

Houston County High School Band

Chaperone Instructions

1) Responsibilities

As band parents, we are occasionally called to make the ultimate sacrifice...parent chaperone. This job is not for the weak individual; it takes a great deal of nerve to climb on a school bus with 35 to 40 high school students! In reality, this is probably one of the most enjoyable parts of being a band parent. A parent chaperone must come equipped with at least three attributes and they are a keen eye, a sense of humor and the acceptance and tolerance that no, you haven't seen everything!

Chaperones are basically another set of eyes for the band staff. We can't be everywhere all the time. You are our greatest asset when we are spread thin. Your biggest responsibility to the students is their safety. Kids are invincible or least they think they are. They take chances and sometimes don't consider consequences before they act. **THIS IS NORMAL TEENAGE BEHAVIOR!** You can help the band staff by trying to avert kids from making mistakes. This sometimes takes all the psychic powers you have. You must be able to read minds and have eyes in the back of your head.

BASIC RULES TO REMEMBER

- ❖ All school rules and policies are in effect for the duration of any trip taken by the band.
- ❖ The bus driver is **THE BOSS** while we are on the road. Chaperones do not have the authority to stop a bus while in transit. This rule is from the Transportation Department at the Board of Education.
- ❖ Chaperones should spread themselves out through the bus. Chances are, nothing is going to happen in the front of the bus.
- ❖ Students may talk as long as the noise level does not become a distraction for the driver. NO radio, tape player or CD player is to be used without headphones. No screaming or yelling.
- ❖ Everyone should remain seated at all times. There is to be no talking, shouting or gesturing out the bus windows. Windows should remain up as we depart a stadium or school and should remain up until we are out of that particular community.
- ❖ Public display of affection is always a very uncomfortable subject. However, school policy addresses this issue. We are to let these kids have fun, but it is not our responsibility to help them through puberty. If you are uncomfortable with a situation, discreetly ask the individuals to put a little distance between them. If the situation continues, inform a staff member and we will take care of it.
- ❖ Students are not to change buses for any reason. The bus they ride on to the game should be the same one that they ride back to the school. Only Mr. Shaw or the staff can reassign a student to another bus. A sign up list will be passed around the bus. We will check roll prior to leaving the stadium. Students are to make a note on the list if they are riding home with their

parents. The buses will not leave until everyone is accounted for. The buses are used to transport band students and parent chaperones. Students are not allowed to bring friends or relatives on trips. We cannot be legally responsible for them.

- ❖ **State Law will only allow us to release students to their parents.** Aunts, Uncles, Brothers, Sisters and Neighbors are unacceptable. We must also have written documentation that a student is leaving with their parents **PRIOR** to our departure.
- ❖ When we arrive at a location, equipment crew may exit the bus as soon as it stops. All other students must remain on the bus until instructed to exit. While at away ballgames, chaperones should escort students to restroom facilities and should spread out between the bleachers and concession stand to monitor our students. Unfortunately, in some communities band students can become targets of local thugs. It is our job to insure that our kids remain safe and don't make any poor decisions.
- ❖ It is up to the driver as to whether food and drink are allowed on the bus. We must keep the buses clean. No trash should be left on the bus when we arrive back at the school. Students are responsible for keeping the buses clean because if we don't, we have to eliminate the problem.

2) Discipline

There is a misconception that chaperones are responsible for discipline and punishment of the rule breakers. This could not be further from the truth. In reality, the only student on the trip you can actually punish for breaking a rule is your own child. Only certified Board or Education staff actually has the authority to discipline school students. It is a sad fact that legal issues make it important that we remember this fact. If someone were to take issue with this, it would be the Band Staff that would ultimately be held responsible.

3) Decision Making

The Band Staff will make all decisions concerning the group. It is our job. We must remember that all decisions do not just effect those around us, but the entire group as well. It can be as small as "Can I go across the street to that restaurant? It is not as crowded." This seems harmless until a student steps off the curb in front of a car. A chaperone can make the call, the director can get sued and lose his job. Other scenarios set up just as easily. Here are some basic rules about decision making:

- a) We cannot stop five or six buses just for one person to go to the bathroom.
- b) There is no such thing as a five-minute pit stop. If we stop the group, we are looking at a minimum of thirty minutes.
- c) If you go across the street to get you child a hamburger, you better bring back 199 more.
- d) Kids **WILL** play you against the staff; it is their nature! They **WANT** you to tell them they can do something we said they couldn't do!
- e) What seems big to you may seem small to them and vice-versa.
- f) High school students are noisy, they can't help it! If you don't like noise, please don't get on a band bus!

- e) **REMAIN CALM!** Kids love to get a rise out of adults...it's a game.
- f) You cannot demand respect out of today's kids; you have to earn it. I have learned this the hard way. They are not like we were at their age. They are neither scared nor intimidated by adult authority.

In conclusion, let the kids have fun, but there must be limits. Use your good judgement and when in doubt, ask a staff member.