

THOMAS A. BLAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL

BAND HANDBOOK 2018-2019



The Characteristics of a good musician can be summarized as follows:

1. A well-trained ear
2. A well-trained intelligence
3. A well-trained heart
4. A well-trained hand

~Zoltán Kodály

Blake Middle School

24 Pound Street • Medfield, MA 02052
(508) 359-2396

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WELCOME

Welcome back!

I hope you and your family have had a wonderful summer! I am very much looking forward to the school year and making music again with the bands.

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize students and parents with the policies and procedures of the middle school band program. Please take the time to read it thoroughly to ensure a successful band experience.

Thank you for your continued participation and support. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours Musically,

Mr. Dexter



WHY BAND?

The Blake Middle School Band Program offers a unique opportunity for students to grow musically, academically, and socially. Band is more than just playing notes, memorizing a few rhythms, attending extra rehearsals, or opting for personal practice instead of an hour in front of the television. It teaches us: *problem solving, teamwork, self-discipline, goal setting, memory skills, concentration, and poise*. Arts-related subjects have a positive impact on every area of study in school. Current research confirms the study of music is one of the most effective tools to improve learning throughout a child's academic curriculum. Band allows students to create formulas and not just solutions that are directly transferable to other facets of life.

The value of music in shaping individual abilities and character are attested in a number of places:*

- “The life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction, in the life of the nation, is close to the center of a nation's purpose - and is a test to the quality of a nation's civilization.” – *John F. Kennedy*
- “Music has a great power for bringing people together. With so many forces in this world acting to drive wedges between people, it's important to preserve those things that help us experience our common humanity.” – *Ted Turner, Turner Broadcasting System*
- The term 'core academic subjects' means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, **arts**, history, and geography.” – *No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, Title IX, Part A, Sec. 9101 (11)*
- “When I hear people asking how we fix the education system, I tell them we need to do the opposite of what is happening, cutting budgets by cutting music programs.... Nothing could be stupider than removing the ability for the left and right brains to function. Ask a CEO what they are looking for in an employee and they say they need people who understand teamwork, people who are disciplined, and people who understand the big picture. You know what they need? They need musicians.” – *Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, MENC Centennial Congress, Orlando, Florida, June 2007*
- Data show that high earnings are not just associated with people who have high technical skills. In fact, mastery of the arts and humanities is just as closely correlated with high earnings, and, according to our analysis, that will continue to be true. History, music, drawing, and painting, and economics will give our students an edge just as surely as math and science will. – *Tough Choices or Tough Times: The report of the new commission on the skills of the American workforce, 2007, page 29; www.skillscommission.org*
- “During the Gulf War, the few opportunities I had for relaxation I always listened to music and it brought me great peace of mind. I have shared my love of music with people throughout this world, while listening to the drums and special instruments of the Far East, Middle East, Africa, the Caribbean, and the Far North, and all of this started with the music appreciation course that I was taught in a third-grade elementary class in Princeton, New Jersey. What a tragedy it would be if we lived in a world where music was not taught to children.” – *General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, United States Army*

These life-skills will serve as an important foundation as your child takes on various responsibilities in the future. Like any endeavor, interest counts more than talent. With the right support, playing music will become a natural part of your child's life.

* Source: MENC – *The National Association for Music Education, Why Music Education? 2007*

COMMUNICATION

Website

On the band website, you will find:

- Performance and rehearsal schedules
- Forms and documents
- Required Materials
- Lesson information

To visit the website, go to <http://medfieldbands.weebly.com/>

Email

Email is the best way to contact Mr. Dexter. Generally, you should expect a response within 24-48 hours. Mr. Dexter's email address is rdexter@email.medfield.net

Voice Mail

You may reach Mr. Dexter's voice mail through the main office at the Blake Middle School. The main office telephone number is (508) 359-2396.

Twitter

Follow Mr. Dexter on Twitter [@medfieldbands](#)

PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Sixth Grade Band

Sixth grade band meets during F period on Mondays and Fridays. Small group lessons are not offered at the middle school as they are at Dale Street. Private lessons are recommended but not required. Performances include the BMS bands winter and spring concerts and the Medfield Band-O-Rama featuring the elementary, middle, and high school bands. Students are provided with a subscription to music learning software called Smart Music. Smart Music assignments are given weekly. Using the Smart Music app on their iPad, students practice and record their assignments from home and submit them to Mr. Dexter.

Seventh and Eighth Grade Band

Seventh grade band meets during A period on Tuesdays and Fridays. Eighth grade band meets during G period on Mondays and Fridays. The seventh and eighth grade bands are combined for the majority of performances.

Performances include the BMS bands winter and spring concerts, the Medfield Band-O-Rama, and the Great East Festival at Six Flags New England. Students are provided with a subscription to music learning software called Smart Music. Smart Music assignments are given weekly. Using the Smart Music app on their iPad, students practice and record their assignments from home and submit them to Mr. Dexter.

Jazz Ensemble and Jazz Lab

Participation in the BMS jazz bands is by audition. Students are placed by level. Jazz Ensemble meets on Mondays from 2:45 to 4:15 PM in the Blake music room. See below for the Jazz Ensemble sectional schedule. Jazz Ensemble performances include the BMS bands winter concert, Medfield Jazz Night, the MAJE Jazz Festival and the Great East Festival at Six Flags New England. Jazz Lab meets in the middle school band room on Mondays from 4:15-5:15 and performs at Medfield Jazz Night.

Jazz Ensemble Sectional Schedule

Tuesday	7:00-7:30 AM	Brass
Monday	2:15:00-2:45 PM	Rhythm
Friday	7:00-7:30 AM	Saxophones

Junior District Auditions

Seventh and eighth grade band students are eligible to audition for the Eastern Junior District Band and/or Jazz Ensemble. Acceptance to a district “all-star” ensemble is considered a significant accomplishment and college resume-worthy. Auditions are January 12. The Junior District Festival takes place March 8 & 9. Audition requirements can be found on the MMEA Eastern District website at <http://www.mmeaeasterndistrict.org/index.htm>. Students are expected to prepare months in advance with the guidance of their private teacher. Interested students should contact Mr. Dexter at the start of the school year.

Band Sectionals

After-school sectionals are offered to provide students with instrument specific instruction. Students have the opportunity to meet as separate percussion, woodwind and brass classes for 30 minutes each week. Grading is not impacted by sectional attendance. However, consistent participation is critical to student success and that of the ensemble.

Sixth Grade Band Sectional Schedule

Wednesday	2:15-2:45	Trumpet, Trombone, Saxophone
Thursday	2:15-2:45	Flute, Clarinet
Friday	2:15-2:45	Percussion

Seventh and Eighth Grade Band Sectional Schedule

Wednesday	2:45-3:15	Trumpet, Trombone, Saxophone, Bass Clarinet, Euphonium, Tuba
Thursday	2:45-3:15	Flute, Clarinet
Friday	2:45-3:15	Percussion

REHEARSAL PROCEDURES AND RULES

1. Report to rehearsals before the music stops.
2. Bring your **instrument, music binder, and a pencil** to all rehearsals.
3. There is no food or drink in the band room at any time.
4. Talking during rehearsals will not be permitted. **“Listen” and “Silent” are spelled with the same letters!**
5. If you do not have music, contact Mr. Dexter outside of class time.
6. Upon entering the band room, immediately set up your instrument. Take your seat and warm-up independently until the start of rehearsal.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all performances is expected. Absences due to illness, emergency, or circumstances discussed well in advance with Mr. Dexter will be excused. All performance dates are scheduled before the start of the school year and posted on the band website. Parents are asked to be mindful that any student's absence impacts the performance of the group and other students. Students dedicate many hours of personal and collective practice over several months in preparation. Performances are a critical part of being in band, yet are infrequent compared to the number of opportunities a student may have to perform on the soccer or baseball field over the course of a season. Most band students will have just three or four performances each year. Students absent from a performance may be asked to take in a recording of the performance and complete a written reflection.

GRADING

Students are graded on the following:

Rehearsal preparation: knowing the music, bringing all materials to/from school, etc.	25%
Rehearsal skills listening for other parts, watching the conductor, not talking, etc.	25%
Assignments SmartMusic	25%
Playing/Written Tests 1-2x each term	25%

INSTRUMENTS

Instrument cases must have the student's name clearly displayed.

Instruments need to be kept in top playing condition. School-owned instruments need to be cared for with the utmost respect. If Mr. Dexter is unable to repair an instrument, arrangements must be made with the Music and Arts repair shop in Walpole (508-668-1709). A loaner may need to be requested as repairs can take up to 2-3 weeks.

Storage

On rehearsal days, students must store their instrument in a cubby in the band room or in a locker before school. Instruments must go home at the end of the day as personal practice is not possible without it. Leaving an instrument in school will affect the student's preparation grade.

Instrument Supplies

Flute

- cleaning rod
- cotton bandana or handkerchief

Clarinet

- box of reeds* (Mitchell Lurie or Vandoren are recommended)
- reed guard (Rico)
- cork grease
- swab

Saxophone

- box of reeds* (Rico Royal or Vandoren (blue box) are recommended for band, Vandoren Java (green box) for jazz)
- reed guard (Rico)
- cork grease
- swab

*Reed strength will vary for each student. See Mr. Dexter for a recommendation.

Trumpet

- valve oil (Blue Juice)
- slide grease
- cleaning kit (brushes/snake)

Trombone

- slide lubricant (Slide-O-Mix)
- spray bottle
- tuning slide grease
- cleaning kit
- cotton cloth

Percussion

- Stick bag set including drum sticks, xylophone and marimba mallets

SHEET MUSIC

Students will be provided with various pieces of music throughout the year. Each piece of sheet music must be stored in a sheet protector inside their band binder. All measures must be numbered with a pencil.

Music Binder

A 1-inch black ring binder is required for band class. Students should have approximately 25 sheet protectors for their sheet music. Music binders must be labeled with the student's name. View binders are recommended.

