

JM Alexander Middle School Band/Chorus Program Handbook

Welcome!

This handbook is designed to answer any questions you or your parents may have concerning the band program and classes at JM Alexander Middle School. The band program includes some of the most talented and dedicate middle school musician and I am excited about the upcoming year. Please read and review all information given in this handbook. Once you have read it, sign the acknowledgement form that indicates both student and parent have read, understand, and agree to the conditions outlined in this handbook. If you have any questions, please contact me at 704-968-7907 or email khiry.sidbury@cms.k12.nc.us.

If you are a returning 7th or 8th grader.....WELCOME BACK!!!!

If you are a 6th Grade member or just new to us... WELCOME TO THE JM Alexander MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND!!

Goals and Expectations

Each member of the JM Alexander Middle school band program is expected to show positive behavior skill during all classes, rehearsals, and performances. Band membership is a **PRIVILEGE** (not a right) and should be treated as such.

Our Mission is: Be Amazing!

Our Goal is to be successful. Success is defined as a peace of mind, which is a direct result of self-satisfaction of knowing you made the effort to be the best you are capable of becoming.

Classroom expectations include:

1. Be on time for all classes, rehearsal and performances. Class starts when the director steps on the podium. If you are not prepared, you will be late. *To be early is to be on time, to be on time is to be late, to be late is unacceptable.*
2. **NO GUM, FOOD, OR DRINK allowed in the band hall.**
3. No playing out of turn.
4. No talking when anyone is on the podium. This is where rehearsal and instruction occurs. Always show respect for the podium and for whoever is instructing from it by being quiet and attentive.
5. **Never handle another person's instrument. Only percussionists are allowed to touch the percussion equipment.**

Consequences: All students who choose **not** to follow the expected behaviors will follow the JMA way behavior process.

Band Fees

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8th GRADE BAND! As a way of saying thank you for all of your hard work over the past three years, I am working to get band t-shirts with each student's name on the back. I am also planning to perform at the Carowinds Music in the Park Festival. This group will be comprised of members of the 8th grade and select members of the 7th grade band class. The shirts **ARE MANDATORY** to participate on this trip. I am also attempting to enter us into an arts competition at the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center in March. The grand prize is \$500. More information to come

School Instrument Usage

The school district does provide some instruments for the band program. Currently they are tubas, French horns, a bass clarinet and some percussion equipment and we plan to add more as funds permit. If you use a school owned instrument, you are also required to purchase a mouthpiece for your instrument for sanitary reasons. Percussionists are also required to purchase all percussion equipment (sticks, mallets, practice pads, etc.) This means the school will pay for all repairs that are normal wear and tear. **The student is responsible for damage due to negligence.**

Private Lessons

We encourage ALL musicians to seek out private lessons on his/her instrument. This helps the musician with a more in-depth study of the mechanics, and helps them prepare for those important auditions. See me for help in securing a private lessons teacher! If you are in the 7th or 8th grade and this is your first year playing an instrument, it is imperative that you secure a private lesson teacher.

Absence Policy

It is important that all students be present for all rehearsals and performances. Other students are counting on you to be there!!

During school practices.

If at all possible, please email khiry.sidbury@cms.k12.nc.us and let us know if you are going to be absent. This way, we can plan and make arrangements for you when you get back. I understand this is not always possible but try if you can.

Excused absences from performances or extra practices

These are the only reasons we will excuse you from a performance.

1. **Personal Illness** – You must call the office at 343-3830 and leave a message explaining the situation. **E-mails will not count.**
2. **Death in the Family** – You must contact the office at 343-3830 and leave a message explaining the situation. I will call back to confirm this with your parents.
3. **School Activity conflict** – In most cases we try to make sure that activities do not conflict, however some do have some overlap. If this situation arrives, you

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are tell your coach and tell me. ***It is not your responsibility to solve the situation that is the responsibility of the sport coach and me. It is your responsibility to contact your coach well in advance (at least two weeks) so we can make a plan.***

4. **Principal and/or director approval** – There are certain circumstances, which come up that, can be excused by the principal and/or the band director.

Band members count on each other to be there for each other. Be Responsible and be where you are supposed to be. Missing a performance (unexcused) will result in a 0 for a performance and can result in failure for the 9 weeks and possibly failure for the semester and year. Please be at all performances.

If you miss a performance of any kind and it is an excused absence, you must play your performance music for an instructor. You will be given a 0 until the work is made up

Grading Policy

I often get a lot of questions about grading for the band, so I am going to try an explain it and not confuse you too much

“Mastery over recall” is vital to a band program. Band students have to be able to look and play things based on items they have worked on. In addition, it makes playing concerts much more fun.

The grade breakdown is:

75% - **Formal** (Performances, Playing tests, scale tests,

25% - **Informal** (Materials, Participation, Pass-offs)

Performances – Most 9 weeks we have a performance of some kind. The grade is based upon showing up for the performances. If your child shows up at all performances during a 9 weeks grading period, they will have at least a 75 on their report card. Showing up is vital. Please read the excused absence policy

Materials – Your child is graded each on bringing his/her material and horn to class each day. For every day, they do not have their instrument, the highest class grade they can earn for that period is a 50. **The exception to this is instruments that are being repaired and no points will be deducted because of this.** Any day a student does not have an instrument; the student will be given a writing assignment called “Rehearsal Detective” to complete. **Full completion of the Rehearsal Detective sheet will earn at 75 for that class period.**

If your child show up to class everyday prepared and shows up at all performances, your child will have a 80 or C for the 9 weeks. C means average and students who show up and just play and not do assignments will make a C. It is my opinion is to make an A or B; you must put forth some effort. It isn't fair for the student who works hard and plays well to make the same grade as a person who comes every day to hang out, play and socialize.

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Sight reading – Starting the 2nd 9 weeks of 6th grade band, the student will be given 5 sight reading exercises. The process goes like this: the exercise will start and give the student one minute to look over the material. After one minute, the clicks will start and the student will play the exercise.

Scale Test – Students are assigned scales/rudiments.

Generally 12 for 8th grade (6 during 1st semester, 6 during 2nd). 6 for 7th grade (3/3) and 3 for 6th grade. You can work on these as many times as you wish and play for your best grade. Re-takes or make-up tests must be done before or after school with 24 hours prior notice.

Passoffs – In our method books are test exercises. Most of these are assigned to band students for playing tests. Each 9 weeks students are assigned exercises and they can take them as many times as they wish and send in your best grade.

Grades

I generally update these once a week usually on Thursdays. In almost all cases, grades should always move upward not downward. If there is not a 90% in an area, please do not hesitate to contact me. Don't wait until the last minute, get it done early!!!

Students can take assignments as many times as they wish (except sight reading) until they make a high grade and **GET IT RIGHT!!!** Must be done before or after school with 24 hour prior written notice.

All assignments are due **one week** before the end of each nine weeks.

Semester Exams

Your semester exams are the Winter and Spring Concerts. **No one** is exempt from the semester exams and there is no make-up exam. It is an easy grade and you are going to be at school anyway. Moreover, it also improves most averages in band. It is 20% of your semester grade

Instrument Repairs

Before you take an instrument to be repaired, **please** allow me to see it. I may be able to fix it or can do a temporary repair that could save you some money. I recommend Amro music store for all repairs, however you may have it repaired wherever you wish. All instruments need to be repaired or replaced in a week or less.

Spring Trip

Every year the 8th grade and select 7th grade band members will be eligible for a spring trip. A couple years ago, we played at Carowinds Music in the Park Festival and had a wonderful time. We plan to make the Music in the Park musical performance a biannual/

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annual event. This year we plan to attend a concert festival at the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center. In order to go on our spring trip, your fees must be paid, you must attend some after school practices, have at least an 85% average in the class and you must be making progress on your horn. Most importantly, you must be in good standing with the administration. (Discipline problems with the administration can result in no spring trip)

Fundraising

TBA: This can be used to pay your band fees or put toward the cost of our spring trip. Fundraised money cannot be carried from year to year and cannot be refunded, so please plan accordingly.

It is a great fundraiser and plus people get a product they will use and enjoy at a great price.

In closing

I look forward to teaching your child to be the best player they can be. I hope I have answered most questions. If not call 704-968-7907 or email khiry.sidbury@cms.k12.nc.us, and I will be glad to help you.

Commitment form

*Note: We hope that both students and parents will find this handbook of guidelines and rules, useful and informative. **Please read the entire contents of this handbook, and return this page signed by both the Band Student and Parent/Guardian.** We suggest you keep the handbook in a spot where you can easily locate it for quick reference throughout the school year. This is to be returned by the end of the first week of school.*

WE HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD, AND WILL ABIDE BY THE RESPONSIBILITIES, OBLIGATIONS AND POLICIES OF A BAND MEMBER AS STATED IN THIS HANDBOOK. PLEASE RETURN THIS WITH YOUR BAND FEE AND INSTRUMENT FEE IF APPLICABLE.

Student Information

Print Clearly: _____
First Name **Last Name**

Grade **Instrument** **E-mail Address**

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE** _____

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PARENT or GUARDIAN (only one parent's/guardian's signature is required)

Print Clearly: _____
First Name **Last Name**

PARENT SIGNATURE _____ **DATE** _____

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Family Information Form**

Address information	Alternate Address (if necessary)
Address:	Address:
City, State, Zip	City, State, Zip
Home Phone	Home Phone

Student Information	Father's Information	Mother's Information
First Name	First Name	First Name
Last Name	Last Name	Last Name
Nickname	E-mail	E-mail
E-mail	Opt 2 nd Email	Opt 2 nd e-mail
Grade in 2014 -15	Occupation	Occupation
Birthdate	Company	Company
Instrument	Cell Phone	Cell Phone
Cell phone	Work Phone	Work Phone

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Parents Signature: _____

Date _____