

GRANITE FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND HANDBOOK



2023-2024

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1. Guiding Principles

Welcome

I wish to issue a sincere welcome to all students and parents who have chosen to be a part of the Granite Falls Middle School Band program. I am very happy to have you with us and trust that your association with this organization will give you great pride. The purpose of this manual is to outline and clarify all aspects of the program operations for the students and parents. These pages should give sufficient information on most, if not all situations that may arise through the school year. Grades, proper concert attire, performance expectations as well as other important information are covered in the pages that follow. All students and their families are asked to read and become thoroughly familiar with the contents of this handbook in order to avoid any misunderstandings, which might arise. This handbook contains all of the policies and procedures that will be in effect for the 2023-2024 school year. As always, parents should feel free to contact the school at any time with questions that you may have. I look forward to an exciting and prosperous school year.

Best Wishes,
Patrick S. Haymore, Director of Bands

My Philosophy

Band was a very special experience for me as young person. Most of my friends were in band and a great deal of my time was spent involved in some aspect of the program. Band gave me a place to grow, succeed, and feel accepted. It is my desire to create a band program at Granite Falls Middle School that will have the same positive impact upon the students that I teach. As such, Granite Falls Middle School Band program is designed to:

- Provide each student with a comprehensive music education by teaching the skills and attitudes necessary to succeed as a young musician and as a young adult.
- Benefit the school and community through the public performance of quality music while promoting and enhancing the dignity and reputation of Granite Falls Middle School Band program.
- To foster the development of essential character qualities which we believe include: a strong work ethic; a respect for order and legitimate authority; a sense of personal integrity; a responsibility for one's actions; a commitment to excellence, and a respect for the time, talents, abilities, and accomplishments of others.
- To provide each student with a positive emotional outlet, a good social experience, and a worthy use of leisure time.

What I Expect

The expectations that follow are more than just a set of rules listed in this handbook, they are characteristics found in students from the best band programs across our country. Band students are typically some of the finest young people in a school. Always remember who we are, where we are from, and what we are about. As Granite Falls Middle School Band members you are expected to be:

DISCIPLINED

Understand the need for practice and make time for it on a daily basis.

PUNCTUAL

Always be on time for class, rehearsals, and performances.

PERSISTENT

Understand that becoming a good musician is a process. It takes time. Work to improve on a daily basis.

POSITIVE

Attitudes are contagious. Be sure yours is worth catching. Smile and be a part of the solution, not a part of the problem.

HONEST

Admit your limitations and mistakes. Take full responsibility for your actions. Do not lie, cheat, or steal.

RESPONSIBLE

You are young adults. Please do not wait for us to tell you the obvious.

WELL-BEHAVED

Follow instructions the first time they are given. Be quiet, attentive, and in control of yourself.

PREPARED

Bring all materials to each class, rehearsal, and performance.

COMMITTED

Realize the impact your actions, attitudes, and performances will have on the group. Think of the band first.

POLITE

Talk to one another, teachers, parents, and administrators with kindness, respect, and courtesy.

MATURE

Think before acting.

PROUD

Remember who you are, and where you are from. Take pride in yourself, your band, and your school. Celebrate success together.

What You Can Expect

Just as we have expectations for each student, there are certain things that you should be able to expect from us. As your teachers we will work to be:

- Firm and consistent in our expectations for each student and for the bands. I will expect your best effort and behavior at all times.
- Fair in establishing and enforcing policies and procedures.
- Committed to helping each student grow and become his or her personal best.
- Worthy of your trust. We will continually work to become a better teacher by listening to and learning from other directors.
- Honest when commenting on your actions, attitudes, behavior, and performances. I will never tell you that it is good when in reality it is subpar, and I will never tell you it is subpar, when in reality it is good

The Importance of Procedure

Policies and procedures are outlined in this handbook to ensure that all aspects of the band program run smoothly, and to ensure that each student has a safe and successful experience. *Please do not ask for exceptions to rules.* At times, unforeseen circumstances may warrant the modification of a policy. When these situations occur, modifications will be made on a case by case basis at the discretion of your director.

The Importance of Discipline

Because of the nature of the organization, band discipline must be strict. The class contains two to three times the number of students found in most other classes; therefore, it is imperative that parents and students be willing to accept the goals, ideals, rules and procedures of the program. Band students are constantly on display and each member should be aware of the importance of good behavior.

2. Curriculum Guide

Course Offerings

The following is the list of class offerings for band at Granite Falls Middle School. Each class has specific requirements for admission and membership.

Sixth Grade Band. Sixth Grade Band is open to all sixth grade students. Sixth Grade Band begins with fundamentals (posture, hand position, embouchure, articulation, characteristic tone production) and continues with extensive development of rhythmic vocabulary, scales, and range development. The Sixth Grade Band will perform on the Winter Concert held in December and will perform on the Spring Concert held in May. Students are required to complete various written assignments dealing with music theory and music history topics. Daily individual practice is essential for student success in Sixth Grade Band.

Seventh Grade Band. Seventh Grade Band students begin to apply previously learned skills to the performance of standard wind-band music. Emphasis is placed on achieving the full band sound and functioning as a complete wind-ensemble. Students also continue to expand their knowledge of rhythms, scales, and basic music theory. The Seventh Grade Band will perform at the Winter Concert held in December, Concert Band MPA in March, and will perform on the Spring Concert held in May. Students are required to attend these performances. There may also be other performance opportunities. Students are required to complete various written assignments dealing with music theory and music history topics. Daily individual practice is essential for student success in Seventh Grade Band.

Eighth Grade Band. The Eighth Grade Band is the top performing ensemble in the Granite Falls Middle School Band program. Students continue to develop the full band sound. All previously learned material is applied to the performance of moderately difficult wind-band literature. The eighth grade band will perform at a concert each grading quarter. Students are required to attend these performances. There may also be other required performances which are outlined in the Calendar of Events. Students will complete various written assignments dealing with music theory and music history topics. Daily individual practice is essential for student success in seventh grade band. Only students of the highest caliber are allowed to perform with this ensemble.

3. Operating Policies & Procedures

Granite Falls Middle School Rehearsal Rules

- Band classes will begin each day with students arriving on time, prepared with all required materials and instrument.
- Students should be seated as soon as possible. In short, you can still be considered tardy if you are not in your seat when the director begins instruction.
- Students are not to talk or leave their seats without first obtaining permission. Raise your hand and wait to be called on.
- Students should return all instruments and classroom materials to their proper storage places at the end of each class. All cases should be latched and placed neatly in their assigned locker.
- Food, drinks (other than water), and gum are **not allowed** in the band room at any time.

Class Participation Policy

All students are expected to play each day in band class. Class participation is a large portion of each student's quarter grade. Below are the "top four" excuses that I hear each year. Each excuse is followed by our policy on the subject.

Braces. Many folks have braces and I realize that these are sometimes painful, especially if the orthodontist tightens your appliances in the morning and you have band in the afternoon. I will work with you on this as long as I do not feel that you are taking advantage of the situation. Follow your doctor's instructions and gargle with warm salt water to help ease the pain. Usually one or two days will be the maximum allowed for brace pain.

"I forgot my horn." Students are allowed to forget their instrument **one** time per quarter without penalty. Any instruments left at home after the first incident will result in the removing of **two points** from the student's quarterly average per occurrence. Students who forget their instrument on playing test days will be allowed to take their test the following day with an eleven point penalty. Woodwind players who do not have a reed, brass who do not have their mouthpieces and percussionist who do not have their sticks will be treated as if they do not have their instrument.

"My instrument is broken." Please let the band director examine the instrument before you take it to the shop to be repaired. Many times it is a simple repair that he can fix. If the instrument is beyond a simple repair, you will need to send it to the shop.

"I don't feel good." In general, if you are well enough to be at school then you should be well enough to play. I realize that sometimes this is not the case. These incidents will be handled on an individual basis. If I feel that you are taking advantage of the situation, parent contact will be made and participation grades made be lowered.

Make-Up Policy

It is important for students to be in class each day and in attendance at all rehearsals and performances. Our success depends on the attendance and hard work of each band member. You are important and we cannot have a successful program without you. In the event of an absence follow the procedures listed below:

FROM CLASS

1. Check with your director to see what you missed (new dates, missed assignments, playing grades, etc.)
2. If a playing test was missed due to absence, it is to be performed the day the student returns to school as long as they had prior notice of the test. If the student was absent when the assignment was made, they will be given the same amount of time to prepare for the test as the rest of the class.
3. If a written assignment was missed, students should have that turned in within seven days.

FROM ANY EVENING PERFORMANCE

Students who miss an evening performance will receive a zero except in cases of emergency (illness, death in the family, etc.). If an emergency has accrued, student will need to bring documentation explaining the situation. If Mr. Haymore exceeds the absence, students will then have to perform their concert music for a grade.

Required Class Materials

The following is a list of required class materials for band classes at Granite Falls Middle School.

Sixth Grade Band

Properly working instrument
Standards of Excellence - Book 1
PENCIL

Seventh Grade Band

Properly working instrument
Standards of Excellence - Book 1
PENCIL

Eighth Grade Band

Properly working instrument
PENCIL
Band Shirt (\$10-15)

Percussionist will be required to have the follow:

Snare drum sticks
Medium rubber mallets
Bell Kit
Practice pad or snare drum

Also Required For All Bands

Reeds for all woodwind players.
Valve/slide oil for brass players.
Sticks and mallets for percussionists.
Instrument in good playing condition.
Step-up mouthpiece strongly encouraged.
Specified Concert Attire for all band members.

Rehearsals and Performances

Band students in the Granite Falls Middle School Band program have a variety of opportunities to perform for the public and for ratings at state sponsored events. Your Director is a member of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), North Carolina Music Educators Association (NCMEA), and the North Carolina Bandmasters Association (NCBA). As such you are eligible to participate in the district and state sponsored events listed below. This is not an extensive list of performances. Please reference the Calendar of Events for the complete list.

Fall Concert. Eighth Grade will participate in a Fall Concert in October. The concert will be held at South Caldwell High School and will in in conjunction with Hudson Middle School's Eighth Grade Band.

Spartan Regiment Eighth Grade Event. This after school performance will take place with the Eighth Grade Band students from Granite Falls Middle and Hudson Middle. Students will get to experience what high school marching band is all about!

All County Band. Seventh and Eighth Grade students may audition for All County Band. Auditions are in October at Hibriten High School with the clinic taking place in November at the J.E. Broyhill Civic Center.

Winter Concert. All bands will perform on the Winter Concert in December. The call time will be announced at a later time.

All District Band. Seventh and Eighth Grade students may audition for All District Band in January. Students who make the band will attend a two-day clinic at Lenoir-Rhyne University in February.

Preview Concert. Each band participating at MPA will perform at a Preview Concert held in late February or early March. The concert is intended as a "dress rehearsal" for the actual performance at Concert Band MPA. Band Directors from local schools provide taped comments just as the judges do at MPA.

Concert Band Music Performance Assessment (MPA). Bands may attend the NCBA Northwest District Music Performance Assessment at Lenoir Rhyne University. At MPA, bands perform a program selected from the state approved MPA Music List. A panel of three judges evaluates the bands performance based on the following categories:

Performance Fundamentals, Technical Preparation and Musical Effect

Following the performance of three prepared pieces, the band goes into a sight reading room and performs for a fourth judge. This judge evaluates the band's ability to perform a piece of music, which has never been seen, or rehearsed before.

After sight reading, all scores are sent to a tabulation room where they are averaged into a final rating for the band. The following level scale is used:

I = Superior, II = Excellent, III = Average, IV = Below Average, V = Poor.

Each band's goal is to earn a Superior rating at MPA. Only bands who have achieved the highest levels of preparation and discipline need attend this event. The band's attendance is contingent upon good instrumentation, hard work, steady progress, and flawless student behavior.

Solo and Ensemble MPA. Just as a band may go to Concert Band MPA, soloists and small ensembles (duets, trios, quartets, etc.) may go to Solo and Ensemble Festival held in April or May of each year. Ratings like the ones given to bands at MPA are given to each performing event.

Spring Concert. All bands will perform on a Spring Concert held in May.

Required Performance Attire

Students will be required to wear a standard outfit when performing. When dress alike it creates an atmosphere of class and dignity; it communicates a unified sense of purpose. The following concert attire is required for each student in the Granite Falls Band Program.

REQUIRED CONCERT ATTIRE

- Boys: White collard shirt (button down or "polo"), and black pants. A tie is optional.
- Girls: White blouse, and black skirt or pants. Skirts need to follow school dress code lengths. Dresses can be black or white.
- Dark shoes
- **No jeans or shorts allowed!**

Concert Etiquette and Procedure

All band members are expected to conduct themselves with dignity and class at all times (whether on the stage, waiting in the band room to perform, or seated as a member of the audience). Students should remember that concerts are our opportunity to make a positive impression on the public. Your good behavior and best performance are critical to that goal. The following guidelines apply for all concert performances:

- Students should arrive prior to their assigned call time to be in place, ready for attendance.
- Students should not play prior to warm-up or while waiting to go to the stage. Each band will warm-up and tune together.
- Students are not to talk during the performance, either on stage or as a member of the audience.

Grading Policy

Grading policies for the Granite Falls Middle Band program have been developed over a period of years and in cooperation with directors from the some of the finest programs in our state. These policies have been designed to ensure that the grade report clearly and accurately reflects the performance quality of each individual and further ensures that the band experience is fair and equitable to all who participate. Below is an explanation of the grading formula used for each grading period.

- 15% Participation (being prepared for class, having all materials, paying attention, follow class rules)
- 30% Evening Performance (arriving on time, appropriately dressed, following concert etiquette)
- 40% Playing Test/Pass-offs
- 15% Worksheets

When there is not an evening performance during a Nine-week grading period, the following grading scale will be used.

- 45% Participation (being prepared for class, having all materials, paying attention, follow class rules)
- 40% Playing Test/Pass-offs
- 15% Worksheets

4. Equipment & Facilities

School Owned Instruments

Granite Falls Middle School requires an instrument rental fee of \$50 for the use of a school instrument. This fee is necessary for the regular upkeep and repair of the instrument. Any damage beyond normal “wear and tear” will be placed on the parents/guardians for repair and repair cost. Please remember that I am NOT a music store and the instruments that the school owns are in varied degrees of quality. I will make sure that rented instruments are in working condition.

Take Your Instrument Home

Students are required to take their horns home each evening for practice. As such, no instruments should be left in the storage room overnight, on weekends, or on holidays. The school’s insurance does not cover the loss of or damage to student property.

Purchasing New Instruments

Many times as a student’s interest in and commitment to band intensifies, parents seek to purchase a higher quality instrument. There are three basic “grades” of instruments available for purchase:

Beginner. Used by students in beginning band. These instruments are designed with the young student in mind and will take a moderate amount of abuse.

Intermediate. These instruments are sometimes called “step-ups.” They are normally played by high school students or advance middle school students. Nicer than a beginner instrument, this type is built with the older student in mind. Step-up horns will have nicer features and will not take as much abuse as a beginner model. Parents and students should notice a significant improvement in the sound quality when a student moves to this level of instrument.

Professional. Used by serious music students (middle and high school), college music majors, and professional musicians. These instruments are of the highest quality and will not take any abuse. They produce the truest symphonic sounds and cost substantially more than beginner models.

Parents who wish to purchase an instrument should contact us at school. I will be happy to suggest a brand and model that will suit your child’s needs.

Please Note: Parents should check with multiple music retailers to find the best prices on new instruments. When a new instrument is purchased, it is strongly recommended that the beginner model be kept and used for marching band.

Step-Up Mouthpieces

All students are encouraged to purchase a step-up mouthpiece. These mouthpieces will also cause a *noticeable* improvement in the quality of sound produced by the player and are an appealing option when compared to the purchase of an intermediate or professional grade instrument. **A beginning instrument with a step-up mouthpiece will often sound very similar to a professional horn!** Please speak to your director for more information.

Private Teachers & Lessons

A good private teacher is one of the most valuable investments a parent can make for their child. Band directors are trained in the instruction of all instruments, but that knowledge cannot compare to that as a professional musician who has spent a lifetime studying and performing on one instrument. The entire concept can be likened to the medical profession. Band Directors are like general practitioners; private teachers are the specialists. Please see Mr. Haymore for contact information.

Facilities

All bands at Granite Falls Middle School will meet in the Music Suite. There are several areas in the building of which you should be aware.

Band Director's Office. The Office is for the private use of the Band Director. Students are not to enter this room without permission from Mr. Haymore. Students are reminded that a closed office door means a private conversation. Common courtesy dictates knocking if the door is closed.

Instrument Locker Room. The Instrument Locker Room is used to house student instruments during the school day. Students are to keep this room neat and clean at all times. All instrument cases should be latched and placed in an orderly fashion. All instruments are to be kept in the lockers/shelves and off the floor at all times. Students may provide their own combine lock for their locker. A copy of the combination must be given to Mr. Haymore. **Any student caught tampering with and/or moving another student's instrument will lose their right to use the instrument storage room. Tampering with another student's instrument could possibly result in a discipline referral.**

Practice Rooms. Very few middle schools have practice rooms available to them. Please treat them like the luxury that they are. Keep them clean and ask permission before using them.

Band Room. Chairs and stands should be returned to their orderly appearance before leaving the band room. Students should help keep the rehearsal hall clean by placing trash in the containers located at the front.

Special Equipment

Percussion Section. The percussion instruments are located in the back of the band room. These instruments are very expensive and are to be played by percussion students only. Percussion students are responsible for keeping this area clean and organized and should alert the director when any instrument needs maintenance or repair.

The Audio System is located at the front of the band room. This very expensive collection of equipment is for director use only.

Chairs and Stands are very expensive and hard to replace. Please do not abuse these pieces. Remember, if you break it, you buy it!

5. How Parents Can Help

Regardless of your musical background, a parent's support and encouragement will have a tremendous impact on your child's progress in band. To assist in the musical growth of your child:

- Support the goals, policies, procedures, and decisions of your child's band director. Your child succeeds when the program succeeds.
- Require practicing at home on a daily basis. Provide a regular time and place where your child can practice every day.
- Ask your child to play for you. Encourage performance.
- Teach your child to be punctual by helping them to be on time for rehearsals and performances.
- Enthusiastically attend all band functions to show your support. Get Involved!
- Help keep your child's instrument in good repair.

Communication

Parent/teacher communication is vital to a child's education and music education is no different. Below are the best ways to contact me.

Email. phaymore@caldwellschools.com. Please allow 24 hours for a response, Monday - Friday.

Band Website. www.caldwellschools.com/Domain/1215 or find it through the GFMS website. The band calendar, important information, recordings, and files can all be found on the website.

Facebook. The Granite Falls Band does have a "private" Facebook page. Parents and students will need to request to join. Lots of information and also a good way to share band photos.

Canvas. Students will be required to join Canvas. Parents will have the ability to join as well.

In Closing

Young people in today's society need positive direction in their lives. I see band as an opportunity to shape young lives and to positively influence young people. Students must understand that their lives will have a tremendous impact on the lives of others. The nature of that impact (good or bad) is up to the individual. Remind your child when the challenge becomes tough, that teachers, just like parents, set high standards because I care. Many thanks for your support of our program and best wishes for a safe, happy, and successful school year.