

PORTER RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL



STUDENT/PARENT BAND HANDBOOK

Preface

Dear Band Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Porter Ridge Middle School Band Program! First, I would like to commend each of you on your decision to be a part of our program. Whether it is your first, second, or last year, you will soon observe that by participating in the Porter Ridge Middle School Band, you will be bestowed with numerous scholastic opportunities that have never been offered to you before. You will make friends and memories that will last a lifetime; you will achieve outstanding musical accomplishments; you will learn the value of hard work and its rewards; you will contribute to something superior. Even though it might be hard to perceive now, all of these experiences will serve as an important role in your future as you continue on to high school, graduate, pursue post-secondary education, and enter the workforce.

As a member of the Porter Ridge Middle School Band, you get the opportunity to learn a new language, find ways to express yourself and connect with others, and realize the joys and academic benefits of a musical education. Strive to make the best of every day! In any organization with such a large membership, it will take the cooperation of *ALL* its members to achieve and maintain the high standards and expectations, which have been established in its past. Dedication and hard work from the director, students, parents, and administrators will be essential, if the band is to be successful in its endeavors.

In considering all of these statements, please begin to read the following handbook, which outlines the policies and procedures of the Porter Ridge Middle School Band program. If at any time there are any questions of what is expected of you as a parent or member of this program, consult the handbook or ask the director. **Please understand that the contents of this handbook are subject to change.**

As the year progresses, we encourage each of you to become as involved as possible in the band program. Remember, this is your program. Teachers are only here to teach and lead you. Through hard work, practice, and the display of a good attitude, you will see an improvement in musicianship and work ethic that will be with you for life.

Porter Ridge Middle School Contact Information

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Program Purpose

Through focused collaborative planning and implementation, the Porter Ridge Middle School Fine Arts Department will provide all students the opportunity to excel in visual arts, choral arts, and instrumental music. In band, students will develop the necessary skills to become proficient on a musical instrument, enabling them to demonstrate proper technique such as posture, breathing, tone, intonation, articulation, phrasing, dynamics, and musical expression. Through the aforementioned process and learning about different aspects of music, this program hopes to instill in each student an appreciation for music that will encourage them to constantly be involved in music throughout their secondary and post-secondary educations and life thereafter.

Program Description

The Porter Ridge Middle School Band program is for any student at Porter Ridge Middle School who has a strong interest in learning about music and how to play a musical instrument. As a part of the program, students will be involved in a number of musical activities including performing on a daily basis in class and performing at different venues for parents, administrators, and community members. Students will also be given the opportunity to learn about music history and music theory, to listen, analyze, and evaluate different genres of traditional and contemporary music, and to develop their creativity, social, communication, and problem-solving skills. Band courses will be held each day of the school week during the designated class times, and possibly after school for important rehearsals, which will be announced well in advance.

Program Goals and Expectations

1. Students will develop the ability to produce a beautiful, full, and vibrant sound on their particular instrument by understanding concepts such as:

- Posture
- Air Production & Air Flow
- Embouchure Development
- Tone Production
- Aural Identification
- Intonation
- Resistance and Resonance
- Balance
- Concept of Sound

2. Students will become masters of their instrument by improving and developing confidence, consistency, and proficiency in the following areas:

- Rhythm (timing, subdivision)
- Sound/Tone Production
- Register Connection
- Flexibility
- Range
- Stamina/Endurance
- Finger Dexterity
- Dynamic Control
- Transposition
- Sight Reading
- Improvisation/Composition
- Musicianship: phrasing, expressiveness, style, tone color, and dynamic contrast

3. Students will be able to describe, develop, and enhance their concept of the qualities that create a good sound on their instrument, and what one must do to be able to produce that sound, using the criteria from Goal 1 and the following resources:

- Attending optional performances outside of those given by the band program
- Listening to recordings of solo performances
- Listening to recordings of ensemble performances with instrumental solos
- Participating in classroom discussions and master classes

4. Students will communicate, observe, practice, and rehearse with other students in the ensemble, both individually and in small chamber groups, in order to promote the creation of great music, friendships, and the exchange of helpful information.

5. Students will develop the confidence and knowledge to be creative, musical, and accurate when interpreting classical and contemporary music in both practice and performance.

6. Students will become well-rounded musicians by learning about various aspects of music related to music history, music theory, traditional and contemporary music, different musical genres, and by applying music to content areas outside the arts.

7. Students will establish the skills and techniques to be successful, both academically and musically, in the band program, school community, and 21st-century workforce through the following:

- Time Management
- Organization
- Problem Solving
- Developing Creative and Probable Solutions
- Advanced Preparation
- Professional & Timely Communication
- Increased Motivation, Perseverance, and Self-Initiative
- Global Awareness



Performance Ensembles

Below is a course outline and description of the performance ensembles that are offered to students as a member of the Porter Ridge Middle School Band program.

COURSE OUTLINE (ALL ENSEMBLES)

- Students will perform at 2-3 concert's per year and **may** meet at least 2-3 times as a full ensemble, during or after school, before each concert.
- Students will learn about their instrument, music notation and basic music theory.
- Students will learn primary and advanced techniques of playing and properly maintaining their assigned instrument.
- Students will learn the value of working together to support group learning.
- Students will learn the basics of a good and efficient practice regime.
- Students will perform music relevant to their music performance grade level.

BEGINNING BAND/SIXTH GRADE BAND

Ensemble for sixth graders to learn instruments and perform together, focusing on fundamental skills and diverse beginner music from method books and concert band literature.

SEVENTH GRADE BAND

Intermediate ensemble for seventh graders emphasizing instrument technique, skill expansion from sixth grade, and Grade 2+ concert band repertoire. Students may perform at the NC district Music Performance Adjudication (MPA).

EIGHTH GRADE BAND

Advanced ensemble for eighth graders exploring middle school concert band literature, fostering musical appreciation, and requiring dedicated practice for skill enhancement. Opportunities may include performances at the NC district Music Performance Adjudication (MPA).

SMALL ENSEMBLES

Throughout the year, students may participate in small groups to enhance tone, intonation, balance, listening skills, and confidence. They learn individual responsibility and collaborative problem-solving while developing leadership and social skills.



Additional Band Opportunities

PRIVATE LESSONS

One on one, individual instruction with a professional musician is one of the most successful ingredients to individual achievement. Private lessons are also what allow ensembles to be exposed to more challenging band literature. It is because of these reasons that it is highly recommended for students to participate in private lessons. It is a general misconception that private lessons are set up for students who are “falling behind” or for those musicians that are “not as successful” on their instrument. While private lessons can still be highly beneficial in these cases, supplemental private lessons are designed and intended more for students that are advancing and proving success on their instrument. Private lessons may occur before, during, and after-school depending on the teacher’s availability. If you are interested in taking private lessons, or would like to learn more about this great opportunity, please ask the band director.

ALL-DISTRICT & ALL-STATE BANDS

Each year, ALL students will be encouraged to audition for the All-District and All-State Honor Bands. If a student does decide to audition, they will be required to play the following: selected scales, an instrumental solo, and a short excerpt to sight-read. Auditioning for these bands allow students to gain tremendous experience in learning a piece of music and performing in front of others. Whether a student auditions and makes the band or not, they should be extremely proud of the work and effort they put forth. In order for students to audition for one of these ensembles, students must receive approval from the band director. Often, students make it without realizing they would! Students who make these ensembles are considered some of the best middle school musicians in the county, district, and state. **NOTE: Please remember that if a student auditions, they must keep the weekend of the assigned clinics open. They are not allowed to audition if they know they cannot attend the clinics.**

Daily Attendance

If a student misses a day of school, it is the student’s responsibility to find out what they missed from the teacher, either before class, after school, or by email. If a student misses a test due to an absence, it is their responsibility to contact the teacher, in person or by email, to schedule a make-up time, either before or after school. All homework directly reflects the concepts taught in class. If you need assistance or tutoring, please talk to Mr. Dowell, before or after school.



Classroom Expectations

Success in any venture comes from 95% drive & effort and 5% talent & inspiration. It also comes from knowing what to do, how to do it, and the willingness to work over a long period of time to get the job done well. With this in mind, we hope each student will approach this band year with the desire to achieve and be successful in all that you do. Your attitude in class will determine your success. The following guidelines will point you in the direction of success:

1. Have your instrument, band binder, and other materials needed for class every day.
2. Play your instrument in class every day.
3. Remain engaged throughout instruction and show 100% effort at all times.
4. Practice at home every day - without this important element you cannot achieve success!
5. Successfully complete all playing assignments (pass-offs, scales, written assignments, etc.)
6. Perform in all performances given by the band throughout the school year.

Classroom Norms and Procedures

Due to the large number of students entering and leaving the band room area, everyone must enter and leave in an organized manner. It is important that students enter orderly, sit in their assigned seat, assemble their instrument carefully and quickly, and wait for further instruction. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. **Students will follow the same school/district-wide discipline plan while in band class, and any infractions will be communicated to the administration for discipline consequences.** As students come to band each day, they should follow these procedures:

1. Do NOT play your instrument until asked to do so.
2. Do NOT touch other student's instruments, including percussion equipment.
3. Do NOT bring food, gum, or candy into the band room.
4. Do NOT horseplay or run in the band room.
5. Do NOT lean on the music stands or walk on the chairs.
6. Students may not leave once class starts to get missing materials, and will lose points for being unprepared.
7. Follow the instructions on the board, once you have unpacked your instrument. These instructions should be completed by the time class begins.
8. Students must raise their hand and wait to be called upon.
9. The band director will end class by letting you know, verbally. DO NOT pack up unless instructed!
10. Everyone has end-of-class responsibilities:
 - a. All wind instruments are to quickly clean out their instruments, pack up their materials, and set the chairs/stands up for the next class.
 - b. Percussion students are responsible only for the percussion section, putting away their own materials, and then putting away the PRMS equipment in the proper place. No exceptions to where and how the equipment is stored!

Classroom Discipline

Because of the nature of this organization, band discipline, must be strict. Band students maintain a highly visible profile both at school and in the community. Poor performance or behavior can cast an unfavorable light on the entire band. Students will be held responsible for their actions, attitudes and performances. Students with severe or perpetual behavior problems will lose their privilege of being a band member. Continuous behavior problems will result in the student not being allowed to be a part of the ensemble the next school year.

After School Full Band Rehearsals

Because of the A/B Day schedule, many bands do not consistently meet as a full ensemble. In order to ensure everyone's parts fit together as the music needs, full band rehearsals may be necessary after school. Students and parents will be given at least a two-week notice of any after school rehearsals. Please schedule rides home well in advance. It is extremely crucial that every band member is present for these rehearsals and for us to be successful, since every part of the music is important. Students must remember to bring all materials and come with a positive, hardworking attitude so we can get a lot done in the small amount of time available.

School-Owned Instruments

Certain instruments may be too expensive to rent from the local music store, so they can be provided by the PRMS Band. The band issues the following instruments for use in the band classes: bass clarinet, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, French horn, euphonium, tuba, and many percussion instruments. Students who are assigned school instruments are responsible for filling out an Instrument Rental Contract and purchasing the required accessories. Students who damage school-owned instruments in any way will be required to pay for the damages. Students who lose a school instrument will be required to replace the instrument.

SmartMusic Software

SmartMusic is interactive music software that allows students to play along with accompaniments that assess and follow their practice sessions. It mimics the experience of performing with a real ensemble. All you need to use the software is a computer, internet access, a microphone, and an active email address. While a subscription is recommended for enhanced practice both at home and school, **this is not mandatory.** SmartMusic can significantly improve practice sessions, boost motivation, and contribute to overall success. For more information, visit www.smartmusic.com.

Classroom Materials

The first 3 items are needed the FIRST day of class

- ☐ Heavy-duty black 1" 3-ring binder with a clear front cover.
- ☐ 50 Non-glare page protectors.
- ☐ 3-ring pencil pouch.

- ☐ Working instrument with name tag on case.

Many cases look alike. Tags can be found at any music store or in the luggage department of a store. Write down the serial number of your instrument and keep a copy at home.

- ☐ Method Book. (*for their instrument*).

Essential Elements Book 1. Label with student's name.

- ☐ Pencils. *In pencil pouch. NO pens.*

- ☐ Metronome/Tuner Combination w/Microphone.

"Korg TM-60 Tuner and Metronome Combo with Clip on Microphone." Percussionist can get the metronome only without microphone. This can be purchased at Music & Arts or Amazon.

- ☐ Instrument Specific Items:

Flute: cleaning cloth & a cleaning rod.

Clarinet & Saxophone: cleaning swab, cork grease, mouthpiece brush, a reed guard (holds and protects 4 reeds), 2 boxes of Vandoren Reeds (Dark Blue Box)

Trumpet: valve oil, slide cream or grease, valve brushes, trumpet snake, & mouthpiece brush.

Horn: Farkas MDC Mouthpiece, rotor oil, slide cream or grease & mouthpiece brush.

Trombone: slide oil (Slide-O-Mix), small spray bottle, trombone snake, & mouthpiece brush.

Euphonium: valve oil, slide cream or grease, & mouthpiece brush.

Tuba: Conn Helleberg Tuba Mouthpiece, valve oil, mouthpiece brush.

Percussion: Evans RealFeel 6" Practice Pad, Vic-Firth Education Pack 2A (VIC-EP2A)

Classroom Materials

Students are expected to come prepared for class with all of their materials each day. Each student is responsible for having their instrument, pencil, and band binder. Participation in daily rehearsals is a requirement of every band member. Any school-owned method books and music that are issued throughout the year are issued as a textbook; if the method book or music is lost or damaged, it must be replaced at the cost of the student.

DAILY CLASSROOM SUPPLIES

The following school supplies will be **required** to accompany students each day to band class:

1. 1-inch Band Binder (for Band ONLY)
2. 50+ Glare Free Sheet Protectors (for sheet music)
3. Loose-leaf, notebook paper
4. Method Book
5. Pencils in pencil pouch in notebook
6. Metronome/Tuner w/Microphone (purchase from a local music store or Amazon)
7. Instrument and materials



INSTRUMENT

It is strongly recommended that you obtain an instrument for your child through renting one from a local music store. If you desire to purchase an instrument online or through a pawn shop, please consult with the band director before purchasing the instrument. The director will be able to let you know if it is a good brand to purchase. Even though this route may be cheaper, please be reminded that you “get what you pay for.” However, you obtain your child’s instrument, it must be in great playing condition. Please contact Music & Arts to learn about renting an instrument or getting a free repair quote on the instrument you have purchased. **Please make it a priority to have the repair completed before the first day of school!**

INSTRUMENT STORAGE

During the first few weeks of school, every child will be assigned a band locker. Due to limited space, some students may end up sharing a locker. Students will only store their instrument/accessories for band (no other school materials) in their assigned band locker, and will respect and properly use the lockers.

1. If the band room door is locked, take your instrument with you to first block. When the bell dismisses for second block, stop by the band room to drop off your materials.
2. Never move or open another person’s instrument case.
3. Never allow another person to play your instrument.

Instrument Care and Maintenance

Instruments must be taken home everyday for practice and security reasons. An instrument inspection may be conducted several times during the school year. Band students will receive a maintenance clinic early in the year and students will be expected to keep their instruments in good, clean working condition. **Every instrument case must have a name-tag and be clean and free from clutter.**

If a student has a problem with their instrument, they should bring this to the attention of a band director as soon as possible. The band director can do some repairs. If they cannot fix the problem, you will need to get your instrument repaired immediately. Many students have maintenance agreements through their local music store from where they purchased the instrument. **Please only allow professional instrument repair technicians to fix your child's instrument. Do not take it upon yourself to fix the instrument, as you may cause more damage and costly repairs.**

PROCESS FOR INSTRUMENT REPAIR WITH LIABILITY COVERAGE

- Student/parent needs to fill out the Instrument repair form your band director.
- Leave the completed form in the instrument case.
- Hand the instrument case to a band director and let them know it is prepared for repair. *We will not search lockers for instruments that need repair.*
- Music & Arts will pick up the instrument and make the necessary repairs.
- The music company will return the instrument upon completion to PRMS.

Please understand, we offer Porter Ridge Middle School to be used as a pick up and drop off point as a courtesy to families. This is an alternative to you, as a parent, having to take it somewhere yourself. If you choose to take it yourself to be repaired, that's fine. If you choose to allow Porter Ridge Middle to be your pick up and drop off point, please follow the above procedures. Thank you so much for your cooperation in this matter.

Our local recommendations for Instrument repair:

Music & Arts 8046 Providence Rd. Charlotte, NC 28226 704-341-0000	Charlotte Band Instrument Service 5920 Windy Knoll Lane Mint Hill, NC 28227 704-573-7319
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Grading Policy

GRADES ARE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING 4 AREAS:

20% Daily Grades:

Class Participation, having materials in class daily, taking instrument home.

20% Practice Charts:

Practicing at home, completing the practice chart, getting a parent/guardian signature, turning the practice chart in on time.

20% Pass-Offs:

Preparing and performing pass-off accurately and on time.

40% Performances & Formal Test:

Concert participation, written test, state contests, after school rehearsals, playing test.

Pass Off Information

"Success comes to those who work for it."

Frequently asked questions or misunderstandings about pass-offs

1. What is a pass-off?

- A pass-off is a short section, a scale, or an exercise that has been assigned to play individually for the teacher to evaluate a student's progress.

2. What order do I need to play my pass-off?

- The students are allowed to play pass-offs in any order if they keep to the deadline dates. For example, if Bb Concert scale is due on January 29 and Eb Concert scale is due on February 27 then the students are welcome to go on and pass-off the Eb Concert scale as long as they don't miss the deadline date for Bb Concert.

3. What will my grade be if I correctly play the pass-off by or before the deadline date?

- If the pass-off is passed off by the deadline date or before, then the student will receive a 100 for the grade.

4. What if I complete my pass-off late?

- For each WEEK that the pass-off is late there is a 5-point deduction from their grade. That is only 5 points per week, not day.
- If the student does not complete the pass-off by the deadline date, then the student receives a "0" for the grade until the pass-off is completed. Once the pass-off is completed, the grade will be changed in the grade book if we are still in the grading period.

5. What if I don't get my pass-off completed before the end of the grading period?

- If the pass-off isn't completed before the teacher's deadline to turn in grades for report cards, then the grade WILL NOT be changed and will remain a "0".
- Please remember that pass-offs are 20% of your student's grade. This is why it is imperative for your student to complete pass-offs on time.

6. What do I do if I need help on a pass-off?

- Students are welcome to come in before or after school for tutoring as long as they have set up a date/time with the director.
- Students can ask questions at the end of class.
- We encourage the students that are having trouble with the scales/rudiments to please ask questions (we aren't mind readers). We have found that sometimes middle school aged students are afraid to ask questions; please help encourage your child to let us know when they need help.

Practice Chart Information

"Success comes to those who work for it."

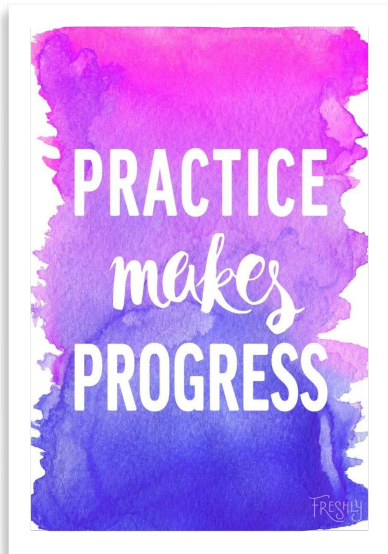
Frequently asked questions or misunderstandings about Practice Records

As we all know, practicing is an essential part of "getting better" at anything. Well, that remains true for band and regular practice is crucial for improving. To ensure consistent practice, band members are required to maintain practice records throughout the year.

WHY PRACTICE CHARTS

- ✓ Practice charts help parents stay involved in their child's practice routine.
- ✓ Students should aim to practice 20 minutes per day.
- ✓ Record daily practice times and ensure the chart is signed weekly by a parent or guardian.

FAQS ABOUT PRACTICE CHARTS



1. When are practice charts due?

- Practice charts must be turned in on the due date listed on the chart or on the board in the band room.

2. What if I forget to turn it in on time?

- Records turned in late will incur a 10-point deduction. No records will be accepted after one week late.

3. Can parents write practice times on something else?

- No, only the designated practice chart sheet is acceptable. Other forms will result in a grade of zero.

4. What if I lose my practice chart?

- Copies are in the band room and students can request one from their teacher.

5. What if I the parent does not sign the practice chart?

- Records must have a parent signature. If forgotten, students have one day to rectify this and will be counted as late.

6. What if I miss school due to illness or other reasons?

- Submit the practice chart on the first day back.

7. What if my instrument is being repaired or I'm unable to practice?

- Note the reason on the practice chart and submit it on time for grading with a parent/guardian signature.

Participation Grading Policy

"Success comes to those who work for it."

Weekly participation grades start at 100 for students who attend rehearsal with all materials and give 100% effort. Points are lost in the following ways.

Example: Joan does not have their instrument for class (-20pts) and is caught chewing gum (-10pts) on Tuesday. In Thursday's rehearsal Joan is caught talking out of turn 2 times (-10pts / -10pts.) Joan has lost 50 points this week giving them a participation grade of 50 for the week.

If you...	you lose...
do not have your instrument	20 participation points
do not have your band binder	10 participation points
are talking out of turn	10 participation points
have your phone out	10 participation points
do not have a pencil	10 participation points
use inappropriate language	10 participation points
are chewing gum or eating	10 participation points

Know how to rehearse and be prepared!



Concert Performances

Performances are one of the main reasons musicians are in existence today. A successful concert shows off the talents of the students and provides opportunities for confidence building. Each year, students will be involved in school and community performances, depending on the ensemble/class they are enrolled.

Concerts are the results of many weeks of preparation by the students. A performance is the finished product and culmination of many hours of hard work and practice. Every member plays an intricate role in the overall balance and performance success of our band. **Therefore, attendance at concerts is MANDATORY.** A calendar, along with reminders, will be sent home to inform parents of concerts and rehearsals. An unexcused absence from a performance will result in a performance grade of "0" that will be averaged into a student's nine-week grade. In the event there is an emergency and your child cannot make a concert, please inform the band directors. The student will then be responsible for completing the alternative assignment given to them by the band directors, in order to fulfill their grade for concert attendance.

CONCERT DAY REMINDERS:

1. Students should arrive at the concert venue...
 - a. Dressed in the appropriate concert attire.
 - b. With all necessary materials for the concert (instruments, music, reeds, etc.)
2. All audience members are asked to be very respectful to the performers on stage.
3. Students should be in attendance for the full duration of their concert performance.
4. No parents should go backstage.

Concert Etiquette

It is important to remember that concerts are cultural events, not sporting events. For this, concertgoers should act accordingly. It is proper to arrive before the concert is scheduled to begin, in order to take your seat. It is also proper to enter and exit the auditorium only between selections. Conversations should also be held between selections and during intermissions or set changes. The same applies for conversations. Applause is a polite gesture showing the audience's appreciation for the effort put forth by the performers. If the performance was particularly moving, it is okay for the audience to show their appreciation by great applause and by standing. When a concert includes multi-movement works, it is proper to hold applause until the end of the entire selection. These tips are for all concertgoers.

Concert Attire

In order for our student performers to look their best and uniform, we require all students to conform to the following concert attire. This attire will be worn at all band performances throughout their middle school career, unless otherwise stated. **You will need to acquire all of this on your own. Please make sure to purchase all concert attire, well in advance of your first performance.**

OPTION 1: Black button-down dress shirt (tucked in), black dress pants, black dress shoes, long black socks, black belt and optional black tie (long or bow tie)

OPTION 2: Black button-down dress shirt (tucked in) or black blouse (shoulders, stomach, back, bust, and bra straps covered), black dress/skirt (mid-calf; below the knee when seated) with black tights or black pants & black dress shoes. Jewelry is accepted but no bright colors.

What is NOT Concert Black attire?

- ♦ Jeans (including black ones), sweats, warm-up/athletic pants, tights only, yoga pants, leggings, mini-skirts or shorts
- ♦ T-shirts, tank tops, spaghetti straps, halter tops, or crop tops
- ♦ Flip-flops, sports shoes, sneakers, black shoes with colored stripes or logos
- ♦ White socks, ankle socks, crew socks, colored socks, or bare feet



Make-Up Performance Assignment

(EXCUSED ABSENCES ONLY)

The following assignment must be completed for each performance the student is excused from attending. The creation of this assignment was based upon the percentage of a performance, in determining a student's grade, and the amount of time involved in a performance. This assignment is not a punishment, but rather a way to replace a very important missed performance grade.

For the Make-Up Performance Assignment, students must choose one of the following essay topics:

- Choose an instrument from band and discuss its creation, history, famous artists, etc.
- Choose a composer and discuss their life, education, compositional genres, notable works, important musical accomplishments, etc.

Essays must be typed, double-spaced, and a minimum of 2-pages with all sources cited. Any Make-Up Performance Assignment is due FIVE school days after the date of the excused performance, unless given special permission by the band director to be turned in at a later time.

Fundraising

Generally, the band program may conduct fundraisers in order to supplement the band instructional supply funds. The operating budget is large and the program needs these supplemental monies in order to provide students with the best musical education and experience possible. Since the profits are incorporated into improvement of the entire program, participation is expected, even if the specific goal does not personally affect a student. Throughout the year, please look for information about upcoming fundraisers from the band directors or band boosters.



Daily Practice and Parent Support

Band is a very challenging and rewarding class. It offers students the opportunity to develop a skill that can be enjoyed for a lifetime. However, like any skill, band requires a commitment to practice and patience to allow the skill to develop. Even if you don't have a musical background, you can still help your student become a better musician. Follow these simple steps to help your student improve!

Remind your student to practice: In any subject, mastery only occurs after understanding through doing. Ask your student if there are any passages that he or she should be working on. Practicing at home should be no different than doing other homework. Keep in mind that practicing in shorter sessions over the week is more beneficial and effective than one or two long sessions per week. As instrumental skills are physical, it is the consistency of building good muscle memory and strength that leads to great results!

Set a regular practice time and space: Setting a regular homework and practice schedule is an important factor in keeping on top of what's going on in class. Find a time and space that works best for all in the household. This can go for any homework.

Ask to hear your student play on a regular basis: You can encourage your student to practice by asking to listen to something he or she is working on. Even if you don't have a musical background, you can probably pick out areas that need some attention. Checking for progress later will help teach your student accountability.

Positive attitude: Positive reinforcement for young people is vital in encouraging improvement. The more excitement and interest that you show the more likely it is that your students will enjoy it, continue playing, and seek your approval for affirmation and further encouragement. Additionally, always remember that it will not always sound pretty for those first few years!

Child as teacher: Teaching others things that were just learned allows for students to reinforce concepts for themselves. You can help your child by being the "student" from time to time! Ask them questions about what they have learned. Be sure to ask questions and for a demonstration. Be sure to keep a positive attitude, show patience, be encouraging, express excitement, and praise your child for a job well done as a teacher!

Ask your student if they need any supplies: A properly maintained instrument is essential to performing well. Ask your student if any supplies are needed. Instruments also need to be maintained periodically. Your student's instrument should be taken in to a music store for a check up at least once per year - do this during the summer.

Take your student to live performances: Hearing live performances is an excellent way to improve without formally practicing.

Encourage your student to take private lessons: Private lessons are crucial for long-term success. Students can learn a great deal in a large group setting, however, it is difficult to get into the intricacies of each instrument during class. When your student takes private lessons, he or she will better understand the instrument and become a better musician much more quickly than in class alone.

Don't let your student give up: Teaching your student perseverance and the importance of following through on obligations can be the most important life skills you impart upon your student. In any activity, there are difficult days or even weeks. In all parts of their life, remind your student that things will get better and with hard work, they will come out as a better person for sticking with it. They will thank you for it later!