

# W.C.M.S. Band Guidelines & Syllabus

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Band

Welcome back to the Woodcliff Middle School Band program! After a long summer, we're ready to get back to making some great music together! The attached guidelines contain all the details and procedures you need to know to both enjoy your time and be successful in the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Band class this year.

After reading through this packet, please have you and a parent/guardian sign the bottom portion of the last page and return it to Mr. Peters by 9/14/2022.

### **Band Schedule**

Each of you are scheduled for two full-band rehearsals and one lesson each six-day cycle. The full-band rehearsals will have all the band members in your grade come together to work on our band music and group playing fundamentals. The lessons are with your instrument group specifically and are a time for you to hone your skills on your instrument so that you can be as successful as possible in the rehearsals. A complete lesson and rehearsal schedule will be available on Mr. Peters' teacher webpage throughout the year. If you have any questions, please reach out to [ppeters@woodcliff-lake.com](mailto:ppeters@woodcliff-lake.com).

### **Band Expectations**

1. Bring a positive demeanor and drive whenever you enter the Band Room! You aren't expected to play everything perfectly week-to-week. Try your best each time you play, and be consistent with practice in between classes and you will always see steady musical growth.
2. All student instruments are stored in the storage room on the far, left side of the room. Please put your instrument back in its correspondingly labeled cabinet after rehearsal.
  1. Instruments can be left by the classroom door ONLY by students who take the bus and should NOT be left by the door overnight.
3. Your instrument, your music folder, and a pencil are critical parts of Band class, so please be sure to bring them with you on your scheduled rehearsal and lesson days.
4. Bottled water is ok to bring to Band, but other food and drink should be left outside of the classroom (especially gum). Instruments can be damaged by many foods and drinks, and we also want to be sure to protect any classmates with allergies.
5. Class begins at the time marked in your schedules. Per school policy, if you will be late for any reason, be sure to bring a signed pass from your previous teacher or the main office.
6. Students should not play their instruments whenever Mr. Peters (or any other teacher) is standing at the podium, or is working with a smaller group of students. If a small group is being worked with, students may quietly chat with one another, so as not to disrupt the class.
7. Please keep the Band Room clean, if not cleaner, than you found it. Make sure to put away all instruments, sheet music, folders, etc. and dispose of any garbage into the garbage pail.

## Consequences

Playing in a Band is a hugely collaborative effort, which means that each and every student must put their best foot forward whenever playing together. Band can and should be a place for everyone to relax and have fun. However, we must make sure that as a group, we understand where the limit is. As such, continuously disruptive behavior within the classroom is met with the following sequential consequences:

1. Student is given a verbal warning by the teacher.
2. Student is given a second warning and a point is docked from their rehearsal/lesson grade.
  - a. If the disruption was instrument-based (i.e. playing the instrument during instruction), then the instrument will be placed under the student's chair for 3-minutes before they can rejoin to play.
3. Student will be asked to speak with Mr. Peters after class, and an email/call will be made home.
4. Student will receive an after-school detention in the Band Room, which will be used as makeup practice time for the time lost in class.

## House Cup

Towards the end of last school year, we began something called the 'House Cup,' based on the competition of the same name found in the *Harry Potter* series of books. The basic concept of the House Cup is that each of the lesson groups in each grade would compete against each other to earn points throughout the year. Whoever ended the year with the most points would be crowned the champion, and could select from a list of fun activities that they would be allowed to do during a future class date. Students can earn points by demonstrating a positive influence in their instrumental music classes, and earn bonus points for going above and beyond in their musical adventures. Examples of going above and beyond would include: signing up for an after school practice session, making a performance recording at home and submitting it before their next lesson, participating in performance opportunities or ensembles offered throughout the year, etc. On the flip side, students not following our class expectations can lose points for their group as well.

This year, we will be reintroducing the House Cup, but with some minor alterations. First of all, a winner will now be announced monthly, after which the points will reset. This will give more lesson groups an opportunity to earn a break throughout the year and can keep the stakes high and exciting for students. Second, each winning group will get to pose for a photo that will be posted on the Band's instagram page (@wclband). Lastly, points will be demonstrated on a board inside the classroom, so students can always check on the current state of the competition.

One last note, students compete in two different House Cups each year. The first is between the lesson groups within that grade (i.e. 8th grade trumpets vs. 8th grade percussion). The second is a grade vs. grade competition, where the points of each 6th, 7th, and 8th grade group are added together to see which grade had the best month. Just like the lesson group competition, the full grade winner each month will get a photo taken and a choice of something to do in one of our full Band classes.

## Required Materials

The following materials will be instrumental to Band class this year. Each of the materials should be brought to every class, whether Band or Lesson, throughout the year. If you have any questions or need any assistance in acquiring any of the following materials, please reach out and we will find a solution.

1. Instrument (rental information going out in an email to all parents)
2. Band folder
  - a. Students should have two band folders
    - i. An **In-Class Folder** will be provided by the school and should be left in the classroom.
    - ii. A **Take-Home Folder** will travel between school and home. Students can use their own folder from home if they choose, but an optional manila envelope will be provided if preferred.
    - iii. Every time students learn a new piece, they will be given two copies of it, one for in-class, and the other to take home. That way if they ever forget their take-home folder, they will still always music for class in their in-class folder.
    - iv. If students make any marks or notes on their in-class copies of music and would like to transfer them to their at-home copies, please let me know and I can scan a copy of their music to send home.
3. *Standard of Excellence* lesson book
  - a. Book 1 (for use ASAP)
  - b. Book 2 (not necessary until completion of Book 1, email home will be made when students should purchase the next Book)
4. Pencil(s)
5. Maintenance equipment for your instrument — reeds, valve/slide oil, cork grease, etc.

## Grading

In a broad sense, the goal of our Band is to make beautiful music together. Individually, our goal as musicians is to continue to show improvement on our instruments throughout the year. Grading in Band is NOT based on how well you play your instrument, but whether you have done your best to better your playing. While factors like attendance, preparedness, and participation are all interwoven, most of your grade is determined by your commitment to improve through practice, listening, etc.

Grades are given each trimester and are based on the “Encore” grade scale:

**E** = 90%-100%   **S** = 80%-89%   **I** = 70%-79%   **U** = Below 70%

These are the following assignment types:

1. **Lessons\* – 15 points each**

Each student has one lesson during every six-day cycle. Those lessons will work on core tenets of musicianship—such as sight-reading, emotive use of dynamics and phrasing, and tuning—while also honing practices specific to your instrument such as note fingerings, embouchure placement, percussion rudiments, etc. Each lesson is graded on preparedness, participation, and performance. A rubric for the lessons is available on the class webpage.

2. **Rehearsals – 10 points each**

There are two rehearsals every six-day cycle. Those rehearsals will certainly involve lots of playing together as a Band, where we will focus on blending, balancing the volumes of our sounds, and putting as much expression into our music as possible. We will also spend some time learning about the history behind some of our pieces, and how the music we play can connect to some of the music we listen to in our own lives. Rehearsal is a time for fun and focus, and as long as we are all engaged, we'll produce some fantastic music.

3. **Quizzes – 10 points each | Playing Check – 20 points each**

Think of both of these as accountability checks for students. Note Quizzes, which will check for student knowledge and understanding of fingerings for notes on their particular instrument. A Note Quiz will only ever focus on one piece of music, and the notes in that piece. Other quizzes on musical terms may be offered as well, but in any case, students will be given notice of an upcoming quiz one full cycle before they take it (aka 8+ days).

Playing checks will also focus only on one piece of music, and likely just a small segment of the music. The playing check is an opportunity for students to sit with me one-on-one and display their comfort on their parts. Students do not have to play perfectly to receive a high grade. Like the note quizzes, playing checks will be announced in advance, this time at least two weeks beforehand.

4. **Homework Assignments – 5 points each**

The last thing I want is for Band class to take time away from your other classes and your social life. As such, homework assignments will be infrequent and straightforward. Such activities could include listening assignments, practice reflections, music theory or music history worksheets, and short recordings. Homework assignments are graded for completion, so if you put your best effort into it, you will do exceptionally!

## 5. **Concerts - 100 points each**

Band class culminates in two performances throughout the year, in December and May. These performances are your chance to display your hard work for your families and friends. Attendance at the concert is required, so please put the following dates in your calendar right away!

**Concert Date 1: Tuesday, December 13th, 2022 (7:00PM)**

**Concert Date 2: Thursday, May 4th, 2023 (7:00PM)**

If any major conflict should arise that might cause you to miss a concert, you **MUST** let Mr. Peters know as soon as possible. If excused from the concert, a make-up assignment will be created for you to complete before the end of the month. If unexcused, a 0 will be given for the concert.

If a student is ever dissatisfied with a grade received for Band or Lesson and wants to earn back bonus points, there are a few options. Signing up for an after-school practice time can earn back half the points lost on any Lesson or Rehearsal grade. In addition, if a student is absent for one of the aforementioned classes, the grade is usually voided. But if a student wants to get extra points added to their grade, they can book an after-school practice time with assistance from Mr. Peters to earn back credit for the absent lesson. Once again, if they choose not to do this, it will not hurt their grade, this is simply an option to add another high score into the gradebook.

## **Extracurricular Music Ensembles**

The band program currently has three auditioned extracurricular ensembles that meet after school once per week: Jazz Band, Woodwind Ensemble, and Brass Ensemble. Woodwind and Brass Ensemble are made up of woodwind instruments (flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, etc.) and brass instruments (trumpet, trombone, euphonium, tuba, etc.) respectively. Jazz Band is open for any instrument to audition. If you would like further information about any ensemble, including audition dates, audition music, and tentative rehearsal schedule, it will be emailed and posted on Google Classroom and Mr. Peters' webpage on Tuesday, September 6th.

Stay tuned for the potential addition of other new ensembles later this school year—more details to come!

## **Practicing**

Practicing is essential to developing the musicality we need to take our Band to the next level. Throughout the year, you will be provided with many tips and materials you can use to craft the best practice routine for you. Generally, your goal should be to practice for approximately 30 minutes 2-3 times per week, or roughly every 3 days. And as you'll learn soon, there are many ways to practice that don't even involve your instrument. Regardless, your dedication to practicing effectively will help determine what music we can perform together in Band this year, so give it all you got!



After you have had a chance to read through this syllabus, please have you and a parent or guardian sign below. Then, tear off this back page and return it to Mr. Peters by **Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup>**! Thank you very much for reading—please feel free to reach out to me at any time if you have any questions or concerns throughout the year. I will do everything I can to make sure you enjoy your time in Band as much as possible. Looking forward to a great year of music-making!

Mr. Peters  
(201) 930-5600 x332  
ppeters@woodcliff-lake.com

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I have read through the W.C.M.S. Band Guidelines with a parent/guardian. I understand what is expected of me in band class for the 2022-2023 school year and will meet those expectations to the best of my ability.

Student Name (please print legibly): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_