

**Elgin Eagles Music Handbook  
2023-2024**



**Mr. Heithoff- Music**

*“If Better Is Possible, Then Good Is Not Enough!”*

# **MUSIC STUDENT HANDBOOK**

## *2023-2024*

### **A STATEMENT OF POLICY**

To assist band/choir members and parents in understanding areas of responsibility, a statement of policy is herein set forth. Becoming familiar with this policy will enable everyone to make the most of this great opportunity to be a member of the Elgin Public Schools music program, becoming a better person and a better musician.

I firmly believe that the student should improve through regular practice. In the Elgin band/choir program we feel that when the student has lost the will to improve him/herself or make a better contribution to the ensemble, he/she is wasting the time and efforts of his/her fellow members and the community by continuing in this program. The HAPPIEST student is the one who is improving through regular habits of practice and daily progress. He/she must not only know right from wrong but must be able to stand for principles. He/she must develop a high sense of purpose toward which he/she is willing to work. RESPONSIBILITY is the focus behind any level of achievement within this program. We intend to conduct ourselves in a manner that will facilitate all students in learning and bettering themselves.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE MUSIC PROGRAM**

- To teach music by its actual performance.
- To develop performance skills necessary for making good music.
- To provide for the musical needs of the school and the community.
- To develop discrimination with the regards to the selection of music.
- To acquaint the students with Music Theory/History and how history and musical composition relate to students' current life and musical experiences.
- To provide all students with the opportunity for worthy use of their time, a means for self-expression, and a healthy social experience.
- To develop the ability to function as a responsible member of a group, enhance interaction, and develop Esprit de Corps.
- To foster leadership skills within each student.

**-CALENDAR OF EVENTS-**  
(See school calendar for detailed schedule)

- August:** School starts
- September:** All-State Audition Due- September 21-23  
Lion's Club Parade- Norfolk- September 23
- October:** Wayne State Band Day Parade- October 7  
EV JH Choral Clinic- October 26
- November:** NVC Choir- Pope John- November 6  
All-State- Lincoln- November 16-18
- December:** Winter Concert- December 4- 7:00pm  
Winter Concert Snow Date- December 19th  
Class D Band Auditions
- January:** Boone Central Choral Clinic- January 8  
Deadline for DMC Solo/Small Group Music Selection- January 31st
- February:** Stanton JH Honor Band- February 3  
Solo/Small Groups must have met with Mr. Heithoff once by February 20th
- March:** Class D All-State Band- March 23  
NVC Band Clinic- March 18  
Solo/Small Groups must have met with Mr. Heithoff twice by March 20th
- April:** District Music Contest- April 19  
Spring Concert- April 22
- May:** Graduation- May 11  
Memorial Day- May 27

In addition, the band will play pep band for home basketball games, and choir members will have the opportunity to sing the Star-Spangled Banner for home football, volleyball, and basketball games hosted by EPS.

## **-JH/HS BAND/CHOIR CURRICULUM IN BRIEF-**

### Concert Band

The Concert Band is the primary performing organization in the instrumental music department during the winter and spring. Membership is open to previous Cadet Band members, or other students as approved of by Mr. Heithoff. Band class is on Monday's, Wednesday's, and Friday's.

### Marching Band

Membership in the marching band requires strenuous physical exercise and the ability to play the difficult literature encountered in the activity. All students enrolled in the band program are required to march. The marching band performs in the fall.

### Choir

The Concert Choir is the primary performing ensemble of the vocal side of the music department. Membership is open to any student grades 7-12. Choir class is on Tuesday's and Thursday's.

### Private Lessons

As one might expect, private lessons on a musical instrument or voice are the best way to improve performance skills. The one-on-one approach allows the student to benefit from individual attention as opposed to a teacher monitoring a full class. A recent survey of students in the All-State Band revealed that approximately 80 % of the students in the band studied privately. Mr. Heithoff is more than happy to assist any student wishing to take private lessons.

### Nebraska All-State Band/Choir (9-12) and Class D All-State Band (9-12).

Freshman through Senior members of the music program are eligible to audition for the Nebraska All-State Band and Class D All-State Band. Auditions are held at specific times throughout the year. The Class D All-State Band clinic is held at Kearney and the All-State Clinic at Lincoln.

**-GRADES-**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**\*Students can acquire up to TWO unexcused absences from daily rehearsals PER QUARTER before points are deducted. A student will earn a 0 for the day if they are over the quarter limit. Students that acquire more than seven absences per semester in class will be subject to the EPS Attendance Policy and will undergo the credit appeal process.**

**\*SCHOOL SPONSORED ACTIVITIES DO NOT COUNT TOWARD THESE ABSENCES. \***

**\*Students applying for credit appeal must attend all required performances and have a passing grade to automatically earn credit. Students appealing for credit that have missed performances must have a passing grade of a C or above and complete a make-up assignment for each missed performance to earn credit.**

**\*All home performances are REQUIRED. These include our two home concerts (winter and spring), Veteran's Day, Graduation (choir) and Memorial Day (band).**

- **Excused absences from these events include illness of the performer and death in the family. Excused absences will automatically incur a grade of 70% for the missed performance. Parents should make every effort to contact Mr. Heithoff prior to the performance. Students can request a make-up assignment to get up to a 90% for the missed performance.**
- **Unexcused absences from a home performance include all other reasons besides illness of the performer or death in the family. Unexcused absences will incur an automatic grade of 0% for the performance. Make-Up assignments will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Students must request the make-up assignment, and the assignment can earn a maximum of 70% for the missed performance. Mr. Heithoff reserves the right to refuse a make-up assignment for unexcused absences.**

**\*All other away performances are still expected but are considered extra-curricular. As such, missing a non-required away performance will not negatively affect the student's grade.**

**\*All performance absences will result in no letter points being awarded for that performance.**

**\*Individual needs will be addressed as they occur. This system is subject to modification by the director.**

**\*STUDENTS INVOLVED IN BAND/CHOIR ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND ALL PERFORMANCES! \***

For ALL performance absences, the following procedure must be followed by the student and parent:

- Director must be notified in advance if possible, via email or phone call from the parent.
- For school activities, a sign-out sheet must be signed.
- Although cleared by the school office, absences from a music activity that same day must be cleared with the director as well – please call the music room or email Mr. Heithoff.
- In extreme cases, a phone message may be left on the music room answering machine, with a follow-up personal call.
- Follow-up is the sole responsibility of the student!

### **-DISTRICT MUSIC CONTEST-**

Music in the state of Nebraska is unique as an NSAA event. It is the largest activity that is hosted by the NSAA yet does not have a State Contest. Therefore, District Music Contest is the equivalent to any form of State contest. Students compete for ratings, with lower scores being desirable. The rating system is as follows:

**\* DMC solos can only be performed by students in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade or above. If EPS has fewer than 24 high school members in either band or choir, junior high will be allowed to participate in small group performances that involve all members of the band/choir.**

**\*ALL solos and small groups MUST be selected by the end of January. ALL solos and small groups MUST meet with Mr. Heithoff at least once after school prior to February 20<sup>th</sup>, and twice prior to March 20<sup>th</sup>, or they will not be entered at District Music Contest!**

**\*When the number of high school students in Band/Choir is 24 or more, junior high will not attend DMC. When that number is less, junior high will attend. Depending on the situation, Mr. Heithoff may elect to not take the junior high or high school members that cannot adequately perform the music for district contest. Performance testing may be done to determine DMC eligibility. All members will perform on the home concerts regardless.**

### **-PERFORMANCE DRESS-**

For most performances, band members will wear their band uniforms and choir members will wear choir robes. However, if either group forgoes official concert dress, students are required to dress appropriately. Secondary concert dress will consist of a collared shirt and black pants/skirt.

Dress shirt and tie are preferred for young men in the performance ensembles. Women can wear a nice blouse. A polo shirt will also work well for either. Any shirt worn should cover the

performer completely from collar bone to waist. Short sleeves are fine. Western style formal dress is also acceptable (bolo tie, western style suit, etc.).

Performing members should also wear black/khaki pants or skirt/dress. Nice black jeans are allowed. Skirts/dresses must meet dress code expectations. If the dress/shirt is shorter than fingertip length when the arm is resting by the side, wearing leggings underneath is acceptable. **DO NOT WEAR BLUE JEANS OR JEANS/PANTS WITH HOLES.**

Shoes shall consist of dress shoes for men, and nice heels or black flats for women. Black marching shoes will also work for either ensemble. Nice black cowboy boots are also acceptable, except for during marching season. Heels should not be stiletto type and should be no taller than 1.5 inches. Tall thin heels are a safety issue, especially when moving on risers.

### **-CONFLICTS WITH MUSIC-**

Conflicts between band/choir and other activities or events are the responsibility of the student. Rehearsal and performance schedules are given out in advance so that arrangements can be made. When outside activities create hardships concerning music, unless it is a rare and unusual situation that may only happen once, the student will need to consult with the director about alternatives that may be possible. Students should have a **calendar** book and be aware of all music dates well ahead of schedule. It is the policy of the band/choir to assist students when conflicts occur within the scope of the music policy. All conflicts regarding performances must be worked out in favor of the student's responsibility to their ensemble. **Work is not an excuse for missing any music performance.**

### **-GRADING POLICY-**

Grades are assigned for the band/choir class and required performances, which are co-curricular.

### **GRADING PERCENTAGES**

Daily Attendance and Participation	40%
Home Concert Attendance	30%
Away Concert Attendance	20%
General Assignments/Playing Tests	10%

Students can earn 10 points per day for daily attendance and participation, 100 points for performances, and 30 points per performance assessment (playing/singing tests). Any general assignments (writing assignments, theory sheets, practice logs, etc.) will vary in point value.

### **-DUTIES OF THE ENSEMBLE MEMBER-**

- Be on time to all rehearsals and performances. EARLY IS ON TIME – ON TIME IS LATE.
- Upon entering the rehearsal setting, acquire your instrument/music and go directly to your seat.
- When the director asks for your attention, all talking should cease.
- Come to rehearsal with a GOOD ATTITUDE.
- There is no excess playing (i.e., horsing around on the instrument); only good solid material.
- Make a real effort to improve daily and establish a good practice routine.
- At the end of rehearsal, put all materials in their proper place.
- MAINTAIN A STRONG ACADEMIC STANDING IN ALL COURSE WORK!
- Become responsible for and assume responsibility for your own actions. Admit when you are wrong.
- Have a proper respect for yourself and those in authority.
- Read and play/sing music with insight – have musical expectations.

### **-LETTER POINTS AND AWARDS-**

Students can earn letter points through their participation in band and choir. While junior high students cannot letter, their points will be used for other awards given. Students can earn points in the following categories:

Enrollment in band/choir	1 pt. per semester
Home Concert Performance	1 pt. per performance
Marching Band Parades	1 pt. per parade
NVC Performance	1 pt.
EV/Stanton JH Choral Clinic Performance	1 pt.
Boone Central Choral Clinic Performance	1 pt.
Large Group Division 1+ Rating at Districts	5 pts.
Large Group Division 1 Rating at Districts	3 pts.
Large Group Division 2 Rating at Districts	2 pts.
Contest Solo	4 pts.
Division 1 Rating on Solo	3 pts.
Division 2 Rating on Solo	2 pts.
Concert Solo	3 pts.
Contest Duet/Small Group	3 pts.
Small Group Division 1 Rating	2 pts.
Division 2 Rating on Solo/Small Group	1 pt.
Concert Duet/Small Group	2 pts.
Extra Performances (pep band, Star Spangled Banner, etc.)	.5 to 2 pts.
All State Audition	3 pts.
All State Selection	2 pts.
Class D All State Audition (Band)	2 pts.
Class D All State Selection (Band)	1 pt.
Honor Band/Choir Audition (UNK, WSC, FFA, etc.)	1 pt.
Honor Choir Selection	1 pt.



Private Lessons	3 pts. per semester
Graduation Performance (Choir)	1 pt.
Memorial Day Performance (Band)	1 pt.
Years of Service	0.5 pts. per semester
College Scholarship Audition	1 pt.

High school students must earn a minimum of 15 points to Letter and must be a member of the ensemble for the entire year. Awards such as the John Philip Sousa Band Award and National School Choral Award will be based on Letter Points, removing as much director bias as possible from the process. Students performing solos/small groups for Districts and Concerts will get preference when selecting for awards.

### **-THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTITUDE-**

The greatest single factor that will determine the success of any individual or organization is **attitude**. The kind of person that you are is an individual choice and how we feel about something, which involves attitude, is one of the few actual independent choices that we have in life. It takes intense dedication to reach goals. Students should learn to discipline themselves to daily practice on fundamentals. The “right attitude” must be present along with sincerity, concentration, and dedication as the foundation. Such an attitude makes an artistic performance inevitable and is the difference between a winning organization and a mediocre group. The band and/or choir can do much for you. Make the most of it in every rehearsal and performance!

### **-THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLINE-**

Because of the nature of the organization, band/choir discipline must be strict! Music students and parents must believe in the ideals, principles, and philosophy of the organization. Each member must always be aware of good behavior and think for himself. Any misconduct casts a bad light on the school, community, and music program. Any member who casts discredit to the organization by his/her conduct or actions in band/choir, in another class, or on a trip, shall be subject to dismissal from the music program or may lose a privilege within the program. This may include the chance to go on a trip with the group(s). This decision will be at the director’s discretion.

### **-ELIGIBILITY-**

Students involved in music are expected do their best in everything they do, especially academics. Students failing a class for two consecutive weeks will be ineligible from participating in any out-of-school music activities, starting on the third week they are failing. Eligibility runs from 10:00am Monday to 10:00am the following Monday.

### **-PARENTS’ RESPONSIBILITY TO THE MUSIC PROGRAM-**

It is the responsibility of every parent and guardian to see that the policies outlined in the handbook are followed. Any questions are to be directed to the music director via email or phone call to the school. **Each parent IS responsible for the attendance of his/her child at all**

**required music functions.** It is the responsibility of each parent to see that their child practices his/her instrument (including voice) daily. My hands are tied without the help of parents.

### **-RULES AND PROCEDURES-**

- Shoes and socks should be worn for all rehearsals. **Sneakers are REQUIRED for Marching Band Rehearsals! Improper footwear will result in a lowered Daily Attendance and Participation grade!- 1 pt.**
- Chewing gum is not permitted during a rehearsal or in the music room.- 2 pt.
- Electronic devices (i.e., laptops, tablets, iPads, iPods, MP3 players, etc.) will only be allowed at certain times in the music room. Phones are not allowed at any time.- 1 pt.
- A band member must respect his/her uniform and always wear it properly- 1 pt.
- Food and drink are not permitted in the music room, except water- 3 pts.
- No hats or sunglasses inside the building (includes other schools!)- 1 pt.
- Be in your seat, warmed up, and ready to begin on time.- 1 pt.
- Respect authority and others, including their personal property.- 1-10 points.
- A band or choir member will wear no exposed jewelry while in uniform; civilian clothes must be tasteful. Only watches and your own class ring will be permitted while in uniform.
- Drinking and drugs are STRICTLY PROHIBITED. *All school district policies regarding such are always in force.*
- All school rules will be enforced.
- Young adults shall not damage property or equipment.
- If you share a folder and are absent, make sure it gets to school.

### **-COVID 19-**

Regardless of personal feelings on the matter, COVID 19 has had a major effect on our lives, and on how schools, and school music programs operate. EPS music ensembles will follow all guidelines and policies as put forth by Elgin Public Schools, as well as any guidelines/policies in the venues we visit for performances or trips.

## MUSIC CONTRACT

**By signing this form, you agree to all the rules and regulations in this handbook and agree to follow them. Failure to follow the rules and regulations outlined in this handbook will result in a lowering of grade and/or loss of letter points, as well as other disciplinary action deemed necessary by Mr. Heithoff or school administration.**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Student** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Parent/Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_

**The music handbook can be found on the school website under  
Academics > Music > Band and Choir Handbook**

## **INSTRUMENT REPLACEMENT AND REPAIR CONTRACT**

**Elgin Public Schools routinely provides instruments for students to use within the band program. Any repairs required due to malicious damage, or damage through negligence, are the sole responsibility of the family using the instrument. If repairs are not able to be performed due to the extent of the damage, all replacement costs will be the responsibility of the family using the instrument, including shipping charges for the new instrument. Any family not agreeing to these terms must provide their own instrument and will be responsible for all repair and maintenance costs of their personal instrument.**

**Guardian Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Guardian Name (Print)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number** \_\_\_\_\_

**If providing own instrument:**

**Make** \_\_\_\_\_

**Model** \_\_\_\_\_

**Serial Number** \_\_\_\_\_