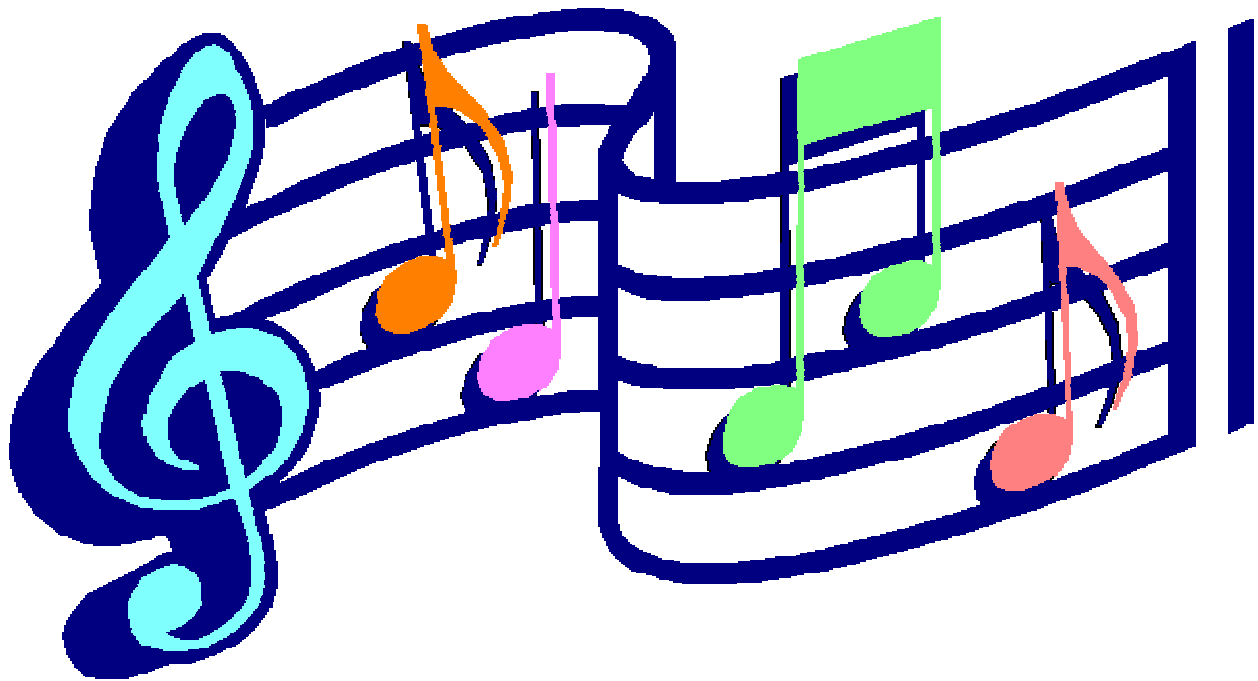


Mason Intermediate School

6th Grade Band Handbook



Band Directors

Christy Downer & Chad Fourman

CLASS EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING POLICY

Students are expected to attend band class during intervention on their band day whether or not they remember to bring their instrument to school. (i.e. Don't skip math if you forget your math book!)

BAND CLASS ROTATION

Woodwinds (flutes, clarinets, saxophones) – Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
Brass (trumpets, trombones, French horns, baritones) – Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays

Each student should be prepared for every class with their instrument, planner, their band folder (provided – free of charge) which contains their band method book and any sheet music passed out during the school year. Band instruments should be in good working order with appropriate supplies. We are able to sell a few of the less expensive supplies at school, and especially recommend that clarinet and saxophone players buy their reeds at school. We encourage this because the band directors are able to advise the best reed strength and brand for each student's ability level and type of mouthpiece and ligature.

INSTRUMENT SUPPLIES AND COSTS:

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|--------|----------------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| Clarinet reeds | \$2.00 | Saxophone reeds | \$2.50 | Cork grease | \$1.50 | Thumb-eez | \$1.75 |
| Reed holder | \$1.75 | Mouthpiece/tooth pad | \$1.25 | Valve Oil | \$4.50 | Slide Cream | \$4.00 |

PERFORMANCES

6th grade band has 2 required performances each year. They are usually in December and May. We will have ONE mid-year, and ONE end-of-the year concert, and the dates will be made available at least a month in advance. It takes several months to prepare music for these special events, and it is crucial to have 100% attendance for the night they take place for the students. If there are scheduling conflicts for your family, please give us some advanced notification. We also ask that you communicate this information to the appropriate people in case of conflicts (coaches, etc...) since this is the **ONLY** evening obligation which compares to a final exam. Attendance is required at both concerts in order for your student to receive full credit for the year. **Baseball, softball, and soccer games are unexcused absences since this obligation was explained PRIOR to joining band.** Sports teams have more than one game, but there is only ONE spring concert. We have been very successful in resolving different kinds of problems, if given enough warning, so please make every attempt to communicate with us. Illnesses and emergencies that interfere with participation in the concert need to be followed up as soon as the student returns to school.

RENTAL INFORMATION:

We highly recommend renting instead of purchasing for the first year or two. Please refer to the 'CHOOSE INSTRUMENT' page from the Intermediate School section of the website for more rental info. There are specifications related to each band instrument that we recommend for good student success. http://www.masonbands.com/MIS_ChooseInstrument.htm If you have any questions not addressed by these website documents, please don't hesitate to call or email us.

METHOD BOOK:

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS 2000 (for your child's instrument)
This method book should come with a play-along CD.

All band members need to contribute in a positive way to each band rehearsal. This means displaying appropriate classroom behavior and sharing evidence of musical growth.

We would like to ask that your student make a commitment to ‘stick’ with band until after our December concert. A student really can’t learn enough technique on an instrument in less than a trimester of classes to have given it an honest try. Performing is a big part of band participation that we’d like all members to experience. We will be having a concert typically in December and also at the end of the school year.

PRACTICING

The rest of their grade is based on improvement. Are they working to get better? We will listen to the students play individually to take a baseline assessment of their ability. We will then periodically have playing tests to evaluate their progress. **Because students only come to band three times a week, it is very important for them to do “homework” or practice at home.** A minimum of 60 minutes a week is recommended for each student in order to maintain and reinforce the techniques that are taught at school. Please ask your student about practice logs. They should be bringing home a small form to document the time they spend playing their instrument outside of class. It needs your signature (please don’t just initial) and should be turned in EVERY WEEK.

This is an example of what practice logs will look like starting the 2nd trimester.

Band Practice Log

Name _____ Team _____ Instrument _____

Total practice time FOR THE WEEK should equal 60 minutes. More often is better than all at once.
When you practice, please indicate the number of minutes under that day of the week.

| MONTH/DAY | FRI. | SAT. | SUN. | MON. | TUES. | WED. | THURS. |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|--------|
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

What did you practice? _____

Turn in by FRI Week's TOTAL _____ Parent Signature _____

The purpose of the practice logs is to encourage setting up a weekly practice routine. The goal is to practice at home at least 3 different times (encourage them to use the CD that comes with the book). Establishing home practice as a regular, consistent habit is much more important than the exact number of minutes they practice. Practice logs are collected and documented for each student every week either on paper or through the internet using SmartMusic. (This amazing internet-based software program allows students to practice at home using their computer. It will indicate whether the student is playing the correct notes or not, AND will document the time spent practicing. This documentation can be ‘submitted’ to their band director via the internet to count as an electronic practice log!!! See more information about SmartMusic later in the handbook.)

GRADES

Students will be receiving a grade for band only on the trimester report cards. Although concert attendance is part of their grade, most of a student’s grade comes from daily participation. Is the student contributing to the group in a positive way? (They need to have their instrument AND music at school to do this, for example.) Being unprepared for class or disrupting the group rehearsal DOES hurt everyone’s potential for success, and will be reflected in daily grades.

When it is time for trimester report cards, most students usually receive a “P” for band. This indicates the student is progressing at a satisfactory level. The only students who will earn a “+” do so by consistently demonstrating competency in all areas of playing (independently, and within the group). When a student is struggling with achievement AND work ethic, the “-” signifies an area of concern that we would have already shared with you. We’ll be sending home an instrumental progress report before the winter break that will indicate your student’s strengths and weaknesses on his/her instrument. Ask about it

Woodwind / Brass progress report:

| | | | | |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| 906 | NAME _____ | | | |
| <u>Playing Quiz</u> <u>Progress Report</u> <small>Winds</small> | | DATE _____ | | |
| | DEMO _____ | | | |
| | <u>Advanced</u> | <u>Proficient</u> | <u>Basic</u> | <u>Below Basic</u> |
| 1) Playing position / posture | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2) Embouchure | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3) Articulation / use of tongue | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4) Reading notes / fingerings / slide positions | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5) Counting rhythms | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6) Keeping steady tempo | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7) Hearing wrong notes or mistakes | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8) Breathing appropriately | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9) Tone quality | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10) Starting over (*evaluated after 1 st playing test) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| <u>COMMENTS</u> | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared for class: • Daily contribution: • Practice logs: | | | | |
| Parent's Signature _____ | | | | |

INSTRUMENT PURCHASES – BEWARE OF I.S.O.’s!!!

***** Beware ***** “Instrument Shaped Object” is a real term the music industry is using to refer to the very cheap unreliable products that are being imported from other parts of the world. When or if the time comes that you want to consider purchasing an instrument for your student, please don’t hesitate if you would like us to evaluate the quality of the specific instrument you may want to buy. THERE IS A WHOLE LOT OF JUNK OUT THERE!! Please let us help you avoid bad purchases and prevent your child’s frustration with an instrument that doesn’t work properly. If there’s any doubt, let us check it out for you. We have a list of recommended instrument specifications posted on the band website. http://www.masonbands.com/MIS_ChooseInstrument.htm Please also be aware that the recommendations we have given for BEGINNING BAND instruments will change for more experienced players. If you are interested in a list of up-grade instrument / or mouthpiece recommendations, please let us know. Our high school band staff has compiled a list of recommendations for more serious band students that will help them choose equipment that will improve their success at a higher level. And as always, if there is EVER any problem or concern you would like to share, please feel free to give us a call.

PRIVATE LESSONS

The Mason Band Program offers referrals for half hour private lessons, taught by an outstanding staff of professional performer-teachers. Private lessons are a great resource not only for the band student who may be struggling with certain skills, but also for the advanced student who would enjoy extra challenges. The pace of learning can be set to maximize the progress of each individual student when studying privately. Lessons are scheduled after school and evenings at Mason High School, Mason Middle School, Mason Intermediate School, or the instructor's private studio.

Although private lessons are not required for the Mason students to participate in band at the intermediate, middle school or high school levels, band directors agree that private instruction is the most effective way for young musicians to fully develop their performing talents. Private teachers help students develop tone quality, technique, musical style, practice discipline, and preparation for solos, playing tests and auditions. The lessons use a combination of explanation and demonstrations while building the student's confidence to enjoy playing in group or solo situations. Private teachers use a variety of materials including solos, exercise books, audition materials, as well as parts from full band arrangements. Nothing compares with sitting down one-on-one with a professional player/teacher!

The cost for private instruction is approximately \$20 per weekly lesson. Lessons can be started or stopped anytime during the school year with make-up lessons given for illness, emergencies, or other excused absences. Lessons are not given during holidays or on days when school is not in session. During the winter months lessons are canceled if school is closed or dismissed early. Some private teachers continue lessons throughout the summer, but most lessons are taught from late September through May.

Parents are reminded that while private lessons are encouraged they are not required. The band directors are fully aware that the combination of cost, time and the individual goals of each student make it impossible for all band students to participate. Please indicate on the signature page if you would like to be contacted with more information.

Also, the Instrumental Music Department for Mason City Schools has a comprehensive website with valuable information for all the band and orchestra groups in grades 6-12. There is even an entire page that provides biographical information about the private teachers we most highly recommend. Feel free to peruse at <http://www.masonbands.com/PrivateLessons.htm>.

SMARTMUSIC

Our school Instrumental music department will be using a software/subscription product called SmartMusic[®] to help students learn concert music and develop essential playing skills. We highly recommend students purchase a SmartMusic home subscription as it will greatly assist their development. Since teachers will be using it in class, a home subscription is a great tool for your student's musical development while practicing at home. It is actually possible to submit SmartMusic assignments via internet connection as an alternative to conventional practice logs.

This interactive software program provides instant feedback for your student as they play their instrument. Please visit www.smartmusic.com where you can view a four-minute video that explains SmartMusic and how it motivates and engages students, builds student confidence, and enriches the student's total music experience.

What is needed to use SmartMusic?

SmartMusic works on your PC or Macintosh and requires an Internet connection to activate your subscription and receive and send assignments securely online. System requirements and support contacts are listed at www.smartmusic.com.

What does SmartMusic cost?

A full-year subscription to SmartMusic generally costs \$30 per year, however Mason City Schools has secured a 15% discounted rate from the company for all products. The annual subscription rate is only \$25.50, and the one-time microphone purchase cost is \$16.96. The microphone is necessary for assignments, tuning, recordings, and assessments. Macintosh computers also require a USB microphone adaptor. More information regarding SmartMusic will be available in the near future.

COMMUNICATION

We hope you always feel free to contact us with questions, concerns or comments you might have regarding your student's musical progress, instrument details, or any issue that we can help with at school. We are working hard to get to know our beginning band students as musicians and as people, and are having a great time with them in band!

Finally, please encourage your student to check their **EDLINE** band page. We have uploaded many documents, links, dates, and important details relating to beginning band. It will be listed in the left column with academic classes. We will share information about specific dates and times for the concerts via Edline email, and the Band Edline page.

We also hope you will take time to check out all the great information at the Mason Instrumental Music website @ www.masonbands.com.

Sincerely,

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