

Forreston HS Band Manual  
2024-2025

# FORRESTON H.S. BAND MANUAL

## 2024-2025

This manual is written in the hopes that a better understanding of the policies, rules, and regulations of our band program will be gained. If, however, at any time you're unclear as to the expectations of your child, please contact me.

### **BAND PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

The Forreston High School Band Program has many years of successful performances and has produced some of the finest high school musicians in the state of Illinois. This success comes from the philosophy that music is an art worthy of study. We are extremely proud of the musicians that have come through the program and we will have the same pride for all of our future students.

In the FHS Band Program, you will learn more than just playing an instrument. You will learn about music history, music theory and composition, improvisation, and creativity. You will also learn many life skills that will serve you well in your future endeavors, whether you choose music as a career or not.

The cornerstone our program is *Daily Incremental Achievement*. Simply put, we are asking you to "Be Your Best Every Day". We are not asking you to be *THE* best, but be *YOUR* best every single day. Our staff and your fellow students are expected to bring the best every day as well. Together, we can overcome any of the challenges that will arise throughout the year. There are no quick fixes, so daily practice is expected of all students. I will help you set the goals to work towards, but you must do the hard work of getting yourself there.

### **WELCOME TO THE BAND FAMILY**

Welcome to YOUR band family. You are an important part of this family and in the coming years, will shape this program with your individual and group efforts. Our organization will be exactly as strong as you choose for it to be. With this choice comes your opportunity and responsibility to grow within the band family, create lifelong friends, and become an expressive musician and human being in our society.

### **EXPECTATIONS**

#### 1. Students will:

- a. try to the best of their abilities to improve themselves and their ensemble every day
- b. advocate for themselves when they are struggling with any requirements of the course.
- c. Work with their director in a spirit of teamwork and cooperation.
- d. Come prepared every day with all necessary materials.

- e. Prepare their individual band part, solos, and ensembles through home practice.
- f. Receive instruction and criticism constructively and apply it to their playing for improvement.
- g. Maintain their instrument in top working condition.
- h. Care for all school equipment properly.
- i. Attend and be on time for all performances.
- j. Pay fees for supplies in a timely manner.

2. The director will:

- a. provide instruction so that the students can develop as musicians.
- b. Provide the students with music that is within their abilities to perform but provides a challenge to grow.
- c. be prepared for rehearsals.
- d. Inform the students and parents of all performances and extra rehearsals with enough lead time to arrange schedules.

3. Parents will:

- a. supply their child with an instrument (when appropriate) and supplies.
- b. support their child by attending all their concerts and other performances. Encourage their child to perform other than with the Forreston High School Band.
- c. Encourage individual practice outside of school for students to grow and perform to the best of their abilities.
- d. Consider providing private lessons for students to enhance their growth and performance

**CLASS VS. EXTRACURRICULAR / ATTENDANCE** - Band cannot be placed exclusively into either one of these categories due to the performance nature of the course. All performances, even though they take place outside of school time and very often are accompanied by an athletic event, are considered "school work". Some of these events will be of such a nature that no excuse absences will be granted, except sickness or death in the family. Examples include but are not limited to IHSA organizational contest and concerts. Some events will not be as critical to the education of your child or the performance of the band as a group, and reasonable excuse absences may be allowed. Please remember that the director and the principal are the parties responsible for issuing excuses. We must constantly weigh the good of the group against the good of the individual, and all requests for excused absences are considered very carefully. You must trust us to make the right decision not only for your child, but for the group as well.

**EXCUSED ABSENCES** - In the event that there is a conflict between a band activity and something else on your student schedule, please consult with me at the earliest possible moment. Many times, conflicts can be worked around, and I am much more likely to excuse students if I have prior notice. Few excused absences (except illness or death in the family) will be granted less than **10 days before an event**. No medical excuses will be accepted that excuse a student from a band activity so that they may participate in another activity, *i.e.*

*Missing Friday's home football game show so the student might be healthier for an event Saturday.* A student's work schedule is not generally considered a valid excuse. *Students who are too ill to perform or have had a family emergency must have their parent contact me before the performance.* The student will make up all excused absences including absences due to sickness, before the quarter is over with projects determined by the director. These projects can be written reports, performance of solos, attendance at other concerts, etc. Failure to complete this project will result in a failing grade for the performance.

**ELIGIBILITY-** In order to participate in certain band activities, students will have to maintain academic eligibility as is outlined in the FHS extracurricular handbook or IHSA regulations. These activities include but are not limited to:

- University band days
- IMEA activities
- Senior Fine Arts Trip
- Jazz Band
- Upstate-Illini Music Festival

In the event a student becomes academically ineligible to participate in an activity, he/she will be given alternative assignments. There will be no penalty for non-participation due to ineligibility.

**UNEXCUSED ABSENCES** - Unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the performance. In certain circumstances, students may be denied the opportunity to return to the ensemble for which he/she failed to perform.

**UNIFORMS** - Your student has been issued a band uniform for which they are financially responsible. Replacement cost for high school uniforms is (last quote) \$600. These uniforms will be kept at the high school. We do not allow any eating or drinking (except water) while in uniform. Uniforms will be hung up properly after each use or fines may result. When a student is in uniform it will be worn correctly, completely, and fully at all times. This means the jacket will be closed, the suspenders will be up, and the hat will be on straight. On the rare occasion that the director changes the manner in which the uniform is worn, his instructions will be followed explicitly. If permission is given to remove the coat due to hot weather, a Forreston shirt must be worn underneath. No jewelry (other than stud earrings) is to be worn with the uniform. Hair that touches the collar must be tied back or worn out under the hat when we are in uniform. Hair ties are to be as inconspicuous as possible.

## **REQUIRED MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT**

### **1. INSTRUMENT**

- a. Brass- kept in good working order and supplied with a cleaning and polishing rag, grease, and oil.
- b. Woodwinds- kept in good working order and supplied with grease, swab, and three working reeds.

- c. Percussion- snare sticks, timpani, yarn, and plastic mallets. A stick bag keeps these items protected.
- d. LYRE/FLIP FOLDER- ordered through FHS band activity account.
- e. SHOES- black band shoes ordered through FHS band activity account. Obtaining them from a former member of the band is acceptable.
- f. WHITE GLOVES- ordered through FHS band activity account.
- g. BLACK SOCKS- Long, calf length.

**SCHOOL INSTRUMENTS-** in order to balance the instrumentation of the band, the school owns instruments that are too expensive for families to afford on their own. It may become necessary for me to assign one of these instruments to your student to play for the year or the semester. Understand that I will only make assignments that are necessary for the well being of the band, and that I will only make an assignment to your child if he/she is capable of doing it.

**MUSIC-** Students will be issued music throughout the year. It is to be kept neat and in good condition. All marks on music should be made with pencil only. Students who lose music or return it in poor condition may be fined for the replacement cost.

**GRADING PER SEMESTER-** Students will be graded with a combination of the following:

Recorded playing tests- Recorded tests that will be emailed to Mr. Cunningham or otherwise collected for grading. These tests will be based on excerpts from the music currently being performed by the ensemble the student is in.

Listening Assignments/Concert reflections- written reflections based on listening and responding to music to improve the students understanding of the music being performed by the ensemble and to improve individual student musicianship.

Formal Concert performances- Evaluated by individual and group performance in formal concerts. Also, based on the student meeting "on-time" and uniform requirements for the concert. **This includes Pep-Band Performances AND Parade performances.**

Live Playing tests- live evaluations of individual student progress to be scheduled during class time with the instructor.

Semester Final

**CHAIR SEATING-**

- A) Auditions will be done through assigned musical excerpts and scales, video recorded by students and sent to Mr. Cunningham via email or performed in person.
- B) If a student qualifies through audition to sit in the upper half of his her section, then he she must agree to all additional performances assigned by

the director. Examples of these performances are solos, festivals, and madrigal performances. If a student refuses to participate in additional performances he/she **may** be moved at the directors discretion.

- C) The director reserves the right to restructure the section at any time based on an impromptu audition. (challenging for chair seating)

**AWARDS-** Forreston high school bands recognize excellence in music performance with the following awards:

- 1) John Philip Sousa Award -- senior who contributes the most to the success of the band through their performance skills, leadership, participation, and attitude.
- 2) Louis Armstrong Award -- Jazz Band member who contributes the most to the success of the band to their performance skills, leadership, participation, and attitude.
- 3) Cardinal tail -- any member who memorizes their traditional marching music. Can be revoked for inspection, attendance, or promptness violations. Will only be displayed at marching or pep band performances.

**SUPPLY FEES** - Students can charge reeds, oil, and sticks, etc. and pay for them at the end of each nine week grading period. At that time, all fees must be paid. Fees paid by check should be made out to Forreston high school. Failure to pay fees in a timely manner will result in denial of future charges.

**FINE ARTS TRIP** - Seniors who have been in band ALL EIGHT SEMESTERS of high school and are in good standing shall be allowed to participate in the annual fine arts trip to Chicago. Students will be responsible for payment and will be allowed one fundraiser during each of their sophomore, junior, and senior years.

**MUSIC PATRONS** - As a parent of a music student, you're automatically a member of this organization. The Patrons do a tremendous job in supporting the various programs and events we undertake; we could not function without them. Help in making your students musical experience the best it can be by participating in the music patrons and helping their projects.

**MUSIC PATRONS MISSION STATEMENT** – Forreston Music Patrons is a nonprofit, fundraising organization that strives to enhance district 221's music programs by providing the students extra opportunities to encourage musical growth. The Music Patrons support all aspects of the music program and align themselves with the philosophy of both the Forreston Music Department and the Forrestville Valley School District 221

### **MUSIC DEPARTMENT PHILOSOPHY**

At Forreston Junior/Senior High School, we strive to create life-long consumers of music. In the music department, we believe that music is an essential part of the curriculum and society as a whole. Through an active collaboration between teachers, students, parents, and the community, we strive to provide a proper

musical education to help students develop the expression and understanding of the complex musical language.

Music education should contain many varied experiences for students. Because of the inclusive nature of music, the music classroom should be a cross-disciplinary classroom in which all subjects are incorporated in its curriculum. As such, it is a necessary, foundational aspect of a comprehensive education.

**SCHOOL DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY-**

The school district, in an active partnership with parents and community, will promote excellence in a caring environment in which all students learn and grow. This partnership shall empower all students to develop a strong self-esteem and to become responsible learners and decision makers. The school district is committed to developing and using a visionary and innovative curriculum and a knowledgeable and dedicated staff.

**CONTACTING ME-** While I am always eager to talk to parents about your child's progress or their responsibilities, there is an appropriate time and place. It is easiest to reach me by email ([tcunningham@fvdistrict221.org](mailto:tcunningham@fvdistrict221.org)). You may also contact me by calling the junior/senior HS (815-938-2175). I check my email often, but there may be a delay in response as I am teaching or out of my office for a few moments. I will return all emails in a timely fashion. I am also available for face-to-face meetings, given enough time to arrange my schedule. If you would like to set up a meeting, please contact me at least 3 days in advance of your preferred meeting date.

This information probably does not cover every possible situation that occurs throughout the year. Please feel free to contact me any time you have a question.

I know that with your help, cooperation, and encouragement, your child will help make Forreston HS Band the best possible musical organization it can be, and that they will learn and grow in the process.

Sincerely,

Travis Cunningham  
Forreston Jr./Sr. HS Band Director.

**\*Please put these events on your family calendar\***

**Dates TBD**

Date	Event	Time	Location
	HS Band Camp		Forreston HS
	Labor Day Parade		Lanark, IL
	Home Football Games		Forreston HS
	Home Volleyball Games		Forreston HS Gym
	Autumn on Parade		Oregon, IL
	Fall Concert		Forreston HS
	IMEA Auditions (Select students)		Dekalb HS, Dekalb IL
	Sycamore Parade		Sycamore, IL
	Playoff Football games (tentative)		Forreston HS
	Christmas in the Country (Select students)		Forreston
	Christmas Concert		Forreston HS
	Home BBB/GBB Games		Forreston HS Gym
	IMEA All-State performance (Select students)		Peoria, IL
	Augustana Honor Band (Select students)		Augustana College
	IHSA Solo & Ensemble Contest		TBA
	IHSA Organizational Contest		TBA
	Spring Concert		Masonic Temple, Freeport, IL
	FHS Commencement Ceremonies		Forreston HS
	LR Parade		Leaf River