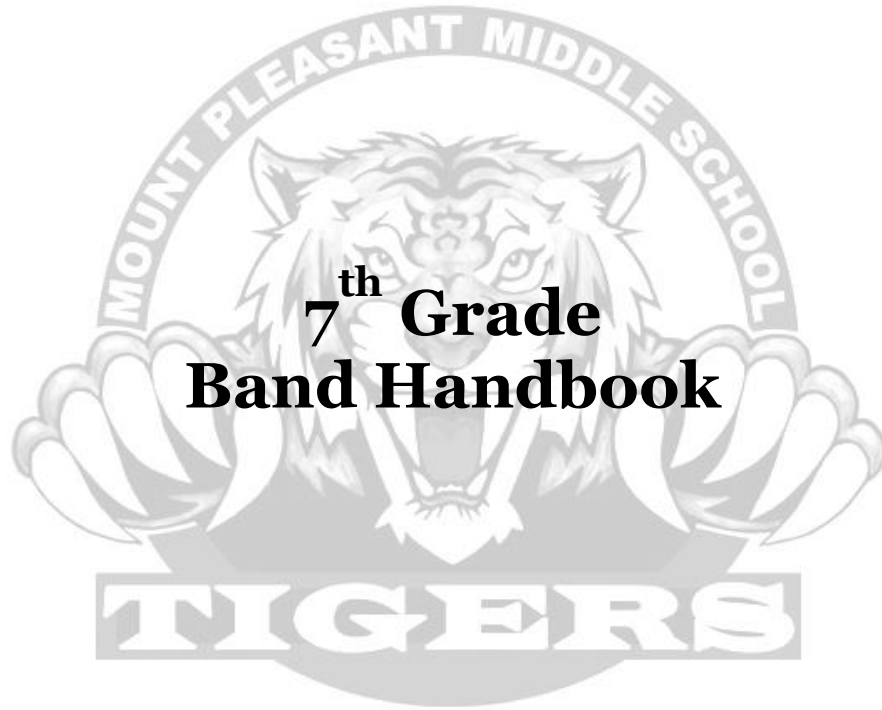


MOUNT PLEASANT MIDDLE SCHOOL



2018-2019

*Every musician is looking for something special. We have found it.
We are Mount Pleasant Band. Welcome home.*

Mr. Timothy Farrar, Principal
Mr. Keith Grush, Middle School Band Director
Mr. Keith Lee, High School Band Director
466 Walker Road
Mount Pleasant, NC 28124
704-260-6547

Mount Pleasant Middle School Band Handbook

2018-2019

Band Parents and Students,

Congratulations on making the excellent choice of being a member of the Mount Pleasant Middle School Band! Mount Pleasant has a long history of very fine bands and I look forward working with you to build upon that strong foundation. If we all work together I am sure that this year will be quite a successful one for everyone involved. This handbook will serve as a reference to help keep everyone on the same page throughout the school year. Our website will also prove to be an invaluable resource to help the directors keep both parents and students informed about the happenings of the band program. You can access our website by going to the Mount Pleasant Middle School homepage, click faculty / staff websites, click encore, click cultural arts, and then the button with band website, or type in the address given in the website section of this handbook.

Please read through this handbook and sign the back page, which is the Band Handbook Acknowledgement Form. **Completing this form will be the first grade for your student.** Please keep this handbook for future reference, or you may download it at any time from the band website. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions!

Sincerely,

Keith D. Grush

Keith Grush
Band Director
Mount Pleasant Middle School

Email: keith.grush@cabarrus.k12.nc.us
School Phone: (704) 260-6547
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Objectives of the Band Program

- To develop performance skills of the various wind and percussion instruments
- To teach music by its actual performance
- To acquaint the students with Music Theory/History and how these can help their understanding of music to expedite the learning process
- To show students how hard work and focused attention can result in spectacular growth and achievement.
- To provide all students with the opportunity for worthy use of their time, a means for self-expression, and a healthy social experience.
- To develop the ability to function as a responsible member of a successful group, enhance interaction, and develop group pride

A Statement of Policy

In order to assist band members and parents in understanding areas of responsibility, a statement of band policy is herein set forth. Becoming familiar with this policy will enable each individual to make the most of this great opportunity to be a member of the Mount Pleasant Middle School band program, becoming a better person, and a better musician.

We firmly believe that the student should improve through regular practice.

In the Mount Pleasant band program, we feel that the **HAPPIEST** student is the one who is improving through regular habits of practice and daily progress. He/she must develop a high sense of purpose toward which he/she is willing to work.

RESPONSIBILITY is the focus behind any level of achievement within this program. We will always make it our mission to put forth 110% effort in everything that we do in the name of the Mount Pleasant Band. We will work harder, smarter, and better than any organization in North Carolina because we owe that work to our school, our community, our families, our alumni, and most importantly to ourselves. We will strive to instill in all people an awareness of music's important role in the enrichment of the human spirit. We will *Play like Champions* Every day because we know that excellence is not an event; it is a habit. Every musician is looking for something special. We have found it. We are Mount Pleasant Band. Welcome home.

Communication

There will obviously be a number of times when Mr. Grush and parents will need to communicate. While you can call the school and leave a voicemail, by far the best way to send messages to Mr. Grush is by email. (keith.grush@cabarrus.k12.nc.us) You can have students bring in notes, but email is preferred. **Please make sure I have a working email address for you!**

I will communicate with you in a number of ways as well. I will send emails with lots of information to any address you like. Please read these and save them for future reference. If needed, I can make a small number of paper copies of emails – please let me know if you need this done.

I will also update the band webpage regularly. **Please visit the webpage regularly!**

There is a middle school band facebook page – ask to join Mount Pleasant Middle School Band

Lastly, the MPMS band will be using a way of communicating that the school has used before; Remind. In order to receive updates on your phone...

Join Remind for MPMS 8th Grade Band by

Text @mpgrush to the number 81010

Or

Email mpgrush@mail.remind.com

Finding a Beginner Instrument

Hopefully, everyone has their instrument from last year and it is still in good condition. If this is not the case, please follow these guidelines. Please notice the section entitled *Step-Up and Professional Instruments*

What Brand of Instrument Should I Buy?

Like automobiles, there are brands of instruments that are safe, dependable, and will treat your child well. Also like automobiles, there are instruments that are lemons and will break the first week you buy them, will never sound the way they are meant to, and will be nothing but a headache. Following the advice given below will hopefully lead you to a cost effective and high-quality instrument.

Suggested Instruments

Any instrument purchased or rented, new or used, from the music stores listed below will be of the best quality. This is the safest, easiest and most cost-effective place to buy or rent a new or used instrument. The music stores know the specifications required of instruments used in our band program, they sell the method books we use, and using their services will simplify all of our lives. **DO NOT BUY INSTRUMENTS CHAIN DEPARTMENT STORES, AND BE VERY CAREFUL ONLINE.** A rule of thumb is if you buy an instrument from the same place you buy a lawnmower, you will end up sounding like a lawnmower!

Local Music Stores

Music & Arts Center

8653 Concord Mills Blvd.
Concord Station Shopping Center
(besides Concord Mills)
Concord, NC
(704) 979-5260

Music and More

706 Church Street
Concord, NC
(704) 786-2314

The Music Center

2040 E. Franklin Blvd.
Gastonia, NC
(704)861-1037

Used Instruments

You may buy a used instrument from an individual, from a flea market, from a pawn shop, online, etc., and may find a good deal when doing so. Remember, however, to have a trained musician look at it first! Like a used car, you may be getting something that looks nice, but will never sound that way. Buying a used instrument is a BIG RISK, so be prepared and be informed before you buy because we don't want you to waste your money. Remember that almost ALL used instruments will probably need some sort of repair work. If you buy a used instrument make sure you get it to a music store soon or you will not get it back by the time we need to play. Please feel free to contact me about any used instruments you think you may want to buy and I will try to help as much as possible. Also remember that some music stores also offer very good used instruments. They're usually as good as any new instrument you can buy.

Used Brass Instruments: Good used brass instruments typically don't need a great deal of repair (if any at all). I do suggest taking all used instruments to a music store for inspection before you pay anything.

Used Woodwind Instruments: Used woodwind instruments will most likely need a good amount of repair if they have been sitting in a case for a long period of time. I suggest taking all used woodwind instruments to a music store for inspection before you pay anything.

School-owned Instruments

Students who are switched to another instrument or who express financial need may use a school-owned instrument **(based on availability)** These instruments are assigned at the discretion of the director and are only available in limited quantities.

Students and the parents/guardians of students who use a school-owned instrument must sign a liability/loan contract and pay a \$15 per semester fee for maintenance/repair. This is to cover regular and routine maintenance, as well as small repairs (stuck slides, stuck valves, etc...) **In the event of loss or major damages inflicted upon the instrument (dents, broken piping, curled bells, etc...) the student is financially responsible for replacement/repairs.** If a school-owned instrument needs a repair, it must be taken to the shop by the school band director. These instruments are very expensive and are purchased on a limited budget. Please be sure to keep the cases latched and clean.

Switching Instruments

Some students may be asked to change instruments so that our band can have a balanced instrumentation. This is the perfect opportunity for students to learn to play a new instrument. Typically, woodwinds players will switch to woodwind instruments and brass players will switch to brass instruments. Of course, there are some exceptions. Our band needs multiple players on the following instruments: tuba, baritone, french horn, bass clarinet, oboe, and bassoon. **Please note: Students may not switch t percussion instruments (unless the band is in DIRE need of more percussion players) All instrument changes must be approved by the band director and the student's parent/guardian. Instrument changes are based on student benefit, ensemble need, and the availability of school-owned instruments**

Lost or Stolen Instruments

Please make sure there is some sort of permanent name tag attached to every student owned instrument! We recommend that each parent and student record the instrument's serial number at home, and if renting from a music store purchase the insurance that is offered with the instrument. Parent who purchase instruments are encouraged to check their homeowner's insurance policy about potential loss or theft of the instrument during the school day. No instrument should be left at school overnight, on weekends, or on holidays. Students who leave instruments at school do so at their own risk. **The school system assumes no liability for theft of, loss, or damage to students instruments and/property. NEVER STORE INSTRUMENTS IN HALL LOCKERS!!!**

Step-Up and Professional Instruments

As students are getting older and closer to High School, students will want to stop using the beginner instruments and upgrade to a higher quality instrument. This is a great way to sound better and in many cases makes playing easier! If you are considering a new instrument, please consult Mr. Grush before you purchase.

Band Boosters

The Band Boosters is the organization whose only purpose is to support the band programs at Mount Pleasant High School and Mount Pleasant Middle School. As the High School is the more active group, many of the activities are centered around them, but we are hoping to increase the activity of the middle school within this organization. We highly encourage any students or parents to assist with booster activities and fundraising.

Extra Help

I will be available some days during Venture and/or before school to give extra help to those students who want it. Students may ask me for help at any time. **Only students who are wanting to practice and receive help will be allowed in the band room outside of class time.** Extra help sessions are not to be used as an excuse to get out of Venture or any other activity. Students found abusing this privilege will lose the ability to come for help.

Required Materials

All Students

1. Any Instrument-Specific Accessories Listed Below
2. A Practice Stand (for home use)
3. Tradition of Excellence - Book 1 for appropriate instrument
4. 2 Pencils – not pens
5. A 1 inch three ring binder - and a small amount of notebook paper.
6. Concert Attire

Flute

Flute (suggested brands: Yamaha, Gemeinhardt, Jupiter, or Armstrong)
Cleaning Rod
Polishing Cloth
Soft cloth (handkerchief)

Clarinet

Clarinet (suggested brands: Yamaha, Jupiter, Buffet, Selmer, Leblanc)
Mitchell Lurie or Van Doren Reeds (2 ½ Strength)
***please do not get Rico Reeds**
Hite Premiere or Fobes Debut Clarinet Mouthpiece
Bois Clarinet Ligature
Plastic Reed Holder (holds 4 reeds)
Cleaning Swab
Cork Grease

Saxophone

Alto Saxophone (suggested brands: Yamaha, Selmer, Mitchell Lurie or Van Doren Reeds (2 ½ Strength)
***please do not get Rico Reeds**
Hite Premiere or Fobes Debut Sax Mouthpiece
Bois Sax Ligature
Plastic Reed Holder (holds 4 reeds)

Cleaning Swab
Cork Grease

Trumpet

Trumpet (suggested brands: Yamaha, Jupiter, Bach)
Bach **3C** Mouthpiece
Valve Oil
Slide Grease
Cleaning Kit for Trumpet

Trombone / Baritone

Trombone (suggested brand: Yamaha, Jupiter, Bach)
Bach **6 ½ AL** Mouthpiece
Slide Cream for Trombone – Valve Oil for Baritone
Slide Grease
Cleaning Kit for Trombone/Baritone

Percussion

Majestic Gateway Series 2.5 Octave Xylophone w/ Bag (only at Music and Arts)
Real Feel Snare Drum Practice Pad
Innovative Percussion FP-2 Intermediate Stick Pack
5 minute Drill Book – order from school

Suggested Items

Clarinets and Saxophones – I **strongly** suggest buying reeds by the box. This is much more economical and convenient than running to the store every time one becomes unplayable (which will be often). I will have a few reeds in stock at school **for emergencies only**. The cost will be \$2 per clarinet reed and \$3 per saxophone or Bass Clarinet reed. Students are expected to pay for reeds by the end of the week they receive them.

Grading Policy

It is the goal of the directors of the Mount Pleasant Band Program that every student have a successful year and earn an A in band class. Band is an academic class and therefore will be graded on the following criteria:

- 40% Class Participation
- 30% Weekly Test
- 20% Concert Attendance
- 10% Written Work / Computer Work

Class Participation

All students are expected to play each day in band class. Students who do not play or fail to bring the required materials will lose two points per day from this portion of the quarter grade. These are the top four excuses for not playing and my policy on each.

- **“My Braces hurt”** I realize that sometimes pain will arise from having braces. I will work with the student on this matter as long as I do not feel they are taking advantage of the situation. Follow your doctor’s advice on easing the pain. One day is typically all that is allowed for brace pain.
- **“I forgot my horn”** Your instrument is an essential part of being in band. In short, if you forget your instrument, you can not play in class/rehearsal. If you can’t play, you lose participation points. Please do not allow a lack of planning to interfere with your grades. **Students who do not have their instrument on playing test days will receive a zero on the test.** Consequences for forgetting your instrument are as follows:
 - **First Time Offense** – Students will be given a written assignment to complete, a letter will go home to parent (which must be signed and returned), subtraction of 2 participation points.
 - **Second Offense** – Students will be given a written assignment to complete, a phone call will be made to the parents, subtraction of 2 participation points, student will need to make up time outside of class.
 - **Third Offense** - Students will be given a written assignment to complete, a phone call will be made to the parents to set up a conference to discuss solution to the problem, subtraction of 2 participation points, student will need to make up time outside of class.
 - **Fourth Offense** – Students will be given a written assignment to complete, subtraction of 2 participation points, and a phone call will be made to the parents to set up a conference to discuss possible dismissal from the Mount Pleasant Middle School Band.

In addition, the band room telephone is not to be used for calling parents to bring instruments or other materials. This is the sole responsibility of each student.

- **“My instrument is in the shop”** If your instrument is being repaired, you must present a note with the following information:
 - The name of the repair shop
 - The date taken to the shop
 - The projected pick-up date
 - Parent/guardian signature
 - Signature of shop clerk
- **“I don’t feel well”** In general, if you are well enough to be at school, you are well enough to play. I realize that this is not always the case. Students who are not well enough to play will be sent to the nurses office. Incidents of this nature will be handled on an individual basis. Student’s risk losing points and seats for perpetual “sickness” and a parent conference will be made to determine the child’s status as a band member.

Weekly Test

Once a week (most often Fridays) students will have a small test based on some of the things we have worked on during the week. In most cases, this will involve playing their instruments, but they may have to count rhythms or have a paper or computer assignment. When playing, what the student plays will need to be correct – as in notes, rhythms, tone, and even style markings will need to be observed. If they do, their grade for this section will be a 100%. If the test is not passed, students will have to complete a practice record in order to receive credit for that week’s test.

Extra Credit opportunity – If you can ever play all 12 major scales and arpeggios in one sitting without making a mistake, I will count all of your weekly tests as completed for all of middle school!

Practice Records

Practice Records will only be required when a weekly test has not been passed. Once that was happened,

students will have one week to complete a practice record. This practice record will be given to students right after their unsuccessful test attempt. The practice record will take about an hour to complete. When the practice record has been completed and turned in, the weekly test grade from the unsuccessful attempt the week before will be changed to a 90%

Concert Attendance

Performing in concerts is very important. Each student is an integral part of the group, and any absences affect everyone else in the group. A concert can occur any day of the week, and at any location. If the concert is outside Cabarrus County, transportation will be provided. You will be notified of concerts at least a month ahead of time, and most likely more than that. Consult your calendars, and notify me if you have something already planned for the day of the concert that you cannot reschedule. If I am not contacted within two weeks of the concert, I will assume that your child will be at the concert. The only reasons I will excuse a student from a concert after the two-week deadline would be sickness or immediate family emergency. Students who are excused from the concert will be given a secondary assignment to make up for the concert grade

Written Work

Written or computer work will be given often while other students are completing the weekly test in class. It will be rare when work is assigned at home other than practicing

Band Member Expectations

It is a privilege to be a member of the band at Mount Pleasant Middle School, and both parents and students should understand that discipline problems are not tolerated in the Mount Pleasant Middle School Band Program. Band students are expected to be mature, responsible, and well-behaved representatives of the school at all times. Students who cannot behave or allow other students to learn must conform to the group.

1. Always be prepared and on time to class rehearsal
2. Always have a positive attitude and be considerate of others
3. Never have any food, drink, or gum in the band room at any time
4. Never touch anything that does not belong to you
5. Be prepared to make music!
6. Your instrument goes home everyday

Daily Procedures

- If the band room is locked in the morning, keep your instrument with you – do not leave in the hallway
- The band room will be open by 8:30am for you to put your instrument in its assigned locker
- Enter the room quickly and efficiently. Don't be late
- Get out all materials quickly, yet carefully
- Talking should stop when director gets to the podium
- Always raise your hand and wait to be recognized before speaking or leaving your seat
- You are expected to fully participate in every class or rehearsal
- During times when you're not playing, you still need to work. You may
 - Finger or read through your part
 - Mark your part with needed reminders
 - Silently practice scales
 - Work on any written band material (or computer work if instructed to do so)
- Before you leave, you are expected to clean up your area including picking up all trash
- Pack your instrument (including sticks and mallets) carefully and place it in the correct storage area

Consequences

- 1st Offense – Verbal Warning, note sent home to parent (must be signed and returned)
- 2nd Offense – Tacet Zone (Designated area to do written assignment) deduction of two participation points, note sent home to parent (must be signed and returned)
- 3rd Offense – Tacet Zone, phone call to parents, deduction of two participation points
- 4th Offense - Same as 3rd offense, but conference with parents
- 5th Offense – Referral to office

Severe Discipline Clause – In the event a student blatantly and/or maliciously causes a serious classroom disruption, the student will be sent to the office and serve whatever punishment the office assigns.

Concert Etiquette

During the school year, students will both attend and perform in concerts. The following list of behaviors is to be observed when at a live performance:

- *Dress appropriately for the event (see Concert Attire section for what to wear while performing in our own concerts)
- *Do not talk or communicate with other people during the performance
- *No not bring food or drinks into a concert area
- *Only clap at the end of a selection. If there are multiple movements, wait until the conductor faces the audience, signaling that the selection is over
- *Please **NEVER leave performances until the entire program is complete**. This is incredibly disrespectful to the performers on stage.

SmartMusic Program

SmartMusic is a subscription based software program which does a variety of activities to help students become better musicians. By connecting a microphone between a computer and their instrument, the program will grade the students on if they are playing the correct music, and show them what mistakes they made. This counts for method books, Solo and Ensemble pieces, and possibly even pieces that we are playing for concerts. For those involved with Jazz Band, there are even methods for improvisation. Students can also explore other materials than what we are working on in class.

This program will allow students to practice more efficiently and know immediately if there are things they need to fix. It will even show students what note they should have played and how to finger it. In addition, students can send recordings to Mr. Grush through email.

Subscriptions are \$40 a year, and can be purchased by going to www.smartmusic.com and ordering a home subscription. If you have trouble with the ordering process, please contact Mr. Grush

Financial Information

Fees

Cabarrus County requires each student in the band to pay a \$10 band fee to help fund the purchase of instructional materials. For students who will be playing school-owned instruments, they are responsible for the maintenance fee listed earlier. The county fee, any method book fee, and maintenance fee are due by **Monday, October 1st**. A set of payment coupons will be given in the first days of school. **Please do not combine this money with money due to other teachers.** Make checks payable to Mount Pleasant Middle School. If you have financial issues, please contact me to discuss this.

Financial Assistance

We realize that outfitting a student with all the necessary materials for band can seem daunting to some families at certain times. **We want every child to be able to participate in band.** Please contact Mr. Grush about financial options that exist if you have any questions.

Concert Attire

For most concerts, band members are to wear “formal concert attire.” For formal performances, the band dress is black and white attire. Females will wear black slacks/black skirts with a black top. Males will wear black slacks with a long sleeve, button-up, collared, white shirt and a long black tie. Male and Female students will need to have black dress shoes, and should wear black socks or hose if the outfit deems it necessary.

Appearance is a major part of performing, and we will often be judged on the way we look as a group. The Mount Pleasant Middle School Band strives to look as classy, professional, and uniform as possible. Great bands look great!!

Private Lessons

One of the most valuable investments that a parent can make for a band student is in a good private lesson teacher. There is nothing like the instruction of a musician who has dedicated their life to studying and perfecting the art of one instrument. **I strongly encourage students to enroll in private lessons.** Private lessons are for beginners, students who are struggling, and students who are advanced. **Anyone can benefit from a private instructor.** If you are interested in private lessons, please mark the yes line on the handbook acknowledgement form.

Honor Groups and Special Activities

One of the great things about music is that there are multiple venues to perform in. Playing with the 7th grade band is not the only experience you can have. All students are highly encouraged to participate in other groups, as the more time you put into band the more it will mean to you. These activities also mean special privileges, such as more field trips. **As 7th grade students, you have a lot of experience and have a chance at participating in all of these groups.**

Jazz Band

This group will play a combination of traditional jazz and swing music, as well as rock, pop, and Latin music. Rehearsals will be outside of traditional class time, including possibly before school, venture, and club time. Trips to Jazz Festivals and extra performances are likely.

All-County Band

This is an honor group comprised of all the middle schools in Cabarrus County. Membership is decided by all the directors in Cabarrus County. If a student is selected, they will attend a 2-day clinic with the band on February 8th and 9th, culminating with a concert in the afternoon. Students will be selected based on how they perform in class and the amount of dedicated practice they do outside of class time. *We want to represent this group with as many Mount Pleasant students as possible!*

All-District Band

This is an honor group comprised of all the middle schools in metro Charlotte and beyond. We are members of the South Central District, which is one of six districts in the state. There will be an audition on January 12th at South Point High School in Belmont. The requirements involve playing a solo, scales, and sight reading. If a student is selected, they will attend a 2 day clinic on January 25th and 26th at Stuart Cramer HS in Gaston County, culminating in a concert. Each student will need to perform their audition piece at reasonable level of proficiency for Mr. Grush or a private teacher in order to go to the auditions. *We want to represent Mount Pleasant with as many people as we can in this event.*

All-Region Jazz Band

This is an honor group comprised of all the middle schools in the western third of NC. There will be an audition on January 12th at Hough High School in Cornelius. The requirements involve playing a solo, scale etude, improvising, and sight reading. If a student is selected, they will attend a 2 day clinic on February 1st and 2nd at Asheville High School, culminating in a concert in the afternoon. Each student will need to perform their audition material at a reasonable level of proficiency for Mr. Grush or a private teacher in order to go to the auditions. *We want to represent Mount Pleasant with as many people as we can in this event.*

All-State Band

This is an honor group comprised of all the middle schools in North Carolina. If students earn a high enough placement in the All-District Band, they will be eligible to audition for All-State Band on March 9th at Central Davidson Middle School. If selected, the clinic is May 3rd to May 5th at UNC- Greensboro.

All-State Jazz Band

This is an honor group comprised of all the middle schools in North Carolina. If students earn a high enough placement in the All-Region Jazz Band, they will be eligible to audition for All-State Jazz Band on March 3rd at Central Davidson Middle School. If selected, the clinic is April 5th and 6th at NC State University.

Solo and Ensemble Festival

This is an event which all students can excel! This event happens on May 11th, and can be done by 1 person or by as many as 4 to 6 people. Students work up a piece of music as a solo or as a small group and perform it for judges. The judges then give them a rating based on how they play. Music can be very easy or very challenging. If performing as a group, students will need to find time outside of the school day to practice.

Awards

Students will receive awards for participating in All-County Band, All-District Band, All-Region Jazz Band, All-State Band, All-State Jazz Band and Solo and Ensemble Festival.

In addition, we have an awards program this year. Arguably the best band in the world is the US Marine Band, which goes by the nickname "The President's Own". We will be forming the Mount Pleasant "Principal's Own" Band. Students will move up in rank each time they complete two weekly tests in class. Also, for every extra group the students perform with, they will move up an extra rank. Students will receive a certificate at the end of the year designating what rank they ended with.

In addition, some superlative awards, such as most outstanding, most improved, and a director's award will be given for each

grade level.

Lastly, we will be having a year long competition in class. More details will be coming in a separate handout, but we will divide all of the band students into houses, with each class having some of each house in it. The houses will be named after famous musicians of the past. Students will earn points by doing especially well on tasks in class or doing extraordinary things. Students will also lose points by not following rules, not being prepared, or not being good citizens in class. Students who are in the winning class at the end of each quarter will receive a reward. Again, more details to be coming soon!

How Parents Can Help

The biggest help is helping to ensure a positive experience at home – Please read the following:

Parents and Home Practice: A Key to Student Success

Music Study is a three-way partnership composed of the teacher, student and parent. The role of the parents is extremely important. The successful instrumental music student is invariably supported by interested, engaged, and progressive parents. Some ways parents can help their child be successful follow.

- *Patience* in repeatedly reminding the student to do his/her practicing, and doing this kindly, but firmly.
- *Encouragement* when the going gets rough (and it will!). Some things in music are easily learned, others require intensive and repeated application. Parental sympathy and understanding are important.
- *Imagination* in creating a musical atmosphere in the home by tuning in to interesting musical programs on television, radio, and the Internet. Invite friends who play instruments into your home, and have them play for your child. Purchase and play recordings of prominent performers on your child's instrument. (Ask Mr. Grush for recommendations). Take your child to live musical performances.
- *Common sense* in avoiding undue stress on musical work. All healthy children want and need a variety of activities. Try for a balanced schedule of interests into which music practice fits as a natural and compensating element.
- *Provide* for the appropriate practice conditions. As a young person advances in his/her music study and is presented with increasingly difficult problems in thinking and playing, the regularity and quality of his/her preparation become more and more important. Regularity and quality can be promoted if parents will assume the responsibility for seeing that favorable practice conditions exist. Here are some suggestions as to how this can be achieved:
 - SCHEDULE A REGULAR TIME FOR PRACTICE: The best time for practice is when minds are fresh and receptive
 - SEE THAT PROPER PHYSICAL CONDITIONS PREVAIL: A quiet room, adequate lighting, sufficient ventilation, and comfort are necessities. Every music student needs a folding music stand for his/her home use.
 - KEEP ALL INSTRUMENTS IN FIRST-RATE CONDITIONS: Be sure that your child has valve or slide oil, the proper sticks, three good reeds, etc... If something is wrong with your child's instrument, do not attempt to fix it yourself, as frequently this results in additional damage. Please bring the instrument to Mr. Grush, and if it cannot be fixed, it will be sent to a reputable instrument repair shop.
 - PRAISE WORK WELL DONE: A congratulatory remark may be interjected during a practice session, or a complimentary comment may be made later.
 - NEVER USE PRACTICE AS A PUNISHMENT: It is advisable to occasionally reschedule a practice period to allow for important conflicting events. But avoid always giving preference to activities conflicting with the practice schedule.
 - SPEND TIME LISTENING TO YOUR CHILD PRACTICE: Ask for your "favorite song" and encourage your child to play for others and family. When wrong note and hesitation occur, suggest:
 - Practicing in short sessions, a few measures at a time
 - Practicing more slowly!
 - Checking the written notes carefully to make sure they have been read correctly.

I am looking forward to a great year. A lot will be expected of you, and you will achieve more than you thought possible. You will feel pride in yourself, the band, and the Mount Pleasant community. The more pride you feel, the more you will be encouraged to work, and you will achieve even greater things. The people who figure this out in life are the happiest and most fulfilled people. Let's start the journey.

Mr. Grush