

Yvonne A. Ewell
Townview Center

Modern Band Handbook

Devlin DeCutler, Director

Updated 8/17/18

Welcome to the Townview Music Department

Greetings to all students, parents, and friends! With your help, we look forward to another successful year of music making. I am excited about our program and its potential for the coming year.

Our school has a strong and long-standing commitment to excellence and the Townview Music Department can only thrive when we continue that commitment. The success of this program depends on the cooperation of **ALL** students and parents. Please understand that **EACH AND EVERY** member must claim personal responsibility for their actions. We are a team, and we must work as one. Together, we have the power to do great things!

It is with pleasure that I present this handbook to you in an effort to answer any questions you might have. The following pages provide an overview of the music program and address rules, expectations, and events. If you have any questions or concerns that are not addressed in the handbook, please feel free to contact me.

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Music Is...

(This is something given to me by another director.)

Music is a Science

It is precise, and it demands exact acoustics. A conductor's score is a chart, or graph, which indicates frequencies, intensities, volume changes, melody and harmony all at once and with the most exact control of time.

Music is Mathematics

It is rhythmically based on the subdivisions of time, which must be done instantaneously, and not worked out on paper.

Music is a Foreign Language

Most of the terms are in Italian, German, or French; and the notation is certainly not English, but rather a highly developed kind of shorthand that uses symbols to represent ideas.

Music is History

Music usually reflects the environment and times of its creation, often the country and/or racial feeling.

Music is Physical Education

It requires extraordinary coordination of fingers, hands, arms and facial muscles, in addition to controlling the abdominal muscles and the respiratory system, all of which responds to the sound the ears hears and the mind interprets.

Music is all these things, but most of all,

Music is Art

It allows a human being to take all of these dry, technically boring (but difficult) techniques and use them to create feeling and emotion. That is why your child should take music, not because we expect them to major in music, not because we expect them to sing all of their life, but—so they will be human, so they will recognize beauty, so they will be sensitive, so they will have more love, more compassion, more gentleness, more good—in short, more life.

Music allows the soul to sing!

Program Description

The Modern Band Program at Townview allows students to explore a wide range of musical styles and genres through guitar, bass guitar, keyboard, drums, and vocals. Very few schools offer a program like it. Whether you are entering as a novice or experienced musician, you are expected to practice daily and improve throughout the year.

Students will have the opportunity to use their own instruments or check out one from the school. Throughout the year, the Modern Band will participate in performances and workshops. These events are mandatory. A schedule of the year's events is available from Mr. DeCutler.

TOWNVIEW MUSIC CODE OF CONDUCT

Attendance Policy

A large portion of your grade in this course is based on your daily performance and participation. It is impossible to “make up” missed classes. Unexcused absences from class rehearsals, afternoon rehearsals, and concerts will **severely** lower your grade. Students with excessive absences may be asked to perform portions of their music individually for a grade. They must receive a passing grade on this assessment to perform in the concert.

Additional Rehearsals/Activities

Rehearsals are course requirements and are integral to our success. Students will be given at least two weeks notice for all extra rehearsals, sectionals and activities. Every effort will be made to minimize the amount of out-of-class time required.

Concerts

Concerts are the ultimate evaluation of many weeks of hard work and preparation. They are an opportunity to demonstrate students’ achievement, skill, and growth as musicians. It is imperative that students attend every concert. Concerts are a large portion of a student’s grade, and as stated above, an absence from a concert will lower a student’s grade dramatically. For educational and evaluation purposes, concerts may be recorded.

Absences

Excused absences in accordance with DISD policy will not penalize a student’s grade as long as written notification is provided. Documentation should be submitted to the school office and to www.townviewmusic.org/conflicts. Excessive absences may prevent a student from performing, at the discretion of the director. Reasons for excused absences include: Personal Hospitalization, Family Death or Emergency, and Religious Holidays. If an excused absence is anticipated, prior notification (7-10 days in advance) is required. If a student misses school on the day of an event, their absence may be excused only if notification is given. Additional notification may be required from a parent or guardian in the form of a signed note, phone call, or email. If prior notification is not received in a timely manner, the absence may not be excused.

In the event of a conflict with another school activity, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the sponsors of both activities. The sponsors will then determine the student’s obligation. Multiple rehearsal absences may prevent students from performing.

The following excuses will not be accepted:

- “Had to work”—Plan ahead. Work does not constitute an excused absence.
- “Couldn’t find a ride”—Plan ahead. Arrange a ride in advance.
- “Forgot about it”—Keep up with your calendar.
- “Just couldn’t come”—means you don’t really care.

Grading Policy

Daily Grade 40%

Daily Grades measure the continued effort and dedication toward our educational objectives or TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills). Points are deducted for failure to meet TEKS objectives. Common deductions from the daily grade are caused by:

Talking	Cell phone use	Eating in class
Chewing gum	Not participating in class	Tardiness
Being unprepared for class		

Concert and Rehearsal Grade 40% (Tests – 25%, Six Weeks Test – 15%)

As stated above, concerts are the ultimate evaluation of students’ work and rehearsals are necessary for our success. Students are expected to attend all rehearsals and concerts. These events are listed on the Calendar of Events. Students must arrive on time with all necessary supplies and stay for the duration of the event. Absences follow the criteria listed above. An unexcused absence from a concert will result in a grade of ZERO and make it difficult, if not impossible, to pass the current six weeks. Students may be given the opportunity to complete an alternative assignment to replace the grade for a missed rehearsal. Alternative assignments must be turned in on time or will not be accepted.

Assignments and Quizzes 20%

Assignments and quizzes will be given to monitor progress throughout the course. Some of these include individual performance tests, written tests, and other assignments. Late work will be penalized 10 points per calendar day late.

Rules

1. **RESPECT** – Treat yourself, others, and your surroundings with care and respect. Listen and respond appropriately. Be a positive contribution to the group.
2. **WORK HARD** – Arrive on time prepared to work. Depart only when instructed. Follow instructions immediately.
3. **STAY FOCUSED** – Do not have distractions such as cell phones, gum, candy, food, or drinks (except water in a bottle) during class. Do not groom in class.

Musicianship

In a rehearsal, either in class or after school, students should strive to maintain the highest level of musicianship. This goes beyond the basic rules listed above. Members of the ensemble should always contribute to the quality of the rehearsal. They should:

- Encourage others and speak without negative comments or profanity.
- Respect the opinion of the director and accept constructive criticism positively.
- Learn your music and take care of your music and music folder.
- Ask questions when information or directions are unclear.
- Show a desire to succeed.

Consequences

If a student fails to follow one or more classroom rules, the director assumes that they have *temporarily forgotten* what the rules are. The director is more than willing to remind students what they have forgotten. After several reminders, however, it becomes apparent to the director that a student's "I forgot..." is actually "I don't care...".

Be aware that repeated reminders will result in temporary removal from the ensemble, parent conferences, disciplinary referrals, and permanent removal from the program at the discretion of the director.

Concert Etiquette

Parents and friends: With your help, we can set an atmosphere befitting the long hours of hard work our students have put into every concert.

- Please silence all cell phones, tablets, etc. for the entire duration of the performance.
- If you bring young children to our concerts, please sit near an aisle so you can exit quickly and quietly if necessary.
- Please do not talk during a song.

Eligibility

All members of the music department are expected to embody academic excellence and maintain academic eligibility throughout the entire year. Eligibility is in accordance with UIL policies and requires a report card grade of 70 (60 for AP and pre-AP). Students will not be allowed to travel off campus for performances or competitions unless they are academically eligible. Song tests will be administered periodically throughout the year in class and/or as homework. Failure of a song test may cause a student to be ineligible for performances or competitions.

T-shirt and Attire

Students are requested to support our organization by purchasing a Townview Music t-shirt. Money from t-shirt sales will be used to feed the ensemble prior to concerts and purchase supplies throughout the year. Much of our budget for additional purchases comes from this.

This shirt will be used as a uniform for more casual events. This is your shirt to keep, but must be kept in good condition throughout the year. When wearing the t-shirt for special events, students should also wear blue jeans unless otherwise directed.

- Shirts should be purchased prior to the fall concert for \$30 as part of our fundraiser. Additional shirts may be purchased for \$15.
- Cash, Credit, Debit, and PayPal are accepted (see Mr. D for details)

Special arrangements, such as payment plans, can be arranged if necessary. If this is the case, students should speak to Mr. DeCutler in private or through phone/email during the first few weeks of school.

Some concert will require alternate attire. This will be discussed in the ensemble, but will typically be black and white clothes (sometimes dressy, sometimes casual). Arriving at a concert out of uniform will result in a significant grade reduction.

Sheet Music and Digital Resources

Students will use a variety of paper and electronic music resources throughout the year. This music functions as a textbook for this class and should be taken care of. Paper copies should be brought to class every day. If students are using digital resources, they must refrain from using their technology for anything other than the current topic of the class. Failure to follow this rule may result in confiscation of technology.

Websites

The Townview Music website allows students to access information pertaining to the program and contains links to our YouTube and SoundCloud channels. Please visit it at: www.townviewmusic.org

Our YouTube channel is: www.youtube.com/townviewmusictheory

Our SoundCloud station is: www.soundcloud.com/townviewmusic

Our database is Charms Office, and it can be found at: www.charmsoffice.com

In Charms Office, you can find information and downloads such as the event calendar and any financial records (including student balances and electronic receipts). On the top right corner, you will see the ENTER link. Click Parents/Students/Members and enter “townviewhschoir” as the school code. On the next screen, enter your password. The

default password is your student ID. The next screen will show links to financial records (“finances”), a copy of the handbook (“handouts”), and other features. Not all of the links are active, but many will be activated as the year progresses.

Friday Night Band

Our advance Modern Band, called “Friday Night Band” is selected by audition in the fall and rehearses after school throughout the year, with a variable schedule. They often perform additional concerts at venues around the city. Audition information will be discussed in class.

Student Leaders

Student leaders help us to be more organized and encourage peer mentoring. These are often informal positions assigned to students who show initiative and a willingness to provide assistance. Students who are interested in a leadership position should speak with Mr. DeCutler.

Letter Jackets

Students will be given the opportunity to earn a letter jacket through active participation in music events. Points will be awarded for years of involvement and specific events. Please see the website for a list of activities and their point values as well as pricing information for letter jackets.

Calendar and Forms

Students will be given a calendar and forms that must be filled out and returned. The calendar contains a list of all the anticipated events for the coming school year. As the school year progresses, the calendar will be updated and events may be added. The calendar is subject to revision at any time throughout the year. Students will be given ample notification of any changes to ensure their participation.

Please return these forms as soon as possible. The Photography and Video Release Form asks you for your permission to use photographs for publicity purposes such as our website and YouTube. Please make certain you are signing on the correct line. It is important for all students to be able to participate in music and we take the safety and security of our students very seriously. Student information will not be published online and records are kept in secure, password-protected areas. Denying permission for your student to be photographed and recorded may jeopardize their involvement in performances. Before denying permission, please speak with me.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. I am excited that you have chosen to be part of our musical family.

Thank you,

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