

Bennett's Mill Middle School Band Handbook

2013-14

This handbook is for the students and parents who are involved in the band program and is an effort to explain expectations and to outline as many of the governing procedures as are practical.

Through the cooperation of every student, parent, and teacher, we will have many enjoyable experiences affording musical growth, accomplishment, appreciation and recreation. Students will develop a sense of pride and respect necessary for the continued success of the Bennett's Mill Middle School Band Program.

Attitude, Effort and Personal Character

Attitude, personal character, and persistence are the most important factors in determining how successful a young musician will be. Every band member has an obligation to the other band members, the school, and most importantly to themselves to strive to be the very best that they can be. The high expectations of the band program enable the student to achieve more than they think is possible. Students are expected to *always* act like ladies and gentlemen. All students should strive to make a positive reputation for the band concerning their musical quality, attitude, and conduct both in and out of the band class.

General Information and Expectations

Grading Policy

Final numeric averages will be determined using the following formula:

- **Daily Class Work (50%)** - A grade will be given each day for participation. A daily grade of zero will be given if a child does not participate in class on a given day. Points will be subtracted from the day's grade for not having music, pencils, other required equipment, or for not following the rehearsal procedures outlined in the handbook. A daily grade will be given for each regular rehearsal that is held outside of the school day. *Please see the section entitled "Fine Arts Attendance Policy" for a detailed explanation.*
- **Tests (40%)** - Written and playing tests, most Chair Placement Assessments, will be given. **A test grade will also be given for each dress rehearsal and performance.** *Please see the section entitled "Fine Arts Attendance Policy" for a detailed explanation.*
- **Practice Records (10%)** – Students are required to practice their instrument **30 minutes on 5 separate days each week for a total of 150 minutes.** A student who practices at least that amount will receive a "100" for that week's practice. Practice records should be submitted on-line at www.charmsoffice.com every Thursday. A paper alternative will be available for those who do not have Internet access. Practice records will be considered homework. ***Failure to turn in practice records may result in removal from an advanced band class.***
 - Thirty minutes can be counted on your student's practice record for any after-hours band activities such as rehearsals, performances, and private lessons. In addition, those students **who take piano lessons** may count *half* of their piano practice time toward their practice record for band! Any questions or additional requests must be made to the band director **prior** to expecting credit.

Fine Arts Attendance Policy

Absences are serious and are either excused or unexcused. Examples of *excused* absences are personal illness (with a doctor's note), a serious illness in the family, a death in the family, and a religious conflict (communicated in writing when the in-class preparation begins for the event). Students with an *excused* absence will be given an alternative assignment equal to the time and effort required for the event missed.

- An *unexcused* absence from a *regular rehearsal* will result in a *daily grade* of zero. Multiple absences from regular rehearsals may result in the student being removed from an upcoming performance. Regular rehearsals are scheduled practices outside of the normal school day such as mornings or afternoons.
- An unexcused absence from a *dress rehearsal* or *extended clinic* will result in a *test grade* of zero and possible removal from the upcoming performance at the discretion of the director. Dress rehearsals are the final rehearsal prior to a performance. Clinics are extended rehearsals that usually involve a guest conductor and are held in the afternoon or on a Saturday.
- An *unexcused* absence from a *performance* will result in a *test grade* of zero and a possible change in the student's band class at the discretion of the director. Students with an *unexcused* absence may become ineligible for field trips and other ensemble privileges.

In-Class Expectations

As with any class, **students are expected to follow all instructions and procedures:**

- Students are expected to be *ready* for classes and rehearsals on time.
- Students who have been detained by a teacher, staff member, or administrator must have a written excuse *upon arrival*. Students will not be allowed to go back for a pass.
- All students should enter the band room *quietly* and *look at class agenda on the board*.
- Students are expected to participate fully in each rehearsal without causing a distraction.
- **Supplies:** Clarinets and saxophones should have *four good Vandoren reeds* at all times. Oboes and Bassoons should have *two good reeds* at all times. Brass players should have valve (or rotor oil), or slide cream and water bottle (for trombones). Percussionists should always have their stick bag which includes the items required for their class. For your convenience, many band supplies are on sale in the band room *before* school.
- **No food, drink, or gum is allowed in the band room. This includes before and after school, as well at any rehearsal, private lesson, meeting, etc.**

Since parental involvement is the key to any discipline plan, parents will be contacted should problems arise. A conference will be requested if needed. The BMMS consequence policies will be followed as outlined in the school handbook.

Additionally, a parent, guardian, or family member 21 or over, that represents a student in the BMMS Band Program, is required to volunteer for at least one band event during the school year.

Out-of-Class Practice Expectations

- Regular, at-home practice is essential for students to progress and should be considered homework. *See the Grading Policy for additional information.*
- Instruments and binders should be **taken home daily**. The band room is for storing instruments and music **during the day only!** Students cannot practice without their instrument!
- Special arrangements are available for students who play large instruments.
- If a student owns an additional instrument for at-home practice, it is the responsibility of the student and parent to make the director aware via a note, E-mail, or phone call.
- All students are expected to participate in ALL rehearsals and performances for their band. *Please see the section entitled “Fine Arts Attendance Policy” for a detailed explanation.*

Instrument and Music Storage

Instruments and music are to be brought to the band room upon being dismissed from the gym each morning. Instruments are not to be taken to other teachers’ classrooms or left in hallways. Since the instrument storage shelves do not have locking doors, students may opt to put some type of locking device on their case for optimal security. If a lock is used, please provide the director with a key in case your child loses theirs! **The band and school assume no liability for instruments left in the school overnight.**

Instrument Repairs

If your child’s instrument is in need of repair, please have him/her show it to the director before taking it to the shop. Many times, a minor adjustment can be made in the band room that will save you time and money. If the instrument needs to be taken to the repair shop, a parent must provide their child with a note or an email confirming the instrument is being repaired. We are very blessed with many repair facilities in or near Fayetteville. However, Don McSwain is the only repairman for school-owned instruments. His phone number is 770-461-5722. Since he works from his home, repairs through Mr. McSwain are often faster and less costly. His E-mail address is dmcswain2@hotmail.com. Of course warranty work should be done through the music store in which the instrument was purchased and/or rented.

If an absence occurs from a rehearsal or performance that has not been pre-arranged, it is the responsibility of the student and parent to submit a **written excuse** to the director within **48 hours** of the student’s return to school or the absence will be considered **unexcused**.

Student Pick Up from Rehearsals

Students must be picked up from the gym porch in the bus loop. Unless otherwise noted, all afternoon rehearsals end at **5:00 PM**. It is expected that parents either pick their student up no later than **5:15 PM** or arrange for *alternate* transportation. As with most things, *communication is the key*. Please let the director know in advance if you will be later than 5:15 PM. A recurring failure to be picked up on time (without prior notice), may result in the student being removed from a performance and /or advanced level ensemble. School and BOE policies will be followed as outlined in the BMMS Student Handbook regarding students who are not picked up.

Private Lessons Academy

The *Bennett's Mill Private Lessons Academy* is an excellent source for private instruction. For your convenience, lessons will be offered on Mondays here at BMMS. A list of Academy teachers is included on the band's web page. Lessons are booked by contacting the teachers directly. We are fortunate to have many fine teachers in our area. If you plan to use a teacher not on the list, a "fundamentals oriented" teacher with a proven record of successful teaching is recommended. The director will be happy to recommend or check out a private teacher for you.

Private lessons are the best way for students to progress on their instrument. They are also the best means of developing the refined, mature playing habits that help students compete for honors such as advanced band membership, first chair positions, District Honor Band, All-State Band membership, and eventually a scholarship. Most All-State Band members begin private instruction at an early age and study and practice diligently for *years* to achieve that honor. The All-State requirements virtually necessitate private lessons in order to learn the required material.

While private lessons are not mandatory to participate in the school band program, they are highly recommended. It is impossible for a student to receive enough one-on-one instruction in a band class for him/her to truly reach their full potential. *Private lessons are the single most important thing that you, as a parent, can do for your child to help them be successful and enjoy being a member of the band program.*

Fund Raising

With every successful music program, fund raising is a necessity. In order to minimize the number of fundraisers needed, every band member is expected to participate through either participation or donation. **As an incentive, 15% of every sale will go directly into your student's individual band account.** Student account money may be used for future band expenses such as band trips, fees or even saved for next year for high school. For those who choose to donate rather than participate in fundraisers, your child will receive **50% of your donation** into their individual band account. The monies in individual band accounts remain there until used. The account will even follow your child to high school or any Fayette County public school, *as long as they continue in band*. Please see the section entitled "Individual Student Accounts" for more detailed information.

Individual Student Accounts

Each band student will have an **individual student account** that will be managed by our Student Accounts volunteer. This account will allow your student to “bank” money that he/she earns through fundraisers until it is applied toward special trips that will be taken or other band needs. Each student is asked to pay a Start-Up Deposit into their account to cover known fees. Accounts can be accessed through www.charmsoffice.com at your convenience. Account balances will follow your child to their next grade (even into high school) as long as they continue in band. If a student leaves the band program, any unused balances will be transferred to a sibling is enrolled in the BMMS band program. If no sibling is in the BMMS band, unused balances will be transferred to the *general operating budget*. **Refunds cannot and will not be given!**

Band Trips

For the students, band trips are often the highlight of the school year. This year’s trips are in the planning process. As with most events, specific information will be sent home regarding each trip.

Uniforms

The uniform(s) required for your child’s band is described below. Please note that **all band members will need the Band T-Shirt but only 6th Grade Band will need a Band Polo Style Shirt**. The “Student Information Sheet” includes the option of using BMMS band shirts that you already own.

Symphonic and Concert Bands

All bands will have two separate uniforms:

- **Casual and Football Season:** Band T-Shirt and jeans, shorts or Capris. This uniform will be worn to some in-school performances, football games, community performances, and field trip performances.
- **Formal uniform:** black tuxedos for the boys and solid black formal dresses for the girls. Each boy must provide a tux shirt, black socks, and **solid black formal shoes**. The tuxedo pants, jacket, cummerbund, and bow tie will be provided. The girls must provide black stockings and **solid black closed toe formal shoes**. The black formal dress will be provided.
 - The formal uniform will be clean when it is issued. Individuals may need to have their uniform dry-cleaned during the year. The uniform must be returned at the end of the year in a ***dry cleaner’s bag with a dated receipt***. The only Symphonic uniform that does not have to be dry-cleaned is the dress, which may be machine washed. ***A \$15.00 fee will be charged for turning in an unclean uniform.***
 - It is the responsibility of the parents to have all parts of their child’s uniform prior to the dates needed. Alterations are the responsibility of the parents according to the “Uniform Care Instructions” issued with the uniform.
 - In the event that uniform parts must be replaced, it will be the financial responsibility of the parent to pay the amount(s) as listed in the “Uniform Care Instructions.”

Sixth Grade Band

The 6th grade band will have two separate uniforms:

- **Casual uniform:** Band T-shirt, jeans, shorts, or capris.
- **Formal uniform:** Band golf shirt, black dress pants, black belt, and **solid black formal** shoes. This uniform will be worn to most performances.

Explanation of Fees

Start-Up Activity Fee

All band students will be expected to pay a Start-Up Deposit to cover the known expenses that will be incurred during the school year. The Start-Up deposit includes the **\$25 Activity Fee**, due no later than September 3, 2013. Additional amounts vary by group and by whether or not replacement shirts are needed by individual band members. While this payment will not cover all of the costs associated with the BMMS Band for the entire school year, it will cover the majority.

Activity Fee:

- **Band Binder: (\$5.00)**

All students will be issued a binder to use for band. This enables the band to look uniform while providing your child with adequate storage for their music and method book. The binder includes clear sheet protectors in which to store band music. The official binder **must** be used and must remain *free of decorations, writings, damage, etc.* Lost or defaced binders must be replaced (cost of \$5.00). *Only the official binder may be used.*

- **Clinician Fee: (20.00)**

Supplemental instructors will be brought in at various times throughout the year. This nominal fee helps to offset the cost.

Add On Items:

- **Symphonic and Concert Band Formal Uniform Rental Fee: (\$20.00)**

Only 7th and 8th Grade Band members will need the formal uniform.

- **Band Polo Shirt: (\$18.00)**

All 6th graders will need a Gulf shirt. This will be part of the uniform that you will use for most performances.

- **Band T-Shirt: (\$8.00)**

All band members will need the band T-shirt. The design is the same as last year. Any 7th and 8th graders who need a replacement T-shirt must order it as a part of their Start-Up Deposit.

- **School Instrument Maintenance Fee (\$25 per year)**

This fee is only for students who play a school-owned instrument (*including percussion*). Please either include this fee in the Start-Up Deposit or pay by October 1.

Parents may opt to pay the Start-Up Activity Fee in full or in as many as three installments with the last payment being on October 2, 2013.

Optional Band Related Opportunities:

Students will be given the opportunity to participate in other band related events throughout the school year. These events ARE NOT included in the start up fee and the charges for them will be assessed when you and your child make the decision to participate.

Payment of Fees

The band booster club will accept cash, checks, or money orders for the payment of fees, fund raiser items, etc. Please note the correct procedures for making a payment:

- All payments should be sealed in an envelope with the student's first and last name, grade, and band period clearly written on the envelope along with what the payment is for.
- All payments should be placed in the moneybox located in the band room. ***Please do not drop payments off in the front office.***

Due to bank charges, there will be a \$25.00 fee for all returned checks. Re-payment for returned checks and the penalty charges will need to be made by **money order** or **cash**. ***If a person has a check returned, we will no longer be able to accept their checks.*** Please be sure to write your student's first and last name on any third party checks. This greatly helps our treasurer.

Band Department Schedule Change Policy

6th Grade and Concert Band students may withdraw from band during the first week of school or at the end of the 9 weeks.

Symphonic Band members are making a year-long commitment.

Teacher Request for Schedule Change- In cases discipline, intentional destruction, and unwillingness to cooperate, parents/guardians will be contacted to consider dismissal from the band program. If a student has an IEP or other behavioral challenges a counselor will be asked to be present for a conference.