

Thomas Jefferson Middle School Bands

Handbook 2019-20



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Course Outline

At Jefferson, sixth and seventh grade band meets for three periods a week and eighth grade band meets five days a week. In sixth and seventh grade, the schedule is set up so that if a student has band on assigned days, such as Day 1, 3 and 4, for instance, they will then have gym on day 2 and 5. Each group follows a different schedule. In the first month or two of school, I will help the students determine which days they have band and which days they have gym class. I recommend that students write down the days they have gym and band in their assignment books each week.

Because the class size has increased dramatically from 5th grade, I often recommend that students get some level of private instruction. This is especially crucial for students who have had less than the usual 2 years of study on their instrument upon entering sixth grade at Jefferson. **It is also highly recommended for students who are more advanced than average, because they will need some accelerated material to work on independently.**

Band class is designed to advance students to the next level of playing in an ensemble format. Technique, ear training, music theory, musical style, ensemble skills and tone quality are the focus of the band class. Individual playing tests are done throughout each marking period (see “Grading”), and I work diligently to attend to as many individuals as possible in each given period. However, there is always an adjustment that the students need to make when studying in large group format. All the students are encouraged to seek out help when they need it and let me know if they need some extra attention. I am always willing to schedule a meeting with an individual student after school or during a team time if I have a free period.

Discipline and Daily Rules and Procedures

By its very nature, band suggests teamwork, cooperation and ensemble with everyone striving for a common goal. From the first day a student enters the Jefferson Middle School Bands he or she should recognize that this is more than just a class, but a performing “team” that depends greatly on the positive contributions of each band member. Every musician in the band is an important and integral part of the success of our band program and everyone is expected to conduct themselves with the pride and respect that is needed to make our group outstanding in all ways. As band director, I regard the conduct of my band members very seriously, and I have developed the following rules and procedures to ensure that everyone performs to their potential on a daily basis.

1. Students must arrive to class on time in an orderly manner with instruments, music folders, and other necessary items for class. Time will be given at the beginning of class to set up instruments and at the end of class to put them away.
2. Students must find their seat and begin setting up their instrument promptly. Once a seat is assigned to a student, students are not permitted to change seats.
3. Once rehearsal has started, students are expected to listen, follow all directions, and play the music that is being studied in class. Talking to other students, talking out in class and general disruptions will not be tolerated.

4. At the end of class, all students are to put their instruments away in the storage room or other assigned storage area. Students may carry their instruments to their next class to go into lockers at the next locker time. No instrument should be left out of a case, with the exception of the large percussion instruments located in the room.
5. Students are expected to take care of their band book, music and any district-owned instruments they will use. All books and music will be returned to me at the end of the year in good condition, or students will be charged for lost or damaged items. If a book is lost during the year, parents may purchase a replacement at Volkwein's music store. (412) 788-5900
6. No student will play an instrument other than their own. This includes district-owned instruments such as percussion and string instruments.
7. Extreme disruptions such as aggressive, insubordinate or dangerous behavior will be taken to the building administrators immediately.

Most, if not all, band members successfully follow these guidelines. For those who do not meet classroom expectations the following consequences generally apply:

- a. In cases of talking or minor disruptions, I will usually give a verbal warning addressing the behavior. If the student continues to disrupt class, then I use an in-class time out. In some cases I will hold a student after class briefly to speak about a problem behavior.
- b. If the behavior continues to be a problem, then I call home and work with parents to solve the problem. At this stage I may also assign after-school or lunchtime detentions.
- c. When parent calls are not effective in deterring misbehavior or misbehavior is extreme, I involve parents and the principals to come to a solution.
- d. After-school detentions will be issued to students who leave their instrument out in the classroom repeatedly or abuse the district-owned instruments.

Grading

Each marking period a grade for band appears on a student's report card, and this grade is averaged into the student's overall grade point average. Student's performance in band is evaluated as objectively as possible. Individual playing tests are given in private tape-recorded sessions. I return an evaluation form to each student as soon as I have listened to the taped tests. These forms will show the student's grade, what I have based the performance grade on, and suggestions for improvement. Other scale quizzes and small group tests may be given in class. **Anytime a student earns a grade below a "B" on a playing test, they will be allowed to retest within a week of receiving the result of the test.** However, permission to retest may be denied if a student has shown a consistent lack of effort by leaving their instrument at school during the period before a test!

If at any time a student shows extreme anxiety over playing in front of a group, even in small group format, then the student should see me to schedule an after-school appointment to

take a test. The goal is to thoroughly evaluate and improve a student's playing, not give them hives or other unmentionable rashes. Each marking period grade is comprised of some or all of the following criteria:

1. Taped playing tests-50 points each
2. In-class small group playing tests/quizzes-10-30 points each
3. Written tests/quizzes-10-40 points each
4. **CONCERT ATTENDANCE-20 points**(When there is a concert in the marking period)
5. Preparation- **Students are given class participation points at the beginning of each nine weeks. A student will be deducted class participation points each time they forget their instrument, music folder or reeds (for reed instruments).**
6. Practice-DAILY PRACTICE IS EXPECTED even if a student has class five days a week! There is only one way to improve and excel on an instrument and that is with regular practice. Students in grades 6 and 7 are given practice charts every week to be turned in on an assigned day each week. Full credit (2 points) for practice charts is given for a practice chart that is filled out, signed and demonstrate a practice total of 30 minutes per week. Over 30 minutes a week of practice is awarded extra credit based on the amount of minutes practiced.
7. Miscellaneous-5-20 points. This could include any spot quizzes, Homework sheets, scale quizzes, or in class-worksheets.

As you can see, many things make up a marking period grade in band. If there are any questions about a student's grade, please feel free to contact me anytime.

A VERY IMPORTANT word about purchasing instruments...

Most students are eligible to purchase an instrument after about 2 1/2 years of rental. Before you purchase an instrument, it is a good idea to get a recommendation from a private teacher or me. As with cars, there are a great number of inferior brands of instruments being sold, and you can easily purchase a "lemon" for what seems like a good price. Off-brand instruments are absolutely not a good substitute when it comes to purchasing a playable instrument. Be especially wary of instruments that are sold at large discount retailers/warehouses and on-line marketplaces that sell a large variety of household, clothing, electronics and other assorted items. **If you purchase an instrument at a place that does not specialize in musical instrument sales, you will find that these instruments are of such low quality, that they break almost immediately and no repair shop will be willing to fix it!**

Even if you can get the instrument repaired, it may sound so bad or be so difficult to play that your child will become frustrated with music altogether. The frustration of playing one of

these instruments can influence a child's interest in music. If you want to surprise your child with a new instrument, rest assured that I can keep a secret, and I would much prefer to guide you through the process. Call me anytime at Jefferson Middle or email me at; KWagner@mtlsd.net and I will reply as promptly as possible.

Concert Dates and other details

There are two main concerts scheduled for this year. Since we do not have an auditorium large enough to fit everyone on stage, we will perform at the high school's main auditorium.

Winter Concert: Tuesday, November 19th, 2019 7:30p.m.
HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

Spring Concert: Wednesday, June 3rd, 2020 7:30p.m.
HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

Concert Dress: **White tops (Girls who are in wind ensemble may wear all black)**
Black on bottom. (no short skirts for girls)
Ties for boys!!!

Dress rehearsals for both concerts will be held before or during the day of the concert at the high school. (See appendix) There are no evening or Saturday rehearsals for the spring or winter concerts.

Contacting Me

I highly encourage all parents and students to contact me at anytime with questions, concerns and ideas. Since I have over 170 students, I rely upon my students and parents to keep in close touch so that I am aware of any needs and concerns you might have. The best way to get a question answered quickly is by dropping a note to me through a student or by using email to contact me. I check my email daily at school. Phone calls are also an option, but be aware that the voice mail system is sometimes "on the fritz" and I may not get your message immediately! Please use the email system as often as you like, or send a message through your child to me.

My email address is KWagner@mtlsd.net also on the front page of this guide for quick reference.



APPENDIX



(NO! NOT THAT ONE!)

**MUSIC SUPPLY AND
INSTRUMENT DEALERS**

**RECOMMENDED
INSTRUMENT BRANDS**

**RECOMMENDED SUPPLIES
FOR BAND**

**CONCERT DATES AND DRESS
REHEARSALS**

**DISTRICT INSTRUMENT
STORAGE POLICY**

Music Supply and Instrument Dealers

Local-Repair

Hollis & Germann Music

4136 Library Road

(412) 531-2781

Two former employees of Volkwein's repair have opened up a shop right near Connor Road. Excellent repair, and they resell used instruments.

Johnstonbaugh's Music Center

South Hills-Chartiers Valley Shopping Center in Bridgeville. **(412) 221-2990.**

The other two stores are: 5786 Satzburg Road, Penn Hills-**(412) 793-6631**

4375 Rt. 910, Gibsonia **(724) 444-5660**

Good repair-Bob Johnstonbaugh stops in once a week to pickup/drop off instruments. The Bridgeville store doesn't repair instruments, so it is best to call and schedule a pick up or exchange if you are still renting.

Volkwein's Music

138 Industry Drive-take (Montour run exit off the parkway, just past IKEA)

(412) 788-5900

Good repair-Sales rep stops in by request-call the store if you need a pickup at school.

****These are the only local repair shops. Some stores will take repairs, but they send them away and you may wait 2-3 weeks to get the instrument back!***

Local-Supplies (reeds, drumsticks, ligatures, neckstraps, tuners, stands, etc..)

Drum World

1020 Castle Shannon Blvd.

(412) 343-2600

Lots of drum sets and sticks/mallets. Several times a year they hold great sales! Good prices on new drumheads.

Volkwein's Music (412) 788-5900

Huge selection of sheet music and instruments. Every supply imaginable. Sometimes very pricey on things like reeds and mouthpieces. Great service-you can order music on the phone and they will send it to your house. Very helpful staff in most departments!

Hollis & Germann Music-see above *Great prices on reeds, neckstraps, mouthpieces etc...*

Johnstonbaugh's Music Center-see above *Supplies for all instruments, some books.*

Local-Instruments

I only recommend Hollis and Germann, Johnstonbaugh's and Volkwein's as local instrument dealers for the excellent brands they carry. If you have been renting from one of them, you will get the best deal on an instrument since you build up money towards a purchase in an account. There are also several good instrument dealers out of town on the next page who have very competitive pricing, especially if you have not been renting.

Out-of-area music companies/catalogs

The Woodwind and Brasswind

www.wwbw.com

An enormous music store in South Bend, Indiana. They have a large inventory of instruments, accessories, printed music and software. They have excellent prices on reeds, tuners, mouthpieces, music stands, drumheads, percussion hardware and many other music related items.

Flute World

www.fluteworld.com

A store that specializes in selling flutes, including very high level instruments for the serious student, and loads of music and flute-related accessories. Also sponsors competitions.

Musician's Friend

www.musiciansfriend.com

Great prices on reeds and accessories. Some good prices on instruments, but they don't check them over before sending out, so they may need to be taken to a repair shop once you purchase from them. Excellent prices on mouthpieces.

J.W. Pepper

www.jwpepper.com

Every piece of music that is in print(practically). Carries music/books for every instrument and ensemble imaginable. If it's not at Pepper, it probably doesn't exist.

Weiner Music

shop.weinermusic.com

Great prices on woodwind instruments and accessories. Best prices I have found on reeds to date.

*****A word of Caution*****

When buying instruments online, stick with recommended brands. Some instruments offered for very low prices are of such low quality that when they break, no repair shop will fix them due to the poor materials and workmanship of the instrument.

Recommended Instrument Brands

Flutes

Student Models-Armstrong, Bundy, Gemeinhardt, Yamaha

Open-hole flutes-There are several good intermediate flutes on the market made by reputable companies and are very reasonably priced. I highly recommend the Azumi, Sonare, Di Jiao and Yamaha intermediate flutes. The Azumi is found locally at Hollis and Germann. The rest are at Johnstonbaugh's and Volkwein's. If you aren't renting, then the best prices on these flutes can be found at Flute World or the Woodwind and Brasswind which are both online.

Piccolos

Armstrong, Gemeinhardt, Selmer or Yamaha. All-metal or metal headjoint with black plastic body is the easiest to control for middle school students. Advanced students might want an all-composition headjoint and body.

Oboes/Bassoons

Fox or Fox/Renard. Selmer makes a nice beginner oboe for renting.

Clarinets

Buffet-especially the B12 and E11 models. Very serious students play on an R13, which is all wood, expensive and should only be owned by someone studying privately with a strong commitment to music. Yamaha and Selmer also makes nice student level instruments.

Alto/Tenor Saxophones

Selmer-comes in several levels. All of them are very good and come with a terrific mouth piece that can be used through the end of high school and beyond. Yamaha is also very nice. If you purchase a Yamaha, then buy a Selmer C-star mouthpiece to go with it! Bundy is a decent student level instrument-especially if you are using one that has been passed down in the family from the 1960's or 70's. Cannonball and Martin are good mid-priced intermediate saxes as well, but you need to look for them online, since none of the dealers in Pittsburgh carry them regularly.

Trumpets

Bach, Yamaha, King, or Conn. Consult with a private teacher if you are purchasing an intermediate or professional silver trumpet.

Trombones

Bach, Yamaha, King or Conn.

French horns, Baritones, Tubas

If you play one of these, you must have a private teacher help you with instrument selection. Never buy anything this expensive without good advice from someone who plays these instruments professionally.

Drum sets/Snare drums

When buying a set get a recommendation from a private teacher. For snares, go with Yamaha, Pearl or Ludwig. (These are also the major set brands) Zildjian and Sabian cymbals are best.

Recommended supplies for band class

All supplies are readily available at any local music store.

- Means an essential item for playing/protecting the instrument
 - ✓ Means a highly recommended item

Flute:

- All flutists need a soft cleaning cloth to be carried outside of the case. Carrying the cloth inside the case can bend the rods of the flute and cause costly repairs. Usually a handkerchief or a bandana is best. It is best to tie the cloth to the handle of the case.
- A cleaning rod which should be included with the flute. If it has been lost, it is easy and inexpensive to purchase one at any music store.

Reed instruments:

- Single reed players will need 4 or 5 good reeds at all times. Double reeds will need at least 2 good reeds at all times.
- Clarinetists in grade 6 will need reeds which are strength 2 ½ or higher. Grade 7 and 8 should be strength 3 or higher.
- Saxophonists in grade 6 will need reeds which are strength 2 or higher. Grade 7 and 8 should be strength 3 or higher.
- Oboists and bassoonists will need at least 2 or 3 reeds-medium soft to medium strength.
- Everyone should have a swab to wipe moisture out of their instrument.
- ✓ A mouthpiece cleaning brush is a nice item to own since mouthpieces get dirty and germly quickly.
- ✓ A reed guard, which is a small plastic case for storing reeds, is very nice to own. Reed guards keep reeds flat and the tip of the reeds protected. They significantly prolong the life of the reeds and cost less than \$5.00.
- ✓ Reeds come in different brands. The most basic is Rico. Rico Royal reeds are higher quality and sound much better than basic Rico reeds. Vandoren reeds are very high quality, and tend to be a little harder than Rico, so order a half size lower.

Trumpet/Baritone/French Horn/Tuba:

- All valve instruments need valve oil, which must be applied often and wiped off the valves on occasion before reapplying.
- Slide grease is essential to keep the tuning slides from sticking.
- ✓ A snake is a good item to own to clean out the lead pipe of the instrument. Lead pipes build up with dirt, old food, etc...and need to be washed out at least once a month.
- ✓ A valve brush is a good item to own, since it is difficult to find a household item that can scrub out the tubing around the valves. Trumpets should have a full soaking bath at least twice a year or more.
- ✓ A mouthpiece brush is also recommended. All cleaning supplies can be purchased separately, or in a trumpet care kit.

Trombone:

- Slide lubricant is essential to a trombonist to keep the slides in working order. I highly recommend a lubricant called “slide-o-mix” which can be purchased at Volkwein’s, Johnstonbaugh’s or Hollis and Germann. A small spray bottle of water is also needed to keep the slides working between applications of lubricant.
- ✓ A snake and a mouthpiece brush are good to own and very inexpensive. They are used to keep the pipes of the trombone free of debris. Trombones should be placed in a soaking bath two or three times a year. Once a month, the lead pipe and main slide should be rinsed with water and snaked out.

Percussion:

- All percussionists need a snare drum/bell kit. Students need the snare drum for concerts and the bells to prepare for tests at home. If you have a pad and bell kit, it is easy to exchange one for a snare and bell kit. Just call the store where you rent and ask them to exchange the kit. There is no difference in price for the snare/bell kit. The music store can bring it to JMS, or you can take the kit to the store and exchange it. If all you own is a snare drum, I have a bell kit that can be borrowed and taken home on a first-come-first-served basis. Students may also practice on the school marimba or xylophone before or after school.
- All percussionists should own at least two pairs of drum sticks, since it is easy to lose sticks in the lunchroom or another class. Students should write their names near the tip of the drumstick for easy identification in case they are left somewhere.
- A drum key is essential for tuning the head of the drum. Most drum kits come with a drum key, or one can be purchased for under \$2.00 at any music store.
- ✓ A stick bag is nice to have for keeping sticks in a secure place. Stick bags can be purchased at Drum World or any other place that rents instruments.

Save the Dates! Concert Dates 2019/2020

8th Grade Band Only: Details to Follow

- 1. Performance with the High School Marching Band:** Saturday, September 21st, 2019. We will be playing for the High School Marching Band Festival at the High School Stadium. The Festival begins at 7:00p.m. . There will be a rehearsal at the high school stadium at some point that week. More details will follow soon.
- 2. Field trip to Seton Hill University:** Friday, October 25th, 2019. We will leave at 7:25 a.m. and return to the school at 1:30p.m. We will be running a demonstration rehearsal for the students in the music education department and we will have a master class/rehearsal with the college professors.
- 3. Performance at High Notes Music Festival/Kennywood trip:** Friday, May 29th, 2020-we typically leave at 7:15a.m. and return by 6:00p.m.

All Bands: Concert Dates

Winter Concert: Tuesday, November 19th, 2019 7:30p.m.
HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

Spring Concert: Wednesday, June 3rd, 2020 7:30p.m.
HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

Concert Dress: White tops (Girls who are in wind ensemble may wear all black)
Black on bottom. (no short skirts for girls)
Ties for boys!!!

Dress Rehearsal Dates/Times: (bus permission form required)

6th grade band- Tuesday, November 19th —12:00p.m.-2:15p.m.
Wednesday, June 3rd —12:00p.m.-2:15p.m.

7th grade band— Monday, November 18th —12:45p.m.-2:58p.m.
Tuesday, June 2nd —12:45p.m.-2:58p.m.

8th grade band- Tuesday, November 19th —8:15a.m.-10:30a.m.
Wednesday, June 3rd —8:15a.m.-10:30a.m.

*****A Plea from Ms. Wagner to Parents of Woodwind and Brass Players: *****

If it is at all possible, please do not schedule any major orthodontic procedures for your child two weeks before a concert. It can be difficult to play a wind instrument just after getting braces, especially if your child has an important solo!

Mt. Lebanon School District Instrument Storage Policy

“Students may leave musical instruments at school when used in class or practice. Parents should take steps to adequately insure their children’s instruments. The District takes no responsibility for instruments left on school premises and does it only as a matter of convenience to the parents and students. The District may or may not have adequate security of the instruments in its possession.”