

West Friendship Elementary School

Band Handbook



Name: _____

Instrument: _____

West Friendship Elementary School Band Handbook

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West Friendship Elementary School

12500 Frederick Road
West Friendship, Maryland 21794
(410) 313-5512

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Hello! My name is Amy Syversen and I am honored to be the band teacher at West Friendship Elementary School. After meeting with your child I know it will be a wonderful year in music at West Friendship. I believe children have talent in music in their own special way, and it is my job to help them discover their musical gift. In order to do that, the students will be taking part in a variety of music activities. These are designed to help your child develop musical skills and to know and appreciate many different styles of music.

Performing in instrumental music ensembles gives students so much more than just musical training. Students learn cooperation and teamwork, commitment and responsibility, tolerance and acceptance, and perseverance and self-discipline. Performing with a group that plays well helps build self-esteem, confidence and pride in accomplishment. Studying music also reinforces reading and math skills and enhances gross and fine motor skills.

You can help reinforce what your child is learning in school in several ways:

- Listen to music together
- Attend school and community concerts, including local middle and high school concerts
- Check out CD's and tapes from the public library
- Encourage your child, as I have, to share with you some of the things they are learning in music class

These are just a few ways music can be extended from school to your home.

Having high expectations and standards gives each student the benefit of enjoyment from their musical experiences. This handbook will explain those expectations and also the policies regarding your child's participation in the instrumental music program at West Friendship Elementary School. Please read through this handbook with your child and sign and return the last page to me. Students will be asked to keep the rest of their handbook in their band binder.

If you have any questions, please contact me at any time!! My email address is amy_syversen@hcpss.org. You can also reach me by phone at school or my home at 301-661-6654.

Don't forget to visit the West Friendship Band website at www.amybejm.com. There is very helpful information for you there including: updated calendars, practice sheets, practice tips and lots of other resources. See you soon!

Musically Yours,

Amy Syversen

West Friendship Elementary School Band

Grading Policy

The instrumental music report card will go out with the regular school report cards.

The following areas will determine your grade in Instrumental Music:

I. All Students

- **Attendance**

It is absolutely essential that students attend band twice a week prepared with all materials and assignments. If students are unable to attend lessons, they must bring home a missed lesson form, which includes all makeup work and must be signed by the parent or guardian and returned. When it is determined by Mrs. Syversen and the classroom teacher that a child can not attend a class, the student will be asked to come to a makeup session after school or during another class.

- **Performance Attendance**

Twice a year we have a concert during the school day and in the evening. One hundred percent participation at each concert is VITAL, as we all depend on each other to create the final musical product. EVERY CHILD IS IMPORTANT AND NEEDED, and attendance at performances is required by the Howard County Instrumental Music Curriculum.

- **Participation/Effort**

Each student starts with an A for this portion of his or her grade. If a student does not show up to rehearsal, does not try his or her best in rehearsal or is unprepared for class, his or her grade will be lowered accordingly.

- **Practice Habits**

Students will be given a practice chart that they will be required to turn in to the teacher on a bi-weekly basis. The practice grades will be determined by students turning in their practice charts on the correct due date with all self evaluation questions answered. All completed practice charts receive a grade of A. A = Turns in a fully completed practice chart on due date. This includes 5 days or more of practice within the two-week practice chart period, all self-evaluation questions answered and completed signatures.

B = Turns in completed practice chart as stated for a letter grade of A after the Fri. of the orig. due date.

C = Turns in signed practice chart with 5 days or more of practice within the two-week practice chart period, and does not complete the self-evaluation questions.

D = Turns in the signed practice chart without answering the self-evaluation questions and has fewer than 5 days of practice within the two-week practice chart period.

E = Does not turn in a practice chart.

- **Preparedness**

Again everyone starts off with an A. If the required materials (music/notebook, instrument, and pencils) are not brought to class every day, then the student will be marked as unprepared and his or her grade will be lowered accordingly.

- **Note Reading/Theory**

This will be included in the performance assessment grades.

II. Wind Students

During performance assessments all wind students' total performance grade will be based on the following areas: embouchure, hand and body posture, articulation, overtones, tone quality, intonation, and fingerings/slide position.

III. Percussion Students

During performance assessments all percussion students' total performance grade will be based on the following areas: stick control, hand position/body posture, and rudiments.

Your student will be graded on the above areas using the following scale:

A	Highest Level of Performance
B	High Level of Performance
C	Acceptable Level of Performance
D	Low Level of Performance
E	Unsatisfactory Performance
X	Does not apply at this time

West Friendship Elementary School Band

Student Responsibilities and Expectations

As a member of the Band you are an important part of a team. The rest of the group is relying on you to arrive prepared and on time to practice, to have a positive attitude and to always do your best. Because lessons are during the day, you will be responsible to make up the work that you have missed in your regular fourth or fifth grade class.

Student Responsibilities

1. Be prepared – Have your music instrument, notebook, method book and all supplies at every lesson
2. Be on time – Know your lesson schedule, you MUST attend every lesson even if you are unprepared for class
3. Make up your missed work – Be sure to always find out and make up what you missed at your band lesson
4. Practice at home
5. Take your instrument home EVERY DAY!
6. Get help if you need it and whatever you do, DON'T GIVE UP! If you have practiced and still need some extra help, I will be more than willing to work with you after school, before school or during other scheduled times
7. Always do your best!

Student Classroom Expectations

1. No food or drink (including gum) is allowed in the band room.
2. Please be courteous of the other students in the band program and arrive to your lesson on time and prepared to begin working.
3. Classroom instructions will be written on the blackboard for each rehearsal. Please read the board when you enter the room so you can prepare for the day's lesson.
4. Please respect the teacher and do not talk while she is talking or working with other students.
5. You will be taught basic maintenance and will be responsible for your instrument's upkeep. Keep a good supply of reeds (at least 4 extra) and oil on hand to keep your instrument in good shape. Clean out your instrument at least once a month (see me if you have questions on how to do this, or pick up an instrument care sheet).
6. All students should have two pencils for their own use.
7. Use the bathroom before coming to class.
8. Remember the instrument you hold in your hands is very valuable. Please be careful in the band room and respect your classmates and their space. Instruments can break easily and aren't always easily or cheaply fixed.
9. The following behaviors will not be acceptable in the band program: dishonesty and cheating, teasing, bullying, and disruptive behaviors.
10. You will be expected to try your best 100 percent of the time.

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Required Materials

The following is a list of **required** materials for band. You may want to rent or lease your child's selected instrument from a local music store. The following is a list of the required accessories you will need to succeed:

All Students:

1. Wire Music Stand (*for home use, do not bring to school*) – this helps promote good posture and playing position during **home** practice
2. Instrument in good playing condition
3. Metronome (can be purchased for \$15 from a music store or www.wvbw.com)
4. Two pencils with erasers stored in your instrument case *at all times*
5. Lesson Books:
 - Measures of Success A Comprehensive Musicianship Band Method Bk One* for your instrument
6. 1½ inch 3-ring binder
7. One package of five index divider tabs for the binder labeled with the following sections: (1) schedule/handbook, (2) music, (3) practice charts, (4) scales/rhythm sheets, (5) handouts/other
8. One packet of sheet protectors (*optional*)

<p>Trombones:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bottle of Slide-O-Mix or "Superslick Slick-It Kit" 2. Tuning Slide Grease 3. Water Spray bottle or "Bone" bottle 4. Polishing Cloth 5. Mouthpiece brush 6. Cleaning Snake 	<p>Clarinets:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4 extra reeds AT ALL TIMES (Rico or Mitchell Lurie 2 strength) 2. Reed case that holds 4 reeds 3. Cork grease and Clarinet Swab 4. Mouthpiece Cap 5. Rovner Ligature (optional)
<p>Oboes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4 extra handmade reeds AT ALL TIMES Paul Sorten (740) 587-1603 2. Reed case that holds 4 reeds 3. Cork Grease, Silk Swab and Water Container to wet reeds (35mm film canister works well) 	<p>Bassoons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4 extra handmade reeds AT ALL TIMES 2. Reed case that holds 4 reeds 3. Cleaning swab 4. Seat Strap, Crutch, Silk Swab and Paraffin 5. Water Container to wet reeds
<p>French Horns:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One bottle of Rotary Valve Oil by Hetman 2. Tuning Slide Grease 7. Polishing Cloth 3. Mouthpiece brush 4. Cleaning Snake 	<p>Flutes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flute tuning rod (should come with instrument) 2. Flute Swab 3. Polishing Cloth
<p>Saxophones:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4 extra reeds AT ALL TIMES Rico or Hemke 2 or medium soft strength) 2. Reed case that holds 4 reeds 3. Cork grease 4. Sax swab 5. Rovner Ligature (optional) 6. Polishing Cloth 	<p>Trumpets, Baritones and Tubas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bottle of Al Cass Brand Piston Valve Oil 2. Tuning Slide Grease 3. Polishing Cloth 4. Mouthpiece brush 5. Cleaning Snake
<p>Percussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bell kit including drumsticks (Vic Firth SD1 Generals), an 8" tunable practice pad, practice pad/bell stand, a set of bells, and bell mallets. *NOTE: It is NOT necessary for you to purchase a snare drum for your child. 2. "Alfred's Drum Method Book 1" (in addition to books above) 3. Stick Bag (optional) 	

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Local Music Stores

Here is a list of some of the music stores in this area where you may want to rent or purchase your instrument from as well as all other required materials for band.

Baltimore Brass Company

99 Mellor Ave.
Catonsville, MD. 21228
Toll Free: (866) TUBA-230/Local or outside of US: (410) 744-1723
<http://www.baltimorebrass.net>

Bill's Music

743 Frederick Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21228
Phone: (410) 788-8900 or Toll-Free: (800) 828-0023 Email: sales@billsmusic.com
<http://www.billsmusic.com/home.asp>

Coffey Music

31 East Main Street
Westminster, Maryland 21157
Phone: (410) 876-1045 or (410) 848-5003
<http://www.musicsalesandlessons.com/>

Chuck Levin's Washington Music Center

Chuck Levin's Washington Music Center
11151 Veirs Mill Road, Wheaton, MD 20902 USA
Phone: (301) 946-8808 Email: sales@chucklevins.com
<http://www.wmcworld.com>

Mike's Music

4872 Montgomery Road
Ellicott City, MD 21043
Phone: (410) 465-0700
<http://www.mikesmusicmd.com/>

Music and Arts Centers

Chatham Station – Ellicott City
9210 Baltimore National Pike, Rt. 40 West
Ellicott City, MD 21042
Phone: (410) 461-1844

Cherry Tree Center – Laurel
11200 Scaggsville Rd Unit 111
Laurel, MD 20723
Phone: (240) 568-0600

Music and Arts Express – Columbia Crossing
6131 Columbia Crossing Drive
Columbia, MD 21045
Phone: (240) 409-5486
<http://www.musicarts.com/>

Stu's Music

723 Baltimore Blvd.
Westminster, Maryland 21157
Phone: (410) 876-7585 or (800) 908-7585 Email: stusmusic@stusmusic.com
<http://www.stusmusic.com>

Wood Bridge Music Company

5809 Clarksville Square Dr., Suite 103
Clarksville, MD 21029
Phone: (443) 535-9677
<http://www.woodbridgemusic.com>

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Suggested Materials

The following materials are not required, but would be beneficial and may be eventually be required in middle school and high school.

Chromatic Tuners

These are recommended for all students except percussionists. These devices help train students to center pitches and to learn how to adjust their instruments to match pitch with everyone in the band. I recommend the Korg CA30.

Step-Up Mouthpieces

For beginners, the mouthpiece that comes with your instrument is just fine. Clarinet, Saxophone, French Horn and Trumpet players who have a year or more experience should consider moving up to the next level of mouthpiece. This allows for a better sound and centered pitch. Do not upgrade until you have been playing for at least one year and have spoken with Mrs. Syversen or your private instructor first. Due to physical limitations, many students do not upgrade until middle school. Here are recommended upgrades that will last up through high school:

Clarinet: Hite Premier, Van Doran B 45 or 5Rv

Saxophone: Hite Premier or Selmer C*

Trumpet: Bach 3C

French Horn: Holton Farkas MDC

Trombone: Bach 6 1/2 A L (if still on a 12 student should go to a 7 next)

Euphonium: Bach 6 1/2 AL (if still on a 12 student should go to a 7 next)

Tuba: Bach 18

Step-Up Instruments (Do not purchase an instrument before consulting with a teacher)

Instrument Repair Contacts

Here is a list of some of the repair stores in this area where you may want to take your instrument for repairs.

Baltimore Brass Company – 410-744-1722
Catonsville, MD

Jim Tull – 301-776-2683
Laurel, MD

Music & Arts Center – 410-461-1844
Ellicott City, MD

Steve Ocone – 410-747-4957
Catonsville, MD

Stu's Music Shop – 800-908-7585
Westminster, MD

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Home Practice Tips = SUCCESS

Home practice is Band's Homework. Here are some tips on how to get the most out of your home practice time:

Students (see practice steps on the next page on how to practice at home):

1. **Find a quiet, distraction-free place.**
2. **Schedule a set time to practice each day.** Just as you schedule a set time for your homework, you should choose a specific time each day to practice at home. Some students like to practice in the morning before school, where other students prefer to practice as soon as they get home from school. A set time (time that remains the same each day) is most helpful.
3. **Always play with correct posture.** To play with correct posture, you will need a music stand when you practice. Wire music stands are inexpensive and can be a big aid during home practice.
4. **Never start out practicing a piece up to tempo (speed).** Always start it slow and gradually speed up to tempo until you can play the piece or section of the piece comfortably and correctly.
5. **Break it down!** Take phrases or sections of the piece you are working on and practice them at slow tempos then speed them up little by little. Next, add another phrase or chunk to the one you just worked on. Don't try to play the whole piece right away. Break the piece down and you will be much more successful.
6. **If you are stuck on a specific rhythm, put your instrument down in a safe place and clap and tap the rhythm out until you can get it.** Then add your instrument and play the rhythm. If you are still having trouble, try writing the rhythm in above the notes and using the clap and tap method once more. Clapping and tapping rhythms will do wonders!
7. **Three times is a charm.** Before moving from one phrase or section to another, be sure you can play the phrase or section correctly three times in a row; then you can move on.

Parents:

1. Help your child **schedule a daily practice time.**
2. Much like the study area a student uses for other homework, a music practice area is very important. Help your child **find a quiet distraction free place** to practice and be sure there is good lighting and a wire music stand available for them to use.
3. When renting or purchasing an instrument, I would recommend brands such as Bach, Selmer and Yamaha. Please avoid purchasing instruments at local discount stores or the brand name "Simba."
4. **Become involved with what your child is doing.** Listen to what he or she is playing. Ask your student for an explanation on what he or she has learned in band lessons that day. Look at their lesson book to make sure that they are practicing what they have been assigned. Keep a steady beat for your child by clapping or encourage your child to use a metronome during home practice.
5. **Encourage your child** to always do his or her best.
6. **Praise your child** for work well done.
7. *****Never use practicing as a punishment.** Practicing should be fun!
8. **Help to foster a musical environment** in your home. Attending local concerts, listening to recordings of professional musicians, and having your child give concerts for family members and friends are all great ways to encourage your up-and-coming musician.
9. *****Help your child to persevere.** There are times when your child will feel less interested and not very motivated. This is normal. Try to withstand the tough times by reaffirming how far your child has come. Remind your child that he or she is a very important part of a team and that the rest of the band is counting on him or her to practice, attend rehearsals, etc. Treat your child to a special instrument accessory or book of popular songs that he or she can play. Learning to play an instrument requires a lot of discipline, perseverance, dedication and determination.

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Practice Steps

Remember, practice doesn't make perfect, "Perfect Practice Makes Perfect." Please use these basic steps when practicing your instrument at home. Incorrect practice habits are harmful to a musician's progress. *You may find it helpful to place this page near or on your practice stand.*

Steps	With Pencil	With Hands	With Foot	With Mouth	Set Metronome
1. Label	Write the counts under the notes, but DO NOT write the note names				
2. Clap		Clap the rhythms of the music	Tap foot silently on every beat	Say the counts out loud	72 Beats per minute
3. Finger		Push keys/valves or move slide	Tap foot silently on every beat	Sing/say the note names out loud	60 beats per minute
4. Play		Push keys/valves or move slide	Tap foot silently on every beat	Play with correct embouchure and clear tonguing	60 beats per minute and increase to at least 72

Practice Grades

Remember, practice includes written homework as well as practicing your instrument. Students will be given a practice chart that they will be required to turn in to the teacher on a bi-weekly basis. The practice grades will be determined by students turning in their practice charts on the correct due date with all self evaluation questions answered. All completed practice charts receive a grade of A.

A	Turns in a fully completed practice chart on due date. This includes 5 days or more of practice within the two-week practice chart period, all self-evaluation questions answered and completed signatures.
B	Turns in completed practice chart as stated for a letter grade of A after the Friday of the original due date.
C	Turns in practice chart with 5 days or more of practice within the two-week practice chart period, and does not complete the self-evaluation questions.
D	Turns in the practice chart without answering the self-evaluation questions and has fewer than 5 days of practice within the two-week practice chart period.
E	Does not turn in a practice chart

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Contract and Commitment Statement

It is important for students and parents to understand that for West Friendship Elementary School to have a successful and high quality band program, students participating must demonstrate a high level of commitment.

I ask that the student and parent/guardian demonstrate commitment to the band program by signing the below contract.

I acknowledge that **I have read and reviewed with my child the WFES Band Handbook**. I also acknowledge that breaking this contract may result in the lowering of a grade or possible dismissal from the band program. Students are required to attend all rehearsals, concerts, and other performances. The only exceptions to this are serious illness or family emergency. **Please bring all conflicts with rehearsals to the band director's attention well ahead of time.**

In order to be a productive member of the West Friendship Elementary School Band Program I, _____ agree to:

1. Attend all required rehearsals and concerts;
2. Arrive on time and prepared to do my best;
3. Take proper care of my instrument whether it is rented or owned;
4. Practice outside of school at least 80 minutes a week, fill in my practice record sheet, and turn in my practice sheet promptly on the day it is due;
5. Always have a positive attitude and work hard in both class and home practice;
6. Take responsibility for making up any class work I miss during my band lesson classes;
7. Let my parents/guardians know of all rehearsals, concerts and other important events; and
8. Always try my best.

Please read and sign this contract and return the bottom portion only. Keep the top portion for your records. *This form must be signed and returned by all students participating in band.*

✂-----
Student/Parent Contract

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent's/Guardian's Name (please print): _____

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____

I give permission for my son or daughter's picture to be used in the classroom or on the school's band website yes no