

# **Hamilton Intermediate School Band Handbook**

Welcome to sixth grade band and congratulations on the beginning of your musical journey! Over the course of the next year, you will learn the basics of playing an instrument, reading music and performing for others. You have many opportunities awaiting you in future years as a band member such as concerts, marching band, parades, solo and ensemble contests, and even band trips to places such as New York City and Chicago.

Being a member of the band comes with responsibility, maturity, and dedication on the part of the student. Students are expected to have a good attendance record, to be organized and to be respectful to their peers, teachers and band equipment. Participation in band will teach the students teamwork and cooperation, and will give them added confidence.

Learning a musical instrument has also been shown to improve performance in academic subjects because the student is using parts of his or her brain that are only used in music. "Students of the arts continue to outperform their non-arts peers on the SAT, according to reports by the College Entrance Examination Board. In 2006, SAT takers with coursework/experience in music performance scored 57 points higher on the verbal portion of the test and 43 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework or experience in the arts. Scores for those with coursework in music appreciation were 62 points higher on the verbal and 41 points higher on the math portion. – *The Student Descriptive Questionnaire, a self-reported component of the SAT that gathers information about students' academic preparation, gathered data for these reports. Source: The College Board, Profile of College-Bound Seniors National Report for 2006; [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)*"

## **Instruments**

To participate in this class, a student must have his/her own instrument. There are three different ways to obtain an instrument.

**Renting Instruments** – This is by far the most popular form of acquiring an instrument. Rented instruments are usually in excellent working conditions thus making the experience of class instruction and home practice more enjoyable. If a student decides to continue band after sixth grade, their instruments may be purchased. Students not continuing can return their instruments at the end of the year. Students who use a rental instrument are, because of their parent's investment, more serious about the class. They consistently practice, they don't forget, damage or lose their instrument and take pride in what they have accomplished musically.

**Buying Instruments** – Please contact Mr. Fulton before purchasing an instrument. This is important for your child's success. Some parents feel that it is cheaper to buy a new instrument than to rent or lease. They would rather make an investment with the idea in mind that the instrument can always be sold if the student does not continue on next year. Be careful when purchasing an instrument and keep in mind it is true that “you get what you pay for.” Some cheaper brands of instruments will be made to low standards of quality, may break after only weeks of use, and most repair shops may refuse to fix them.

If you purchase a higher quality instrument, you may have to invest more in the beginning, but the instrument will most likely last through high school and will **cost less** in the long run because of **fewer repairs**. Here are some recommended brands to purchase:

**Flute:** Yamaha, Gemeinhardt, Armstrong and Jupiter

**Clarinet:** Yamaha, Conn-Selmer owned brands (Selmer, Vito, and LeBlanc), and Buffet

**Saxophone:** Yamaha, Selmer, Conn (both owned by Conn-Selmer), and King

**Trumpet or Trombone:** Yamaha, Conn, Bach, Getzen, and King

**Percussion (Practice Pad and Bell Kit):** All percussionists are required to rent an instrument due to the specialized nature of the section.

If you are planning to borrow a used instrument from a family member, please take it to a repair shop such as Music & Arts (a.k.a. Colonial Music) to be checked for any necessary repairs. Your child will have the most success in band with a quality-working instrument!

**Borrowing school-owned instruments** – If a child cannot participate in band because of a financial situation, school-owned instruments are available for loan. Loaned instruments are limited and will be distributed on an as need basis. Interested parents **MUST** write a letter describing this need in order to be considered. The guidelines for the consideration of the loan of a school-owned instrument will be based on upon the following criteria: (1) financial need, (2) students academic qualifications, (3) recommendation from former teacher, and (4) application letter. Anyone borrowing an instrument will be held responsible for its loss or any repairs needed during the year. Please see Mr. Fulton to get more information on applying for an instrument loan.

## **Required Supplies**

As well as having an instrument, all students must purchase a book called *“Essential Elements 2000, Book 1”* for their instrument. This book can be purchased at any music store. If you rent your instrument, make sure you get the book while you are there to save time.

There are some supplies that all instruments require to stay in good working condition. These supplies are also the responsibility of the student and should be brought to every band class. Here are the supplies you will need listed by instrument:

**Flute:** cloth swab, cleaning rod

**Clarinet:** a box of unbroken, unchipped working reeds – Mitchell Lurie strength #2 1/2, linen swab, cork grease (You will save time and money if you buy reeds by the box in larger quantities.)

**Saxophone:** a box of unbroken, unchipped working reeds – Mitchell Lurie strength #2 1/2, swab, cork grease, neck strap (You will save time and money if you buy reeds by the box in larger quantities.)

**Trumpet:** valve oil, slide grease

**Trombone:** slide grease, tuning slide grease

**Percussion:** Does not require many supplies, but make sure that the kit you purchase includes a bell set, drum pad (not a real snare drum), stand for both instruments, bell mallets, drum sticks, and a rolling case.

## **Scheduling**

Band is open during the first two weeks of school to any sixth grade student who desires to learn to play an instrument. Once the student is enrolled in band, he or she is enrolled in the class for the entire school year and cannot drop the class mid-year. By joining band, you are making a one-year commitment to the class. However, you are highly encouraged to continue the class throughout high school and experience the many opportunities that high school band presents.

Band meets twice a week for 47 minutes with your student’s instrument group. Each week, students are expected to bring their instrument in working condition, all required supplies, their book, and a pencil. Students who forget their instrument will not be able to fully participate and cannot earn all 10 points of the class grade, but will still be expected to be engaged in the class activities and to “pretend play” their part.

## **Homework**

ALL band students are expected to practice their instrument a minimum of 20 minutes per day. Daily practice is the only way for students to build the endurance and coordination required to improve their playing skills. Proper practice means that the student has a designated practicing place and that he or she is working on a weekly assignment for 20 minutes a day.

It is very important that the student's family is supportive of the daily practice routine. Please understand that the student will not sound like a professional for the first few months. It takes months to develop the muscles to control the sound, but eventually you will be amazed at the improvement as long as the student is practicing!

## **Grading**

All band students earn a letter grade on their report card. Grading will be based on the following:

- Each band class is worth up to 10 points that the students earn for:
  - Having the proper supplies (instrument, book, accessories, pencil)
  - Being prepared for class (practicing the previous week's assignment)
  - Participating in class with 100% effort
  - Demonstrating improvement on the instrument over a course of time
  - Demonstrating understanding of reading music (not writing in notes)
  - Proper posture (students will be taught how to sit when playing)
  - Holding the instrument correctly
  - Performing with the characteristic tone of the instrument
  - Demonstrating proper technique (fingerings, stickings)
  - Proper embouchure (use of facial muscles to create the proper sound)
- Playing tests
  - Playing tests are performed individually for Mr. Fulton
  - These are graded using a 20 point rubric based upon:
    - Correct notes / rhythms
    - Articulation / technique
    - Characteristic tone
    - Posture
  - Students who forget their instrument have one school day to make up the test
  - Students who are absent have 3 school days from the day they return to make up the test
- Written quizzes / tests
- Two concert performances, given in December and May

- Absences/Forgotten Instruments
  - Absences may be made up by the student seeing Mr. Fulton individually within one week of the absence to learn what they missed in class. All absences are marked as a missing assignment for the class that was missed and average as a zero until they are made up.
  - Missing assignments can be made up by practicing in the band room from 7:30am-8:00am. If transportation is not available, the student may practice at home for 30 minutes, then turn in a half page written practice journal to Mr. Fulton. The practice journal must take up half a page of notebook paper and must detail what they student practiced and what they learned from practicing.
  - If a student forgets his/her instrument for class, he/she will earn a maximum of 5/10 points for the class. These points can be made up in the same way as absences.

## **Concerts**

Each year, the sixth grade band has two opportunities to perform as a large group. There is a winter concert held in December and a spring concert held in May. These concerts serve as a chance for family and friends to hear a performance by our young musicians and as a “show what you know” required performance grade for the students.

If a student is unable to attend a concert, he or she will be required to make up the performance grade by performing for the teacher on a one-on-one basis. More details about the concerts will be distributed as the year progresses.

## **Photographs and/or Videos During Extra-Curricular Participation**

Participating in activities such as band, drama, athletics, and other school related groups may result in photographs and/or videos being taken and appearing in programs, yearbooks, video and print media, and other sources due to the nature of the activity.

## Sixth Grade Band Participation Contract

I have read and understand the sixth grade band handbook. As a parent/guardian, I understand that my child will be expected to practice his or her instrument every day for at least 20 minutes and bring it to class every week. I understand that the student will be graded on his or her performance every week for a letter grade. I understand that each concert is counted as a playing test and that test will have to be made up if the student is not present at the concert. I understand that playing tests must be made up within one school day for a forgotten instrument or three school days for an absence.

I understand that I am responsible for getting any necessary repairs to the student's instrument in a timely manner. I understand that I am responsible for supplying all accessories such as reeds and a book. I understand that band is a year long class and that my child is committing to completing the entire sixth grade year in band.

By signing below, I am indicating that I agree to everything stated in the terms of this band handbook.

\*Please tear out this entire page, return it to Mr. Fulton, and keep the handbook for your records.

Print Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_