

# PORTER RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND



## PRACTICE: HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?

*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 reinforce 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. After all, a student playing an instrument is a very special skill and source of pride and joy among many parents. 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. Have them teach you specific musical concepts and techniques. Be sure to ask questions, for examples 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. Hearing quality ensembles will train your student's ear to listen better and play more musically.

**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!