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Band Handbook

2009-2010

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to one of the most exciting, enjoyable and educational experiences in which you can participate—**THE BAND!** I am **Mr. Richardson** and I hold a Bachelor's degree in Instrumental and General Music Education from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. I am glad that you have chosen to be in band and I am looking forward to an excellent year of making and enjoying music.

This school year you will be learning, or continuing to learn, how to play a musical instrument and how to perform music in a group. There are three important factors that will help you to develop as a musician and be successful in band:

1. **ATTENDANCE**. A band is a team, so if one part is missing, then it hurts the whole team. Students must have regular attendance at all rehearsals and lessons in order to learn the music and stay on track with the rest of the band. We need you in class to make music together!
2. **PRACTICE**. Learning an instrument is like learning to ride a bike—it takes practice! Just like athletes, musicians must practice regularly in order to prepare for concerts and be successful. Students will keep a written practice journal which will be turned in each week for a grade. Practice is your homework in band. More information on the practice journal is included in this handbook.
3. **ATTITUDE**. If you believe you will be successful, you're probably right. If you believe you will fail, you're probably right. A positive attitude will not only help you be successful in band, but it will also make it more enjoyable. Give your best effort at all times and you will be amazed at how far you will go and how much fun you will have!

We have several performances to look forward to this year. The band will prepare and perform music for both the winter and spring concert. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in a solo music festival as well as an honors band. Additionally, students may have a special performance opportunity such as playing for a school assembly, church, or other venue.

Parents, your support and encouragement are very important to your child's success and enjoyment in band. Learning a musical instrumental is a process and can be challenging and difficult at times. Your encouragement along the way will help your child to stay motivated and positive. I encourage you to reward them for their practice time and hard work. Please feel free to contact me about your child's progress as we both want them to be successful and enjoy their experience in band.

Let's have a great year!

Sincerely,

Kent Richardson



OVERVIEW OF THE BAND PROGRAM

Junior Band

The Junior Band is comprised of beginning band students. In Junior Band we start at the very beginning with learning how to assemble your instrument, produce a characteristic sound and care for your instrument. We also learn how to read and write music. Lessons are taught in a group setting and emphasis is placed on learning the elements of music, playing in a group and having fun!

Senior Band

The Senior Band is comprised of intermediate and advanced band students. In Senior Band we continue to focus on developing a characteristic sound and improving instrument techniques. A greater emphasis is placed on reading music, performing as an ensemble and also as a soloist. The music is more challenging and we work very hard while having fun through the process!

Jazz Band

The Jazz Band is open to all intermediate and advanced band students. This is an elective group that students may participate in outside of school. We meet once a week in the evenings. Students will explore a variety of music styles and are introduced to music improvisation. More information will be sent home in your child's band folder in the Fall.

Honor Band

The *Band For Today* Honor Band is made up of invited 6th, 7th and 8th grade students. The Honor Band is a full day of sectional and ensemble rehearsals, culminating in an afternoon performance. Students are selected based upon attendance, attitude, ability and citizenship. The day is committed to the highest quality of instruction and performance and a variety of music is selected which makes for an exciting and challenging experience.

Solo Festival

Every March, *Band For Today* hosts a Solo Festival for students. This festival involves students playing a solo before a judge. The students are rated on pitch, rhythm, technique, and presentation. First, second, and third places receive either a gold, silver or bronze medal and perfect scores with the solo memorized receive an engraved trophy! This is a great way for students to take a little more responsibility for their own improvement as young musicians.

Concerts and Performance Opportunities

All students will participate in three concerts during the year:

- Winter Concert in December
- Solo and Chamber Concert in March
- Spring Concert in May

Students are required to wear a white shirt, black pants and shoes or a school uniform for concerts.

In addition to these concerts, ALL band students will have an opportunity to perform the *Star Spangled Banner* at a **Kane County Cougars** baseball game in the spring! Senior Band students will also have an opportunity to perform at a **Chicago Wolves** hockey game and participate in the *Trills and Thrills* music festival at **Six Flags Great America!**

It is an exciting year of music, concerts, festivals and performances! Information about each event including dates, times and locations will be sent home in your child's band folder.

PROFESSIONAL MISSION STATEMENT

My professional mission is to develop purpose, discipline and excellence in students through music. I will provide a positive music education experience that will nurture the musical intelligence of each child and cultivate comprehensive musicianship through teamwork, critical thinking and meaningful experiences.

OBJECTIVES OF THE BAND PROGRAM

In band, student's will:

- Explore the elements of music through performance.
- Experience music through music-making, listening and appreciation.
- Cultivate comprehensive musicianship through teamwork, critical thinking and meaningful experiences to become a well-rounded musician.

In addition to these musical objectives, students will:

- Develop critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- Discover meaning and relevance by making practical use of skills and processes.
- Express themselves, their ideas, thoughts and emotions in a constructive and healthy manner.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS, RULES AND CONSEQUENCES

In order to be successful in band and enjoy the year, I expect myself and students to:

- Be professional at all times.
- Be respectful to others, yourself, our instruments and music.
- Give our very best every day.

Our rules will allow us to accomplish our goals and achieve our best. Rules are actually choices:

1. I am on time for rehearsal.
2. I am prepared with my instrument, music and materials.
3. I will participate willingly and eagerly.
4. I listen to instructions the first time and follow directions carefully.
5. I have a positive attitude.

There are positive and negative consequences for our choices and actions:

- Verbal praise (*Thank you for being on time John*) or verbal warning (*John, you are late*).
- Earn points or lose points towards your rehearsal participation grade.
- Receive or lose rewards (stickers, prizes, treats).
- Send a good note home or make a phone call to parents to discuss a poor choice.
- Have an enjoyable year in band or a miserable one. The choice is yours!

BAND GRADING POLICY

Grades are not given; grades are earned! You begin the year with zero points and will earn points for your work throughout the semester. Your final grade will be determined by the number of points you earn divided by the total points possible. Missing work will not lower your grade, but you will not earn any points. Completing your work on time and to the best of your ability will earn you more points and positively affect your grade. Every point counts!

Participation (5 points each rehearsal)

As a member of a performing ensemble, our rehearsal time is very valuable. Therefore, attendance and preparation at rehearsal is a must. This means that you are on time to rehearsal (1 point), with your instrument ready to play (1 point), and your music folder, stand, and pencil (1 point). You will also participate by answering questions and completing in class work (1 point). Lastly, you must bring a positive attitude that contributes to the class (1point). Your grade will be determined by the points you earn divided by the total number possible.

Practice Journal (20 points each week)

In order to be successful in this class, you should practice 3-5 days each week for about 20-30 minutes each session. Each student will need a bound notebook to keep their practice journal in for the entire year. All assignments, practice records and notes will be recorded in this journal. Parents must sign the practice journal each week in order to receive credit. The practice journal will be checked at the beginning of each lesson. Students who meet their weekly goal will earn points as well as cool prizes and treats. A sample practice journal has been included on the next page.

Performance (100 points each)

You will have three major concerts this year. Each concert is worth 100 points, which is one whole letter grade. One missed concert means that you cannot earn higher than a 90% in the class. After each concert, you will also turn in a written reflection of the group's performance.

Playing Tests (50 points each)

You will have eight playing tests during the year. Each playing test will have 5 criteria worth 10 points each. You will also complete a self evaluation after each playing test.

Written Work (100 points total)

Throughout the year you will be given a variety of assignments to demonstrate your musical knowledge and creativity. Details and instructions for these assignments will be given as they are assigned. They are as follows:

Theory Assignment #1	10 points	Recording Reflection	10 points
Theory Assignment #2	10 points	Composition Project	10 points
Theory Assignment #3	10 points	Music History Project	10 points
Theory Assignment #4	10 points	Written Test #1	10 points
Concert Reflection	10 points	Written Test #2	10 points

Extra Credit (25 points total)

You may complete up to 25 points of extra credit by completing extra assignments. Extra assignments are worth 5 points each and include concert reflections, music projects and additional performances.

Grade Scale

The grade scale is consistent with the school grading scale.

SAMPLE STUDENT PRACTICE JOURNAL

10/05/2009

Write today's lesson date at the top.

Quote "Music can change the world." - Beethoven

A quote or question for the week.

- Task 1 Warm-up with #52
- Task 2 Practice Ode to Joy measures 9-12
Play the whole song 3 times with no mistakes
- Task 3 Memorize solo Sawmill Creek

These are the assignments from the class lesson. They will be written on the board.

Goal 4 days of practice, 25 minutes each day
Total of 100 minutes!

Your practice goal for the week.

When before/after homework before/after dinner
before/after TV other time

When do you plan on practicing?

Day

Write down what you practice each day. Be specific.

Record the # of minutes.

Monday	Warm-up #52, Ode to Joy m9-12 Played whole song 2 times no mistakes	25 minutes
Tuesday	no practice	0 minutes
Wednesday	Warm-up #52, memorized 8 measures of Sawmill Creek, Played Ode to Joy 1 time	30 minutes
Thursday	short practice, no warm-up, Played Ode to Joy 3 times made mistake in measure 11	15 minutes
Friday	no practice	0 minutes
Saturday	no practice	0 minutes
Sunday	Warm-up # 52, Played Ode to Joy 3 times Memorized 16 measures of Sawmill Creek	35 minutes

Total Minutes 105

Add up the total.

Write down how ready you are for your next lesson.

8.5!

Jane Smith

Have a parent sign it.

FOR BAND PARENTS: HOW CAN I HELP?

Playing a band instrument involves an investment of both time and money. In order for your child to be successful it is important that you offer encouragement and support. They will catch on to some things very easily. There will be times when they find a particular technique or concept to be difficult to learn. We must understand that learning to play an instrument is a process and therefore takes patience on our part.

Besides giving your child morale support, you can help them to develop good practice habits. Here are some suggestions on how to help them achieve good practice habits:

- Have a set time to practice each day. Help your child make a wise choice about when this time will be: after school, after homework, before/after dinner.
- Provide an adequate place to practice. Your child should have a straight chair to sit on, music stand and good lighting. Practicing in the living room or out in the open will help build confidence. Also, help make practice time free of interruptions: no tv, computer, cell phone, radio, or other distractions.
- Ask your child what they are learning in band. Ask them to play a class lesson or song for you.
- Reward your child each day for practicing. If they practice before dinner, then give them a special dessert. If they practice at night, then they can watch their favorite TV show. If they are going to play with friends, suggest they bring their instrument. Please contact me for more ideas!
- Make music a family activity. Accompany your child on piano. Take them to hear a concert. Purchase recordings of good musical performances. Please contact me for suggestions!

HOW TO PRACTICE

This is the practice method that I use in class to practice music:

1. **STUDY IT!** Choose a small section of music to focus on (4-8 measures).
2. **CLAP IT!** Clap and count the rhythms out loud.
3. **POINT IT!** Point and name each of the notes.
4. **MOVE IT!** Position the fingers or slide for the notes.
5. **PLAY IT!** Play the music three times with no errors before moving on to the next section.

Remember:

- Start each line slowly
- Tap your heel to keep the beat.
- Repeat the part of the line that is difficult three times correctly.
- Make notes in pencil on your music.
- Increase the tempo only after you can play it perfectly.

MUSIC ADVOCACY'S TOP TEN FOR PARENTS

1. In a 2000 survey, 73 percent of respondents agree that teens who play an instrument are less likely to have discipline problems.

- *Americans Love Making Music – And Value Music Education More Highly Than Ever, American Music Conference, 2000.*

2. Students who can perform complex rhythms can also make faster and more precise corrections in many academic and physical situations, according to the Center for Timing, Coordination, and Motor Skills.

- *Rhythm seen as key to music's role in human intellectual development, Center for Timing, Coordination, and Motor Skills, 2000.*

3. A ten-year study indicates that students who study music achieve higher test scores, regardless of socioeconomic background.

- *Dr. James Catterall, UCLA.*

4. A 1997 study of elementary students in an arts-based program concluded that students' math test scores rose as their time in arts education classes increased.

- *"Arts Exposure and Class Performance," Phi Delta Kappan, October, 1998.*

5. First-grade students who had daily music instruction scored higher on creativity tests than a control group without music instruction.

- *K.L. Wolff, The Effects of General Music Education on the Academic Achievement, Perceptual-Motor Development, Creative Thinking, and School Attendance of First-Grade Children, 1992.*

6. In a Scottish study, one group of elementary students received musical training, while another other group received an equal amount of discussion skills training. After six (6) months, the students in the music group achieved a significant increase in reading test scores, while the reading test scores of the discussion skills group did not change.

- *Sheila Douglas and Peter Willatts, Journal of Research in Reading, 1994.*

7. According to a 1991 study, students in schools with arts-focused curriculums reported significantly more positive perceptions about their academic abilities than students in a comparison group.

- *Pamela Aschbacher and Joan Herman, The Humanitas Program Evaluation, 1991.*

8. Students who are rhythmically skilled also tend to better plan, sequence, and coordinate actions in their daily lives.

- *"Casily Column," TCAMS Professional Resource Center, 2000.*

9. In a 1999 Columbia University study, students in the arts are found to be more cooperative with teachers and peers, more self-confident, and better able to express their ideas. These benefits exist across socioeconomic levels.

- *The Arts Education Partnership, 1999.*

10. College admissions officers continue to cite participation in music as an important factor in making admissions decisions. They claim that music participation demonstrates time management, creativity, expression, and open-mindedness.

- *Carl Hartman, "Arts May Improve Students' Grades," The Associated Press, October, 1999.*

COMMUNICATION TO PARENTS

The Band Folder

The band folder is the best way for me to communicate with you. I will send all information home via your child's band folder. Practice journal, assignments, and other notes will be sent home every week through the band folder. Dates, times and locations regarding upcoming concerts and performances will also be sent home in your child's folder.

It is essential that you check your child's band folder every week!

Email

I will email parents as is necessary to discuss your child's progress in band. A good note, a practice tip or a word of encouragement from time to time can be expected. If your child forgets their band instrument, I will send a reminder so that you can help them remember their instrument for their next lesson.

Phone

I will call parents as is necessary to discuss a specific issue or to ask a specific question regarding your child's progress in band.

CONTACTING MR. RICHARDSON

Email

During the school year I will check my email everyday Monday thru Friday. Please allow me 24 hours to reply to your email. If you have a question about how to help your child be successful in band, please contact me right away. Questions about instruments, practicing and any other concerns related to band are invited. **The best way to contact me is via email!**

Phone

If you have a specific question that you would like to discuss, you may call our office and leave a message. I will return your phone call within a week's time. Please try contacting me via email so that I can offer a quicker response by phone.

Website

You may also contact me through my website. This will send a message directly to my email. The website contains information for students and parents as well as this handbook. I will also post upcoming concert and performance information as a reminder. Lastly, there are videos and music selections that you and your child can enjoy at home.

A note on internet safety: Please monitor your child's use on the internet. I am only responsible for the content on my website. If your child leaves my website area, I cannot control the content that is available from other websites. I encourage you to explore the resources on my website along with your child.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns you have regarding your child's progress or the band. Along with you, I want to help your child be successful and have an enjoyable year in band!

Mr. Richardson

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PLEASE RETURN THIS PAGE!

I have read the Band Handbook carefully and understand the information it contains. I am aware of what is expected of me and will carry out my responsibilities to the best of my ability.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Director Signature Kent Richardson Date 8/24/09

STUDENT INFORMATION

Name _____ School _____

Instrument _____ Grade _____ This will be my _____ year in band.

PARENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Communication will generally come via email and your child's band folder. Telephone is only for an emergency or extreme instance. Please complete your contact information below:

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

MEDIA WAIVER

Throughout the year I plan to photograph our concerts and events and record audio and video of the band for listening and reflecting on our performances. By participating in this program, parents give permission for all written work, photos, audio and video to be used in school related activities and promoting the band program. If for any reason parents do not wish for their child to be photographed, videotaped or have their first name published, please contact Mr. Richardson.

YES I CAN HELP!

Your support is important to your child's success as well as the music program as a whole. Your help would be greatly appreciated for **one** of our events or activities this year. Please indicate your availability below:

- ___ Yes! I am available to help during the evenings for music concerts and programs.
- ___ Yes! I am available to help during the school day for music events and activities.
- ___ Yes! I would like to help promote our music concerts and programs.
- ___ No, I am not available to help.

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