

A decorative border of musical notes surrounds the text. The border consists of a series of eighth notes connected by a line, forming a rectangular frame around the central text.

Gettysburg Area School District
Band Grades 4 - 6 Handbook

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Please retain this handbook for your record and reference throughout the school year.

I. Requirements:

A. Band Room Expectations

Band room behavior expectations are posted in each of the 4 band rooms:

B – Be respectful to *everyone* and *everything*. Students are expected to treat everyone in the band room – their peers, teachers, and *themselves* – with the same amount of respect that they would like to receive. They are also expected to treat all equipment and supplies in a respectful manner.

A – Accept responsibility for yourself, your actions, & your learning. Students are expected to be responsible for themselves and their belongings – attending lessons on time and with all necessary supplies, picking up after themselves, participating in rehearsals, and practicing at home.

N – Never touch things that don't belong to you. Simply put, students are expected to keep their hands to themselves – not touching other people or their instruments and only using the equipment they have learned how to properly use.

D – Do your best every single day. Students are expected to always put forth their best effort. This includes being prepared, showing up on time, working hard during rehearsals, practicing at home, and maintaining a positive attitude.

Students who repeatedly struggle to meet these expectations will be asked to write a short reflection paper about the expectation with which they are struggling. Continued failure to meet band room expectations will result in the teacher contacting home or and/or inability to participate in concerts and other special events.

B. Practicing:

All students are expected to practice between lessons. GASD operates on a 4-day cycle, so students will have a lesson once every 4 school days. This year, 4th and 5th graders will be using a “Number of times” practiced rather than number of minutes. Each 4th and 5th grader will be asked to turn in their practice chart at the beginning of each lesson. Throughout the lesson, they will write (on their new practice chart) the numbers or names of the songs they need to practice and the number of times that they need to be played between lessons. 4th and 5th graders do receive a Standards grade based on their lessons, which will be affected by their completion of practice charts. Practicing is considered band ‘homework’ and should be treated as such. Students who do not practice regularly will find themselves unable to advance through the Band Karate belts. 6th graders are also expected to practice; however as they are graded on performance evaluations, they will not be required to keep practice charts.

B. Lessons:

Students will attend a 30-minute group lesson once each 4-day cycle. Students are expected to come to their lesson **on time** with their **instrument, music, a pencil, and a good attitude**. I understand that Band can be hard work, but it should also be fun – and the right supplies and a good attitude go a long way toward helping this be true!

C. Reeds:

Students who play a clarinet or saxophone will be expected to provide their own reeds. Mrs. McDonald will send home more information about what kind of reeds to get and where they can be purchased.

D. Instruments:

All students are expected to have an instrument *of their own* to use during the school year. To avoid issues with practicing, rehearsals, and performances, sharing of instruments between siblings, relatives, or friends is *strongly* discouraged. Instruments may be acquired in three ways:

- **Purchase:** An instrument may be purchased (or borrowed/gifted) for a student. Please make sure that the instrument is in good working order before making a purchase. I caution against purchasing from a source other than a music retailer such as Woodwind Brasswind, Menchey Music, or Music & Arts. Please do not purchase plastic instruments, even though they come in pretty colors. They will not sound good and they will not last the school year. If you aren't sure about how to purchase an instrument, please contact Mrs. McDonald and she would be happy to give you advise.
- **Rent:** An instrument may be rented for a student. We partner with Menchey Music (based in Hanover) for our instrument rentals. Information about rentals can be found on the Menchey website (www.MencheyMusic.com) and will also be distributed during the New Parent meeting in September. The cost of a rental varies based on the instrument. Rentals will be delivered to the school at no cost in time for the student's first lesson.
- **School-Owned:** Students who qualify for free or reduced lunches may be able to use a school-owned instrument if they are otherwise unable to acquire one. There is a limited number of instruments available and they will be distributed on a first come, first served basis. Students and guardians will need to sign an Instrument Use Agreement stating that they are financially responsible for the instrument while it is in their care. Any damage that affects the playability of the instrument will need to be repaired by the student's guardian. In the event that an instrument is damaged beyond repair, the student's guardian will be responsible for paying to replace the instrument.

All students are responsible for providing their own lesson book and instrument supplies. School-Owned instruments will come with basic cleaning supplies (a container of oil for brass instruments and a tube of cork

grease for woodwinds) and a starter pack of reeds for clarinets and saxophones. After these supplies are exhausted, students will need to provide replacements for themselves.

E. Rehearsals:

Advanced Band rehearsal will take place from 7:37 – 8:37 every Day 2 and 4. 6th graders will report to the band room for Homeroom and use this time to set up and tune their instruments. 5th graders who are members of Advanced Band will need to be at the Middle School by 7:28 on Days 2 and 4. Bus Riders can catch a GAMS bus in the morning (bus drivers will be notified) and those who walk or are dropped off can arrive any time after 7:15. Please report directly to the band room and get your instrument out and set up. Following band rehearsal, 5th graders will be bussed back (or walked across the street) to their elementary schools in time for the start of the day.

In case of a delay, Advanced Band rehearsal will be cancelled and 5th graders should report directly to their elementary schools.

Beginner Band will begin having rehearsals in May, although the schedule is yet to be determined. A letter will be sent out in the spring detailing those rehearsals.

Students in both bands are expected to attend all rehearsals unless they have an excused absence from school. Students are expected to be **on time** and to **bring their instrument, music, a pencil, and a good attitude**. 6th graders' rehearsal attendance *will* factor in to their overall band grade. Students who arrive unprepared (no instrument, no music, etc.) will still be expected to attend rehearsal so they can keep up with the rest of the band. This also applies to students who may have an injury that prevents them from playing their instrument. Just as an injured football player still attends practice to learn the plays, all band members are expected to attend all rehearsals.

E. Performances:

Beginner Band will perform their spring concert in May. Advanced Band will perform two concerts, Winter and Spring, as well as marching in the Gettysburg Memorial Day Parade. See the section on Performances & Dress Codes for more details.

All Band members are expected to attend all performances. Without just one member, our band is incomplete. Please get the dates on your calendar **now** to avoid any scheduling conflicts. 6th graders: your attendance at performances will count toward your Band grade! 5th graders in Advanced Band: your attendance at performances is required to achieve your Brown and Black belts in Band Karate!

Lesson Groups may also get the chance to perform some Pop-Up performances throughout the year. Lesson Groups who excel at a song may get the opportunity to go perform it for a class or other group in the school. These

performances will be scheduled with permission from Principals and classroom teachers and will take place at Mrs. McDonald's discretion.

II. Lessons:

A. Scheduling:

Students will attend a 30-minute group lesson once each 4-day cycle. Mrs. McDonald will have lessons at James Gettys on Day 1, GAMS on Day 2, Lincoln Elementary on Day 3, and Franklin Township on Day 4. Students will be on a rotating schedule so they do not miss the same section of class more than once in a month. Schedules will be distributed to students on a monthly basis and will also be posted in the band rooms and in the elementary classrooms. 6th grade students will receive a pass each week to excuse them from class for their lesson. They will be responsible for keeping track of the pass and *politely* telling their teacher that they need to come down for a lesson.

Students are expected to come to their lesson on time with their instrument, music, a pencil, and a good attitude. I understand that Band can be hard work, but it should also be fun – and a good attitude goes a long way toward helping this be true!

B. Make-Ops:

If a student is struggling in a particular class or has a test, the teacher will *not* allow the student to leave for their lesson. This does *not* excuse the student from having a lesson during the cycle. Students need to come down for a lesson at another time during that day, temporarily joining another lesson group. Please ask your teacher to allow you to come down to the band room to get a new pass for a later lesson time.

III. Performances & Dress Codes:

A. Concerts:

The Beginner Band will have a Spring concert on May 17, 2018. The Advanced Band will perform a Winter Concert on December 7, 2017 and a Spring Concert on May 9, 2018. All concerts are held at 7 pm at the Middle School Auditorium. Students should wear concert dress: all black shoes and socks (no sneakers!), black slacks or skirt, and plain black shirt (no t-shirts and no writing). Depending on the severity of the dress code infraction, performers who do not adhere to the dress code for concerts may not be permitted to perform with the band. Students should arrive at the **Middle School** and report to the **band room** by **6:15** on the evening of the concert.

Please remember to bring your instrument and music! Reminders will be sent out the week of the concert.

B. Tours (Advanced Band):

Advanced Band students will have the opportunity to go on a Tour of Schools the day before each of their concerts. This will give them the chance to perform for their peers and teachers during the school day who may otherwise be unable to attend the concerts. The day of the tour will be considered a Band Field Trip. A permission slip will be sent home in the fall to cover both the winter and spring Tours. We will begin the day by warming up at the Middle School during our regular rehearsal time. Then we will travel to Franklin Township to perform there before heading back to the Middle School to perform for Lincoln Elementary and 6th grade GAMS students. After this performance, we will go out to lunch. Students will need to decide in advance if they would like to eat at Wendy's or Burger King or if they would like to pack their own lunch. After lunch, we will proceed to James Gettys for our final performance. Following the last performance, students from Franklin Township, Lincoln Elementary, and GAMS will be bussed back to their schools for dismissal. Students should wear their concert dress (see above) for the tour with two exceptions. For the Winter tour, students may wear a holiday hat, scarf, or tie and for the Spring tour, students may wear a brightly colored scarf or tie.

C. Parade (Advanced Band):

Advanced Band students will also be marching in the annual Gettysburg Memorial Day Parade on May 28, 2018. After our Spring Concert, we will begin working exclusively on Marching Band music and marching practice. Intent to March forms will be distributed in April and will be due no later than May 1. More information on times and locations will be available at that time. Wardrobe will be announced in April.

6th Grade: since this performance is not *required* your participation will earn you extra credit points.

IV. Grading (6th Grade):

A. Lessons:

Students can receive a maximum of 10 points for each lesson. Attendance = 5 points; Having instrument = 2 points; Having music = 2 point; Attitude/Participation = 1 point.

B. Rehearsals:

Students can receive a maximum of 20 points for each band rehearsal. Attendance = 10 points; Having instrument = 5 points; Having music = 3 points; Having a good attitude and participating in rehearsal = 2 points.

C. Concerts:

Students can receive a maximum of 50 points for each of the two concerts. Attendance = 25 points (minus 2 points for each minute late); Having instrument = 10 points; Having music = 5 points; Arriving in proper concert dress = 10 points.

D. Tours:

Students can receive a maximum of 50 points for each of the two school tours. Attendance = 25 points; Having instrument = 10 points; Having music = 5 points; Having good behavior (including on the bus and in the restaurant) = 10 points.

E. Parade (extra credit):

Students are not required to participate in the Memorial Day Parade, but it is HIGHLY encouraged, both for the marching experience and the involvement in the community. Students who DO march in the parade can receive a maximum of 30 extra-credit points for the year. Attendance = 10 points; Having Instrument = 10 points; Having Music = 10 points.

Other extra credit opportunities may be made available throughout the year at Mrs. McDonald's discretion.

V. Band Karate (4th & 5th Grades)

A. Belt Testing:

As students progress through their lesson book, they will be given the opportunity to do a "belt test" to pass off exercises for their belt requirements. The final 5 minutes of each lesson will be dedicated to Belt Tests. Students wishing to do a belt test must perform the exercise as a solo in front of the rest of the lesson group. If the performance is accurate, the student's Belt Chart will be initialed. *It is not necessary to complete all belt requirements in the same test.* For example, a student can test off one item per week and achieve a belt per month or one item per month and achieve 3 belts a year. **Students may work ahead to achieve belt levels.** Students who wish to work ahead in their lesson books to complete their belts more quickly are encouraged to do so. They will still be required to do the work assigned to them in their lesson.

B. Belt Requirements.

Students will receive a belt chart to tape into the back of their lesson book. Each time an exercise is tested and found to be accurate, Mrs. McDonald will check off the requirement on the chart. After all requirements of a belt level have been completed, the student will receive a new “belt” band for their instrument and get to move their name along the belt chart posted in the band room at their school.

C. Red Belt - Advanced Band.

5th Graders who achieve Red Belt status by the last lesson in October will become members of the Advanced Band. There are still two belts beyond this, which both carry the requirement of participating in an Advanced Band performance. These can be tours, concerts, or parades. **It is my goal that all 5th graders should be able to achieve black belt status before moving up to the Middle School.** However, Belt Level achievement will ultimately be determined by the amount of effort put in by the students themselves.

VI. Student Commitments:

The statements in this section are to be read and upheld by students throughout the school year

- A. I will always give my best effort.
- B. I will be honest when filling out my practice record.
- C. I will respect my bandmates and my instrument by taking good care of it.
- D. I will talk to Mrs. McDonald if I am having trouble with band or if I think I might want to quit.
- E. I will have **FUN** with band!

VII. Contact Information:

A. Phone:

(717) 334-6254 ext. 7105 (this is my office at Lincoln, where I teach on day 3)

B. Email:

HMcDonald@gettysburg.k12.pa.us

C. Remind:

Remind is a free app that helps us to stay connected with more privacy than email or texting. Using the Remind app, I can send out a quick reminder to parents such as “Tomorrow is lesson day – don’t forget your instrument!” or “Concert tonight – be at the school by 6 pm!” You can sign up to receive these alerts via your email or as a text. You can even reply to my reminders with questions (although this is not an appropriate way to let me know you’ll be missing a performance). Best of all, the app is totally confidential, meaning

that I will never see your cell phone number and you will not see mine. Our class names on Remind are:

Lincoln Elementary:

GASDBandLE

Middle School:

GAMS6Band

James Gettys:

GASDBandJG

Advanced Band:

GASDBandA

Franklin Township:

GASDBandFT

Beginner Band:

GASDBandB

If you plan on using the app, please add the class for your building (for lesson schedule reminders) and also for your student's band level (for rehearsal and performance reminders).

“Music is your own experience, your own thoughts, your wisdom. If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn.”

- Charlie Parker, American Jazz Musician

Updated 8/16/17

Please sign these forms and return them to Mrs. McDonald at your first lesson.

Parent/Guardian Agreement Form

By signing this form, I verify that I have read and understand the policies and procedures as laid out in this handbook. I will retain this handbook to reference throughout the school year. I will abide by these policies and will contact Mrs. McDonald with any questions or concerns.

Name

Signature

Date

Student Agreement Form

By signing this form, I verify that I have read the statements of commitment on page 7 and agree to uphold them throughout the school year.

Name

Signature

Date