



Elementary Band Handbook

Wapsie Valley Elementary Schools

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Welcome to Band!!

Students and Parents/Guardians:

Congratulations on joining band at Wapsie Valley! I am so excited that you have decided to participate in this fantastic opportunity. Not only will you be able to learn to play amazing music on your new instrument, but you also will meet new friends, improve your creativity, be able to perform in front of many people, and you will be more likely to be successful in your other classes! Research shows that learning music helps students to express themselves more efficiently, and students who are involved in music often earn better grades in their primary classes.

Band class for you will be a *blast*. Be aware, however, that it takes *time* to learn a new instrument- the squawks, squeaks, and wrong notes at the beginning are normal! With practice, you *will get there* (I promise!) and eventually you will be able to play all kinds of music.

By joining band, you've become part of a team. Every single player in the band is essential to the sound and success of the band! Make sure that you practice hard and have a great attitude to make the experience fun for your classmates as well!

Parents/Guardians- you will be essential to your student's success in band. Stay involved- ask your student how band is going, be willing to listen to impromptu concerts at home, overlook the struggling sounds and praise their successes! Practice at home is incredibly important to your student's success- remind them to practice and cheer them on when they work at it! Throughout their experience, know you are *always* welcome to stop in and listen to any rehearsal, lesson, or concert, and also to become involved with the music boosters. Learn along with your students and enjoy the music with them!

I have great expectations for this year, and I know this group is going to be an amazing bunch of players! Good luck, and happy music-making!

-Mrs. Davis

ENSEMBLES

♪ The Elementary Concert Bands

- There are two elementary concert bands: the 5th grade band and the 6th grade band. While we rehearse separately at Readlyn and Fairbank, each class will perform together with their same grade at concerts! We have two main concerts per year: the Winter and Spring concert. (We may add a performance with the high school band at a football game in the future too!)

BAND RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

♪ Band Class Rules

1. Be on time! You should have your instrument, music, and pencil and should be sitting in your assigned chair before it is time for band to begin.
2. Be respectful to your fellow band members and to Mrs. Davis.
3. Use correct posture at *all* times.
4. No talking unless you are asked to by Mrs. Davis. When she gets in front of the band, we need to be quiet to play.
5. Be responsible for your own instrument, music, and pencil. *You* need to remember to bring these to class- I will not remind you.
6. Food, gum, candy, pop, or flavored water are not allowed during rehearsals. Eating these items before/during playing can cause major damage to your instrument!

♪ Taking Care of Your Instrument

1. Only play on your instrument- never on anyone else's.
2. Only percussionists can touch or play on the percussion equipment. Never place anything on top of the drums or other instruments.
3. Handle your instrument with care- they can break very easily and can cost a lot of money to fix! If you set your instrument down, make sure you place it carefully in a safe place away from others.
4. If there's something not working on your instrument, tell Mrs. Davis- she will try to fix it, or find someone who can!

♪ Taking Care of the Band Room

1. After band, always put away your instrument and folder on the correct shelf. You will have your own personal music shelf to store your folder during the day!
2. Take good care of the stands, chairs, and other equipment- do not touch Mrs. Riggs's music room equipment unless Mrs. Davis says that you can.

BAND LESSONS

All band students will be placed into small group lessons that meet once each 6-day cycle. At these lessons, students will demonstrate their abilities to perform music in the method book: Essential Elements 2000 or The Performing Percussionist, scales, and/or the music being worked on in Band. These lessons will be held during the school day.

Summer lessons will be offered during the Summer of 2013! Be on the lookout for a sign-up form on the band website in the Spring.

GRADING POLICY

Student grades will be in the quarterly report cards. On this progress report their class participation and progress in specific performance elements will be noted using a rubric form. Students are required to complete their required practice time for each week, attend all lessons and rehearsals (excused absences will be granted for illness, family emergencies, and required school functions), and to play at each concert.

PRACTICE TIME

- ♫ **5th grade students** are required to practice a *minimum* of **15 minutes per day, five days per week.** (75 minutes total)
- ♫ **6th grade students** are required to practice a *minimum* of **20 minutes per day, five days per week.** (100 minutes total)



Students should only leave their instrument in the band room on band days. After band, students should take their instrument home at the end of the day- no exceptions. You can't practice at home without your instrument!

Students will record their practice time and practice goals on a personal practice chart. Parents/guardians will need to sign off on the chart each week to indicate that their student completed their practice time.

"Extra-Bonus" practicing: When a student practices *over* the required time per week, Mrs. Davis will record the extra time on a chart in the room. The student in

each fifth/sixth grade class who has practiced the most extra time will receive a prize at the end of each quarter!

CONCERTS

♫ **Dress Code**

Unless stated otherwise for "theme" performances, students must wear:

Boys must wear dress pants (khaki or black), and girls must wear a dress/skirt *below* the knee. Girl saxophone players may wear pants *if* they play with their sax in front of them rather than to the side.

For shirts, boys may wear a button-down dress shirt or a dressy polo shirt. (Ties are optional 😊). Girls should wear a dress blouse/shirt.

All students must wear dress shoes- no sandals, "flip flops," or tennis shoes

HONOR BAND

Each year, the 5th and 6th graders who pass an audition will be eligible for Honor Band participation at the Young Musician's Honor Band, which is in Cedar Rapids in Late February. At Honor band, students have a full day of rehearsals with approximately 100 other really talented kids. There is a guest conductor who is brought in to conduct the honor band. At the end of the evening, the honor band performs at a final concert. More information about this band will be sent to you at a later date.

What do I need to buy?

Students who join band will need to buy certain materials- but look at these purchases as an investment that will just keep giving! If you take care of your instrument, this purchase can be a source of life-long enjoyment.

Students will be able to buy/rent their instruments from West Music, *or* they may rent a school instrument (when available). Please *do not* buy any instruments from Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, Best Buy, etc.- these instruments are made of

extremely poor quality, will break very quickly, and often are not fixable by instrument repair shops! Invest in a quality instrument from West, and you will spend much less money on repair in the future.

The materials I require students to buy are the following:

(All: It is optional, but highly recommended, for you to buy a folding metal stand from West Music. Practicing at home and good posture are much easier if your student has a stand to place their music on!)

Woodwinds (Flute, Clarinet, Sax, Oboe, Bassoon):

1. Instrument
2. Method Book (Essential Elements 2000)
3. Reeds (except flutes). Clarinets should buy Vandoren V-12 reeds if possible, about 2.5 strength. Saxophones should buy La Voz, medium strength, or Vandoren. Woodwinds will go through approximately 3-5 reeds per year, at minimum.
4. Cleaning Swab for swabbing out your instrument- this is important!
5. Optional: Key Oil/Bore Oil

Brass (Trumpet, Horn, Trombone, Euphonium, Baritone, Tuba):

1. Instrument
2. Method Book (Essential Elements 2000)
3. Valve Oil/Slide grease (Vaseline also works for a slide grease substitute)
4. Trombones should buy a small spray bottle (find a travel size in your local wal-mart/target, they work great!)
5. Cleaning Snake

Percussion:

1. Practice Kit (includes snare pad and bell set)
2. Snare sticks/bell mallets
 - a. As students get older, they will eventually be required to buy their own stick bag with timpani mallets, yarn mallets, hard rubber mallets, and

snare sticks. If you want to buy one now you may, but it is not required at this point!

3. Method Book (The Performing Percussionist)

Jeff Taylor, our West Music representative, will stop by each week to see if I need to order materials for students. If your student needs materials after the start of the year, have them see me, fill out an order form, bring a correct check payment (made out to West Music), and Jeff will bring the materials to us!