

Rock Lake Middle School Band Handbook

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Rock Lake Band program!! This handbook has been written to familiarize you with the many aspects of the program, and to ensure an enjoyable and educationally rewarding musical experience. I realize you are deluged with reading material from the school at the beginning of the year, but **PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO READ ALL OF THE HANDBOOK!!** After you have read this handbook, sign the last page, detach the form, and return it to me. Band students will be held accountable for the information contained in this handbook so **please keep the rest of the handbook for future reference. Please refer to our website www.rocklakeband.com.**

Band is an ELECTIVE and SELECTIVE course. It differs from the general music class, or any other course on the enrichment wheel, in that we seek to develop greater proficiency over a longer period of time. It involves learning math concepts and applying them (rhythm); learning and applying a new system of notation; developing fine motor skills; developing the ability to listen critically; and becoming sensitive : to the sounds we make, to the conductor, to the sounds others make, and to the musical demands of the music. It requires cooperation with a conductor and a large team of musicians working together toward a common goal. And of course it also requires practice at home, occasional after school rehearsals and performances, and investment in and proper maintenance of an instrument. Band involves responsibility to the group. The sound each student makes changes the sound of the entire group. Most students possess the musical and mental skills necessary to be good student musicians. Success is most likely if the student has the desire to learn to play; the parents and students understand what is required for success; and the parents share responsibility for the music education of their child. It is hoped that this handbook will be a guide that will lead you and your child to a successful experience in band. If you have heard the Rock Lake Bands perform, you probably realized you were listening to a very special group of people. They have developed skills and have had learning experiences that will be useful in any endeavor they pursue. And perhaps most important, they experience the unique joy of making music. I sincerely hope your band experience will be as rewarding and exciting one!

Sincerely,

David Hedgecoth
Band Director

Course Descriptions

Beginning Band

Beginning Band is open to all students during the 1st 9 weeks of each year with parent permission. Previous musical training and music reading is of course helpful, but not necessary.

Instrument Selection

Beginning Band students will have an opportunity to try out several instruments. Selection of instrument is based upon student interest, physical characteristics (formation of lips and teeth), rhythmic coordination (percussion instruments), and instrumentation requirements (the number of students playing each instrument must be kept within reasonable limits in order to be able to perform the music written for the modern band).

Instrument Assembly, Care, and Maintenance

Proper assembly and care are necessary to minimize repairs and frustration caused by a malfunctioning instrument.

Tone Production

This includes all of the elements necessary to produce a musical sound on a wind or percussion instrument. Embouchure (the way the lips and facial muscles are used and applied to the mouthpiece), use of air, and concept of correct sound for a given instrument are learned.

Articulation

Articulation involves the correct use of the tongue in playing an instrument. It is very similar to pronunciation in speech.

Music Reading

After students can demonstrate basic tone production and articulation concepts, music reading is introduced. Students are introduced to notes and rhythms gradually. Students only learn notes and rhythms they are able to play and apply. New notes and rhythms are added as control improves. Music reading involves learning the name of the note, the sound of the note (pitch), the duration of the note (rhythm), and the fingering of the note on the instrument. It is essential that students practice daily, to avoid getting behind. Each skill builds on the last skill, so progress depends upon keeping up.

Ear Training

The ability to discriminate pitch, to play in tune with others, and to hear a musical line is a skill that can and must be developed by music students. Students can learn to play in tune, understand and

appreciate good tone quality, and learn to blend and balance their sound with their fellow musicians. Most students have quite good natural pitch perception; musicians develop an above average awareness of the sounds around them by learning to listen critically.

Scales

Students will learn 7 major scales in Beginning Band. Students will also be able to write and label each of their scales. Almost all music is based upon some kind of scale. Knowledge of scales is essential in learning to play an instrument. Percussion students learn scales on the mallet instruments, and in addition learn rudiments- exercises that build coordination and control necessary to play percussion parts.

Concert Band

Concert Band is open to students at an intermediate level of development. Students should be proficient in music reading, scales, tone production, and articulation. All of the basic techniques that were introduced in Beginning Band are further developed in Concert Band. Greater emphasis is placed upon performing band music of an intermediate level. The Concert Band performs at Florida Bandmaster's Association Festivals, and is combined with the Advanced Band for Christmas parades. Private lessons are a great help at this level, since class size and performance commitments limit the amount of individual instruction a student receives. Students will have after school section rehearsals when necessary for concert preparation.

Advanced Band

Advanced Band is open to only the most proficient students who have demonstrated ability to perform more difficult music. Instrumentation is a consideration when selecting students for Advanced Band. In addition, a student must have a proven record of reliability and good conduct in order to be considered for Advanced Band. The skills learned in Beginning and Concert Band are further refined, and additional scales and more difficult exercises are learned. Private lessons are highly recommended. Private teachers can help with preparation for All-County Band and All-State Band auditions, preparation of difficult band music, and selection and preparation of Solo and Ensemble music for performance at F.B.A. Solo and Ensemble Music Performance Assessment. Students will rehearse after school when necessary to prepare for a performance.

Jazz Ensemble

The Rock Lake Jazz Ensemble consists of members of the Advanced Band who are interested in performing Jazz and Rock music, and in learning improvisation. Instrumentation is limited, and only the top musicians in the school are considered for membership. This ensemble performs at F.B.A. Festival. Tools of improvisation, including blues, dorian, and dominant scales will be studied. A variety of musical styles, including Swing, Jazz Rock, Latin, and Ballad will be performed using a traditional "Big Band" instrumentation. Students may also play in a combo format.

SECRETS TO A GREAT BAND EXPERIENCE

The following information is important. Please Read!

1. Students should enter the bandroom in an orderly manner, and be in their seats and ready to play by the time the tardy bell rings.
2. Band students should not play their instruments at any time until instructed to do so.
3. Students will play only their own instrument or one assigned to them.
4. Students who play school owned instruments must pay a rental fee of \$50.00 per semester for the use of school instruments. Parents are responsible for damage caused by abuse or neglect.
5. Students are required to have an instrument and mouthpiece that is approved by the director. Equipment must be maintained in good playing condition. Parents should see that their child handles his instrument with care to avoid repairs. When repairs become necessary, parents should take the instrument to the repair shop promptly. Students are responsible for keeping their parents informed of the need for repairs!
6. Band students are expected to practice at home on a regular basis. A minimum of 30 minutes per day is recommended.
7. All instruments left in the band room during the day should be placed in the storage room in the student's assigned locker. Instruments should not be left in the main rehearsal room or in the hall outside the band room. Students who wish to use a locker must purchase their own combination lock, and the combination must be given to the director. Lockers should be locked at all times!
8. Instruments are to be kept clean and well maintained.
9. Reed players are expected to have a proper reed keeper and at least two good reeds at all times. Having a good reed at all times is essential! Reeds take time to break in, so students should avoid putting a brand new reed on their instrument just before a performance.
10. Students are expected to attend any rehearsals or performances that are scheduled for their group. Absences must be approved by the director, and students must make up missed rehearsals when practical. Excuses must be presented at least 3 weeks before a concert and 3 days before a rehearsal. **ATTENDANCE AT AFTER SCHOOL REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCES IS A REQUIREMENT OF BAND MEMBERS** HIP. Every effort will be made to accommodate students involved in other activities. These will be handled on a case by case basis. I am very flexible when approached early with potential conflicts!

11. Students who do not make adequate progress; do not meet the required standards of behavior; or do not display responsibility in meeting their obligations may be transferred to a lower level band, or to the enrichment wheel after parent notification. Students must usually wait for the beginning of a semester period to transfer.
12. Students are expected to play every day in class. Students who can not play should come to class with a note from their parents explaining the problem. *Whenever possible, students should follow along in the music and finger the notes on their instrument* when they are unable to play.
13. Student musicians should give the director their full attention during rehearsal, just as professionals do. The conductor and the musicians must work together if music is to be made. Refrain from unnecessary talking, and raise your hand if you have a question.
14. Students should have a pencil in their music folder at all times.
15. Students are to bring all band music and band books to class in a folder EVERY DAY. Music should never be folded or wrinkled. Students are encouraged to mark their music when necessary, BUT ALL MARKS SHOULD BE MADE IN PENCIL ONLY.
16. Students should not make negative comments about the music, other band students, or other bands.
17. Students should strive to develop a positive, "can do" attitude.
18. Each student should learn to LISTEN: to his own playing, to others around him, and to the director's instructions.
19. Each student should strive for a maturity of conduct and attitude befitting a 1st Class musical organization!
20. Band students are to show respect for the conductor, chaperones, substitute teachers, members of other bands, and each other- and are to exhibit proper concert etiquette during performances.
21. During band concerts, students must sit with their parents or other responsible adults when not on stage. Students are expected to remain for the entire concert.

UNIFORM

Advanced and Concert Band students will need to purchase: a long-sleeved pleated tux shirt, black tux pants, a maroon cummerbund, and a maroon bow tie from the band boosters. Black dress shoes and black sox must also be purchased. Beginning Band students will need to buy a shirt from the Band Boosters and purchase black dress pants and black shoes.

GRADING POLICY

Band students will be graded using A,B,C,D, or F. Band Students will receive a grade based upon:

1. Class Participation in daily rehearsals (50%)
2. Performance on playing tests and assigned music (weekly) (25%)
3. Attendance at after school rehearsals and performances (quarterly) (25%)

AFTER SCHOOL REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCES

The number of students in the bands, the need to work with smaller groups of similar instruments, and the desire for quality music education demand that some time be devoted to rehearsal after school. Every effort will be made to keep after school rehearsals to a minimum, and to accommodate students involved in other activities. These students should see the director to work out conflicts. If a student must miss a rehearsal or performance, the director should be notified well in advance. Excuses should be presented at least 3 days in advance of a rehearsal, and 3 weeks before a performance in order to be considered. **BAND STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO GIVE BAND PERFORMANCES FIRST PRIORITY WHEN CONFLICTS ARISE.** The earlier a student notifies the director, the more likely a request to be excused from a performance will be accepted.

CONDUCT

Band directors often work with large classes. It is necessary to hear students play individually or in small groups in the normal course of a class/rehearsal. It is essential that students understand the importance of remaining quiet and attentive when individuals or groups are playing during a rehearsal. Proper behavior while performing or listening to other students perform is just as important as playing well. Students must demonstrate proper conduct to remain a part of the band.

BAND BOOSTERS

The Rock Lake Band Boosters sponsors fund raisers, makes uniforms, provides chaperones, makes programs, and organizes the annual awards night. This organization raises most of the band budget each year. The officers and chairpersons, along with the band director, comprise the Band Booster Board. The Board meets 5 times per year, or as needed to conduct business. The Board will choose new officers at the end of each year. Persons interested in serving as President, Vice-President, Secretary, or Treasurer, or as Uniform, Ways and Means, Publicity, Program, or Telephone Committee Chairperson should contact the band director or a member of the board in March or April.

The school is able to provide only a small part of the funds necessary to purchase large instruments, buy sheet music, pay for transportation, repair and maintain school instruments, and pay fees associated with participation in F.B.A. sponsored events. The Band Boosters raise money in the following ways:

1. The Annual Fundraiser-

This is our only major fundraiser and our largest income source. In order to ensure a successful event, the Ways and Means chairperson works with a professional fundraising company. We select

the company in the Spring for the following Fall fundraiser. We hold this fundraiser in September of each year.

2. Band Booster Membership- Band Booster membership is \$25.00 per family and is due at the beginning of each school year. By law we cannot charge a band fee per se, so we must depend on parents to join the boosters as an additional source of revenue. This money helps to pay for new music to begin the year, and for repair and maintenance of our school instruments.

3. School Instrument Rental- Students who use school instruments must pay a \$50.00 rental fee each semester. This fee helps to offset, but does not fully cover, the cost of maintaining our school instruments. The \$50.00 fee must be paid before an instrument is assigned, unless the fee has been waived by the band director. Checks should be made payable to the Rock Lake Band Boosters.

F.B.A. MUSIC PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

The Florida Bandmaster's Association sponsors the District Solo and Ensemble Music Performance Assessment and the District Concert Band Music Performance Assessment. Adjudicators, approved by F.B.A., rate the performances of bands at Concert Assessment, and of soloists and small ensembles at Solo and Ensemble Assessment. Each adjudicator uses an evaluation form, which is made available to the director and students who participate. Ratings range from I (Superior) to V (Poor). Students who achieve a Superior rating receive a medal to wear on their uniform. All music performed must be from the F.B.A. Music List. Students wishing to perform at Solo and Ensemble should see the director for help in picking music of an appropriate level. Music on the F.B.A. List is graded I (very easy) to 7 (very difficult). Soloists must have a piano accompanist. Festival dates are made available early in the year. **PARENTS SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP THESE DATES OPEN! CONCERT MPA IS OUR MOST IMPORTANT PERFORMANCE!**

ROCK LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL

SCHOOL BAND INSTRUMENT RENTAL AGREEMENT

For Tuba, Baritone (Euphonium), and French Horn Students Only

I agree to pay the non-refundable sum of \$60.00 per semester for the use of the following school band instrument. I understand I must supply my own mouthpiece, reeds, etc. I further agree to pay for loss or damage due to neglect, abuse, or improper care.

Student Name(print)_____

Parent Signature_____

Street_____City_____Zip_____

Phone_____

Instrument: (circle one) Tuba Baritone F Horn Bassoon

Brand Name_____County #_____

Factory Serial#_____

This form must be completed and returned with a check for \$60.00 payable to the ROCK LAKE BAND BOOSTERS before an instrument can be assigned.

ROCK LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND

PARENT-STUDENT INFORMATION

STUDENT _____

PARENTS _____

FAMILY EMAIL: _____

STREET _____ CITY/ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ CELL PHONE _____

I HAVE RECEIVED AND READ THE ROCK LAKE BAND HANDBOOK AND UNDERSTAND THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE ROCK LAKE BAND:

PARENT _____ STUDENT _____

If you would like to serve on the Rock Lake Band Booster board, or assist the Boosters in any way, please check here: _____

BAND BOOSTER DUES

DUES ARE \$25.00 PER FAMILY PER YEAR FOR ADVANCED BAND MEMBERS, AND \$15.00 FOR ALL OTHER BAND MEMBERS. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE ROCK LAKE BAND BOOSTERS. PLEASE RETURN YOUR CHECK WITH THIS FORM- WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT! **Please note that Jazz Band students should include an additional \$15 in their booster payment.**