Welcome to the Highlands Middle School Band!

This handbook is designed to answer your questions about the Middle School Instrumental Band Program and to advise students and parents of the policies and procedures under which the Middle School Band and Jazz Band operate. This handbook also includes important concert information, tentative rehearsal schedules, and explanation of student expectations and responsibilities. Please review this information and return the completed Student Information Page to the Middle School Band Director as soon as possible.

Our Goals
The primary purpose of the Highlands Middle School Instrumental Band Program is to provide students with a quality music education through band rehearsal and performance. To that end, the following principles represent the core philosophies of our program:

- Music and the arts are unique and valuable expressions of humanity that must continue to be cultivated in our society. These disciplines provide us with a means of experiencing and understanding the world around us while communicating and expressing the ideas within us.
- Musical understanding is a form of human intelligence that is possessed, to varying degrees, by all people; therefore, ALL people are capable of experiencing, performing, and creating music.
- Music education refers primarily to the development of the musical intelligence, not merely the use of music to enhance and support education in other areas. In the Middle School Band Program, we educate students IN music, which allows their education THROUGH music to be more meaningful.
- All students, regardless of academic achievement or socio-economic status, have the ability to develop their musical intelligence. At Highlands, we provide all students with a variety of opportunities to develop their musical intelligence, both in the general music classes and in the performing ensembles.
- Music-making is the key experience in a meaningful music education. Performance (in the form of rehearsals and concerts) is emphasized throughout the entire Middle School Instrumental Band Program.
- A thorough instrumental music education requires the performance of music from various styles, periods, and cultures. Music selection is based on the educational needs of the students, the intrinsic value of the music, and the sense of enjoyment and accomplishment students will gain from its successful performance.
- A band concert is a public demonstration of the students' continuing education and a showcase of their unique musical talents and abilities. To maximize the educational value of this experience, students need the support of their families and community.

The Instrumental Band Program
The Highlands Middle School Band Program consists of Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Grade students who have chosen to enroll in Band and Jazz Band. These classes, which are offered during the regular school day, are both graded and credited. Band and Jazz Band meet during the Exploratory period for each grade level. To prepare for upcoming performances, the Band and Jazz Band will also have several combined rehearsals. These rehearsals will be scheduled both during the school day and immediately after school. The Middle School Band presents a Winter and a Spring Concert each year. The Middle School Jazz Band (6th Grade TBA) will perform at the Winter and Spring Band Concerts as well as the Highlands Jazz and Show Choir Festival in April. Either ensemble may participate in additional programs during the school day or, on occasion, outside of regular school hours.

Students enrolled in Band or Jazz Band may also have the opportunity to audition for specialized performance groups and concert solos. These opportunities vary each year according to the needs of the organization.
Student Expectations and Responsibilities

All Highlands students are expected to be Respectful, Accountable, Motivated, and Safe. To be successful in the Middle School Band Program, students must simply be PRESENT, PARTICIPATING, and POSITIVE. This handbook will further outline these responsibilities and the policies relating to them. As you read, please remember that these policies exist to reinforce the importance of each individual to the ensemble and to ensure that every student has the same expectations and responsibilities. Most importantly, these policies support our goal of providing every student with the best possible instrumental music education.

**BE PRESENT (Attendance)**
- Attend all rehearsals and performances. If you are not here, our performance (rehearsal) is not the same. If you absolutely cannot attend a performance, show responsibility to the group by submitting an excuse to the director.

**BE PARTICIPATING (Behavior)**
- Lead by example. Make a positive contribution to the ensemble.
- Set high performance goals for yourself. Strive to reach them each day.
- Work towards group performance goals. You, along with the other students in the ensemble, set many of these goals based on your past musical experiences. The director primarily shows you how much potential you have and provides the motivation and skills for you to reach your goals.
- Practice cooperation and teamwork. Do not allow your attitude or actions to prevent the band from having a productive rehearsal or a good performance.
- Understand that there are different levels of respect. Your director respects you as an individual and as a student. If you want to be respected as a musician, you must earn that respect. If you behave as a professional and perform as a musician, you will be given that kind of respect – not just from your director, but from your audience and peers as well.

**BE POSITIVE (Attitude)**
- Give your best attitude and effort at all times. Even if you are having a bad day, you should TRY!
- Take pride in your performance. Our performance is a reflection of you – your time, your talents, and your energy.
- Realize that although you are only one member of the group, you are very important. You contribute something to the ensemble that no one else can. You are unique and irreplaceable.
- Understand that, in music, there are many levels of greatness. As your skills increase, you are constantly reaching for the next level.
- Think of your director as a mentor. He is someone who, because of his education and experience, is able to teach you how to perform on your instrument more effectively and do so with a greater level of musicianship. He cannot, however, do these things for you. You have to be willing to work to develop those skills.

**Student Discipline**

Because members of the Highlands Middle School Band and Jazz Band are representatives of our school and community, students are expected to behave appropriately and professionally. To accomplish this, students must simply listen attentively and follow the instructions they are given. In addition, each student is expected to develop self-awareness with regard to behavior. Even though the director, chaperones, and school personnel closely supervise the students’ behavior, it is important for students to develop the ability to monitor and correct their own behavior. These skills will benefit both the individual student and the ensemble by allowing rehearsals and concerts to proceed without unnecessary interruptions.
All Band and Jazz Band students are required to follow the rules and expectations set forth by the Instrumental Band Program, the Middle School, and the Highlands School District. Students will be held accountable to these three authorities, as the situation dictates.

**Grading Policy**

Band and Jazz Band are graded and credited courses. For this reason, it is important that students understand the grading policies for the class. The following chart outlines the components of each student’s nine weeks grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band and Jazz Band Nine-Week Grade Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Lesson - 10% (Jazz Band does not receive Weekly Pull-out Lessons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehearsal Assessment (see attached rubric) – 50% (60% for Jazz Band)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Dress Rehearsal and Attendance and Participation – 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Concert Attendance and Performance – 30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If there are no performances in any given nine-weeks, 100% of the student’s grade will be based on rehearsal assessment and weekly lessons.

The Rehearsal Assessment Rubric is designed to allow all students who actively and appropriately participate in rehearsal to receive an "A" for the nine weeks grading period; however, it is also designed to challenge students to put forth EXTRA effort to earn grades in the 98-100% range. Likewise, students who are negligent in their responsibilities or disruptive to the rehearsal will also receive grades that reflect their contributions to the ensemble. Extra credit activities and assignments are available to students each grading period by request.

**Pull-out Weekly Lessons**

ALL Band students MUST attend 6 weekly lessons over a nine-week grading period. These lessons will rotate between at least two periods from week to week, and will not last the entire period. ALL students are required to report to their assigned teacher for the appropriate period and inform them that they have a lesson that period in which they are scheduled to attend. They are responsible for work missed during this time. If there is a scheduled test, quiz, or group project in which the individual student’s participation will affect other student’s grades, they are permitted to miss a lesson and MUST have that teacher sign their agenda stating this is why they missed. The student is still responsible to make six lessons of individualized instruction.

**Band/Chorus and Jazz Band/Show Choir Students**

All students enrolled in Band/Chorus or Jazz Band/Show Choir are required to fulfill all requirements for both ensembles. If this becomes a problem, the choral director or band director may recommend that the student choose one of the two ensembles to be involved in. Ultimately, the decision will be left to the parents and the student. This situation is extremely rare, but it is important that these expectations are clear.

Band/Chorus and Jazz Band/Show Choir students split rehearsal days between the two ensembles. During the Exploratory period, Band/Chorus students will report to Band twice a week and to Chorus once a week, while Jazz Band/Show Choir students will report to each ensemble one day a week. The regular schedule for these students is:

- **BAND:** Tuesday, Friday
- **CHORUS:** Thursday
- **JAZZ BAND:** Wednesday
- **SHOW CHOIR:** Monday

Occasionally, the band and choral directors may decide to change this schedule to better prepare for upcoming performances. If the regular schedule changes, students will be notified in advance so that they can be prepared for the appropriate rehearsal.
After School Rehearsals

To better prepare for our evening concerts and to allow the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students to rehearse the songs they will perform together, we will have several combined rehearsals prior to each concert. Dress rehearsals, which will take place immediately after school on the scheduled day, will allow us to completely rehearse the concert selections and staging. Students DO NOT need to wear concert attire for these rehearsals. Dress rehearsals held during the school day will allow our audio-visual staff and stage crew to coordinate the lights and sound for the public performance. These rehearsals are mandatory and will factor into the student’s grade for the nine-week grading period, as outlined in the previously stated grading policy.

If transportation for the after-school rehearsals is an issue, students will be permitted to ride the Activity Bus home at 3:45 if it is available on that day. (Our rehearsals have been scheduled to coincide with the Activity Bus schedule, providing that there are no unforeseen changes to that schedule as the year progresses.)

You MUST submit an excuse for “excused absences” (see student agenda for school policy regarding this) any dress rehearsal or concert that you do not attend in order to receive the appropriate credit. The attendance policy for rehearsals and concerts is outlined in the next section.

The tentative schedule of additional rehearsals for the 2010-2011 school year is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Rehearsal Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 22nd, 2010</td>
<td>Rehearsal for MS Band Night 6 until 8 p.m. at MS and Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, December 14, 2010</td>
<td>Dress Rehearsal (6th grade only) after school until 5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, December 15, 2010</td>
<td>Dress Rehearsal (7/8 grades only) after school until 5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, April 11th, 2011</td>
<td>Dress Rehearsal (Jazz Band only) after school until 5:00 p.m. * for HSD Jazz/Show choir Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, May 24, 2011</td>
<td>Dress Rehearsal (7/8th grades only) after school until 5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, May 26, 2011</td>
<td>Dress Rehearsal (6th grade only) after school until 5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues/Wed, May 31st/June 1st</td>
<td>Commencement Rehearsal during school day – TBD 8th Grade only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every effort will be made to keep this schedule unchanged; however, it is often difficult to predict the needs of the program until closer to the performance date. Students will be notified in advance if any changes to this schedule become necessary as the year progresses.
The Highlands Middle School Band and Jazz Bands regularly present two combined concerts during the school year – a Winter Concert in December and a Spring Concert in May. In addition, the Jazz Band will perform at the Highlands Jazz and Show Choir Festival in April. This year’s concert dates are as follows:

**Middle School Band Night, Friday, September 24th**

Rehearsals and report times will be announced via letter to parent/guardian after collaborating with High School Band Director.

**Winter Band Concert: Thursday, December 16th, 2010**

Call Time (student arrival): 6:00 p.m. for 7th/8th Grade; 6:20 p.m. for 6th Grade (HMS Band Room)
Performance Time: 7:00 p.m. (HMS Auditorium)

**Highlands Jazz and Show Choir Festival: Tuesday, April 12, 2011**

Call Time (student arrival): 6:00 p.m. (HHS Band Room or designated area TBA)
Performance Time: 7:00 p.m. (HHS Auditorium)

**Spring Concert: Thursday, May 27, 2010**

Call Time (student arrival): 6:00 p.m. for 7th/8th Grade; 6:20 p.m. for 6th Grade (HMS Band Room)
Performance Time: 7:00 p.m. (HMS Auditorium)

Commencement Ceremony Practice and Performance (8th Grade only)
Rehearsal and report times TBA after Commencement Planning Team meeting

These concerts are an extremely important part of the student’s music education; for this reason, every student should make every effort to attend. Because the concert is such an important musical experience, 30% of the nine-week’s grade is based on concert attendance and performance.
Students will report to the Band room (or assigned backstage area) prior to concert time for warming up and lining up. This allows us to focus on the performance ahead and to present the best possible concert to you, our audience.

Concert dress for Highlands Middle School Band and Jazz Bands is as follows:

**Formal Concert Attire (evening concerts):**
- **BOYS:** black dress pants, white shirt (preferably a collared, button-down shirt), dark shoes, neck tie
- **GIRLS:** black skirt (preferably knee-length or below), white dressy shirt (no T-shirts), black dress shoes
- **ALL:** Please wear lightweight, breathable clothing (cotton blends are best). Also, avoid using large amounts of perfume, cologne, or hairspray. The combination of these smells and the heat from the lights is likely to make some performers feel nauseous or faint.

**Informal Concert Attire (in-school performances):**
- **ALL:** “Highlands Middle School Music” T-shirts, jeans, casual shoes.

**Jazz Band Concert Attire:**
- **ALL:** “Highlands Middle School Jazz Band” t-shirts, black pants, black shoes.

**Absences**

If you are unable to attend a scheduled rehearsal or performance, you MUST submit an excuse on the yellow excuse form!!! (A sheet is included in this handbook, and extras are always available in the Band Room.) This will ensure that you provide the necessary information and that your excuse will be filed appropriately. All excuses must be received by the end of the affected nine-weeks grading period. **Please note:** excuses submitted to homeroom teachers for attendance purposes are filed separately and are NOT forwarded to the band director. For this reason, you must submit an excuse to the band director for the rehearsal or performance itself, even if you were absent from school that day.

**Excused vs. Unexcused**

Absences due to personal illness or family emergency will be considered excused. An excused absence will receive a grade equivalent to a 90% (for that requirement). You will not be able to receive full credit for a rehearsal or performance if you are unable to be there, but your Band grade for the nine-weeks will not be drastically affected by one absence. (Remember, you can always do extra credit to make up those few points!)

Unexcused absences are, in short, absences that could have been avoided with prior planning but that a written excuse has been submitted for. If no excuse is received, the student will receive a zero for the rehearsal. Unexcused absences, on the other hand, will receive a grade of 50% (for that requirement). Again, extra credit is always available for students to make up the points for any rehearsal or performance they have missed.

**Sports and Other Activities**

Obviously, many of our students already have demanding schedules, especially those who are involved in school sports. **It is your responsibility to communicate with BOTH your band director and your coaches about your schedule conflicts.** We can usually work together to reach a compromise. Because our concerts are scheduled only twice a year, absences due to sporting events will be graded as unexcused absences. Please remember to submit an excuse so that you receive the appropriate credit.

If you miss a rehearsal due to a game or meet (and submit an excuse, as required), the absence will be counted as an excused absence. **Students are expected to split the time between commitments when the conflict is between a rehearsal and a practice.** (For grading purposes, half of the rehearsal will be excused.) In these cases, please be sure to communicate with both the band director AND your coach to avoid any confusion that you are, in fact, fulfilling your obligations to BOTH activities.
Communication is KEY!!! Please remember that these policies exist for the benefit of the group, and each individual has responsibilities to the entire group. In today’s society, too many students are satisfied with just meeting the minimum requirements. In a band, this would mean missing out on truly great musical experiences and letting the rest of the ensemble down.

EVERY INSTRUMENT LIST IS IMPORTANT TO EVERY REHEARSAL AND EVERY PERFORMANCE!!!

As a director, AND Dad of four children, I understand how busy and unpredictable life can be. As long as you make every effort to fulfill your responsibilities to the group and communicate with me when you can’t, this will be a positive experience for you. My hope is that, by publishing this schedule in advance, we can avoid some conflicts. Obviously, there will be others that we cannot avoid, but that is expected with a group of this size and diversity. Please be aware that these policies directly coincide with those of the Middle School Music Department.

Band Enrichment (during Homeroom)

From time to time, Chorus students may be able to participate in enrichment activities during Homeroom period. Students must acquire a pass to excuse them from Homeroom Remediation prior to the designated day. Students will not be excused from their Grade-Level Homeroom meeting for Enrichment.

This year, Band and Jazz Band students that require PSSA tutoring will also need to report to the Band Room (with a signed slip prior to the day they are coming) to work on Study Island in order to avoid missing rehearsals. In the past, this tutoring was scheduled on another day of the week, but that is no longer the case. Please contact Mr. Lynn if you are assigned PSSA tutoring or if or if you have any questions.

Trips and Outside Performances

In the past, the Middle School Band and Jazz Bands have performed at various locations both in the community and outside of the school district (as schedule and opportunities permit). These performance opportunities are scheduled to serve the community and also to supplement the students’ instrumental music education. While these performances are not typically graded requirements, each member’s attendance is important to ensure that these opportunities remain available to us in the future. Information regarding any trips or additional performances will be forwarded to you as soon as the performance or event is scheduled and the information is available.

HMS Music Department and Jazz Band T-shirts

Each student in the Middle School Band will be required to purchase a Music Department T-shirt (if you do not already own one). These shirts will be worn for all casual performances and any Chorus-sponsored trips or outside performances. This T-shirt design will be the same each year for both Band and Chorus. Jazz Band students will also need to purchase a Jazz Band T-shirt for their performances. We plan to use this design for the next several years as well, so you will not need to purchase a new shirt every year. Opportunities will be available at the beginning of each year to allow students to fundraise the cost of their T-shirt (if desired) rather than paying for it out-of-pocket. Please contact Mr. Lynn if you have questions or if you need assistance because of financial hardship.

Fundraisers

Occasionally (as the need arises), the Middle School Music Department sponsors fundraisers to assist students in raising money for ensemble T-shirts, upcoming events, trips, or other activities. While we do not want to overwhelm your family with fundraisers, we do want to help make it financially possible for your child to participate in any additional Band-sponsored activities. Our fundraisers are not mandatory; however, all students are encouraged to participate in these fundraisers because they benefit each student directly.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding the information in this handbook, please contact:

Mr. Lee Lynn, Middle School Director of Bands
(724)226-0600 ext.174 • llynn@goldenrams.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>demonstrated playing ability is above grade level expectations; consistently a leader in the section; learns even difficult instrumental parts quickly</td>
<td>is reliable and self-disciplined; cares for materials and equipment; has good attendance; consistently demonstrates appropriate rehearsal behavior</td>
<td>individual contributions exceed expectations; is independent and resourceful; seeks out additional responsibilities; helps others in the ensemble</td>
<td>has a positive impact on the group; displays leadership qualities; consistently demonstrates dedication to learning and pride in performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>demonstrated playing ability is meeting grade level expectations; solid performer in the section; easily learns instrumental parts</td>
<td>is fairly reliable; cares for materials and equipment when encouraged; has good attendance; demonstrates appropriate rehearsal behavior</td>
<td>individual contributions are meeting grade level expectations; is willing to accept additional responsibilities; occasionally helps others in the ensemble</td>
<td>is beneficial and supportive to the group; shows increasing dedication to learning and pride in performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>demonstrated playing ability is less than grade level expectations; often follows others in the section; struggles to learn instrumental parts</td>
<td>is inconsistent; sometimes late for class; requires occasional monitoring to achieve appropriate rehearsal behavior</td>
<td>individual contributions are not meeting grade level expectations; shows little desire to help others in the ensemble</td>
<td>is usually cooperative when encouraged; occasionally shows an interest in learning and pride in performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>demonstrated playing ability is not meeting most requirements; appears unsure and consistently follows others in the section; extreme difficulty in learning instrumental parts</td>
<td>is inconsistent; often late for class; requires constant monitoring to achieve appropriate rehearsal behavior</td>
<td>is inattentive; often distracted during rehearsal; strives to meet only the minimum requirements</td>
<td>is generally neutral but not objectionable; shows little interest in learning or pride in performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>lacks effort; often does not play; performance is not accurately assessable due to lack of participation</td>
<td>is not reliable; has poor attendance or unexcused absences; rarely demonstrates appropriate rehearsal behavior even with constant monitoring</td>
<td>shows little or no initiative; engages in other activities during rehearsal; has chosen to contribute as little as possible to the ensemble</td>
<td>is sometimes negative or detrimental to the group; words or actions deteriorate group morale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>refuses to play; performance is not assessable due to lack of participation</td>
<td>is not reliable; is deliberately destructive; has extremely poor attendance or excessive unexcused absences; rehearsal behavior is unacceptable</td>
<td>behavior interferes with rehearsal process; actively prevents the ensemble from reaching performance and learning goals</td>
<td>is often negative and decidedly uncooperative; actively seeks to destroy group morale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Excuse Form for Rehearsals and Concerts

Student’s Name ________________________________________________

Date of Rehearsal or Performance _________________________________

Reason for Absence _____________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Parent/Guardian Signature ________________________________________

Daytime Phone Number __________________________________________

Date Submitted ________________________________________________

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Student’s Name ________________________________________________

Date of Rehearsal or Performance _________________________________

Reason for Absence _____________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Parent/Guardian Signature ________________________________________

Daytime Phone Number __________________________________________

Date Submitted ________________________________________________
Student Information Page

Please complete the following information to help me communicate with you throughout the year (as needed). **Detach and return this completed page to Mr. Lynn no later than October 1st.** All information will be kept confidential and will be used only by the band director or, if necessary, appropriate school personnel. Thank you, in advance, for your cooperation!

Student Name (First & Last):

Ensemble(s):

Instrument:  Grade:  Homeroom:

Home Address:

Parent/Guardian Name(s):

Phone Number(s):

Email Address(es):

Please sign below indicting that you received this Handbook of the Highlands Middle School Instrumental Band Program. All students participating in the Band, Jazz Band, or other instrumental ensembles will be held accountable to the policies outlined in this document. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact the band director at any time throughout the year.

__________________________________________  ______________________________________
Parent Signature  Student Signature