

WESTFIELD CONCERT BAND POLICIES

Welcome to the Westfield band program. For students and parents new to the Westfield Concert Band, I would like to take a few minutes to outline some basic rules and guidelines for participation in Concert Band. For those returning students and parents, this will be a quick review of what you hopefully already know. At the end of this document you and your child/children will be asked to sign the attached sheet and return it to me so I have a record that everyone has read the policies and is aware of them.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all Concert Band and Jazz Band rehearsals is mandatory. Our continued progress in the band program at Westfield depends on **every** student's commitment to the program. Many important things are learned, discussed and practiced at each rehearsal, and if a student is chronically absent, that child will miss important information and will not be performing the music up to the standards of the group. This affects the entire group, and is not fair to the other students. In addition, if your child is healthy but unable to play due braces tightening, bone fracture, etc., they will still be expected to attend rehearsal with their music so they are aware of what was worked on during rehearsal and can mark their music accordingly.

A student's absence from band will be excused if the student is also absent from school that day. **If a student is absent from band but attends the regular school day, that absence will be considered unexcused.** Any student in need of an 8:00 am help session from another teacher on a band day will be excused from band **only if all of the following criteria have been fulfilled** 1) the academic teacher has been made aware of the conflict and is unable to schedule the help session for another day or time 2) the student has given prior notification to the band director, either verbally or with a note in her mail box, the day before the assigned help session. The classroom teachers at Westfield are supportive of the band program. If they are aware that a help session is scheduled on a band day, they will try to find another day if at all possible. I will be flexible about letting students go to a help session provided they have tried their best to find an alternate time. Any more than two unexcused absences from band per semester will result in no grade being given for band that semester. **Any unexcused absence from band must be explained in a signed note (or email) from the parents.**

TARDINESS

Westfield School unfortunately has a very limited amount of rehearsal time, and every second is precious. Rehearsals start promptly at 7:30am. Any student who enters the band room or takes their seat after the downbeat at 7:30am will be considered tardy. This means they must be in their seat warming up **prior to 7:30** so they are ready to start on time. Tardys due to unforeseen circumstances such as car malfunction, etc., must be explained **with a signed note (or email)** from the parents, or a voice mail message on my phone (529-6211 ex. 5371). Tardys that go unexplained will automatically be unexcused and could affect your child's grade. Please remind your child that if they are standing by their locker talking when I give the downbeat, they are officially tardy. If students enter the band room after 7:15 am, they will not be permitted to go to their lockers before band. Concert band members are required to have their instrument warmed up and tuned before they sit down for rehearsal, and need to allow enough time for that to take place.

GROUP LESSONS

The grade that your child receives for band includes their participation in and preparedness for group lessons. This grade will not be decided by how talented your child is, but rather the preparation they undergo in learning their music (whether or not they are practicing), as well as their regular attendance for lessons. Any student who has a test during their scheduled band

period should go to their class to take the test, and then report to the band room for lessons if there is any time left after their test is completed. However, the student is responsible for notifying the band director that there is a scheduling conflict as soon as they are aware of it. I am sometimes able to rearrange lesson schedules to accommodate a test, but I need a little advanced warning to do so. The same rule applies for students who have special projects that they have in class-I am happy to rearrange the lesson schedule to accommodate them, but I must know one day in advance if possible, and if not, then first thing in the morning the day of the lesson in question.

CONTESTS

Every year the Concert Band participates in district contest. All members of the ensemble are expected to perform in this contest. Students receive a performance calendar at the beginning of the year with this date on them. It is important to the group that every student attends all performances. Failure to accompany the band to a large group contest performance will result in the student forfeiting their grade in band for that marking period. All students represent Bloomingdale and the Westfield Middle School when performing. Appropriate attire will be worn to all performances, and will be either concert black, or dress clothes. Concert black consists of a white dress shirt, black pants or skirt, black socks or stockings, and black shoes. **Navy blue is not acceptable for concert black.** Dress clothes means absolutely no jeans of any kind (blue or black), and absolutely **no sneakers, gym shoes or tennis shoes.** Brightly painted hair is not considered appropriate dress for any performance situation. Students will be notified several weeks prior to a performance what the dress will be for that particular concert. School dress codes apply for all concerts and contests.

All students are expected to remain in attendance to the very end of each performance, even if their particular group is first on the program. This is proper concert etiquette, and it shows respect and support for their peers. I understand that occasionally an unavoidable conflict may arise that requires a student to leave before the end. Parents must talk to me directly **prior** to the day of the concert to explain the situation. A decision will be made at that time regarding the best way to handle that particular situation.

GRADES

All students participating in band will receive a grade for their participation that takes all of these criteria into account. Band grades will count towards a student's cumulative grade point average only if they are getting an "A". They will get no grade at all if they fail to meet the minimum requirements for an "A", thereby not being penalized.

DEMERITS

The band director reserves the right to issue demerits for regular school infractions such as not having homework completed (music learned within reason or written assignments), for leaving their instruments at school over night (if their instrument is here then I know it is not being practiced!!), for chronic tardiness, and for failure to fill out their practice records each week and get a parent signature. Each offense will earn the student 1 demerit. 5 demerits in any category will earn the student a morning detention. I get no pleasure from issuing demerits and morning detentions-my goal is to help your child establish a good practice routine and to stick to it.

CHALLENGES

At the beginning of first semester students undergo chair auditions. They are given the materials for these auditions months in advance. Students will be arranged in order from top to bottom in the section based on the results of these auditions. I know that students improve at different rates throughout the year. If your child feels that they have improved sufficiently to move up in the section, they can see me to set up a date to challenge any person sitting in front of them to move up to that chair. Both students will be given the same music to prepare for the challenge. The

person who performs the best during the challenge will win the higher chair.

PRIVATE INSTRUCTION

I currently have instructors on almost every instrument coming to the Westfield School at least once per week to teach private lessons after school. While it is not a requirement, I would **strongly encourage** students to study privately as it greatly enhances their skill and knowledge on their instrument. If you would like for your child to be taking private lessons please contact me so I can help you get in touch with the appropriate teacher.

Please understand that it is not my goal to get embroiled in demerit paperwork or record keeping. My main goal is to continue to improve the quality of your child's experience and progress in band and on their instrument. The guidelines set forth in this handbook are tools that I have at my disposal to make sure our musical goals can reasonably be met. I am a reasonable person and encourage open communication regarding your child's experience in band. I know that everyone is extremely busy and the morning band schedule is often difficult to fit into busy lives. I appreciate your efforts to comply with the rules, and I appreciate all the support you give your child's musical development as well as the band program here in Bloomingdale. Please feel free to call or email me if you have any questions or concerns about these policies.