

This is a supplemental guide for informational purposes only. A formal Band Handbook is available on the Alamo Heights Band website.

**Alamo Heights High School  
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**Directors:**

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**Is there a band website?**

The Alamo Heights Band has its own website! Check the band's website for current information and updates. Go to: [www.alamoheightsband.com](http://www.alamoheightsband.com)

**Is the band on Twitter and Facebook?**

The Alamo Heights Band Tweets! Twitter is used to get important information out quickly to band members and parents. It is most often used to announce contest results as soon as they are known, inform parents when buses have left a site, and when they have arrived at a site. Our twitter address is: @HeightsBand

We also keep our Facebook page up to date with interesting updates and pictures. Like us at [www.facebook.com/AlamoHeightsBand](http://www.facebook.com/AlamoHeightsBand)

**What are other ways that you communicate with band parents?**

We send out information primarily through email. We use a program called Charms that is a database for all of our student information. Please make sure we have a correct email address and that you add Charmsoffice to your accepted email list.

We also use a text message program called Remind 101 to send out texts. This is a one-way text message feature that you will need to sign-up for. There is an instruction sheet on our webpage that tells you how to sign-up.

### **How can I keep up with my student's financial account?**

We use Charms as a data management tool for the band. You can log onto Charms at any time to see the most current status of your student's financial account.

[www.charmsoffice.com](http://www.charmsoffice.com)

parent/student login = AlamoHeightsHSB

Student's password = student's ID # (a six digit number on their school documents)

Add charmsoffice.com to your contact list so that you will receive these e-mails.

Include your login info so that you will know how to access at a later time.

### **What is the Alamo Heights Band Association (AHBA)?**

The Alamo Heights Band Association (AHBA) is the parent and community support organization for the band. The main purpose of this organization is to help the band directors and band members achieve their goals as a performance group. The booster club provides the extra support, both financial and volunteer that the band needs to compete at the highest level.

### **What is the structure of the band?**

There are 7 parts to the Alamo Heights Band:

Wind Ensemble

Symphonic Band

Concert Band

Percussion

Color Guard

Marching Band

Jazz Band

A student's placement is determined by tryouts in the spring and fall. During the fall semester (marching season) all of these parts meet together for rehearsals, both before school and after school. During the school day each member will rehearse with their assigned group during their assigned class period. In the spring each group will meet during their assigned class time.

### **What is Color Guard?**

The Color Guard is an integral part of the visual performance of the marching show. Selection is based on tryouts in the spring. The group is under the direction of the Color Guard Director. The Guard augments the marching show by incorporating flags, rifles, and a variety of props. The Color Guard has their own individual competition season in the second semester called Winter Guard. See Winter Guard.

### **What is the Music/Marching Mini-Camp in May?**

This camp is for the full band and is all about the music and marching. The music for the new show is introduced and the stand tunes are taught to the incoming freshmen. The older members are a tremendous help with the teaching process while building camaraderie with the new band members. This camp is held one week in May.

### **What is Summer Band Camp?**

The beginning of August marks the start of Marching Season. It is all about learning the band's marching show-music and drill. UIL rules dictate when a high school program can begin working on marching drill. This date fluctuates based on the start date of school, so summer camp will usually begin on or around August 1st. The kids will be learning show music and drill. Attendance at this camp is mandatory. Speak to the directors about any concerns.

Generally, the rehearsal schedule is:

First week- Monday -Saturday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. with a lunch break from 11:45 – 1:00.

Second week – 2:30-9:00pm with a dinner break from 4:30-6:00pm

Third week – 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. (Color Guard schedule may vary)

### **Things to know:**

The kids must wear a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen.

They also must bring their water jug.

Tennis shoes are required

Light colored clothes are encouraged

Lunch is from 11:45-1:00 daily. Students may bring their lunch or leave campus with parent permission.

### **What is Band Registration?**

It is a chance for the PARENTS to get all of the information they will need to navigate through the band year. This is when all paperwork must be completed and when you pay your band fees. (or at least make a partial payment) You will have the opportunity to meet the directors. Stations will be set up so you can learn about fundraising opportunities, sign up for Game Night Dinners, sign up to chaperone, purchase spirit wear and so much more.

### **What are band fees?**

Band fees cover the cost of putting your student on the marching field. Band fees cover clinicians, master classes, the cost of the marching show (including copyrights), drill techs, contest entry fees, transportation costs, snacks and meals while at contests, and many other items that combine to fund this program for our students.

### **How much does it cost?**

The fee this year is \$300.

### **What is the Meet the Band Night?**

This is a performance/social activity that is designed to give you a chance to meet other band families, sign-up to volunteer, and purchase band spirit items. We will also introduce the entire 2014-15 Alamo Heights Marching Band, and it's leaders.

**When are rehearsals once school starts?**

Generally we rehearse two evenings and two mornings a week.

Mondays – Brass/Battery: 5:30-8:00pm; WW/pit – 6:30-8:00pm; CG: 6:00-8:00pm

Tuesdays - Brass/Battery: 6:30-8:00pm; WW/pit – 5:30-8:00pm; CG: 6:00-8:00pm

Thursdays – Full Band 6:45-8:00am

Fridays – Full Band 7:00-8:00am

If we have a holiday on Monday, this schedule may be altered.

**Will the band know the entire show by the first football game?**

No. Our shows are very intricate with many parts. Each week of the marching season you will notice new parts and/or additional choreography. After the first three or four games the basic outline of the show will be complete but they will continue “fill in” and add choreography and more interest. It is a fun and intriguing thing to witness.

**What is a marching spot?**

We will initially perform two different marching shows during football season. The first show is the contest show. We have written this show with less marching spots than the number of band members. Each year some students are unable to keep performing in the contest show due to failing a class, sickness, injury, or excessive absences. Limiting the number of spots ensures that we have every spot filled when it comes time to go to contest. The second show is performed at games after contest season is over. This show incorporates every eligible band student.

**What is the process for earning a spot in the competition show?**

Students will perform a series of marching and playing sequences that are evaluated by the band staff. The staff looks at 5 captions: Upper Body, Lower Body, Posture, Music, and Pulse. Students are put into one of two categories: 1. Should have their own marching spot or 2. Should share a spot with another band member. Each band student will then either be assigned to a spot in the show or assigned to share a spot. Those students that share a spot in the show will be evaluated before each performance to determine which of the two students will perform that performance. This evaluation will include playing and marching a portion of the show. Attendance also plays a factor in earning and keeping a marching spot.

**Tell us about the Friday night football games.**

On most Fridays from the end of August until the beginning of November there will be a football game. The students will be given a set time to meet in the band hall. There will be inspections of uniforms, costumes, and equipment before the buses are boarded for away games and before walking in formation to the stadium for home games. The meeting time is usually very soon after school ends and the students should have already eaten dinner. (see Game Night Dinners). The end of the football game does not mean the band is released. If we are at home the band waits until the stands are almost empty before they walk in formation back to the band hall. If we are at an away game all members must board the buses and return

to Alamo Heights. Once in the band hall, all students should put their uniforms back on the racks, and take all of their belongings home. This includes water jugs to be washed.

### **What if the football team makes playoffs?**

If the football team makes the playoffs the band is expected to play at the games. This usually includes a game during Thanksgiving break, so plan accordingly. The schedule for these games will be different from the regular season so watch for directions to come from the band directors.

### **What is “Game Night Dinners” (GND) ?**

As we mentioned, there is not much time between the end of the school day and the time the band members are to report back to school for inspections etc. on the night of a football game. The Band Association offer the service of serving dinner so the kids can eat at school and not rush back and forth to home or to a restaurant. This meal is optional and is an additional fee. There will be an opportunity to sign up for this meal and pay for it at the Band Registration and at Meet the Band Night.

### **What if it rains at a football game?**

Raingear is provided for the band members during a game or competition. The band is expected to attend the game even if it is raining. The district safety regulations are in effect so if there is lightning detected the game will be delayed, paused, rescheduled, or called complete.

### **What is Winter Guard?**

Winter Guard refers to the competition season for the Color Guard that follows the Marching season. These contests are held indoors and separate routines for groups as well as individuals are learned and performed.

### **What are Marching Contests?**

Besides football games, the fall is all about the marching competitions for the Alamo Heights Band. These competitions are held on Saturdays. They are comprised of UIL and other marching competitions. For the contests the students will meet at the band hall at an instructed time, they will rehearse, and then load the buses to travel to the competition site. After the final awards are announced the band will reload the buses and return to the Alamo Heights band hall. Once again we recommend that you wait for a phone call from your student telling you that they have been released before you go to the school to pick them up or watch for a message on Twitter. This all means very long days for our band kids! Hydration and nutrition are always a top consideration. You will be notified when a sack meal needs to be sent or if a meal is being provided. We highly recommend that you volunteer to chaperone one or more of these trips. It is truly amazing to see what it takes to put on one of these shows and to see how amazing our students are. You will have a newfound respect for your student and how hard he/she works.

### **What is UIL – and the State Marching Competition?**

The University Interscholastic League--UIL--governs the state marching contests. The UIL has strict rules concerning the conduct and procedures to advance to the state competitions. The schools in the state of Texas are divided into classes based on student population. Alamo Heights High School is “class 5A”, the class for the second-largest schools. In order to make the state competition more manageable, class 5A schools have their marching competitions in odd numbered years, i.e., 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015. Every year the UIL contest begins with the regional marching competition. Alamo Heights is in region 12. The bands are given a rating of Division I, II, III, IV, or V. These are not 1st, 2nd, 3rd place awards. All bands receiving a Division I rating proceed to the Area competition if it is a state advancing year. 2014 is not a state year for Alamo Heights HS, so we will not have another marching contest after the UIL Region Marching Contest on October 18. We will have a contest on Oct. 4, 11, and 18. Please plan to be in attendance at all of these contests as we are a team, and an individual absence affects the entire band.

### **Do the band members who play percussion have extra competitions?**

Yes. The Alamo Heights percussion also competes in percussion competitions. These are in addition to the full marching band competitions. You are encouraged to attend these contests and cheer on our great percussion group. Each group is also ranked against other groups in their division and trophies are awarded at the end of the night.

### **What is the March-Through-Heights?**

This is one of our major fundraising events of the fall. Students raise money through pledges as well as selling mini-concerts at houses along the marching route. This allows students to raise money for their trip and band expenses.

### **What is the Concert Season?**

Concert season takes place mostly in the spring semester but begins immediately following marching season. Concert season is the time when most musical training takes place and each band’s performance rating during the UIL concert contest is the basis for evaluating the entire band program. Band members will be placed in one of three bands based on the number of students and their playing abilities. Tryouts are held in late fall. Concerts and contests are held throughout the spring semester.

### **Are private lessons necessary?**

Private lessons are not required, but strongly recommended. They are offered on every instrument, pending instructor availability and are conducted at Alamo Heights HS. Our instructors are professional players or advanced-level university students who are contracted through AHHS. The lessons are \$25 per session. Students with the benefits of private lessons not only elevate their own play but the musicality of the band as a whole.

**What are sectionals?**

Sectionals are held during concert season. This is an extra rehearsal each week for the students and is assigned by instrument. It is very helpful for the directors and clinicians to have the opportunity to work on music with one section at a time. Sectionals are scheduled by the directors and are mandatory.

**What are All-Region, Area, & State try-outs?**

This is an individual contest. Individual band members of the Wind Ensemble are required to tryout and members of the Symphonic and Concert band are strongly encouraged to tryout. Pre-selected tryout music is available to all students beginning in July. Region Concert Band tryouts are held in December. The students passing the first round of tryouts will perform with the all-region band. The top students at the region audition attain area status and therefore are eligible to compete for the All-State band. This competition is usually held in early January. Band members who become All-State musicians assemble in San Antonio in February to perform at the Texas Music Educators Association convention. The bands and orchestras made up of these wonderful musicians represent the top ½ of 1% of the high school band members in the state of Texas. Advancing to All-State is the highest individual honor a high school musician can achieve.

**What are UIL Solo Contests?**

This contest gives the band students another opportunity to progress musically. Participation in this event is not mandatory for any band member but it is highly encouraged. The contest is usually held in February. Each member will choose a piece of music with his/her lesson teacher that is appropriate to their level of play. The students are given a rating of I-V, I being the highest level. If a student chooses a piece of music from an approved list, performs that piece from memory, and receives a rating of I, that student will have the option of progressing to the state UIL solo competition usually held in late May.

**What is UIL Concert & Sight-reading Contest?**

The UIL Concert contests are held in April. The concert bands travel to a local high school where they perform and are critiqued and graded by UIL judges. Each band performs their concert music followed by the sight-reading portion of the contest. If you have never been to the contest, you will be amazed during sight-reading. The band is given music that neither they nor their directors have seen or heard and have approximately 8 – 10 minutes to talk their way through the piece. They then receive a “one-time-shot” at their performance. These contests are open to the public and are fascinating to watch.

**What is the Spring Trip?**

Each year the Alamo Heights band offers its members the chance to travel on a spring trip. The trip is always in conjunction with a performance of some kind. The band has traveled to the Texas Coast, Disney World, and Hawaii. This trip has an additional fee and is not mandatory but is encouraged. The directors try to rotate

the trip from year to year. One year it is an instate trip, the next year it is an out of state trip.

**What is the Band Banquet?**

A Band Banquet is held each spring near the end of the school year. It is a time to gather and celebrate the year, but more importantly to thank the senior members for the time they spent with the band and wish them good luck in their future endeavors. Tickets are sold to the band members and their parents and siblings. The attire for this event is dressy but not formal.

**What are spring try-outs for?**

Late April and early May are very busy times for all band members. Try outs for fall band placement, drum majors, band officers, and color guard all take place at this time. Results are given before the end of the school year.

**Is spirit wear available?**

Yes, Spirit wear is available for parents and other fans. We have shirts, caps, and much more. These items will be for sale at most parent meetings. It is a great way to show your support for the band.

**What do I need to purchase on my own?**

You will be responsible for purchasing the following items on your own:

- Black socks for marching uniform (at least calf high)
- Cleaning supplies for instruments
- Valve oil, slide grease, reeds
- Burp and lyre if applicable
- Metronome/Tuner

**Where can I find more information?**

More information about the band, including policies on grading and attendance, is in the Alamo Heights High School Band Handbook. This can be found online at [www.alamoheightsband.com](http://www.alamoheightsband.com).