

Grant Jr High



BAND HANDBOOK 2014-2015

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Preface

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Welcome! I am excited about your choice to pursue band and its opportunities for personal enjoyment and intellectual growth. Music is a life-long pursuit that allows each of us to express ourselves in no other way that is possible through creativity and mastery of a musical instrument. This handbook has been written to help students and parents gain the most from their band experience as well as provide guidance to the practical everyday experiences of the band program.

The band program exists to provide an excellent music education for the students. This is achieved through individual study and varied performances in many venues: school events, parades, competitions, and concerts. The skills that band students acquire in these activities are directly related to skills necessary for auditions, presentations, and interviews in other career fields.

The band program will also develop a student's social skills. Participation in band enables the students to form close friendships within the school through their collaborative efforts. It also provides the opportunity to work with their peers as part of a team. As a member of the GJHS Band program, students make long-lasting friendships and develop a sense of camaraderie that is unique to our organization. There will be many opportunities for musical fellowship and fun through participation in band. Organizational goals are clearly established, and the students depend heavily on each other to achieve them. As a result, the concepts of responsibility, teamwork, and good citizenship will develop as each student experiences the world of music.

The success of the band program centers on pride, commitment to task, and the willingness to work hard to achieve a common goal. I do not expect every student in the band program to become a virtuoso musician. However, I do expect every student to establish both short and long range goals for improvement on his/her instrument, to exhibit mature responsible attitudes and actions at all times, and to be willing to contribute lots of hard work for the benefit of all.

The ultimate goal of the program is to produce graduates who are knowledgeable about music, can perform successfully with confidence, can operate within a structured framework, and can work to develop the skills necessary to become a life-long musician. In addition, the program strives to produce informed adults of high integrity who understand and appreciate music and musicians, and who will foster the continuing developments of artistic endeavors in their community.

I strongly encourage parents to contact me at the school or through email at any time should questions arise. Furthermore, parental involvement is one of the most important facets of a successful band program. I hope to see all of you at our band parent meetings and speak with you about the encouragement you are giving your child when they practice regularly at home. Again, I am excited about your participation in the GJHS Band Program, and look forward to our time together for musical enjoyment and fellowship.

Our Mission

As an extension of the philosophies described in the preface, the band exists to serve these general goals and objectives:

- I. Mental and physical discipline
 - a. Develop concentration
 - b. Memorization techniques
 - c. Learn techniques of preparation as they relate to group and individual performances
 - d. Develop self and group discipline

- II. Citizenship through group endeavor
 - a. Develop leadership abilities
 - b. Develop responsibility
 - c. Develop the ability to cooperate with others and to work as a team member
 - d. Develop diligence
 - e. Develop mutual respect for each other

- III. Physical conditioning—Develop strength, stamina, endurance, and coordination

- IV. Value Judgments—Obtain the ability to make musical value judgments through critical listening (as they pertain to a musical setting). The student will recognize quality of sound, pitch, style, tempo, rhythm, blend, balance, phrasing, dynamics, and articulation.

- V. Music theory
 - a. Know and utilize note values and rests
 - b. Know and utilize keys, key signatures, and scales
 - c. Know and utilize musical terms, signs, and symbols
 - d. Recognize and tune intervals and harmony
 - e. Ear training/listening skills

- VI. Proper instrumental technique
 - a. Care of the instrument
 - b. Assume correct posture and playing position
 - c. Develop the embouchure /stick grip/ hand position
 - d. Develop characteristic instrumental tone
 - e. Develop proper breathing techniques
 - f. Develop technical instrumental proficiency (fingering, articulation, rudiments, scales, etc.)

Getting an Instrument

I highly recommend that all students who are able either purchase or rent their own instrument. Students who acquire their own instrument tend to learn responsibility for it and attain a higher level of achievement in band. School owned instruments are usually not in a condition that is conducive to your child fulfilling their potential in band.

Students who are using personal instruments are expected to keep them in good working order. The best way to do this is by handling them as if they are worth a lot of money (which they are) and maintaining them by using proper lubricants and swabs. **Do not place a Woodwind instrument in water to clean it. This will result in a necessary re-padding of the instrument by a repair professional.** If you own your own instrument I recommend parents have the serial # on file. Also, it is very cheap to have an instrument insured with your homeowner insurance company.

Purchasing instruments can be difficult. There are now literally 10x more brands on the market than there were 5 years ago and they can be expensive. Below are the most common vendors to make this a bit easier. **Note: Always consult Mr. Casselberry before purchasing an instrument if it is not listed below. If I don't know anything about the brand you are looking at I know someone who does. Especially with woodwinds, there are many manufacturers that produce low cost "instruments" that will barely play and are impossible to find repair parts for.**

- **Local/New Instruments & Supplies**

- **Red River Music** [5731 Jackson St. Exd in Alexandria (443-6365)] – They are extremely knowledgeable and supportive of our program. I have school instruments repaired here. They also offer financing with a 1 year return option. If within the first year you decide to give them the instrument back you can stop paying the balance no questions asked.
- **B&A Music** [1640 Military Hwy in Pineville (442-9856)] – Offer instrument rental.
- **Cenla Music** [3404 Jackson St. in Alexandria (443-9010)] – Offer instrument rental.

- **Used Instruments**

- www.shopgoodwill.com – I can't say enough about this website. They always have tons of used instruments for cheap prices. A \$40.00 instrument with \$150.00 worth of repairs after purchasing is a very cheap one.
- www.musicarts.com – Instrument Rental – Free shipping & cheap insurance. Only \$15.00/month for most instruments + \$3/month insurance. Will send you a working instrument even before they get the one back that needs repairs.
- Ebay
- Ask friends/family. More people have band instruments in their attics than you would think!

****** Keep in mind, used instruments that aren't rentals will most often require a trip to the shop for some TLC before they can be used. You may want to factor repairs into the cost of a used instrument ahead of time if it isn't guaranteed to be in working condition.***

Recommended Beginner Instruments & Mouthpieces

- Flute
 - Gemeinhardt 2SP. Also acceptable: Armstrong, Artley, Selmer, and Yamaha.

- Clarinet
 - Anything made by Conn-Selmer, Buffet, or Yamaha are great. Also acceptable are Vito, Leblanc, Artley, and Armstrong.
 - Mouthpiece: Yamaha 4C

- Alto Saxophone
 - Yamaha YAS-26. This is by FAR the best Alto Sax for beginning band students and I am reluctant to even mention other brands.
 - Mouthpiece: Yamaha 4C

- Trumpet
 - Yamaha YTR-200AD. Also acceptable are Bach, Holton, Conn, or King.
 - Mouthpiece: Bach/Yamaha 7C for beginners or 5C for 8th graders.

- French Horn
 - Not expected to purchase or rent instrument.
 - Mouthpiece: Yamaha 30C4 or Holton Farkas MDC

- Trombone
 - Bach TB-300/301/600. Also acceptable are Yamaha, Holton, Conn, or King.
 - Mouthpiece: Bach 6 ½ AL

- Tuba
 - Not expected to purchase or rent instrument.
 - Mouthpiece: Bach 22

- Percussion - Students should highly consider purchasing their own drum sticks and a practice pad.
 - Sticks – Innovative Percussion AS-MM or AS-BK
 - Practice Pad – Any, but I like the Evans RealFeel
 - Optional (and highly recommended) - Student Bell Kit...there are often many of these on the goodwill auction website.

School-owned/issued Instruments

- I highly recommend purchasing your own mouthpiece (brass) or mouthpiece & ligature (woodwinds) for use with your school instrument. ***See mouthpieces on previous page.***
- Students and parents will sign a form acknowledging responsibility for a school-owned instrument being used.
- School-owned instruments are not to be treated as free instruments. At fault repairs must still be made just like personally owned instruments. Please strive to treat these instruments as if they were your own. Most school-owned instruments exceed a \$750.00 value. Some...more than \$3,000!
- The GJHS Band will pay for any repair needed due to **regular use** of all school-owned instruments. All students are expected to keep school-owned instruments in the same working conditioned as when they were issued and are responsible for any damages due to negligence (including fire, theft, accidental damage, abuse, and general maintenance not incurred through normal use). **Do not place a woodwind instrument in water to clean it.** This will result in a necessary re-padding of the instrument by a repair professional.

Band Fee

- Each student will be assessed a \$50.00 band fee due by the first Monday in September. **If the band fee cannot be paid, please contact me so we can work something out.**
- The fee covers a band shirt, food, music, instrument repair, instrument supplies, student participation fees for Louisiana Music Educators Association events, and end of year awards.
- To keep the fee under \$200.00 (standard fee in area programs) we must focus on fundraising. This means full parent participation at scheduled fundraising events. The band is lucky to have the opportunity to run concessions for many GJH sporting events. Please do your best to pick up a shift or two at these events. It takes a ton of money to operate a successful band program, but together we can make it happen.

Supply Lists

The supplies listed below will be provided by the GJH band program. Everything listed below is of the utmost importance to success in band and should be present at every class and rehearsal. Items listed as recommended will not be provided but should be considered for purchase. Your child is responsible for the proper use of and replacement of these supplies if lost, stolen, or broken. **If the initial item provided is lost, the student is expected to personally replace it immediately.**

All Band Students

- **Recommended for all: Korg TM50 Combo Metronome/Tuner**
- *(Beginners Only)* Method Book: Standard of Excellence
- 3 ring binder w/ sheet protectors
- Some loose leaf paper in binder
- Pencils (always)
- Marching flip folder

All Brass Players

- Tuning slide grease – Selmer tuning slide & cork grease in squeeze bottle recommended
- *Trombones Only:* Slide-o-mix or Hetman trombone slide system with water spray bottle
- *Trumpets, Baritones, Tubas Only:* Valve Oil
- *French Horns Only:* Rotor Oil

All Woodwind Players

- Proper instrument swab
- *(Clarinets Only)* 4 working reeds at all times
 - Size 2 ½ for beginners
 - Size 3 for 8th graders
 - Size 2 ½ for Bass Clarinets
- *(Saxophones Only)* 4 working reeds at all times
 - Size 2 ½ for beginners
 - Size 3 for 8th graders
 - Size 2 ½ for Tenor & Bari. Saxs

All Percussionists

- **Method Books: A Fresh Approach to Mallet Percussion and A Fresh Approach to the Snare Drum**
- Practice Pad – see instrument section for recommendations
- Pair of mallets – see instrument section for recommendations
- Pair of snare sticks – see instrument section for recommendations
- Highly Recommended: Beginner Bell Set for practicing melodic parts

Attire for Performances

- Pep-Rallies/Football Games/Parades:
 1. Band Shirt
 2. Khaki Pants
 3. Belt
 4. White socks
 5. Tennis Shoes (please, no flip flops or open toe/heel shoes)

- Concert Attire:
 - Ladies:
 1. White dress shirt
 2. Black dress slacks/skirt (skirt must be below the knees while sitting)
 3. Dress shoes (flats or short heels)

 - Gentlemen:
 1. White BUTTON-UP shirt
 2. Black tie
 3. Black dress slacks
 4. Black belt
 5. Black socks!
 6. Black dress shoes
 - a. NO TENNIS SHOES

The purpose of these items is for us to be uniform, to teach professionalism, and to do well in the judged appearance category at performance assessments. **If you do not presently have any of these items in your wardrobe, please secure them ASAP.**

If you question any item that you may wear to any performance then you probably should not wear it. If you cannot wear it to church then do not wear it to band! Before each performance there will be an inspection of all the details stated above. If any of the standards are not met the student will not be allowed to participate in the current event. This will also result in a zero for any performance that is missed.

Music Enrichment

Private Lessons

Private lessons are not required, but absolutely essential for a young musician to advance their knowledge of his/her own instrument. Students that take private lessons usually advance at a much faster rate, are more successful at performances, and acquire confidence through individualized study. Because it is not practical for me to give every child in the band the needed hour private lesson a week, this must be done on an individual basis. If interested, contact me and I will be more than happy to set you up with a knowledgeable private lessons instructor. Every single one of the most successful bands in the country have a 100% private lesson participation rate. Let's strive to be the best!

LMEA District II Honor Band (8th graders)

8th grade students are required to audition for the District II Honor Band. Students audition by performing two pre-selected exercises and a few pre-selected scales. Students will also perform a short sight-reading excerpt (this means performing music they are seeing for the first time given 30 seconds to look it over). Students selected to perform in the Honor Band will participate in a two day rehearsal then perform a concert. The Honor Band groups are taught by paid master teachers from around the Ark-La-Tex region.

Auditioning for Honor Band is one of the most important aspects of a child's musical growth. The ability to prepare and audition alone builds the entire group in a miraculous way. If your child is selected to perform, it will be an amazing musical experience for them due to the quality of the Honor Band ensemble. *Please see the calendar for dates when it becomes available.*

Solo and Ensemble (7th and 8th graders – 8th graders required)

Similar to Honor Band, Solo and Ensemble is an event requiring preparation for an audition style competition in front of a single judge. Students may either perform an approved solo with or without accompaniment, or perform in a small group (ie. a duet, trio, quartet, etc.). Like Honor Band, students who prepare for Solo and Ensemble see a significant improvement in their abilities. This carries directly into the full band at school. *Please see the calendar for the date when it becomes available.*

Practicing

Practice Habits

Like any life pursuit, practicing is an integral part of consistent development culminating in enjoyment through self-expression. To achieve this, students are required to practice a minimum of 60 minutes per week. Keep in mind 60 minutes is a minimum. It is more important that a student practices each day than for long stretches of time. This consistency will ensure that students are successful and have a meaningful and fun experience. In order for students to be successful, I encourage parents to:

1. Remind your student that **perfect practice makes perfect**. Only ever play something as fast as you can play it in time and with a beautiful sound
2. Provide a proper chair for practice in a quiet place that is free from distractions (including electronic devices).
3. Encourage regular practice in a positive manner. Students may not be able to hear/perceive daily improvement, but it is happening.
4. Try to motivate your child to practice every day. Short concentrated efforts are far more productive than one long session a week.
5. Help to provide a working instrument that is in good condition. Quality yields quality.
6. Most importantly...give encouragement, praise, and show commitment to their study. Some aspects of music can be learned very quickly while others may require some extra time.

Practice Expectations

- It is expected that students will practice a minimum of 1 hour a week as a beginner and 2 hours a week as a 2nd year player.
- These practice expectations are specifically for focused and purposeful practice. It will take longer to accomplish anything if you practice while playing on the internet!
- Students will have clear goals for each week set by the teacher.
- Students will be assessed each week to see if they have reached these goals. These assessments are given with practice time at home in mind.
- Class time for receiving the knowledge you need to understand how to play something and sometimes begin to learn to play it. Practice time is for actually mastering it.

Grading Policy

- **Class participation (10 pts/week)** – the student must have all materials necessary for a rehearsal, student must be focused during the entire rehearsal, and the student must be musically prepared for all rehearsals. Everyone participates 100% of the time.
- **Small Assignments (15 pts/each)** – these assignments will be sporadic and assigned as necessary. May include: worksheets, short writing, practice logs, music terminology.
- **Playing/Written Exams (25 pts/week)** – the student must be prepared for all exams. The student will be given prior notice for all exams to allow for practice time.
- **Required Performances (25 pts/each)** – each student in Intermediate Band is required to audition for Honor Band and Solo and Ensemble and all students are **strongly** encouraged to participate in Solo and Ensemble. These are events that will significantly improve the students' abilities and provide an invaluable experience.
 - **Performance requirements** – the student must have all materials for performances, be in proper attire, be ON TIME, and be musically prepared for all performances.
 - **All performances are mandatory-** failure to attend will result in a 0 for the missed performance. Make up work, in the form of a playing exam, will be assigned in order to credit the student with the appropriate performance grade. **This make up work can only be accomplished through written documentation from the student's parent/guardian. Also, it is the student's responsibility to come set a date to make up the missed performance/rehearsal.**
 - **Attendance to ALL required practices/events** – the student must attend all required events. If a student is involved in another after school function the student will need to contact Mr. Casselberry.
 - **The ONLY exception to miss a REQUIRED event is in the case of an emergency. If this happens the parent must contact the teacher by phone or email. Written documentation must be sent to school the following day.**

Academic Responsibilities

Band is an extracurricular activity. Generally, band students have increased motivation and abilities in core subjects. However, if a student is making a failing grade in a core subject, his/her privilege of participating in band activities and/or band class will be suspended. **The student will spend class time doing work in the troubled subject and will be expected to actively seek tutoring/help of some kind to bring the grade up.**

Rules & Procedures – Please read carefully

Rules

1. You will raise your hand to speak in class unless otherwise instructed.
2. You will **never** touch or play another student's instrument.
3. Don't touch or speak ill of another student. There will be a positive environment in my classroom at all times.
4. Do not leave your seat unless permission is granted.
5. There will be no running in the band room. This includes before/after school.
6. No student is allowed in the instrument storage room unless they are getting out/putting up an instrument.
7. There will be absolutely no trash left in the Band Room. Take pride in YOUR Band Room.

Procedures

Beginning Class

1. Enter the room in an orderly fashion and immediately get out your instrument.
2. Do all necessary maintenance (oil, grease, wipe down, etc.)
3. Gather your instrument, binder, and pencil (sharpen now and only now if necessary) then head directly to your seat.
4. Observe the daily agenda on the board then begin warming up slowly until class begins.
 - a. Failure to complete this process by two minutes after the tardy bell will result in a tardy. It does not take more than two minutes to complete this process for any instrument and you will usually enter the room well before the bell.

Ending Class

1. You will push your stand down all the way and look at Mr. Casselberry when told. You will listen to the important information he is giving.
2. When, and only when, you are told to pack up, you will calmly go put your things away.
3. Everything will be put back in its place before you are allowed to exit the room. This includes your instrument, supplies, sticks, binder & method books.
4. If you pack up a few seconds before the bell you will sit in your chair in the setup where you were sitting before until the bell rings.
5. You will throw away the trash you have been holding when you exit the room.

During Rehearsal

1. As long as Mr. Casselberry is in front of the group you will sit with excellent posture and be completely attentive.
2. When Mr. Casselberry has to give information to a group of players that doesn't include you, you will finger through your part. Mental practice is as good as actually playing.
3. Most importantly, perform all pieces and exercises to the absolute best of your ability. When one student isn't performing to the best of their ability the teacher is wasting everyone's time. A football player wouldn't go to practice and let the guy with the ball score just because he didn't feel like running as fast as he was capable of would he?
4. Do not get frustrated, scared, worried, or saddened by a mistake. To keep a positive environment, I will never punish a mistake. There are literally hundreds of things that have to be done at once to perform perfectly on an instrument. It isn't possible. I've never done it and neither has anyone else. However, we will always strive to get as close to perfection as possible...and it will feel awesome.
5. If a mistake is made, you will actively try to correct your mistake to the best of your ability during class then go home and practice the part. I know what is within your ability and I will never accept less than your best.

Rules & Procedures cont.

Entering Class Late

1. As quietly and with as little attention from classmates as possible (like a ninja), place your admittance slip on my rolling cart then get your instrument out and quietly take your seat.
2. Wait for me to give instructions. Do not ask your classmates or me what is going on.

Leaving Class

1. Raise your hand to get my attention.
2. If granted permission, quietly get up and sign your name along with the time and date on the sign-out clipboard.
3. Always take the vest unless you have been called to the office.
4. Sign back in with the correct time and put the vest back where you got it.
5. Bathroom breaks will be granted only in an emergency unless noted by a tag on your I.D. Please plan accordingly. You have 4 minutes between classes and it takes 2 minutes to walk with purpose from one corner of the school to the other.

Sudden Illness

1. Raise your hand to get my attention.
2. Follow the appropriate steps using the back of your planner.
3. Questionably frequent trips to the health center will be discussed with school nurses.

Visitors Entering the Class

All visitors are invisible. Didn't you know? You will not react in any way. I will handle the situation unless they are simply there to watch us have an awesome class. *Each class will have a designated door opener.*

Getting Your Attention

1. I will stop what I am doing and begin to count from five.
2. You will immediately cease talking and we will continue class.
3. If I make it through all five counts the class will begin Plan B.

Interaction Between Classmates

1. When a classmate is speaking you will stop and actively listen to everything he/she has to say by showing them the same respect you would expect from them.
2. When responding, they will return this favor.

Written Assignments

You will write your name, the date, and your block number in the upper left corner of your paper.

Sharpening Your Pencil

1. This will be done before you take your seat.
2. If your pencil breaks, use your backup pencil.
3. If your backup pencil breaks, raise your hand. This will not be a common occurrence.

Throwing Away Trash

1. Do not ask to throw away trash.
2. Simply place it in the trash bin on your way out of the class.

Disciplinary Process

The following disciplinary process has been created for the purpose of maintaining rules and procedures in my classroom. This ensures a productive learning environment for all students. In my dream classroom I never have to go past Step 1. Doing so wastes your time that could be much better spent. However, the disciplinary process will be fair and consistent.

Step 1 – Verbal Warning

Documented by Mr. Casselberry.

Step 2 – Plan B

1. Documented by Mr. Casselberry.
2. Plan B means completing written work that corresponds to the current subject matter. This will allow you to continue learning and practicing skills in my class, but in an old school fashion.
3. If I deem the work done to be acceptable this step will be over.
4. If I notice the student not working diligently on their Plan B work, I will move to Step 3 at the end of class when it will not interrupt my teaching.
5. If at the end of class I deem the amount of work completed not acceptable for the amount of time given I will move immediately to Step 3.

Step 3 – Essay

Documented & parents contacted.

You will:

1. Complete the essay —The Four Types of Behavior on a piece of loose-leaf paper.
2. You will complete —My Action Plan on the reverse side of the essay form.
3. You and your parents will sign and date the form.
4. Staple the loose-leaf paper to the form.
5. Return it to Mr. Casselberry before school in the Band Room or the second you enter class the following day.

Note: Failure to complete Step 3 will lead immediately to Step 4 and a State Referral.

Step 4 – State Referral

1. This step will only be reached by the student that disappoints Mr. Casselberry by reaching Step 3 TWO TIMES. Shame!
2. Certain extreme incidents will move straight to Step 4 (fighting, profanity, academic dishonesty, etc.)
3. Once you reach Step 4, your option for Step 3 is gone. You will move from Step 1, to 2, to 4 in the future.

HANDBOOK VERIFICATION

Please sign below indicating that you have read the handbook, understand the expectations outlined, and agree to follow the guidelines and policies stated within this handbook. You are also accepting responsibility for your child's attendance at all required performances and events. As always, should you have any questions or need further information, please email or call me at the school.

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

Signature of Student

Date

GENERAL INFORMATION

***Please fill in as much information as possible. If you prefer to use your cell phone just put it as the only number. Most correspondence will be through email.

Student Name _____

Grade _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____

Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Father's Name _____ Day Phone _____

Father's Address _____ Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ Email _____

Mother's Name _____ Day Phone _____

Mother's Address _____ Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ Email _____