

# Great Bridge Middle School Band

## Grading Policies and Information

Welcome to the start of another school year! I hope you had a great summer and are excited to get started in Band. Our 6<sup>th</sup> graders will be learning many new skills and meeting lots of new friends. Our 7<sup>th</sup> graders will continue the excellent progress they established last year. Our 7<sup>th</sup> grade band will also be adding several new instruments like the tuba, French horn, oboe and bassoon to help us achieve us a much more professional, refined sound. Finally, we have several new experiences planned for our 8<sup>th</sup> graders, including a performance at a varsity football game and representing our entire band program at the annual Virginia Concert Band Performance Assessment.

Below are the Chesapeake Public Schools grading policies for middle school Band and some additional information regarding instruments, supplies, insurance, etc. Additional information, concert dates and more can be found on our website: [www.gbmsband.org](http://www.gbmsband.org).

### Grading Policies:

Each student's grade is determined through earning points in three areas of evaluation (The 3 "P's" to Musical Success):

- **Participation – Performance - Practice**

**Daily Participation** comprises 40% of each student's grade.

The **participation** of each member of any organization is vital to its success. Such is the case in the GBMS Band program. Students learn to be part of a "team", working towards a common goal. Some of the more common reasons for not earning one's Daily Participation points include:

- Disturbing the class
- Failing to be prepared for class
- Failing to be "on-time"
- Eating or chewing gum

The effectiveness of any music program can be measured by the progress made by each individual student. Self-control, courtesy and dedication are essential from each participating student in order for the group to attain a superior level of performance.

**Performance** comprises 40% of each student's grade.

Periodic evaluations of each student's progress will be given in the form of playing and written tests and/or quizzes. Some common areas for evaluation include: the ability to produce a proper and characteristic tone, note accuracy, rhythmic accuracy, correct articulations, dynamics, phrasing, hand-position, instrument position, posture, sticking, grip, etc. The student's comprehension of various musical concepts and terminology will also be evaluated. These evaluations may be announced or unannounced and will take place during class. The Chesapeake Public Schools' policy regarding make-up work will apply to missed evaluations due to a student's absence.

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**Practice Records** comprise 20% of each student's grade.

There are two main goals of the **Practice Record** category. The first and more obvious goal is to develop the student's playing ability through reinforcement of performance objectives taught in class. The second and underlying goal is to develop part of each student's personal responsibility. The student must enter information on a form (amount of time practiced and the date) and submit this record by the deadline. *The minimum assignment for home practice is 20 minutes per day (30 minutes for percussionists) for 5 days per week.*

Practice records are due every Monday. There are six practice records required each term. The remaining seventh, eighth and ninth weeks may be used to replace a missing or low grade. If the student has no missing grades, or grades lower than an "A", these remaining weeks will be counted as extra-credit towards the student's term average.

### General Information:

**INSURANCE:** Please check to be sure your instrument is covered by an insurance policy. Your personal instrument is **not** covered by the Chesapeake Public Schools.

**ACCESSORIES:** In order for students to properly play and maintain a musical instrument, certain accessory items are required. Items in *italics* must be in class every day:

- **FLUTE:** *A soft cotton cloth and cleaning rod*, a polishing cloth for fingerprints.
- **OBOE & BASSOON:** *2 good reeds, cork grease (or paraffin wax for bassoons), swab.*
- **CLARINET:** *2 good reeds (2 reeds is a minimum . . . most clarinet players have at least 4 good reeds at all times!), cork grease, swab.*
- **ALTO SAXOPHONE:** *Neck strap, 2 good reeds (2 reeds is a minimum . . . most sax players have at least 4 good reeds at all times!), cork grease, swab.*
- **TRUMPET, BARITONE, TUBA:** *Valve oil, tuning slide grease*, mouthpiece brush, flexible cleaning brush (snake) and a soft cloth to clean fingerprints.
- **FRENCH HORN:** *Rotary valve oil, tuning slide grease*, mouthpiece brush
- **TROMBONE:** *Slide oil or slide cream (Slide cream tends to work better. If you use slide cream, you will also need a small spray bottle of water.), tuning slide grease*, mouthpiece brush, flexible cleaning brush (snake) and a soft cloth to clean fingerprints.
- **PERCUSSION:**
  - **6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade:** *A pair of 2B or SD1 drumsticks, pair of bell mallets, metronome.*
  - **8<sup>th</sup> grade:** *Vic Firth EP2 Intermediate Education Pack (or equivalent) which includes: a stick bag containing 1 pair of SD1 or SD2 drumsticks, 1 pair M3 yarn mallets, 1 pair M6 phenolic bell mallets, 1 pair T3 timpani mallets.*

**HOME PRACTICE:** Every student is expected to practice at home regularly. It is a proven fact that those students who practice regularly display the most improvement during the year. Please notice our practicing and practice record requirements. **Students are encouraged to practice beyond the minimum requirement if they expect to experience steady progress and above average test scores.**

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**PRIVATE LESSONS:** Private lessons are not a requirement of our band program. *However*, private lessons are an asset to the student and have always been the traditional method used to master a musical instrument. I have a list of several excellent private instructors in our area who are always delighted to work with our students. I cannot emphasize enough the effect private study can have on you and your playing.

### **PUBLIC PERFORMANCES:**

The following are the expectations for each member's participation in concerts and other public performances given by the GBMS band program. The following policies are based on general self-respect, mutual respect between your peers and directors, and your personal responsibility and commitment to the band.

- **Participation** in approved concert performances is a part of the requirements of the Great Bridge Middle School Band and the Chesapeake Public Schools Department of Music. The National Standards for Music Education and the Virginia Standards of Learning identify *performance* as a critical component of our curriculum. When you join the band, you are making a commitment to this ensemble. At the very least, that commitment includes participating in our public performances to the best of your ability, to be prompt, and to display the proper concert etiquette. Our concert dates are published on the very first day of school. Don't say at a later time that you have something else to do. (*Unforeseen emergencies accepted.*) Not following through on your commitment causes problems for the whole group. I cannot stress strongly enough to follow through on all your commitments in life. Don't make a commitment if you don't think you will be able to honor it.
- An **absence** from a Great Bridge Middle School Band performance results in the student's nine-week term grade being lowered two letter grades. Being tardy for a performance (arriving after the published tardy time) will result in the student's concert participation grade being lowered one point for each minute late. An *excused* absence affords the student the opportunity to "make-up" the required performance. Since there is no practical way for a student to "make-up" a live performance, you should contact Mr. Oare upon your return to school for additional information. Excuses for an absence must be submitted by the parent in writing and approved by Mr. Oare and the school principal or designee *prior* to the performance. In the event of an emergency situation, a written note stating the reason for the unexpected absence must be submitted by the parent for approval by the principal and band director on the next school day. *The determination of whether an absence is excused or unexcused will be guided by the regular Chesapeake Public Schools policy concerning school attendance.*
- **Dress appropriately.** It is appropriate for a performer to dress in a professional manner. Sloppy looking clothing, or generally inappropriate attire (shorts, short skirts, jeans, athletic shoes, etc.), sends the message to the audience that you don't care about the performance or the audience. If you look professional the audience will take note in a positive way without dwelling on it.
- **Concert Dress:** Our **Stage Band** and **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Symphonic Band** have a uniform which consists of a green polo style shirt with khaki slacks and appropriate footwear (shoes, not athletic wear). Ladies may wear khaki slacks or a khaki skirt of appropriate length. The shirts will have a "Great Bridge Band" logo embroidered on the left pocket area. Our **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Band** and **7<sup>th</sup> Grade Band** wear "dress clothes". Boys wear a dress shirt and tie, slacks (not jeans) and shoes (tennis shoes and other athletic types of shoes are not appropriate). Girls wear a dress, an appropriate length skirt and blouse outfit, or an appropriately "dressy" pants outfit. Your concert dress does not have to be "black and white" . . . colors are fine. Failure to wear the appropriate concert attire will result in the student's concert grade to be lowered one letter grade.