



2018-2019

Band Handbook

Dear Whitko Band Students and Families,

Welcome to a **vastly** different school year! Things in our lives are changing rapidly, and this school district is no exception. We have a lot of new routines to get accustomed to, new faces to learn, and new ways of doing things in our buildings. This change can be overwhelming, so hopefully you have and/or can find a home here in the band department to help you weather these changes.

Because of all of these changes, we have a unique opportunity to make some improvements in the ways we do things in the band department, and this handbook will serve as a guide and a reference for these improvements. I am truly honored to be in my second year of a program that has amazing potential, and I consider it my honor and my duty to help as many students fulfill that potential as possible. Just a few thoughts before diving in:

- 1) My ultimate goal as a teacher is to help each student become more **responsible** and more **independent**. To that end, I strive to give every student all the tools they need to answer their own questions.
- 2) Through **your** efforts over the past five years you have established this place as one of the premiere small-school instrumental music programs in this region. This has led to our student-driven culture of holding very **high standards**.
- 3) These standards can only be upheld by continuing to develop our character both **in** and **out** of the classroom, and by continuing to be **responsible** and **independent**.

This document contains all of the expectations that have been set, not by me as the teacher and authority figure, but by your actions as students wanting **success**. It is my job to help you hold **each other** accountable to the high standards you have set for **yourself**. Please refer to this document throughout the year, and let's all work together for the common purpose of being the **best Whitko Band we can be!**

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General Expectations

These sections apply to all groups no matter the age or the ensemble. These expectations are in place to ensure each rehearsal is conducted efficiently and smoothly.

Classroom Rules

Be respectful - Treat others the way you want to be treated; listen to the director; do not talk over others; take care of your instrument and classroom equipment

Always do your best - At all times play with good posture, tone quality, and proper hand position; Never let your instrument produce a sound you are not proud of!

Never Give Up - Keep going, don't stop, even if you get lost; complete your Smartmusic assignments and practice to improve; always strive to be better than you were the day before

Directions must be followed - Listen to, read, and follow all instructions from your leaders and teachers the first time they are given; do what is expected of you; always do what is right, even when you think no one is looking.

Rehearsal Procedures

Before Class

- Be sure to enter the room before the bell rings or you will be marked tardy.
- Check the screen to see what the rehearsal agenda is for the day.
- Go to your locker/cubby and get out your instrument and any materials you may need.
- Go straight to your seat and setup your performance space (instrument, music, etc).
 - Percussion - set up all of the instruments and materials you will need for the entire rehearsal
- Tune yourself.
- Use the remaining time to warmup on your own or practice music you need to go over.

During Class

- When the metronome starts be ready to warmup with your group's warmup exercises.
- There should be no talking during class while the teacher is on the podium.
- If you have a question please raise your hand, do not talk out of turn.

After Class

- Safely put your instrument in its case. Take your case and all of your materials back to your locker/cubby.
 - If you are in the Sr. High band room and have a locker it is to remain locked at all times (except during rehearsal).
- Make sure you did not leave any personal items or trash on the floor around your chair. Straighten your chair and stand

- Percussion - Be sure all school sticks/mallets/instruments/equipment is properly stored after class. Do not leave something out thinking the next class will need it.
- Sit in your chair and wait for announcements. Your teacher will dismiss you, not the bell, so wait until you are dismissed to leave class.

Required Materials

At each rehearsal all students are expected to have the following:

1. Instrument
 - a. Woodwinds: You **must** have at least **three working reeds** at all times. Do not play the same reed until it breaks. Number them and play on a different one each rehearsal. This also gives you a couple of backups if one does break.
 - b. Brass: Your instrument doesn't work without the mouthpiece, so always keep it in its case.
 - c. Percussion: Make sure all of your instruments and equipment you need for rehearsal are setup before class begins. Take the time to setup your performance space for maximum efficiency and ease of use.
2. Music
 - a. Whether paper copies or digitally please ensure you have all music you need
 - b. This also includes your band book
3. Pencil
 - a. Even if you're using your iPad, make sure you have a pencil with you during class. There may be things to mark in your book as well, which (as of the time of writing this handbook) may or may not be scanned into the iPads.
4. School issued device
5. Headphones - from time to time you may be asked to either listen to music or watch a video, or record Smartmusic assignments, at your seat. Headphones will be very helpful in this process.

After School Attendance

There are several after school events that are required for members of the Whitko Bands. These events are listed on the calendar and are communicated to students and parents at the beginning of the year. Events that come up throughout the year will also be communicated as soon as possible. Failure to attend these events (rehearsals, performance, clinics, etc.) will result in a 0 in the gradebook for the event. Absences may be excused as long as they are communicated ahead of time.

Many of our students are involved in athletic programs as well, which is fantastic! However, there are often conflicts in scheduling that arise between band and athletics. As a rule **games trump rehearsals and concerts trump practices**. Conflicts between practices and rehearsals as well as games and concerts will be worked out individually between student, director, coach, AD, and other administrators.

If you know ahead of time that you are going to miss an event (required or not) please fill out the Absence Form on Google Forms. This can be found on the "About" section of your group's Google Classroom.

Technology

If you know me then you know I **love** using technology. When used properly, technology can help students learn and ease some of the headaches teachers face on a daily basis. I do not, however, believe in using technology just to use it. Every use of technology in my classroom has a purpose, and students are expected to follow the procedures associated with each of them.

Student Devices

All students are expected to have their school issued device with them at every class and rehearsal. We may not use them every day but, "Tis better to have and not need than to need and not have". Students are expected to follow school rules and procedures on these devices that have been set out for them upon issuing to the student.

ViewSonic Display

In the Jr./Sr. High band room we will be having a 70" flat panel, interactive touch screen display installed as a pilot for the rest of the district. This display replaces both our whiteboard and our projector but gives us a lot of different interactive and collaborative options instead. As with the whiteboard, please do not draw on or use this display unless instructed to do so by me.

iPad Cart

This year I was fortunate enough to obtain a classroom set of iPads from another teacher who no longer had use for them. We'll be using these iPads in place of paper music and method books. This has two immediate benefits: 1) We no longer have to worry about paper music. "I forgot my music" can be a thing of the past! 2) You also no longer have to worry about a pencil because it is attached to you! The app we will use to display this music allows you to write directly on the music using your finger.

Students are required to follow these procedures when using the iPads in class. Failure to follow the procedures will result in participation points being taken away, other disciplinary actions, and loss of iPad privileges, meaning you will have to go back to using paper copies.

Beginning of Class

- Each student will be assigned an iPad number, much the same way you are assigned a slot number on a folder rack. You are only to take that iPad, no other. Your music will not appear on any other iPad, so make sure you take the same one each time.
 - If we are able to, Pierceton students will have iPads brought over to be kept in Larwill.
- Using one hand on the iPad and one hand on the charging cable, remove the cable from the charging port on the iPad. If you yank it out you **will** ruin the charger or the port, both of which will be charged to you to repair.
 - If your iPad is not plugged in when you get it please tell me right away. This means that the last person who used it did not plug it in, and they will need to face consequences.
- Take the iPad back to your seat and set it on your stand. Do not put it anywhere else or it will get broken.
- Winds/Timpani - use the "InsTuner" app to tune yourself before we begin. This won't be the only tuning done during rehearsal but it will help aid that process.

End of Class

- Take the iPad back to where it is supposed to be kept and put it back in its proper place. Be **absolutely certain** it goes back where it came from.
- Plug the charging cord back into the iPad. This **must** be done at the end of every rehearsal as these iPads are used throughout the day. Even if you think someone is going to come right in after you and use it, please make sure it gets plugged in because that student may be absent and you might not know it.
- Failure to charge your iPad will result in the following consequences
 - 1st Time - Loss of 5 participation points
 - 2nd Time - After school detention
 - 3rd Time - Temporary loss of iPad privileges (one week)
 - 4th Time - Permanent loss of iPad privileges

Other iPad Related Items

- Students are not able to download any apps onto the iPads, not even I can do that! These apps must be installed by the district technology employees.
- You will be given a paper copy of all music when we begin working on it for the next performance. That copy will be kept in your binder, so you will still need to keep a binder in your locker/cubby.

Communication

There are many different sources of communication for both students and parents to be informed of what is going on with the band program. I try to make it as easy as possible for both students and parents to know what is going on, so I try to send out communication on as many different platforms as I can. That way you never have to go looking for anything, it is brought to you right where you are. Below are all of the different communication tools I use as well as how you can follow them or connect with them.

Email: John.VanPatten@whitko.org (if you need to contact me, this is the best way to do so!)

Website: <http://www.whitkoband.com>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/WhitkoBand>

Twitter/Instagram: @whitkobands

Google Classroom: Parents can enroll in their child's classroom using the student code

Mailchimp: Click [here](#) to signup for our weekly newsletter published every Sunday or go to our website.

Remind: Text message app for quick updates and reminders. See Google Classroom for how to sign up for your class and/or ensembles.

Letters: Hard copies of schedules, itineraries, and concert reminders will be passed out in class; pdf copies of these letters will also be sent digitally through all of the platforms above.

Phone: (260) 723-5146, ext. 7409 (Jr./Sr.. High Band Room. Pierceton students/parents: please call here)

- Because I am frequently away from my office phone, and do still travel between buildings, please call only if you are unable to communicate digitally. As I have said before, my email on my cell phone is attached to my hip at all times, my office phone doesn't move.

Google Classroom

Lots of important information, as well as assignments, will be posted to Google Classroom throughout the year. You need to check it on a regular basis. There are two areas where you can find information:

Stream

Regular posts show up here. These are things like announcements, assignments, sub work, quizzes, videos, links, and scores and judges comments after contest performances. The due dates associated with assignments are the dates they will go into PowerSchool immediately following that date. As with Smartmusic assignments you may turn them in up to one week following the due date for a 10% deduction. Work submitted more than one week after the due date will not be accepted.

About Section

The “About Section” contains reference materials that do not need to be looked at on a regular basis. For example, this handbook will be posted both on the band website and in the About section on Google Classroom. If you have a question about a policy or an expectation, go to this page first. 90% of questions can be answered by looking here. Other items found here include Smartmusic tutorials, calendars, the Absence form, and Remind class codes, as well as lesson plans and rehearsal slideshows.

Performances

Below are all of the performances listed by grade level/ensemble. All of these events and any associated rehearsals are required, graded events. Please see the section on attendance for policies on absences. Also see the yearly calendar for dates and times.

Concerts

Fall Concert - Elementary band, junior high band, marching band

Christmas Concert - Elementary band, junior high band, concert band, jazz band

ISSMA Solo/Ensemble - All students grades 6-12 will perform solos/ensembles

JME Contest - Elementary band, junior high band

HS Contest - Senior high band

Spring Spectacular - Elementary band, junior high band, concert band, other ensembles as needed

Marching Band

Parades, Invitationals, ISSMA events, Fall concert

Jazz Band

ISSMA Jazz Festival, other concerts throughout the year

Pep Band

Weekend home basketball games; look for a specific schedule around Thanksgiving

Concert Dress

All performances of any group require students to look professional and presentable. Our standard “Concert Dress” will consist of the following:

- Blue “Whitko Bands” polo shirt (purchased at the beginning of the year)
- Black dress pants. Girls may choose to wear a long black skirt (thigh-foot length)

- Black shoes (girls - heels must be a reasonable height)
- Black socks
- No jewelry (except small earrings)
- No phones are to be on your person at any time during a performance.

If your dress is to be different from this, I will let you know ahead of time. Marching band and jazz band have different concert dress codes.

Grading

Grades are calculated by total points:

Participation

Students are given 10 points per class per day. This is entered into the gradebook as a weekly participation grade. Points are taken away for things like missing materials, misbehavior, failure to follow instructions, or anything that detracts from the rehearsal.

Performances

Attendance at all rehearsals and performances is required. Rehearsals will be worth 50 points, concerts worth 100, contests worth 200.

Smartmusic

See the Smartmusic section of the handbook for more information. Usually 10-20 points per week

Class Work

Worksheets and other assignments done during class. Usually 10 points each.

Assessments

Administered approximately once per week to check for understanding of important concepts. These can be either written assessments or performance assessments. Usually 25 points each.

Absences

If you are absent from school there are plenty of ways to find out what you missed and what you are responsible for instead of coming to me and asking, "Did I miss anything yesterday?" Of course you did, you missed BAND!! As with all things I do, I try to give you the tools to be your own problem solver:

Rehearsal Slides

The slideshows that I present during class can be found on your Google Classroom page in the About section. They are posted there at the beginning of every month and changes made each day are instantly visible.

Lesson Plans

I write weekly lesson plans. These are also published to Google Classroom in the About section. They do not show each individual day (that's what the daily slideshows are for) but you can still check them to see what you may have missed, or if you like knowing what's coming up.

Google Classroom Stream

If there was any class work assigned on the day you were gone it will show up here. Check the stream to look for any missed work.

PowerSchool

Please check your grade on PowerSchool on a regular basis. If there is incomplete or inaccurate information please send me a quick email to let me know and I will correct as soon as possible. I try to update grades on a weekly basis but depending on how busy the band program schedule is I may fall behind. If you feel your grade is severely out of date please also let me know that through email.

Discipline

Any student who fails to follow classroom rules and policies will have participation points taken away. Once a student has had ten points taken away the following consequences will be enacted:

1st Time: Verbal conference with student after class

2nd Time: Detention (according to your school's disciplinary code); parent contact

3rd Time: Referral to office; parent contact

4th Time: Referral to office; parent conference with student and administration

5th Time: Removal from band class

Substitute Teachers

Whenever you have a substitute teacher in band class, chances are this person does not have a musical background. Band is not a class that someone unfamiliar with the content can just show up and teach. If your substitute does not have a musical background, you will be given work to do on your device (this will not involve the iPads as the cart will be locked at the end of every day). ***It is firmly expected that every student complete sub work when it is assigned. If you are absent that day you are still responsible for the work.*** I find it absolutely unacceptable to show a substitute teacher any less respect than you show me on a regular basis. My substitutes have instructions to leave me any names of any students not following directions or being disrespectful. We will have a very serious conversation about respect upon my return if your name is left with a substitute.

Smartmusic

The Smartmusic System is an incredible practice tool that, if used properly, can help students develop their musicianship. I believe **very** strongly in the use of this tool, and in a district that gives every student a device it is possible for every student to succeed through guided practice with Smartmusic. This section details how Smartmusic will be used in class.

Assignments

Students will have weekly Smartmusic assignments. Each assignment will be pushed out to students on Monday morning at 8:00, and they will be due by the following Sunday by midnight. Work done on time will receive full credit. Late work may be turned in one week late for a 10% deduction. If a student is not able to turn their work in on time they are still strongly encouraged to turn it in late. Your score will be much higher on

an assignment turned in late than on an assignment not turned in at all. **Work will not be accepted more than one week past the due date, the assignment then becomes locked.** Extra credit opportunities will be afforded to students throughout each quarter.

Where To Record

The best place to record your Smartmusic assignments is at your own home in a quiet, relaxed environment. However, I understand that not everyone has reliable internet at home or has the ability to take their very large instruments home on a regular basis. If you are not able to do your Smartmusic at home you still have many other options available to you:

1. Mondays after school I will be in the Jr./Sr. High band room from 3:00 - 4:00. You will need to sign up in advance if you want to come in. That way I am not waiting around if no one is coming.
2. 7:00 - 7:45 before school. During marching season this option will not be available as there will be no supervision in the band room while I am out with the band rehearsing.
 - a. Marching band members can come in from 6:30 - 6:45 to do their work before rehearsal.
3. During your study hall/DS period. I am still going to be in Larwill one period for Pierceton 6th grade band, but if I am in the building in South Whitley you may use a practice room if they are available.
4. If you are not able to get your work done with any of the above options you may do your work during class, but this is meant as a last resort as you do not want to be missing class time on a regular basis.

Pierceton 6th Grade Band - If you are able to take the shuttle to the South Whitley campus you can come in after school on Mondays. Otherwise we can work out time to use the Larwill practice rooms during class time for you to do your work.

Types of Assignments

There are several different types of assignments that students will be required to complete:

- Book exercises/Concert music excerpts
 - These will be the most common assignments in Smartmusic. These will consist of lines out of the book or short sections of your concert music.
- Scales/Rhythms/Exercises
- Sight reading
 - The music will only be displayed for a short amount of time (set by the teacher)
 - During this time students will need to look at
 - The key signature
 - The time signature
 - The tempo (in beats per minute)
 - Notes
 - Rhythms
 - Accidentals
 - Articulations
 - After the timer is over recording will begin automatically. BE READY!!
 - Students will get one chance to record what they see and will have to submit this one take. You don't get a do over...which is what sight reading is all about!
- Playing tests/quizzes
 - Known music that is setup just like a sight-reading example. You will only get a short amount of time to prepare, and you'll only get one take, just like a quiz or a test.

Award Badges

Students have the opportunity to earn award badges within Smartmusic. There are three different types of award badges, and here is how you can earn them:

1. **Discipline** - Record your assigned content for at least 10 minutes each week.
2. **Discovery** - Record unassigned content (songs you have found on your own) for at least 10 minutes each week.
3. **Consistency** - Record any content (assigned or unassigned) for 5 minutes each day over the course of the week (this is the most difficult badge to earn!)

At the end of each quarter there will be prizes awarded to students earning at least 5 badges. Those earning the **Consistency** badge at least 2 times will earn a higher prize!

Best Practices

Smartmusic is a terrific system but it is not without its glitches. Many times these glitches are caused by preventable errors, so please follow these best practices to get the best result out of Smartmusic that you can.

- Smartmusic uses your built-in microphone to listen to you and compare what it hears to the music displayed on the screen. External sounds that are not part of your performance can affect how you are assessed, so it is best to complete your work in a quiet setting without other noises.
- Sometimes Smartmusic simply assesses notes wrong that I as your teacher would not count “wrong”. While it’s a great tool, it’s still a computer program with limitations in its programming. Don’t worry so much about the score Smartmusic gives you. I listen to every recording submitted and I will put in the score you deserve, not necessarily the one you receive.
- Older student devices do not have a lot of memory, which Smartmusic needs to work effectively. While working with Smartmusic make sure you do not have any other open tabs or apps running in the background as this will take memory away from Smartmusic.
- Do not store more than three takes at a time. This also takes up memory that is needed for Smartmusic. If you are not satisfied with your work after three takes, close out of Smartmusic and reopen a new browser window. This will delete your previous takes so make sure they are disposable before you do this.

Parent Volunteers

We have some terrific band parents in this organization, and before the year even starts...and from the bottom of my heart....thank you for all that you do for your child! I cannot do what I do for your children without all the help I get from you!

Volunteer Guidelines

We want every parent who contribute their time and talents to our organization to have fun, feel valued, and want to return, so to that end here are some guidelines for parent volunteers to keep in mind:

1. Any parent volunteer that interacts with students, has the potential of interacting with a student, or could be alone with a student without direct supervision from a Whitko employee, must fill out volunteer paperwork and have it on file with the school district. See Mr. VanPatten for this paperwork if you have not filled it out before.
2. Respectfully, parent volunteers are asked to abide by the guidance and direction of Mr. VanPatten in how events are planned and/or executed.
3. Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism at all times while serving as a volunteer, and representative, of the Whitko Band. There is to be no:
 - a. Smoking
 - b. Use of inappropriate language to or around students
 - c. Immature or unprofessional behavior
 - d. Touching or laying hands on a student
 - e. Derogatory comments referencing other schools, students, directors, staff, or adjudicators
4. Booster officers oftentimes plan and prepare events and have more details about these preparations than Mr. VanPatten. During these events booster officers are “in charge”; in other words, they have the most information and can best support the band program and its students, so adult volunteers should take direction from them.
5. Parent volunteers can feel free to remind students of the policies and procedures set forth in this handbook. However, parent volunteers are not to engage in the disciplining of students. If discipline should need to be given out it will come from Mr. VanPatten, so please report it to me right away.
6. If there is a conflict between a student and a parent volunteer or between two parent volunteers it should be brought to the attention of Mr. VanPatten right away. This conflict can be resolved by him or with the help of the principal or school administration.
7. Parent volunteers who sign up to assist with an event are expected to attend and assist as needed. If you are unable to attend an event you volunteered for please contact Mr. VanPatten or the booster officer running the event to let them know.

Parent Contribution

All parents are encouraged to support your child by volunteering at some point in the year. There are a lot of events that need volunteers in order to happen. Everyone can find something they are interested in and chip in just a little bit! Click [here](#) to go to the SignUp.com page for all of our volunteer opportunities throughout the year. Remember that the smallest time commitment you contribute will mean the world to your child, as well as the rest of the band program! Please consider volunteering for at least one event at some point in the year, regardless of what grade your student is in.

Character

Band students tend to be the “Cream of the Crop” behaviorally, but we still want to hold each other accountable to our actions. We want the Whitko community, as well as outside observers, to see us as model

citizens that demonstrate the highest character at all times. These are some traits that anyone should be able to ascribe to a Whitko band student:

Language At all times your language needs to be of a positive tone. Inappropriate language and cursing will not be tolerated at any time. Use your words to help improve the band and the experience of those in it.

Leadership Everyone in the band should display the qualities of a good leader. If someone next to you is struggling, help them out. If someone makes a mistake, help them prevent a second. Listen to the troubles of others, and lean on them for support when you have trouble yourself.

Manners “Please” and “thank you” go a long way. Use them at all times with adults, and even with other students!

School Rules Band students should be examples of how to follow school rules. The administration should not be dealing with behavioral issues from band students outside of band class. What you learn in band about dedication and leadership should be with you in all of your other classes and activities.

Academics Complete your work in other classes, and try as hard with your schoolwork as you do with your music. Take pride in your academic achievements just like you take pride in your musical achievements.

Persistence One of the most important lessons I can teach a student is that of persistence. Never give up, never accept defeat, keep going and try hard. Don’t look at failure as an ending but rather a beginning.

Punctuality Being on time is very important. Showing up late signals to the other members of your group that you believe your time is more valuable to you than theirs is to them. If a rehearsal starts at 5:00, you should plan to arrive at 4:45. That way you are prepared and ready to start when the rehearsal begins. “To be early is to be on time; to be on time is to be late; to be late is to be wrong.”

Attendance Be present at all band events. If you are going to miss, please fill out the Absence Form on Google Forms, which can be found on your group’s “About” section in Google Classroom.

Focus Be present minded. Focus on what you are doing at all times. In rehearsal always focus on improving, getting better than you were a minute, an hour, a day, a week ago. When asked to change something by your teacher, focus on how to improve it. Remember what was done and build on it for the next rehearsal.

Cooperation Work together with the members of your ensemble. We are all in this together. We can only be as good as the weakest member, so work to build up the bottom end so everyone gets better. Help, don’t hurt.

Passion Love what you do! Music should, at all times, evoke emotion. Let even your warmups fill you with passion for what you do

Pride What you do matters. Your achievements, no matter how small, should be celebrated. Take pride in all that you do for yourself and for your organization.