

Wheaton Christian Grammar School

Concert Band Handbook

2009-2010

Wheaton Christian Grammar School

Concert Band Handbook

September 2, 2009

Dear Band Members and Parents,

I hope you are all as excited as I am about Concert Band this school year. I am really looking forward to working with each one of you in creating the best sounding Junior High Band we can be. In this handbook you will find my policies and procedures of the band program as well as information concerning this school year.

Parents

Thank you for allowing your son or daughter the opportunity of playing a band instrument. Playing in a concert band is a unique experience like nothing else. It is crucial that I have the support of parents as we partner in training your children in becoming great musicians. Please encourage your children in the area of practicing. Being an instrumentalist for over 40 years I know that the only way to improve as a musician is to spend time practicing. A musician's expertise on an instrument is directly proportional to the time spent practicing – it's as simple as that!

Over the past five years I have been working hard toward a balanced instrumentation in Concert Band. We have made some great improvements within the balance and numbers of each section of the band. I will still, however, actively pursue students to fill vacancies that presently exist. We currently have openings in the following sections: clarinet, trombone, baritone, tuba, horn, and bassoon. Perhaps some of you that are in some of the "large" sections of the band would consider learning a secondary instrument for the benefit of the band! Trumpet players are probably the most likely instrumentalists that can make the switch to tuba or horn, and clarinet or sax players to bassoon. Please see Mr. Wright if you are interested.

Please read through the following information very carefully. Students and their parents must turn in the signed sheet by Wednesday, September 9.

I'm looking forward to a great year together!

Sincerely,

Mr. David Wright

Discipline

Band by its very name suggests oneness, teamwork, ensemble, and cooperation, with everyone striving for a common goal. This all comes at a middle school student's life when individual identity is desired. As Christians, we all recognize the importance of working together cooperatively, for one goal – bringing glory to God. A very small number of students find they cannot make this kind of sacrifice and become disruptive discipline problems in the band rehearsal. These students will not be allowed to affect the quality of learning taking place in class. Continued problems will result in that student being removed from rehearsal, and ultimately dismissed from the instrumental program. Consequences may include a one on one conference with the director, after school detention, call to parents, additional assignments, and a reduction of the student's daily grade. Band members need to accept *responsibility* for their actions, good or bad. Students should be looking to glorify God and work toward the success of our band program.

Daily Rules and Procedures

The following rules are set in place to create an atmosphere of learning and success. Students who violate these rules are responsible for reducing the amount of time for rehearsal and consequently hurting the entire band.

1. Enter the multi-purpose room in a quiet, courteous, and orderly manner.
2. Quickly get your instrument and music and take your seat.
3. Students are considered late to class if they are not **in their seats, instruments ready, music on their stands, and ready to play by 2:40 p.m.** Class begins at 2:35 p.m. That gives students five minutes to put together their instruments and be ready. Students that are late to band must bring a pass from the teacher of their previous class in order to be excused from being tardy.
4. **Students are not to play their instruments until directed by Mr. Wright. Warm-ups will be done together as a band. There will be NO PLAYING until this happens.**
5. Concert attention will be observed when the director steps on the podium and no further talking will be permitted.
6. Students will not play their instruments without permission.
7. Students will not play other students' instruments. **This includes percussion instruments and keyboards.**
8. Band members will have the following at every rehearsal:
 - a. INSTRUMENT (with the necessary accessories)
 - b. ALL MUSIC
 - c. PENCIL (you supply your own)
9. All school books, cases, and equipment not needed for class should be left in the instrument lockers during band rehearsal.
10. Good posture is of great importance at all times.
11. Music stands are for music – ONLY.
12. When class is over, quietly remain in your seat until you are dismissed.
13. Instruments MUST be stored in instrument lockers when not being played at school. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR INSTRUMENT ON THE MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM FLOOR, IN HALLWAYS, OR IN THE MUSIC**

ROOM! If you would like to lock your instrument in your instrument locker, locks are available. Please use WCGS locks only.

14. Practicing is very important. More is accomplished in band rehearsal when you have learned your music at home. Leaving your instrument at school overnight should be the exception rather than the rule.
15. Students who do not bring their instruments to school for rehearsal will have points deducted from their participation grade.
16. Absolutely no gum, food, or drink in the band rehearsal. (water is OK)
17. Respect the rights, safety, and property of others.
18. Accept responsibility for yourself and your learning.

Grades/Points

Grades are based on an average of practice/preparation, performance, and progress that includes participation/attendance at rehearsals, concerts, and sectionals (see attached rubric). Points are accumulated for each activity listed above. In addition to these activities students may also earn extra points by doing the following:

Concerts/Recitals – Students may attend concerts or recitals to earn points. Concerts that you attend must be performed with live music and musicians.
20 points per event

Recitals – If you play in a recital with a private teacher, or in the spring recitals at WCGS, you may earn points toward your grade. See Mr. Wright for details of what may be acceptable.
50 points per event

Private Lessons – Every instrumentalist should consider taking private lessons on his/her instrument. Students will receive points for taking weekly private lessons from an approved teacher. *30 points per lesson*

IGSMA Solo and Ensemble Contest – Solo and ensemble contest will be coming up in February. Now is a good time to begin thinking about your involvement in this contest. Information will be sent home when it is available.
75 points per event

IMEA District Honors Band – Students will receive points for auditioning for this band (see Mr. Wright for details).
50 points for playing an audition
75 points for being accepted and participating in the band

Rehearsal Clean-up - Earn extra points by helping Mr. Wright clean-up after rehearsals. *10 points per day after school*

Concert Set-up/Take-down – Earn extra points by helping Mr. Wright set-up and/or take-down before and after a concert. A minimum of one hour of work is required for points. *50 points per hour*

Sectionals

All students in Junior High Band have scheduled sectionals during the regular school day. Since academic classes will be missed for sectionals, **IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK!** The only exception for missing a sectional is if a teacher is giving a test during that period in class and it cannot be made up at another time. **It is critical that every band student attend these sectionals. They are vital to the success of our band's progress.**

SmartMusic Practicing System

All students are required to practice at home several times a week. Consistent, daily work is essential to improvement on your instrument. This year, we will again use the SmartMusic computer program. Each Concert Band student will be required to purchase a subscription and enroll in the SmartMusic program. The cost for a one-year subscription is \$21.25. Periodic assignments and playing tests will need to be completed and submitted throughout the year. These assignments will make up 15-18% of the student's quarter grades. Students who do not have access to a computer at home may submit their assignments at school either during class, before school, or after school. If you have a SmartMusic subscription make sure that you renew your license and enroll in Concert Band online. If you are new to WCGS, or do not have a previous subscription, see the attached information and instructions for SmartMusic.

Instrument Care and Maintenance

All students must have instruments in good playing condition. Students are expected to maintain proper care of their instruments throughout the school year. This includes reeds, mouthpieces, mutes, valve oil, slide cream, cork grease, etc. Music and Arts, Inc. visits our school weekly and can be utilized for repairs. I recommend the following companies for purchasing supplies: Sam Ash Music (on Roosevelt Road in Lombard), Music and Arts Center (at Naper and Ogden in Naperville), The Woodwind Brasswind – www.wbw.com, or Musician's Friend – www.musiciansfriend.com.

Here is a list of accessories each student will need for the proper care of their instrument(s):

Flute

Cleaning rod
Small cloth
Silver polishing cloth

Oboe

Oboe reeds
Oboe swab

Clarinet

Clarinet reeds (min. 4)
Clarinet swab
Mouthpiece brush
Cork grease

Saxophone

Sax reeds (min. 4)
Sax swab
Mouthpiece brush
Neck strap
Cork grease

Trumpet/Horn

Valve Oil
Cleaning snake
Tuning-slide grease
Mouthpiece brush
Cleaning rag

Trombone

Water spray bottle
Tuning-slide grease
Mouthpiece brush
Trombone slide cream
Cleaning snake
Cleaning rag

Baritone/Tuba

Valve Oil
Cleaning Snake
Tuning-slide grease
Mouthpiece brush
Cleaning rag

Percussion

Drum Sticks
Bell Mallets
Bell / Combo Kit

Rehearsal Schedule

Concert Band rehearses twice a week on Wednesdays from 2:37-3:17 p.m. (chapel days from 2:44-3:17 p.m.) and on Fridays from 2:35-3:17 p.m. Always be on time. Rehearsals are mandatory and may not be missed for any reason other than absence from school. If you know you will be out of school on a particular day, please see Mr. Wright ahead of time to cover what you will miss. Missing band rehearsal to make up work in another class is absolutely prohibited. Attendance and punctuality are a major part of your grading period average.

Seating Auditions

In an effort to assign a part to each student that is within his or her range and technical ability, each student will play a private audition. This is not an audition to “get into the group,” but rather for part and chair assignments. Each student will be assigned an audition time at the beginning of the school year.

Challenges

On the basis of the results of the auditions in August, students will be assigned seats within the section. Students desiring to “improve” their position may do so by challenging the person directly ahead of them. A student wishing to challenge simply informs the director who will assign music to both players. At the end of the week the player who exhibits better preparation on the assigned music will take the higher seat.

Concert Uniforms

Each student is required to purchase a uniform for performances. The mandatory concert dress code is:

Boys: White, oxford cloth, long-sleeve dress shirt with a buttoned-down collar (may be purchased through Lands End – see attached order information), a black tie (must be purchased through WCGS to insure uniformity), black dress slacks, black belt, black socks, and black dress shoes.

Girls: White blouse with three-quarter-length sleeve (must be purchased through Lands End – see attached order information), black skirt (knee length or longer) OR black dress pants, and black, low-heel dress shoes.

Music Boosters Parent Organization

We are interested in forming a Music Boosters Parent Organization this year at WCGS. The purpose of this organization is to help encourage and promote music at our school. We are also looking for ways to raise money in order to provide equipment for our vocal and instrumental music groups that is not covered in our normal operating budgets. If you are interested in helping or taking a leadership role in this organization, please contact Mr. Wright at 668-1385, ext. 257, or email at dwright@wheatonchristian.org as soon as possible.

Concerts and Important Dates

The concerts and events listed below are **mandatory** and may not be missed for any reason other than illness or a death in the family. Student's grades for concerts cannot be made up with the exception of illness or death in the family. These events are to be viewed as a final exam. Failure to attend any of these events will cause a **two-letter drop** in the student's quarter grade.

Band AuditionsAugust 26-September 3, 2009
Music Department Kick-off Concert7:00 p.m., Tuesday, September 29, 2009
Grandparents Day(during school day) Tuesday, November 24, 2009
Christmas Band Concert 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, December 8, 2009
Yorktown Christmas Concert (during school day) Tuesday, December 15, 2009
Rockford Ministry TourMarch 5-6, 2010
Spring Band Concert..... 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 18, 2010
Graduation (8th grade only)..... 7:00p.m., Tuesday, June 1, 2010

All Concerts are to be held at WCGS unless noted otherwise.

In addition to the above concerts, students may **choose** to be involved in the following events for extra credit:

IMEA Concert Band/Jazz Band Auditions Saturday, October 3, 2009
IMEA Jazz Band Music Festival Saturday, October 31, 2009
IMEA Concert Band Music Festival..... Saturday, November 7, 2009
IGSMA Solo and Ensemble Contest.....Saturday, February 13, 2010

Concert Band Commitment Form

I have read the preceding information. I understand and accept the commitment and expectations of becoming a member of the Concert Band. I also realize that I am making a one-year commitment for the 2009-2010 school year to the WCGS Concert Band.

Student's Signature

Parent's Signature

Please detach this form, sign and return to Mr. Wright by Wednesday, September 9.