



2024-2025 HANDBOOK

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Welcome

August 16, 2024

Dear Students and Parents:

Welcome to the Mills Park Middle School band program! With the right mindset and work ethic, students in our program can accomplish much in the way of musical excellence. Our aim is two-fold: to educate children through music performance and to instill a lasting appreciation of music in our students.

In an effort to meet these objectives, our program offers a wide range of educational and performance opportunities, both academic and extra-curricular in nature. This handbook is designed to inform parents and students of the expectations and opportunities of the Mills Park Middle School band program. **After reading all the applicable sections of this handbook, please complete and return the necessary forms, found in your child's band folder, by the following date:**

Thursday, September 5 (7th and 8th grade students)

Thursday, September 12 (6th grade students)

I am happy that you as parents and students have chosen to be a part of our band program at Mills Park Middle School. It is my firm belief that, as with any other worthwhile endeavor, students can gain from band what they are willing to put into it. With dedication and hard work, band can be one of life's most rewarding experiences. It is my sincerest hope that through this program, young people will gain a deep appreciation for music as well as individual integrity and pride in their own accomplishments. I look forward to a very successful year as we strive to achieve our maximum musical potential here at Mills Park.

Sincerely,



Erik M. Riggs
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Index of Topics

Academic Integrity.....	4
Attendance	5
Class Materials	4
Classroom Expectations	5
Concert Attire	3
Concert Etiquette	6
Grading	6
Instruments	2
Instrument Storage.....	4
Music and Equipment.....	4
Music Dealers & Repair Services.....	2
Performance Probation.....	4
Private Instruction.....	2
SmartMusic.....	4
Supplies	3
Travel Policies.....	6

General Information

Philosophy

Band is an incredibly valuable component in a child's education for three reasons:

First, music is an important discipline in its own right. The arts help define our humanity, and their creative and expressive qualities help shape a child's mind in ways that other disciplines simply cannot.

Second, music reinforces what students learn in other disciplines. Mathematical concepts are reinforced through rhythm and form. Scientific principles are reinforced through study of the acoustical properties of instruments, pitch, and ensemble. Language skills are reinforced in the vast vocabulary utilized daily by musicians. Historical and multi-cultural understanding is reinforced through the study of composers and the performance of a varied repertoire. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are developed regularly through practice and performance.

Third, social skills and citizenship are taught through participation in an ensemble. Responsibility, independence, and cooperation are traits that band students must master in order to be successful. Band students also learn the importance of setting goals, developing a plan of action, and working hard to achieve those goals.

Instruments

Each student is expected to furnish his own instrument by purchasing or renting from one of the area music stores. The school has a few of the larger instruments that will be assigned to individuals in 7th or 8th grade, and in some cases late 6th grade. Students using a school-owned instrument must fill out an instrument loan form and are responsible for the care of that instrument and any damages that occur. It is recommended that any instrument not covered under a rental insurance plan be placed on a home-owners insurance policy. Please place an identification tag on the instrument, complete with name, address, and phone number. Parents are encouraged to keep the instrument brand name and serial number on file at home as well.

Music Dealers and Repair Services

Necessary supplies (mallets, reeds, oil, method book, etc.) may be purchased at either of the following:

Hills Music Shoppe	51 US-158 BYP, Henderson, NC	252-492-4116
Music and Arts (retail store)	426 Crossroads Boulevard, Cary	919-854-0024
Music and Arts (repair shop)	5950 Poyner Village Pkwy, Raleigh	919-872-1601
Flying Squirrel (woodwind repair)	2828 Capital Boulevard, Raleigh	919-615-3117
Morse Repair (brass instrument repair)	by appointment only	919-624-1623
Sweeney Brass (brass instrument repair)	1520 Brookside Drive Unit 1	919-617-6340
Case Closed (instrument case repair)	www.case-closed.us	919-859-3133

Private Instruction

Private lessons, while not a requirement for all instruments, are **strongly** encouraged for students of all ability levels. As a student improves, a greater collection of literature becomes available to him and will enable him to excel, which in turn improves the band. With the aid of private instruction, students also find greater opportunity through experiences like all-county, all-district, and all-state band. Students who find themselves struggling to keep up with class requirements should expect to take private lessons since Mr. Riggs' one-on-one time with students is severely limited. A list of local private instructors is available at www.wakecountybands.com, under the "resources" tab. Another great list is located at www.philharmonic-association.org/private-teachers.

Supplies

All students should purchase a *folding wire music stand* for home practice. Additionally, there are cleaning supplies and accessories that are needed for each instrument, as listed below:

FLUTE	Cleaning rod, 2 lint-free cloth handkerchiefs (for inside), Polishing cloth (for outside)
OBOE	Silk cleaning swab, cork grease, soft cloth, small water container, reeds (consult private instructor as to brand and thickness)
BASSOON	cleaning swab, cork grease, soft cloth, small water container, three or more working reeds (consult private instructor as to brand and thickness)
CLARINET/ BASS CLARINET	Vandoren 5RV Lyre (Profile 88) or Fobes Debut mouthpiece. Silk cleaning swab, cork grease, soft cloth, Vandoren or D'Addario Reserve reeds (size 2.5 for 6 th graders, size 3 for 7/8 graders)
SAXOPHONE	Selmer Paris S80 C* or Vandoren Optimum AL3 mouthpiece. Silk cleaning swab, cork grease, soft cloth, neck strap, Vandoren or D'Addario Reserve reeds ((size 2.5 for 6 th graders, size 3 for 7/8 graders)
TRUMPET	Bach 5C or 3C mouthpiece, Al Cass fast valve oil, tuning slide grease, cleaning snake, mouthpiece brush, mutes as needed
HORN	Farkas MDC mouthpiece, Holton rotary valve oil, tuning slide grease, cleaning snake, mouthpiece brush
TROMBONE	Bach 6 1/2 AL mouthpiece, Slide-O-Mix (black cap..pre mixed), spray bottle, tuning slide grease, cleaning snake, mouthpiece brush
BARITONE/TUBA	Bach 6 1/2AL (Euphonium), Conn Helleberg 120 (tuba), Al Cass fast valve oil, tuning slide grease, mouthpiece brush
PERCUSSION	6 th : bell kit, medium hard rubber mallets, practice pad, Vic Firth 5A snare sticks, stick/mallet bag +7 th /8 th : snare drum (for home use), medium yarn mallets, medium timpani mallets, pitch pipe

NOTE: *Reed players must have at least 4 playable reeds at all times. It is generally less expensive (per reed) to buy them by the box rather than individually.*

Concert Attire

	BOYS' ATTIRE	GIRLS' ATTIRE
All Grades	Solid black dress shoes (no sneakers/flip-flops) Solid black socks Solid black dress pants (no jeans/shorts) Solid Black, Long Sleeve Button-up dress shirt Solid black neck tie	Solid black dress shoes (no sneakers/flip-flops) Solid black socks or hose Solid black slacks (no jeans/shorts/skirts) Solid Black, Long Sleeve Button-up dress shirt Solid black neck tie OR Solid black dress shoes (no sneakers/flip-flops) Solid black socks or hose Solid black, full length formal dress

*****black means solid black – not gray, blue, brown, or black with stripes****

I will be sending out a separate communication regarding dress apparel. This will contain examples of each option for clarification.

Policies and Procedures

Instrument Storage

Students are expected to take their instruments home daily in order to practice. During the school day, students may store their instruments in a personal storage space in the band room. Guidelines are:

1. Only band students are allowed in the band room and instrument storage rooms.
2. Lockers are to be used for storage of band instruments and other band-related materials only. Other school or personal property should be kept in backpacks
3. It is recommended that small, easily stolen/lost items be kept in the student's backpack.
4. Students are to use only the specific locker assigned to them.
5. Students are not to write on lockers, put stickers on lockers, or otherwise vandalize them in any way.
6. Trading or switching lockers may only occur with the permission of the director.
7. Instrument cases should be left in the lockers during class (not on the floor).
8. All band students and parents must complete a WCPSS Personal Property Waiver.

Class Materials

Each day, every student is expected to have the following materials on his stand or at his seat when class begins.

1. Instrument
2. Instrument accessories (reeds, valve oil, mallets, etc.)
3. Dedicated Band Binder: 1'-1.5" three ring binder with 20 clear document pages
4. Method book
 - a. 6th Grade - Standard of Excellence, Book One
 - b. 7th Grade – Foundations for Superior Performance, Habits of a Successful Middle School Student
 - c. 8th Grade - Foundations for Superior Performance, Habits of a Successful Middle School Student
5. Music
6. Pencil
7. At least 10 sheets of blank notebook paper (in band binder)

Music and Equipment

All members of the band program should show the utmost respect for school-owned property that is provided for individual use. This includes music, instruments, percussion equipment, music stands, etc. Students are held financially responsible for the damage or loss of any school property that has been assigned to them. Large items such as instruments require checkout through an official WCPSS instrument loan form and rental fee before leaving the school.

Performance Probation

Any band member may be placed on performance probation as a result of excessive absences, excessive behavior problems, inadequate rehearsal participation, or lack of preparation on the concert music. A student placed on performance probation will not be allowed to perform until the probation has been lifted by the director. An alternate assignment may be given to replace the missed performance.

Tuner, metronome, and music stand

It is recommended that all students have access to a tuner, a metronome, and a wire music stand at home. If the students have access to a smart device, Mr. Riggs recommends the app "TonalEnergy Tuner & Metronome." We will be using this in class every day. While it is not free, this powerful \$3.99 app contains a tuner, metronome, pitch drone, the ability to record audio and video, and MANY more functions! Students will be taught how to submit their assessments using this application.

Classroom Expectations

These rules and procedures are designed to create a positive learning environment where students are able to learn and feel safe. Students who are unable to follow these basic rules and instructions may find themselves in silent lunch, parent conferences, administrative conferences, or even lose the privilege of being a member of the band.

1. Students are to enter the band room quietly and respectfully.
2. Students must be in their assigned seats with instrument and all materials within one minute after the official start time of class. This additional minute is to allow wind players to assemble instruments and percussionists to set up. It is not for socializing.
3. Daily instructions and rehearsal order will be on the board. Students are expected to prepare accordingly.
4. Students are not to warm up until the director starts the class. Students are allowed to play only under the teacher's direction for the duration of the class.
5. Students are to refrain from talking or other distractions and disruptions during rehearsal. If they wish to ask or answer a question, raising a hand is the appropriate way to signal the teacher.
6. Students are to remain engaged and participate actively during class. Work for other classes is not allowed during band class.
7. Students are not to have food, drink, candy, or gum in the classroom, except under special circumstances specified by the director or with written documentation of a medical condition. Clear water bottles with plain, non-flavored drinking water are acceptable, as long as trash is properly disposed of each day.
8. Students must respect the property of others.
 - a. Students should never touch or otherwise tamper with another student's instrument, accessories, case, or other band materials.
 - b. Student must respect the room equipment. The music stands are not to be used as desks, written on, leaned on, spun, or otherwise mistreated. The stands are designed for music and a pencil only. Violations will be treated as vandalism.
 - c. Percussion instruments are for percussionists only. Non-percussionists are not allowed to touch or move these instruments without specific permission from a director. This policy includes the piano.
9. Instruments must be stored on the proper shelves or cubicles, not on the floor.
10. Percussionists should cover the timpani and mallet instruments and put away all accessories before being dismissed.
11. Students are not to enter the band office without permission from the director.
12. Trash such as old reeds, reed cases, paper, etc., must be put into a garbage can before leaving the room.

Attendance

Band members are expected to be present and prompt for all rehearsals and performance functions. The band's policy on excused absences parallels that of the Wake County Public School System and applies to required performances as well as daily class meetings. *Transportation issues, other homework or activities, and forgetting about a performance are not excusable reasons.* Absences shall be excused only in the following circumstances:

1. Illness or injury
2. Death in the family
3. Medical or dental appointment*
4. Court appointment*
5. Religious observance*
6. Other pre-approved educational opportunities*

In order for an absence to be excused, parent documentation is required. For items marked with an asterisk (*), parent documentation must be submitted well in advance.

Bold items on the band calendar are mandatory events – please plan ahead. We purposefully limit the number of required events so that our band students can participate in many other activities. Because of this, concert performances should take precedence over more frequently scheduled activities such as club meetings, athletic practices or games, etc. ***Students who do not prioritize concert performances should consider other elective course options.*** We may also be performing for end-of-year awards assemblies, which would occur during the regular school day. Many of the dates on our calendar are determined by the North Carolina Bandmasters Association. Concert dates are subject to change based on the school calendar and schedule. If such changes occur, or if any other events arise, the director will notify parents as soon as possible via email.

Grading

An essential and inherent component of the instrumental music curriculum is student performance. Therefore, a substantial portion of the student's grade in band is determined by participation in performance activities, either individually or with the group. The school's grading policy will be used and is available on the school website.

Individual Musicianship

Students should consistently arrive on time, bring the necessary materials for class, participate actively, conduct themselves according to all class rules and procedures, and demonstrate fundamentals such as posture, hand position, embouchure, etc. *A student who cannot play his instrument because it is being repaired or because of an illness or injury must bring a signed note from a parent in order to be excused from playing during class. If a loaner is available at school, it is expected that the student will play and therefore should have his/her mouthpiece, reeds, etc.*

Projects and Written Classwork Assignments

Occasionally there are non-playing activities that serve to reinforce instruction in the areas of performance, music history, or music theory.

Tests

Playing and written tests are given to assess each student's comprehension and mastery of material covered in class. Playing tests will be performed in a variety of ways: in class (live), on a recording device according to the director's instructions.

Concerts

Student attendance at concerts is mandatory. Concert grades are based on performance and demonstration of proper concert etiquette. Please refer to the MPMS Band Calendar for event dates, and plan accordingly.

Concert Etiquette

1. Listen attentively. Give your full focus to the music being performed.
2. Refrain from talking, tapping, or making other distracting sounds or movements.
3. Refrain from chewing, eating, or drinking.
4. Remain seated until the performance is over.
5. Turn off cell phones or other electronic devices.
6. Applaud only when appropriate and only in a way that will encourage the performer(s).
7. Be open-minded and receptive to different styles of music.

Travel Policies

1. A completed and signed WCPSS field trip permission form is required of each student participating in any trip taken by the Mills Park Middle School Band.
2. A full itinerary will be issued to each student prior to any trip. It is the student's responsibility to share this information with his parents.
3. While on trips, students are to follow all applicable school and band policies.
4. Students who are riding with their parents instead of with the full group should submit a signed note to the director prior to the trip.
5. Band members will sit in assigned seats and are expected to cooperate during all roll checks. Students will load and unload vehicles only upon the director's instruction.
6. Students will be held financially responsible for any damages to bus property.
7. All school bus safety rules must be observed while on charter buses as well.
8. Students and parents should arrange transportation home from the band room in advance.
9. Electronic items such as personal tape/cd/mp3 players, video games, etc. are considered personal property. Neither the band director nor the school are responsible for theft, damage, or loss of such items. The band director reserves the right to restrict the use of such items when necessary. These items may be used only with headphones.