and performance events.

- **WINTERGUARD** Winterguard is an extra-curricular activity during the winter season used to showcase the colorguard within an organized competitive circuit. This winterguard is open for audition by students who have participated in the fall marching program.
- **WINTER PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE** This is a co-curricular activity during the winter season used to showcase the percussion within an organized competitive circuit. This ensemble is open for audition by students who are currently a part of any other Program performance group and participated in the fall marching program.
- **PRIVATE LESSONS** Powhatan is working to offer a wide variety of private lesson and studio ensembles for the 2006-2007 season. More information will be soon forthcoming.

Schedules of practices are posted on a seasonal basis.

More About the Program

Each student has the opportunity to participate in as many (or few) aspects of the Program as he/she is able. It is understood that a student may not always be able to function in an ensemble in the position in which he/she may first choose. It is also understood that, in pursuit of excellence for the common good, the director has the right to remove, redirect, or refer to administration any student not willing to put forth the effort necessary to uphold individual responsibilities. Also, some students may simply not be ready, for many reasons, to give the type of commitment or ability necessary for the ensemble in which he/she is a part. This, too, may result in the above actions being taken.

It is the policy of the Program that once a student commits to a program activity, that student has made the commitment until the annual conclusion of that specific activity. Any student withdrawing from an activity before it's natural annual conclusion may be forbidden from any further participation in any non-classroom Program activity for the duration of that child's enrollment at Powhatan High School. Parents, this also includes the premature removal of your child for any reason. Any exceptions to this rule are left solely to the discretion of the director.

It is certainly important that each child be successful in all areas of academic pursuits, and the director is interested and able to be a valuable tool in assisting where possible. Though the competitive performance ensembles are both aerobic and athletic, one must keep in mind that each season is *specifically designed* for the intentional inclusion of all chosen participants (unlike most sports) and no contingencies for substitutes are planned. Group integrity in the development of performance art is paramount and must be maintained at the highest levels for the sake of all individuals participating.

There is no GPA rule for participation in band programs because:

- the core activities of the Program are already academic classes incorporated into the school day for credit towards graduation and
- the non-classroom activities are a direct extension of the academic classes and are taught in a comparable manner with full inclusion.

It is therefore highly recommended that parents avoid using participation in Program activities as a contingent action or threat for affecting behavioral change in their children. Ultimately such usage, particularly during adolescence, is self-defeating and devalues quality academic pursuits (furthermore, the director frowns greatly on his life-work being reduced to a bargaining chip for behavioral change). As a reminder of the importance of arts education, let us remember that we cannot relegate it to "second-class" status and then complain about the sad state of today's pop cultures and their effects on civilized society.

Keep In Touch

Communication is the key to a more functional and unified program. Parents (especially new Program parents) are encouraged to keep active communication with the director on the progress of their child; thus avoiding unnecessary problems. Also, the director may not be aware of an individual student's needs, problems, or concerns unless he is told by the student or parent. Often times, the director can be of great assistance in relation to academic and behavioral development. Therefore, to keep a solid band program, we all must communicate.

The Program maintains Web sites and an email mailing list for your benefit, and highly encourage you to go to the Web site and put your email address on the newsletter list. Go to www.powhatanbands.com and look on the left column below the navigation bar. Also, to support the program and get even more information through the Powhatan Band Boosters at www.powhatanbandboosters.com.

The Powhatan Bands and Ensembles sincerely hopes this handbook has been a help in understanding what we are all about. The Program director and the PHS administration work in conjunction with each other to ensure a program filled with educational opportunities for young minds seeking artistic growth, aesthetic development, technical expertise, grace in performance, and a strong understanding of the meaning of "commitment to excellence."

Scott Gordon, Director of Bands
School - 804.598.5715
scott.gordon@powhatan.k12.va.us

www.powhatanbands.com
www.powhatanbandboosters.com

2006 – 2007 Contract of Commitment

This is a token and reminder of the commitment needed by every student and parent. Understand that participation in any aspect of the Program is implied agreement to this contract. The following understandings and commitments are absolutely necessary to ensure a smooth program:

I (student and guardian) have read and understand all portions of the 2006-2007 PB&E Handbook.

I (student and guardian) understand Mr. Gordon's definition of seasonal commitment and will abide by such. Additionally, I (guardian) will actively pursue open communication with Mr. Gordon with unique situations as they relate to my child in plenty of time for all of us to work together, so we may facilitate the highest levels of success for my child.

I will attempt to attend all rehearsals. If it becomes necessary to miss a rehearsal, I will always let Mr. Gordon know in person and in writing beforehand of my reason for the absence. (Each will be handled on an individual basis. Everyone should remember that this is a team and everyone suffers when someone is missing. Too many absences may result in dismissal from the ensemble.)

I will attend all performances. (We do not have substitutes like sports teams do. Parents are also encouraged to attend in support of the students.) We request parents understand that, although every attempt will be made to arrive back to the school as scheduled from competitions/trips, we cannot always anticipate the exact time of finish of any event we attend.

I (student and guardian) understand that as a member of the band program, there are occurrences where students will be photographed or put on audio/video for various functions. These pictures or recordings will be used for educational growth as well as to help promote the band through various forms of media: our web site, presentations, or press releases, etc. Your student's last name will not be used in any identifying manner.

I will maintain good dietary habits during the year, never skipping meals, so as to be consistent in my ability to handle performance stresses.

I understand that I am responsible for the care, whereabouts, and daily maintenance of any equipment I use, whether mine or the school's, and may be financially responsible for any loss or damage I cause, intentionally or otherwise. I will be responsible for the upkeep, whereabouts, and cleaning of my uniform and may be responsible for any loss or damage I cause, intentional or otherwise.

I understand and agree to abide by the Program policies. I also agree that my conduct must be in accordance with school rules and band policy at rehearsals, in route to and at any events. I further understand that any and all violations will be reported.

Each student needs to give 100% commitment to the ensemble and remember to STRIVE TO BE THE VERY BEST YOU CAN BE!!!

After reading, please sign, date, and return to Mr. Gordon.

STUDENT

PARENT/GUARDIAN