

BAND HANDBOOK



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WHY MUSIC?

- I. Music is a Science. It is exact, specific, and it demands exact acoustics. A conductor's full score is a chart, a graph which indicates frequencies, intensities, volume changes, melody and harmony all at once and with exact control of time.
- II. Music is Mathematical. It is rhythmically based on the subdivisions of time into fractions which must be done instantaneously, not worked out on paper.
- III. Music is a Foreign Language. Most of the terms are in Italian, German, or French; and the notation is certainly not English- but a highly developed kind of shorthand that uses symbols to represent ideas. The most complete and universal language.
- IV. Music is History. Music usually reflects the environment and times of its creation, often even the country and/or racial feeling.
- V. Music is Physical Education. It requires fantastic coordination of fingers, hands, arms, lips, cheek and facial muscles, in addition to extraordinary control of the diaphragmatic, back, stomach and chest muscles, which respond instantly to the sound the ear hears and the mind interprets.
- VI. Music Develops Insight and Demands Research.
- VII. Music is all of these things, but most of all, Music is Art. It allows a human being to take all of these dry, technically boring (yet difficult) techniques and use them to create emotion. That is one thing science cannot duplicate; humanism, feeling, emotion, call it what you will.

That is why we teach music:

Not because we expect you to major in music

Not because we expect you to play or sing all your life

BUT-

So you will be human

So you will recognize beauty

So you will be closer to an infinite beyond this world

So you will have something to cling to

So you will have more love, more compassion, more gentleness, more good –
in short, more life.

(Source Unknown)

BEACH PARK BANDS HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

The success of a school band is to a large degree dependent upon the competence of its individual members. The contribution of each individual, in turn, can be evaluated in terms of three factors, each of which is necessary for effective participation.

***Attitude:** Each student must be willing to share the responsibility of establishing high standards of excellence in his or her organization. Each student must show respect for those in authority and for other fellow band members.

***Skill in Performance:** Meeting the demands of the part to which the student is assigned will require individual response beyond the time spent in rehearsal. Fluency of technique, a pleasing quality of tone and intelligent interpretation are equally important phases of musical performance. Individual practice should provide for improvement of all three of these phases.

***Knowledge:** The third factor is knowledge of numerous fundamentals, rudiments and the terms, which are commonly used in the study and performance of music. The student who merely plays the notes cannot possibly play with understanding. He or she must understand the language of music in order to speak it properly.

The following pages will explain the Band Program and provide each young musician with the responsibilities and expectations of each group. It will also explain the extra activities that are a part of the band program, including trips, special events and concerts, and band camp. In general, this handbook should help clarify the expectations and requirements of parents, students and teachers in the Beach Park Band Program.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE BAND PROGRAM

The band program was established so that the children of this school district would have an opportunity for educational enrichment beyond regular classroom activities and enjoy the experience of music and the satisfaction of working with others to attain a common goal. In our age of computers, video games, spectator sports and entertainment brought into our homes by pushing a button on a remote, it is important that young people are actively engaged in some sort of constructive endeavor rather than merely passive amusement. Anyone who has played in a band will tell you how much more fun and how much more rewarding it is to be actively playing the music than to just be listening. It is a genuine cooperative activity.

The values derived from playing in a band are more than purely musical. The discipline of learning a musical instrument is in itself a worthy one. The student learns to listen, to constructively criticize, to improve, to accept constructive criticism from others, and to join others in a common effort. The young musician also learns to concentrate, and make efficient use of hands, eyes and ears. It is not merely a figure of speech to say that playing in a band is a way of learning to work in harmony with others. This is one of its great values in education and one of the chief reasons why music is taken so seriously in our schools.

Playing an instrument is a great way to develop self-confidence. The student takes pride in belonging to a select and sought-out group and earns respect and admiration from others for their part in the band. Each musician knows that they are responsible for their part in the group; they are responsible for attending rehearsals, and for practicing. The student is helped to develop this sense of responsibility individually and to the group.

This kind of physical and mental training is open to all students in band. Music is an equal opportunity experience, and as most children respond to music, this program can provide them with the chance to play an active part in a wholesome, educationally sound, constructive, and active organization.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

The teacher's responsibility is to provide the space and materials and direction needed for students to succeed. The teacher will provide opportunities during class time and lesson time to learn. The teacher will also supply encouragement, and praise when earned, and hold students responsible for their progress.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents can insure their child's success in band by taking a sincere interest in what he or she is learning. Listed here are some ways to express that interest:

1. Set aside a regular time and place for your child to practice.
2. Help keep a daily record of practice.
3. Encourage your child regardless the strange sounds you may hear!
4. Make the effort to help your child attend all rehearsals or performances outside the school day.
5. Keep a copy of your child's lesson schedule posted in the house as an extra reminder.
6. Call your child's teacher if you have questions regarding your child's progress.
7. Attend all concerts and consider getting involved in the Band Boosters.
8. Help your child understand that hard work now pays off in the long run – learning an instrument is not procrastination-friendly.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

By the very nature of what we are trying to teach, students have a responsibility to practice the things that we teach them. In order for progress to be made, students must become adept at not only learning the notes on the staff, but how to play them on their instrument and make them sound pleasing to the ear. Music is a discipline – the student's responsibility is to develop it. Learning an instrument can be challenging, and seldom is achieved overnight. Most children have some innate talent, but if it not nurtured, it will deteriorate.

Success in the band program can be achieved by:

1. Attending weekly lessons and rehearsals
2. Attending all performances
3. Keeping a positive attitude and an open mind.
4. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!!!

THE BANDS

Currently there are four performing ensembles in the Beach Park District. The Beginner Band meets twice weekly at each of the grade schools, and the Concert, and Symphonic Bands meet every day during the school day. Jazz Band meets twice a week after school from 2:25 to 3:30.

The Beginner Band is comprised of 4th and 5th grade students who are new to the program. Students in the Beginner Band learn much about their instruments – they learn how to manipulate fingers and mouths to produce pleasant sounds, and they learn to read music so that they can organize those sounds. They learn to maintain their instruments so they can CONTINUE to make those wonderful sounds, and they learn the discipline of practice so that they can spend a lifetime enjoying the sounds they make. Most importantly, they learn the value of participating in a group where all parts are working towards a common goal, and progress is regularly assessed and ultimately enjoyed by all in a concert setting.

The Concert Band is made up of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students who have been playing for at least one year. They are learning more about their instruments and the music they make. They learn more complex rhythms and are increasingly learning the value of their own role and responsibility to the group. With more challenging music comes a broader overview of music itself – these students begin to truly experience more diverse styles of music. The Concert Band is the next natural step in the progression through the district's band program. Placement in the Concert Band is not viewed as negative – students have the opportunity to learn more advanced skills needed while participating in a more relaxed, less aggressive atmosphere. This is a uniformed band for concerts, and will possibly be participating in the IGSMA Organizational Contest in the spring.

The Symphonic Band is comprised of 7th and 8th grade students. The Concert and Symphonic Bands are ability-based, and students are placed into either band by audition. The directors also take into consideration the following items before placing a child in either band:

1. The current instrumentation of the ensemble and maintaining musical balance
2. The consistent progress of each student
3. The maturity and dependability of each student

The Symphonic Band is the more advanced of the two 7th/8th grade bands. This group is held to the highest standard, as they are considered to be the premier band of the district. Maturity and responsibility are expected of each band member, in addition to a high level of performance on the instrument. This group regularly attends the IGSMA Organizational Contest in the spring, and is called on for various other performing opportunities both in and out of the school district. This organization also ventures out every other year to compete on a more national (or international) basis.

The Jazz Band meets two days a week after school from 2:25 to 3:30, usually on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The director of the Jazz Band chooses mostly 7th and 8th grade students to participate. Instrumentation is limited, as the traditional jazz ensemble is comprised of saxophones, trumpets, trombones, piano, bass and drums. This group performs at concerts and some local jazz festivals. We anticipate this group having more opportunities to make public appearances as the group develops. This is not a graded course. Students may remain in the group as long as they meet the requirements for their other ensembles.

The directors of each of the bands reserve the right to schedule extra band rehearsals after school if they so deem it necessary. All of our bands are held to a high standard, and if we feel that we are not meeting that standard, we will take necessary action. This also includes shifting students back or forth from Concert to Symphonic Band. We all work very hard to achieve our goals, and if the directors see a student either falling behind or moving ahead, we reserve the right to adjust that student's band placement.

Graduation Band is put together every spring for the express purpose of performing at the Graduation Ceremony. This band rehearses intensely for one week after the last concert before graduation. Students are selected to participate according to instrumental needs. Most often, these students are selected from the Concert Band.

PLEASE NOTE:

THE DIRECTOR WILL ALWAYS SEND A NOTE HOME BEFORE A CONCERT, WITH CONCERT DETAILS CLEARLY STATED.

ALL BAND MEMBERS ARE EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL PERFORMANCES SCHEDULED FOR THEIR GROUP. THE DIRECTOR NEEDS TO BE NOTIFIED AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR FOR A LEGITIMATE CONFLICT. IN CASE OF SUDDEN ILLNESS, THE DIRECTOR NEEDS TO BE NOTIFIED IMMEDIATELY. THESE ARE PERFORMING ENSEMBLES, AND EACH MEMBER PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE. FAILURE TO APPEAR AT PERFORMANCES PLACES THE REST OF THE ENSEMBLE AT A DISADVANTAGE, AND ALSO COMPROMISES THE INTEGRITY OF THE PERFORMANCE. THEREFORE, FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS POLICY JEOPARDIZES THAT INDIVIDUALS CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THE BAND PROGRAM. EACH INFRACTION WILL BE DEALT WITH ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE DIRECTOR.

UNIFORMS

For the **Beginner Band**, the only required "uniform" is the blue band shirt. This shirt can be obtained from the director, and is worn for all concerts.

The cost is \$6.00.

The Concert and Symphonic Bands will be issued full uniforms sometime in November.

Concert Band students will be required to provide the following:

Black Socks and Shoes

Black Belt

White Shirt (to wear under shirt front)

Symphonic Band students will need the following:

Black Socks and Shoes

Black Belt

Symphonic Band Shirt (available for purchase through the director for \$15)

Jazz Band students need to purchase the Jazz Band T-shirt for \$10.00

LESSONS

All band students, in addition to meeting as a full band, will have a 30-minute small group lesson once a week. Lessons involve both playing and some written material. Students are given weekly assignments that they are expected to complete in addition to practicing band materials. These groups are on a rotating schedule so students do not miss the same class every week. It is school policy that students are released from class to attend lessons, unless the classroom teacher is giving an important test or particularly needs a student to be in attendance. When it is necessary for a student to remain in the classroom, it is the STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY to inform the lesson teacher. Failure to notify the lesson teacher will result in an unexcused band absence.

GRADING POLICIES

Band is a graded class, and grades are based on the following:

Attitude/Participation – 30%

Performances – 30%

Lessons – 30%

Written/Playing Tests – 10%

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

Being a part of the Beach Park Band Program is an honor and a privilege. The directors make their expectations very clear at the beginning of each school year. We use the BP's as our guidelines:

***Be Prompt** – Be on time for all band activities, rehearsals, lessons, and performances.

***Be Prepared** – Have your instrument, music, folder, pencil, and anything else you need at all times.

***Be Polite** – It is important to treat each other with respect, and not be a source of irritation to others.

***Be Positive** – Attitude counts!

***Be Persistent** – Very few things are accomplished on the first try.

***Be Patient** – Excellence takes time and hard work.

***Be Perceptive** – Pay attention to what is going on around you and in front of you!

Due to the nature of the program, the directors seldom encounter discipline problems. However, in the event of classroom issues, students will be dealt with according to the policies set forth by Beach Park School District. In the event of serious disciplinary infractions (theft, chronic daily discipline issues, gross negligence, destruction of band property, repeated failure to adhere to band standards) students can and will be excused from the band program.

SUMMER BAND

Summer Band is a four-week program set up for the express purpose of keeping students playing their instruments during the summer months. Much of what is learned during the school year can be undone over the summer if students do not continue playing over the summer. This program usually starts during the last week of June, and continues through the third week of July. Students are scheduled once or twice a week for small group instruction. This is not a summer school course, so students do need to pay a nominal fee. This is not a required program; however, it is strongly encouraged. More information regarding Summer Band will be sent home in May.

BAND CAMP

Band Camp is a self-contained camp financially supported by the Beach Park Band Booster Organization. The purpose of the camp is to give our students a “head-start” to the coming school year. Band Camp is a weeklong musical experience held during the first full week of August at Conference Point Center in Williams Bay, Wisconsin. Students leave for camp early Monday. They spend the week practicing in small groups and full ensemble settings with 8 – 10 professional music instructors hired by the Band Boosters for the week. The Boosters also contribute to other camp expenses, totaling approximately \$10,000. Be aware that there is a charge for students to attend camp. While the Boosters contribute \$10,000, this is only to offset operating costs of over \$30,000.

Band Camp is open to 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Beach Park Band students with a few stipulations. (See criteria listed below) 4th and 5th graders are invited based on their personal progress in the Beginning Band program, and when space is available. Students are split into two bands – Concert and Symphonic. If time and instrumentation permit, we also include the Jazz Band. They work hard playing their instruments, and various recreational activities are built into the schedule, so the students are kept quite busy. The week culminates in a concert on Saturday for the parents.

Each student who wishes to attend must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Must have earned a grade of B or better each trimester in Band.
- 2) Must not have more than 4 unexcused lessons during the entire school year.
- 3) Must exhibit a positive attitude!
- 4) Any student who has been suspended from school at any point during the school year FOR ANY REASON will not be allowed to attend band camp.

Band Camp is a privilege. The Director reserves the right to evaluate students on an individual basis and justly approve or deny any student’s attendance at Band Camp, regardless the criteria listed above. Band Camp registration is sent out at the end of March.

SOLO AND ENSEMBLE CONTEST

Solo and Ensemble contest takes place every February. Although the contest is open to all Concert and Symphonic Band students, the directors reserve the right to encourage or discourage participation based on the individual’s readiness (or lack thereof). A great deal of time is needed to prepare for this event, and the director may feel that the student’s efforts would be better spent working on personal development.

The director’s responsibilities:

1. Help select music for the student(s)
2. Provide assistance in learning the music
3. Notify the student of the contest information (where and when)

The student’s responsibilities:

1. Notify the director of intention to participate (forms sent out in late fall)
2. Pay all necessary fees (entrance, pianist, etc)
3. Obtain a pianist if necessary (the director will help when possible)
4. Learn the music to best of ability
5. Arrange times to rehearse with other ensemble members
6. Request extra help when student feels the need for assistance
7. Attend contest at correct site and time(s)

CONVENIENCE SERVICES

As a service to our band students and parents, we do offer some supplies and services. A representative from A-Major Music comes by once a week to pick up any rental instruments in need of repair. The directors are also able to repair minor problems. Major repairs are sent out to our repair facility, which usually returns the instrument in a week or so. Due to circumstances out of our control, students who own their own instruments will need to take care of their own repair issues. The directors can make recommendations as to where to take it, and they will call you when there is a problem. Whenever possible, a loaner instrument will be provided so the student can continue practicing. The directors also keep a stock of instrument supplies (reeds, valve oil, cleaning tools, etc.) and lesson books, which are available for a nominal fee. A copy of the price list is available in the Band Office and with each director.

*In case of repairs needed for gross neglect, the directors will NOT provide a loaner instrument, or will charge a fee for use of a loaner instrument.

BEACH PARK BAND BOOSTER ORGANIZATION

The Beach Park Band Boosters play a significant role in the support and promotion of the band program. The officers and chair people of the various committees work year-round to help meet the needs of the bands. Every parent with a child in the program is asked to contribute time and energy to the many and varied Booster projects. These projects include, but are not limited to: fundraising, band shirt sales, publicity for the bands, uniform fittings, chaperoning skating parties, lock-ins, band camp and band trips, financial assistance for deserving students, purchase of new music and equipment, etc. Over the years, the Boosters have spent over \$600,000 for the purchase of school instruments, band uniforms, band camp, and several band trips. Much of the success of the Beach Park Band Program is dependent on the enthusiastic and hard-working parent organization. Please consider being a part of this well-organized, supportive group.

FUNDRAISING

The Band Boosters work very hard for the bands, but one small group of people cannot support a program of this size and quality alone. The Boosters hold various fundraisers throughout the year for the express purpose of funding various band activities. As mentioned earlier, the Boosters help fund many projects. As a part of the Band Program, it is important to recognize and understand your role in the fundraising process. In one way or another, all students in the Beach Park Bands benefit from the fundraisers. Whether its band camp, band trips, roller skating parties, lock-ins, or something as simple as the instruments and music they play, costs are almost always defrayed by the funds raised through fundraisers. Without the Boosters and the funds generated by fundraising, the Band Program would be severely limited to the point where most of our activities would cease to exist. PLEASE do what you can to contribute to the bands!

BAND TRIPS AND PARTIES

Depending on the year and activities planned by the band director(s), there may be extra activities and/or trips planned for the various groups. These trips are not required, although we do encourage students to participate. However, participation is dependent on students meeting the regularly scheduled requirements for their respective groups. Failure to attend all required performances on any given year could result in being excluded from any potential trips, including field trips or larger, multiple day excursions. These decisions are made at the discretion of the director, as all cases are handled on an individual basis.



PRACTICE TIPS FOR STUDENTS

- Find a time to set aside EVERY DAY, even if only for 20 minutes. 30 minutes is preferred.
- Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed.
- Do not count assembly time, cork-greasing time, valve-oiling time, or instrument-cleaning time as practice time. The time that counts is the time that the instrument is on your face.
- Use the first 5 – 10 minutes to practice scales in whole notes. Check your key signature carefully! If you miss a note, figure it out and play it again – do NOT just skip it!!
- Practice in your lesson book for the next 15 minutes or so. Set a goal for yourself – pick one or two exercises, check their keys, any rhythms, accidentals, style markings, whatever, and play them as many times as it takes to play them correctly. These exercises are not difficult, and should not take very long.
- If you struggle with a particular exercise, break it down into small pieces – play the song a measure or two at a time until you are comfortable with it.
- Do not spend long times on things you know you can play. Playing “Mary’s Little Lamb” 100 times will not help you to become a better player.
- When you are done with your book, play some of your band music. This can be done daily, or if you learn all of your book assignments in the first couple of days, spend more time on band music. Try to pick one tune a day to work on. Just like in the book – pick a difficult part and go over it several times until you get it right. If you spend all of your time on the whole notes and other less-challenging parts, you will not accomplish very much at all, and you will end up lost during rehearsals!
- Strive to be the best player you can be! The band is only as good as its weakest player. If everybody does their part, rehearsals will be much more productive and lessons will run quickly and smoothly. We only have 9 months to get you ready to move on to the next level, and we have several performances along the way. We want to show people what we CAN do, not what we cannot!