



**CHINA SPRING MIDDLE SCHOOL  
BANDS**

*“Excellence by Example!”*  
2023-2024 Rules & Policies

## **WELCOME**

Welcome members of the China Spring Cougar Band! We look forward to having a great year as we strive to take pride in ourselves by continuing to set and reach incredible goals! Music and the performing arts connect students with their culture through a common language crossing generational and social barriers. The activities that a student pursues influences the type of person he or she becomes. The experience that comes with participation in a performing arts organization builds discipline, character, pride, and self-confidence at a crucial age and forms the springboard to even more significant achievements in adulthood. Band is a performing arts class that requires much hard work and preparation throughout the ENTIRE year, but we believe that it is one of the most rewarding and fun organizations in which you can be involved. We look forward to working with each of you this year and want to remind you; never hesitate to talk to us if at any time you have any concerns, problems, need help, etc. Good luck to all this year!

## **PURPOSE / MEMBERSHIP**

The China Spring Middle School band exists to educate students by using music as a vehicle to teach discipline, honor, respect, loyalty, timeliness, self-expression, self-respect, excellence, and many other soft skills students will use for the rest of their lives. All while teaching the fundamentals of music from the analytical to the artistic. Science has shown that students with an early introduction to a rigorous music program tend to become better contributors to society and are the “creative problem solvers” that so many 21st century employers desire to hire. Finally, our purpose to perform great music at a high level for the sake of playing great music in its intended form. So often we downplay the importance of the “art” of music. Music is an art form designed to be enjoyed by the audience and the performer.

## **CHINA SPRING ISD STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT / POLICIES**

All expectations and regulations outlined in the China Spring ISD Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct must be followed and supersede all expectations set in this band handbook. Students are to follow all rules and policies established in the handbook at all band practices as well as when traveling off campus with the band for a competition or other music-related event sponsored by China Spring ISD. A copy of the China Spring ISD Code of Conduct and handbook is available at:

<https://middle.chinaspringisd.net/students/student-handbook>

## **INSTRUMENTS (SCHOOL OWNED & PERSONAL)**

Students are expected to take extreme care of all instruments whether the instrument belongs to a student or China Spring ISD. Students bringing personally owned instruments to school are expected to keep the instrument in good playing condition and will be responsible for any repairs needed. Students of these instruments are required to furnish their supplies and keep these supplies with them at all times: mouthpieces, reeds, cork grease, valve oil, slide oil, polishing cloths, drumsticks, Tuner and working chord, etc. Many students will have the opportunity to use a school-owned instrument. Such instruments include low woodwinds, double reeds, French horns, baritones, tubas, and percussion. China Spring ISD will be responsible for repairing all damages to the instrument due to normal aging or wear and tear. Once a school instrument has been issued to a student, the student becomes responsible for the instrument. If the instrument becomes lost or stolen, the student will be responsible for replacing the instrument.

## **EQUIPMENT—**

All students need to have their personal instruments in top working order. Professional repairman at Tarpley Music (1300 Lake Air Dr. Suite 1, 235-1127), Ellis County Music Center (972-937-5300) in Waxahachie, and Freedom Music Services (254-749-1961) provide repair services and instruments. Please bring in your repair ticket if your instrument needs repair as proof that it is at the shop and will be ready on a certain date. Students will need everything to keep their instrument in working order—

**Brasses:** oil, slide grease, cleaning snake, mouthpiece brush, and cleaning cloth., and tuner/metronome.

**Woodwinds:** cork grease, swab, and at least 3 good reeds in the case at all times, and tuner/metronome.

**Percussionists** need a personal stick bag and tuner/metronome. These will contain the sticks that are generally used by percussionists in all of the UIL pieces, solos, and ensembles that we will be performing. These will also transfer to high school when you enter 9<sup>th</sup> grade. These will be available through any of the above dealers.

\*All 8<sup>th</sup> grade band members and honor band members will need a flip folder and music lyre and pep rallies---This is standard equipment for high school that will transfer with you in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. These are available at any of the above music dealers.

## **CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS-**

1. Always TRY!! You can control your EFFORT. We will coach up your skill set; you take care of your EFFORT to attain the skills.
2. Maintain a positive attitude and believe in yourself. Take PRIDE in what you do! Excellence in EVERYTHING.
3. Strive for your best in every practice and every performance.
  - Be musically prepared!
  - Take your instrument home for additional practice.
  - Get private lessons if possible.
  - Ask your band director for help!
4. Set reachable yet challenging goals.
5. Create a consistently disciplined environment.
6. Respect each other. We must all work TOGETHER to reach the same goal.
7. Respect and take care of all property.
  - Take care of your instrument.
  - Take care of school and other students' instruments.
  - Take care of band hall and help keep clean!
  - No food or drinks in the MS Band hall except water.
  - No chewing gum during rehearsals.
9. Attend ALL practices and performances with all required equipment. This includes instrument, pencils, music, uniform, etc.
10. Represent China Spring ISD and the Cougar Band in the most positive manner possible. Inappropriate and disrespectful behavior toward anyone will not be tolerated.
11. Cell phones should remain in backpacks during class. There are no phones during rehearsals. Directors will give one warning about cellphones then they will be taken up.

## **Sectionals and After School Rehearsals-**

All students in the fall semester will be given a sectional time to help them learn fundamental skills and to learn pass off music. These are required and will be a part of their grade. If a student cannot attend due to conflicting activities or ride issues a director must be notified so that we can have make up time for that student. These sectionals help to promote our student's learning and are important to the

program. Students will have the opportunity to learn and pass off their music during these after school sectionals. During the spring semester Honor band and symphonic band students will continue with their sectionals and will have 4 after school rehearsals that are required to attend. This will be a great time for our student to build their ensemble skills as a group. If it is an honor band year (Every other year ending in an even number) students in the honor band may have extra requirements for rehearsals. Your director will communicate with you if that is the case. If you have any questions or concerns about after school sectionals or rehearsals please don't hesitate to reach out to Ms. Berg at [rberg@chinaspringisd.net](mailto:rberg@chinaspringisd.net).

## **GRADING—**

### **The Six-week' Objective Sheet (25%)**

The CSMS Band will maintain the "The Six-week' Objective Sheet" as a vital part of your grade. This will be in conjunction with the regular class instruction. Each six-week' grading period a new set of Skills and Objectives will be distributed to you with a date for completion. You will play your Skills and Objectives for the directors who will then determine if the Skill is up to standard. You will know if you have completed that skill when the director signs your Skill and Objective Sheet.

### **Tests and Performances (25%)**

This will consist of class tests (either written or played) or performance (concerts, pep rallies, or special events requiring a concert, etc). Performances are a vital part of your band experience---it is like taking a test in public. Therefore, extenuating circumstances are the ONLY excuse for missing a performance. (Extenuating circumstances are an occurrence out of the control of most reasonable people.) A missed performance for anything other than an extenuating circumstance will result in a "0" for that event. Remember, you are part of a team, and if you are not there, the team cannot be excellent. If you cannot attend a concert because of an extenuating circumstance, we need notification at least a week in advance if possible. Communication by email is best to the director of your students corresponding band from the parent/guardian explaining the reason for your absence. Performances are posted well in advance so that you can make arrangements to be at the performance.

### **Daily Grade (50%)**

This is the most reliable indicator of the progress you are making in class. It is an ongoing process of evaluation that will lead to success and excellence. The daily grade will reflect your full participation in daily rehearsals. By "full participation" we mean: instrument and everything you need for band at your seat on time to begin rehearsal and stay completely engaged in the band objectives for the full 50 minutes.

## **ACTIVITY FEE-**

Each year there is a \$25 activity fee to help provide supplies for the classroom to keep instruments working (extra reeds, oils, etc.), supplies to help keep students organized, a band shirt, a blue book, and contest fees. If you have any questions about this, please don't hesitate to reach out to Ms. Berg at [rberg@chinaspringisd.net](mailto:rberg@chinaspringisd.net).

## **UNIFORMS —**

Pep Rally Uniform (Honor band and all 8<sup>th</sup> graders who want to volunteer to play): Band shirt  
UIL Uniform (Honor, Symphonic, and Concert Band): **We will wear this for Band Photos, all concerts and UIL band contest in the Spring.**

- Black button-up dress shirt with collar, black belt, black pants, black dress socks, and black dress shoes that can be polished.

- Girls can wear either black pants or a knee-length black skirt with no side slits. A plain black dress that is knee length can also be worn. Shoes need to be dress flats—no high heels.

## **Performance Opportunities-**

Region Band Auditions: Students wishing to perform in an honor group may audition for placement in a Region Band sponsored by The Association of Texas Small School Bands. All students will work on the audition sets as part of their Skills and Objectives requirements. For the students who earn a place in the region honor band, commemorative patches are awarded to them after they perform at the region band concert. If a student auditions for the region band and makes the band they must attend the region concert in January.

Jazz Region Band Auditions: Jazz region band auditions are held in the spring and allow your students to showcase their jazz skills. If your student auditions for the jazz region band and makes the ensemble they must attend the concert.

The CS Solo and Ensemble Contest: The solo and ensemble contest is held in April. This contest allows your student to demonstrate excellence on a solo or as a member of a small group. Students who demonstrate excellence receive a medal for their achievement and Outstanding Performers are featured on an Honors Recital.

## **PRIVATE LESSONS—**

Students wishing to gain additional help or knowledge of their instrument may do so through private lessons. Private lessons are individual instruction provided by a highly qualified musician on the particular instrument you are seeking help. Private lessons may be used to assist students in preparation for All-Region Band auditions, Solo & Ensemble, College or University auditions, or just for the enjoyment of musical growth. While some of our students already study privately with professional musicians in our community, we would like to make private lessons more accessible to all by bringing the private teachers to our school. Most of the more successful band programs in Texas offer the opportunity for students to take private lessons. We must find out how many of you are seriously interested in this opportunity before we take steps to secure private teachers to come to China Spring for the school year. Those teachers who come to our school must have a certain number of students to teach to make it worth their while to travel to our campus. Your response to this letter will help us determine what instruments can be taught at China Spring in a regular weekly program. Please fill out a private lesson interest form, and we will have the appropriate private lesson teacher contact you and schedule a lesson.

Private lessons are designed to supplement classroom instruction. The teachers use materials and one-on-one instruction to help improve the individual student's level of proficiency rather than to rehearse music that the student will be performing in the band. Any student who desires to perform at a level higher than that which our band literature offers should take private lessons. Those who desire to be competitive when auditioning for high school-level All-Region Band will benefit from individual instruction. High School students who wish to perform at the highest level of success in UIL Regional Solo and Ensemble Contest and have a chance at State competition should have a private teacher.

## **COST**

While participation is optional, those who elect to take private lessons must commit to attend a weekly 30-minute lesson and pay the private teacher accordingly. Additional practice time, on the student's own time, will be necessary if the student is to benefit from the private lesson. Most private teachers who are college students studying to be professional performers/teachers will charge from \$20 to \$25 for each 30-minute lesson. A college level professor will usually charge at least \$50 per lesson. Payment

and attendance will be the responsibility of the student and parent. Private teachers must be given notice if a student must miss a lesson due to illness or other school activity. Payment is expected when a student cancels a lesson without notifying the private teacher. The band directors cannot assume the responsibility for communication between the student and private teacher. The commitment should be long-term (for the school year) since lessons are designed with long-range goals in mind. Private lessons are not for a temporary "quick fix" of a student's performance problem.

**SCHEDULE** The lessons will be held at the High School or Middle School band hall and will run from 3:45 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Some days might go a little longer, but there will not be any night time lessons. Days will be determined by the availability of a private teacher. The Texas Education Agency mandates that the private lessons only be taught after school. Student transportation on the lesson day will be the responsibility of the parent. Specific scheduling will be done between the Student, Parents, and lessons teacher that fits into our time frame stated above.

**\*We will only be able to have a Private Lesson Program for those instruments supported by a sufficient number of students.**

### **BAND BOOSTERS—**

All parents, friends, and supporters of the Cougar Bands are encouraged to become a part of the China Spring Band Boosters organization. The band boosters work hard throughout the year to raise funds to help with supplies and activities for our band students. Such supplies and activities may include purchasing of new instruments or equipment, providing meals for the MS band for contest and trip days, providing special treats and prizes throughout the year, and providing scholarships to our seniors and band camp attendees. Parents may help as much or as little as you would like but all help will certainly be needed and appreciated!

President – Jerry Tucker  
CSBBpresident@gmail.com

### **FUNDRAISERS-**

Fundraisers are a vital role of the financial success of the band program. Several fundraisers will be scheduled throughout the year. All fundraising goes to assist the purchasing of new equipment, along with scholarships for seniors, students wishing to participate in a band camp, spring trips and festival performances. All students in band will be expected to help with fundraising.

### **YEAR COMMITMENT-**

All students who sign up for band are signing up for a year-long commitment. This means that students will be enrolled for the entire year unless the schedule is changed within the first 2 weeks of school and the parents and students have talked with the director.

### **HOW TO STAY IN TOUCH—**

#### **Director Contact Information:**

- Honors Band- Ms. Rachel Berg (836-4611) e-mail: [rberg@chinaspringisd.net](mailto:rberg@chinaspringisd.net)
- Symphonic Band- Ms. Michaela Schwyhart email: [mschwylhart@chinaspringisd.net](mailto:mschwylhart@chinaspringisd.net)
- Concert Band- Mr. Ian Mitchell (836-4611) e-mail: [imitchell@chinaspringisd.net](mailto:imitchell@chinaspringisd.net)
- Our District Band website is [www.cscougarband.com/middleschool](http://www.cscougarband.com/middleschool). Check here first for the most up-to-date communications and schedules.

**Student and Parent Remind:**

- Honor Band: @honorcsms
- Symphonic Band: @symphcsms
- Concert Band: @csmsconcer
- Jazz Band: @jazzcsms
- Sign up for our email list at [www.cscougarband.com/middleschool](http://www.cscougarband.com/middleschool)
- Make sure you have an accurate email address in your charms account: [www.charmsoffice.com](http://www.charmsoffice.com)  
School Code: chinaspri Password: Student ID Number
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/cscougarband/>
- Instagram: cscougarband
- Twitter: @cscougarband

# CHINA SPRING MS BANDS

Excellence by Example



Please sign, detach, and return to school by August 28, 2023

Student Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Received, read, and agree to abide by all rules and procedures as explained in the CSMS Band 2023-2024 Rules and Policy document. We also understand that failure to abide by the rules and policies will result in grade penalties or appropriate disciplinary action as determined by school personnel.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_