2016-2017

BRANDYWINE MIDDLE SCHOOL

**BAND HANDBOOK**



Welcome Middle School Band Students and Parents to another year!

I am so excited about this coming year! Your students have already starting learning the basics of being a musician and will continue to learn essential fundamentals this year which will help to open the door for much greater things!

I know that at this time of year there are MANY things to read and sign. However, PLEASE take the time to read through this handbook. Every year, multiple times a year, there are so many miscommunications, issues, and items that take so much of my attention away from teaching and building the band program (where my efforts should be concentrated on), that are all spelled out in this band handbook, if only people would take the time to read it. Please understand that miscommunications, issues, etc. affect OTHER STUDENTS in a class like band, so I am begging you to read through this for not only yourself but for the sake of **other students** as well.

Band is SO often misunderstood. It is a CURRICULAR CLASS, but also takes up time outside of school so at times it feels like a sport or extracurricular activity, although it is not! This handbook is here to help guide you through band and understand it.

The last page is very important-it is a permission slip for every item listed on our band calendar. It is ESSENTIAL that I receive this form back by the end of the week.

Middle School can be a “fickle” time for many students. It can be very hard for students to find structure themselves, and many students’ focus is purely on having “fun” in school. There is a GREAT saying that I love that says, “It’s great to have fun, but it’s more fun to be GREAT”. Band is WORK and doesn’t always feel “fun”, but that work pays off in BIG WAYS if you can PLEASE help your students follow through with this commitment they have taken on. I have NEVER heard a student say, “I wish I would have quit band”, but I ALWAYS have former students who come back and say, “Mrs. Livengood, I REALLY wish I *wouldn’t* have quit!”

If you have any questions please don’t hesitate to ask!

Most Sincerely,

-Mrs. Ruth Livengood

rlivengood@brandywinebobcats.org

269-683-4800 ext. 205

**STUDENT EXPECTATIONS**

Members of the Brandywine Bands are expected to:

* + Attend **ALL** rehearsals and performances.
  + Participate POSITIVELY in all band events and support the band
  + Bring all necessary materials to band events, rehearsals, etc.
  + Give utmost effort to prepare assigned music and learn course material
  + Show appropriate respect for all staff or students working with the band

Show proper respect for the band room school property

***Do NOT*** *keep items for other classes (books, notebooks, etc.) in the band room*

***Do NOT*** *keep extra articles of clothing in the band room*

***NEVER*** *bring food or drink (other than water) into the band room without permission from the band director*

Students are expected to give 100% effort 100% percent of the time! ☺

**CLASSROOM PROCEDURES**

* + Students are to arrive to rehearsals as quickly as possible; time prior to rehearsals is for warming-up and tuning, rather than *SOCIALIZING.*
  + Any student not in the band room at the beginning of class is tardy. The only exception for this would be an excused pass from school personnel. Any student not in the appropriate location with instrument ready to play at the start of rehearsal (when director steps on podium for warm-up) will be marked TARDY.
  + Rehearsals begin upon the director’s signal.
  + Students who are not able to participate in class (did not bring their instrument, etc.) must play “air horn/drums”, march drill when applicable, etc.

*Note: Students are prohibited from working on any other classroom, reading, etc. work during rehearsal if they are without their instruments. They will still benefit from rehearsal by paying attention, fingering along, etc. Parents MUST communicate to a director to excuse any points*

*If a student is injured, etc. and cannot play.*

*RESTROOM PASSES*

Students will only be allowed a restroom break on an **emergency only** basis. Students are expected to take care of restroom needs during passing periods. If students abuse this privilege, the director reserves the right to refuse not to allow a student out of the room for passes.

**DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE**

*Note: these may not necessarily occur in order, depending on the severity of the offense*

1st offense- Verbal Warning

2nd offense-Parent will be contacted and/or student will receive a detention with Mrs. Livengood. A special assignment may also be given.

3rd offense- Referral/meeting with parent and student

If a student repeatedly requires additional disciplinary action, a conference may be required between the student, parent/guardian, band director and principal, and depending on the severity of the situation, the student may be removed from band.

**OFFENSES/POINT SYSTEM**

Students will receive 5 points for daily rehearsals, cumulating in 25 participation points weekly. Performances are worth 100 points!

Below is a list of offenses and the subsequent points taken off when executed. Offenses are not limited to items below. The band director reserves the right to remove points for other infractions as well. ***Note: almost all points taken away in band class are for talking during rehearsals! Don’t let incessant talking affect your grade!***

Conversations during rehearsal (up to director discretion) -5 points

Disrespecting teacher or others -5 points

Using profane language (up to director’s discretion)-5 points

Intentionally distracting others -5 points

Unexcused absences for band rehearsals-5 Points

Seeing Cell Phone/Using in class -5 points and confiscation of phone 1st time, turned into the office 2nd time (if problems become frequent, no warnings will be given, phone will be confiscated and turned in to the office)

Insubordination, write-up

Not bringing materials for class/being prepared (musically or otherwise) up to -5 points

Tardies -2 Points per offense (OFFICE MANDATES WRITE-UP PAST 2 TARDIES)

Unacceptable posture/playing position -2 Points

Chewing gum-2 Points, Eating food -5 points

*Note: Please refer to the school handbook for other procedures involving infractions*

**EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Many students and parents will ask the question, “What qualifies as an excused absence for rehearsals or performances?” Below is a list of examples of excused absences and unexcused absences. My general rule is, if the school will excuse it, I will excuse it. Remember that band is a PERFORMANCE-BASED CLASS, and EACH ABSENCE affects others in the bad. In addition, grades are given for EVERY rehearsal and performance. Because of this, excused absences are limited in order to maintain a successful band program for the students. Excused absences are ultimately up to the discretion of the band director. COMMUNICATION IS KEY, **and I expect middle school students to be able to communicate**! Although I often give reminders and itineraries, please don’t get too dependent on these. It is still SOLELY the students’ obligation to remember when performances are.

*EXAMPLES OF EXCUSED ABSENCES:*

-Excused illnesses/appointments through the school (**I would expect that appointments such as physicals, teeth-cleanings, etc not be scheduled during a performance, please!**)

-Weddings, funerals, events that are pre-planned

-Conflicts comprising a student’s religious convictions

*EXAMPLES OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:*

-Skipping a rehearsal or not-notifying Mrs. Livengood in advance about missing a rehearsal/performance (unless of an emergency situation of course)

-Non-family emergency

-Birthday Parties, etc.

-Sports Activity at the same time as a **concert** (rare and typically can be worked around-band is a class for a grade!)

-Not having a ride (I can get you one if you let me know in advance!)

-Work (band is a class! Performances are required and for a grade!)

**TESTING**

There will be several different testing methods used to evaluate the students periodically throughout the year. They are as follows:

* + Playing Tests-given periodically throughout the year to assess student preparation of music

*Note about playing exams: Throughout the year, students will be required to play by themselves in front of their peers. This is NOT an attempt at embarrassing a student in any way. Performing on an instrument alone is a music education benchmark, in accordance with National Music Education Content Standards, as well as a necessary method of evaluation in the classroom.*

* + Worksheets- given to help develop musical knowledge
  + Exams- Given at the end of each semester

Students who have an excused absence on the day of a playing test will take the test the first day upon returning to class. Students who have an unexcused absence or who forget their instruments on the day of a playing test will receive a 10% deduction in the score for that playing test every day, up to 3 school days, past the test. After three school days, the student will receive a 0 on the playing test. **It is up to the STUDENT to initiate making up for lost work!**

**SUPPLIES**

The following is a list of **REQUIRED** supplies. If a student does not have these materials, he/she may have points removed for lack of preparation for class. Please see Mrs. Livengood if there is an issue obtaining these required items.

* + An instrument in GOOD WORKING CONDITION. This means valves oiled, tuning slides in a moveable state, all springs/screws tightened and in working condition, trombone slides slick, reeds that are NOT chipped, etc. It is up to the student to keep the instrument in good working condition! Take the initiative.
  + Pencil at every rehearsal
  + **Reed-Instrument players**: At least **three working reeds** of appropriate hardness *Mitchell Lurie*, *Vandoren*, or *Rico ROYAL* are strongly recommended for durability). Buying a box of reeds is an excellent idea-they’re cheaper by the box! Cork grease and cleaning materials are also MANDATORY to own!
  + **Brass-Instrument players:** At least one mouthpiece of appropriate size, valve oil (except for trombonists, who need to use slide cream and a water bottle). Cork grease and cleaning materials are also necessary.
  + **Percussionists:** Must supply their own snare drum sticks. For practice purposes, a keyboard, keyboard mallets, and drum or drum pad is essential
  + **Woodwinds**: Be sure that your mouthpiece produces the best possible tone for you. (**Flutes**: Make sure your instrument includes a tuning/cleaning rod)

Reeds, valve oil, and cork grease are available for purchase through Mrs. Livengood BEFORE OR AFTER SCHOOL (not 30 seconds before rehearsal begins)

Other supplies may be purchased through local music stores.

Each wind player has an opportunity to use a band locker and each percussionist a music slot. These are not required to use, but recommended. **PLEASE REALIZE that these slots are NOT secure, although you are welcome to bring a pad-lock to secure your locker.** When not in use, all student instruments should be kept in these locations, rather than in the percussion cabinet, storage room, or other areas of the band room. Instruments should always be kept in cases and music in folders. Abuse of school instruments may result in the inability of a student to use the instrument! Brandywine MS/HS cannot be held responsible for lost or stolen items. Any items found in inappropriate locations will be placed in the band room lost and found box, taken to the main office, or thrown away.

**REPAIRS/SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENT POLICIES**

For PERSONALLY OWNED INSTRUMENTS that need a repair, students have the opportunity to send it in for repair through the director (this requires a note from a parent/guardian), or to take it to a local instrument-repair shop. Students who seek their own repairs for their instruments need to bring a note of verification from their parents/guardians to avoid losing points for not having an instrument. For liability reasons, the band director will not attempt to fix even simple repairs. *Please note that only specially trained instrument repairmen should ever be attempting to fix an instrument!*

For SCHOOL-OWNED instruments, a check-out form must be completed by the student and parent/guardian of the student in order to “check” an instrument out. This signature indicates that the signee assumes full responsibility for the care and maintenance of the instrument. If the instrument is lost or damaged as a result of misuse or negligence, the signee will pay the school to replace or repair the instrument. The cost of repairs is ONLY covered by the school for normal “wear and tear” items, including pads wearing out, screws wearing out, etc., which are up to the discretion of the band director. Damages inflicted upon the instrument after the instrument has been assigned to the student MUST be covered by the parents/guardians of the student. Repairs not-covered by the school would include dropping an instrument, losing or damaging mouthpieces, etc. Parents/Guardians and students are prohibited from attempting to fix school-owned instrument themselves.

*Other applicable info:*

It is the STUDENT’S responsibility (not the band director’s) to initiate the process of getting their Instrument repaired.

All instruments should be overhauled (checked over) once a year to ensure that all pads, mechanisms, etc. work properly. Vacation periods are the best times to accomplish this.

**UNIFORMS**

Students must obtain the following uniform parts:

\*Black (entirely-no other colors visible) socks

\*Brandywine Band Polo Shirt for 8TH GRADERS ONLY (approximately $15 depending on customization), which is ordered in early Spring through Mrs. Livengood

\*Black Dress Pants (NO JEANS OR LEGGINGS) and WHITE long-sleeved dress shirt (NOT A T-SHIRT)

\*Black shoes that (8th grade students only need shoes which students can MARCH IN (no sandals, flip-flops, must have ankle support)

Special instructions pertaining to uniforms:

* + Since the purpose of wearing a uniform is to make all members look as similar as possible, students should refrain from wearing excess make-up, jewelry, bright or big hair accessories, or anything else that would make them stand out.
  + All uniforms should look as professional as possible (casual clothes are not acceptable)
  + Students should periodically check their uniforms throughout the year to make sure they still fit properly; if a student outgrows a uniform part, the student must arrange to provide another appropriate garment (exception being marching uniforms with which ample notice must be given to the director!)

**CHAIRS/PART AUDITIONS**

Oftentimes for part assignment purposes, for Honors Band purposes, and to promote positive practicing/competition, students may compete for “chairs”. Chair ranking is based strictly on playing ability as demonstrated through the audition. For percussion, students will audition on a battery and mallet instrument and have the scores averaged together.

Students may challenge students who sit ahead of them in chair placements. Challenges occur outside of class; the band director will select a piece of music for the challenge and post all pertinent information regarding the challenge as soon as possible. Students who are more than five minutes late will forfeit the challenge unless they can verify an unavoidable conflict. All band director decisions are final. Students should be aware that it is a privilege to sit a certain chair, and the band director reserves the right to rearrange chair as he/she sees fit due to behavior or unexcused absences.

**REMINDER TEXTS**

Parents: Sign up for to get reminder texts! Your number stays anonymous and you can unsubscribe at any time.

For 7th Grade Parents: Text this number: **81010**, This message: **@6ab2b**

For 8th Grade Parents: Text this number: **81010**, This message: **@b83a**

**2016-2017 BRANDYWINE MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND CONSENT FORM**

I certify that I have read the 2016-2017 Brandywine MS Band Handbook and am aware of and agree to abide by its policies. I have also read the 2016-2017 Brandywine MS Band Calendar and understand the importance of adequate notice for absences as outlined in this handbook. As a Parent/Guardian, I give my consent to allow my student to participate in all facets of band performances outlined in the Band Calendar, and both as a student and parent, we agree to participate (or allow participation) in all band performances unless in the event of an excused reason outlined in the handbook.

Student Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Phone(s)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Do you wish to receive texts?\_\_\_\_\_

Please initial if you give permission for your child to watch G, PG, and PG-13 rated films in class

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Address \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian E-mail(s) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*(only list if you’re not*

*Already on the e-mail list* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student E-mail\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Phone\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(Parents and students, please include your e-mail if you wish to be included in a parent e-mail network)**

*Please list any conflicts with band performances (see calendar)*

*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

**\***NOTE-phone numbers may be used by the teacher OR chaperones in the event that a parent needs to be contacted for any reason.

**STUDENTS: PLEASE RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO MRS. LIVENGOOD BY FRIDAY,SEPTEMBER 9TH, 2016. This is a 20 point assignment and is what we use as the universal “permission slip” for all our events! It must be turned in for students to be in band!**