

Middle School Band book

# Reidland Middle School Band Handbook

Welcome

The start of a new school year is an exciting event, especially for you as an Reidland Middle School Band member. You will be walking the halls of a School of Excellence, a tradition that you are challenged to continue.

As a member of Reidland Middle School Band, you have chosen to associate with some of the finest scholars, athletes, musicians, and student leaders in our school. Our expectations are high. Each member will be held accountable for his/her actions, attitudes and performances.

Mature behavior, personal commitment, and hard work are expected of all members of the Reidland Middle School Band.

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 as we progress through the school year. This handbook contains policies and procedures that will be in effect for the current school year. Parents, feel free

to contact me anytime at school (270- 538- 4190) or

christopher.thornton@mccracken.kyschools.us with questions that you may have. We look forward to an exciting and prosperous school year.

Sincerely,

Chris Thornton, Band Director

## Philosophy

Music was a special experience for me as a young person. I joined band in fourth grade and many of my friends were in band. A great deal of my time was spent involved in the music program. Music, sports and other wholesome organizations gave me a place to grow and succeed. It is my desire to create a band program at Reidland Middle School that will have the same positive impact on my students. The Reidland Middle School Band Program is designed to:

- Provide each student with a comprehensive music education, while teaching the skills and attitudes necessary to succeed as a young musician and as a young adult.
- Benefit the school and community through public performances of quality music, while promoting and enhancing the dignity and reputation of Reidland Middle School.
- Foster the development of essential character traits to include a strong work ethic, personal integrity, a commitment to excellence, and respect for self and others.
- Provide each student with a positive emotional outlet, a good social experience, and a worthy use of leisure time.

What I Expect

The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are based on twelve basic expectations I have for each student. Band students are typically some of the finest young people in a school. As a Reidland Middle School Band student, 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 part of the solution, not 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 to be told 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 class, rehearsals, and performances.
- Committed. Realize the impact that 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.

#### Daily Procedure

- Band classes will begin each day with students arriving on time and prepared for class with their pencil, music, method book and instrument. Students are to be in their seats no later than one minute after the start time. We will warm up and tune together.
- Students are to raise their hands during rehearsal for permission to leave their seat or speak. Do not raise your hand to ask a question once the director's hands are raised for playing. If you have a bathroom emergency, let me know, discreetly, and go. When class ends, the director will dismiss you. Students should return all instruments to their assigned storage areas. Students are to keep the band room clean and neat at all times. Trash containers are at the room entrances. Please be careful not to track dirt or mud into the room.
- When a school instrument needs repair, the director must be notified immediately so arrangements can be made with an approved repair shop.

## **BAND HALL AND BAND REHEARSAL RULES**

1. Students may not have gum, candy, food, or drink in the band hall at any time.
2. Students may not horseplay at any time.
3. Students must get a drink and go to the restroom before rehearsal begins, not after.
4. Students must check their instrument before rehearsal and get it fixed at that time.
5. Students must get all necessary supplies (reed, valve oil, etc) before rehearsal.
6. Students must get all notes signed (admit slip etc.) before or after rehearsal.
7. STUDENTS WILL BE IN THEIR CHAIR WITH INSTRUMENT AND ALL SUPPLIES AT THE SCHEDULED TIME.
8. Students may not get up for any reason after rehearsal begins unless it is an emergency, and you have asked for and gotten permission.
9. Students will not be allowed to use the phone during band rehearsal. If you must use it to notify parents of after school rehearsal times, wait until after class. Notify parents of extra after school activities before the day of that activity.
10. If your instrument will not work during rehearsal, wait until after rehearsal to get it fixed. Just sit and ghost your part until rehearsal is over.
11. Students will cease all noise when anyone steps on the podium. Do not talk when anyone is on the podium for any reason, except to ask the director about the music or about some instructions that have been given. In this case, the student should raise his or her hand and wait  
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until the director gives permission to ask the question.
12. Students may not get on podium without permission.
13. Students may not play with any instrument or equipment that does not belong to them or allow anyone to play with an instrument for which they are responsible.
14. Students may not enter any office or storage room without authorization from the band director.
15. Keep all equipment, music stored according to the band director's instructions.
16. Most importantly, give the director your respect and total attention at all times.

## **Behavior Consequences**

Responsibility to the group is essential to the Reidland Middle School Band program. An individual's behavior and performance have a major impact on the other members of the band. Students are expected to exhibit their best behavior at all times. Occasionally, we have visitors in our classes, and many people will see our concerts and festival performances. One incident of poor behavior can ruin the public's good impression of our band program and our school.

Consequences for behavioral infractions will be handled on an individual basis and are based on a continuum ranging in severity. The consequence(s) will depend on the severity and frequency. Steps in the continuum may be skipped based on severity. The Behavioral Consequence Continuum is as follows:

- Verbal Warning
- Top Dawg Referral
- Conference with Student
- Contact with Parent
- Parent Conference Administrative
- Administrative Discipline Referral

Horseplay of any kind in the band hall or instrument storage room will not be tolerated. These rooms are filled with instruments and equipment, which can easily be damaged. Most importantly, students can be seriously injured. Any such infraction will result in, at minimum, a Top Dawg Referral and maybe a call home.

School-Owned Instruments

Our school has a limited inventory of instruments, which include tenor saxophones, horns, euphoniums and tubas. These instruments are assigned at the discretion of the director. The student is responsible for any damage to the instrument or loss of the instrument.

When a school instrument needs repair, the director must take it to a shop approved by the school system. The school will pay for all routine maintenance of the instrument.

Take Your Instrument Home

Students are required to take their instruments home each evening for practice. The school's insurance does not cover the loss or damage to student property.

## **Instrument Repair**

The band director has worked out an arrangement with music store representatives to come to Reidland approximately once every week to bring materials and supplies, and to pick up instruments, which need repair. The director receives nothing in helping the students with this service. It is the responsibility of the student and the parents to pay for work done to personally

owned instruments, or work done on instruments checked out to the students. There is no way that the director can pay for the repairs and allow students to reimburse him. Please make every effort to pay for these repairs as quickly as possible to insure that you have an instrument in top playing condition.

## **Class Participation Policy**

All students are expected to play each day in band class. Class participation is a 25% of each student's 6 weeks grade. Below are the "top four" leading excuses I hear each year. Each excuse is followed by our policy on the subject.

**Braces.** Many students have braces. I realize that these are sometimes painful, especially if the orthodontist tightens them in the morning, and you have band in the afternoon. I will work with you on this as long as I believe that you are not taking this situation for granted. Follow your doctor's instructions. Sometimes gargling with warm salt water will help ease the pain.

"I forgot my instrument." This may result in a deduction from your participation and daily grade for each occurrence. Without an instrument, you cannot participate in class. The same consequence applies for not having any reeds or any other accessory, which renders your instrument inoperable.

"My instrument is in the shop." No instrument should go in for repair until I see it first. I may be able to repair it much quicker if it is minor and may be able to lend the student an instrument while it is repaired. If your instrument is taken to the shop before I see it, you must bring a note from your parents, which includes the following:

1. What is wrong with the instrument?
2. Which shop is it in?
3. What is the estimated time needed for repair?

"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 this is not always the case; therefore, situations will be handled on an individual basis.

## **Absences from Rehearsals and Tardies to Rehearsals**

NO absences or tardiness will be excused unless PARENTS have contacted the band director, BEFORE the incident except in extreme emergencies. In extreme emergencies, parents may contact the band director after the absence or tardy. In any case, parents MUST contact the director in order for the student to receive an excused absence.

Private Lessons

A good private teacher is perhaps the most valuable investment a parent can

make for their child. Band directors are trained in the instruction of every band and orchestral instrument, but their knowledge cannot compare to that of a professional player who makes a living teaching and performing on one instrument.

Private teachers are excellent for the student who wishes to grow faster or for the average student who is having isolated problems. Such requires the knowledge and skill of a specialist.

I strongly urge all Band students to assist their pursuit of excellence through private instruction. Please see your director for suggestions on private instructors.

Class Materials

### 6th Grade Band

- Tradition of Excellence Book 1
- Clarinet and Saxophone Reeds: Vandoren, rico (strength 2 or 2.5 the first semester and 3). Four good reeds (not chipped) with reed guard for saxophone and clarinet players.
- Woodwind Cork Grease, Flute Swab, Clarinet and Alto Sax Swab.
- Valve oil and tuning slide grease for brass players
- Slide cream and water sprayer for trombone players
- Cleaning snake & mouthpiece brush for all brass players
- Sticks/Mallets for percussionists
- Pencil (not a pen) on the stand at all times
- Every instrument case must have an identification nametag on it at all times as well as a cleaning kit inside.

### **Facilities and Equipment**

All band classes at Reidland Middle School meet in the band room. The office is for the use of teachers. Students are not to enter the office without the permission of the band director. The instrument storage room and instrument lockers are used to house student instruments during the school day. Students are to keep them neat and clean at all times. All instrument cases are to be latched with all latches. The only items to be stored in the instrument storage room are instruments with completed name tags. Students are required to take their instruments home each evening for practice. 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.

## **Rehearsals and Performances**

Band students at Reidland Middle School have a variety of opportunities to perform for the public and for ratings at region-sponsored events.

After-school rehearsals will be called periodically and before performances. This will allow split classes the opportunity to rehearse together. It will also give students more individualized attention in many cases. It is imperative that we have 100% attendance at these limited rehearsals.

## **All-Region Bands**

Students are encouraged, but not required, to participate in this process. It is an opportunity to share a common love of music with the best players from all the schools.

Music for the audition is available from the directors.

## **Performance Attire**

Students are required to wear this year's Band Polo when performing with the Reidland Middle School Band. Students who come to the concert without the required attire will not be allowed to perform, and will be graded as a zero.

## **Travel policy**

Students should arrive at the band hall with all equipment at the stated time.

**STUDENTS MUST BE ON TIME FOR AWAY PERFORMANCE DEPARTURES!**

The band shirt and a nice pair of black pants should be worn as the uniform.

Students may want to bring blankets, pillows. Any radio, CD, MP3, or multimedia players will not be allowed unless headphones are used. Students are required to be accompanied by chaperones during out of town performance. Reidland Middle School and MCPS are not responsible for lost or broken items.

## **Grading Policy**

The grading policy for Reidland Middle School Band have been designed to ensure that the grade 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 nine-week period.

Each student's nine-week average is based on three categories:

Tests (25%), Playing Tests and Skills Check

Daily grades (10%) - written work, responding, creating

Participation (45%) - performing  
Concerts (20%)

Tests/Daily grades: Students will be given both playing and written tests periodically on assigned music exercises and concepts. Music being rehearsed in class may be tested at any time, daily grades included. Practice sheets will be checked periodically and must be signed by a parent for a grade and other daily activities. It is important to know that no credit will be given for practice records that are not signed at the end of each week.

Participation: Students begin each quarter with a grade of 45 in this category. Deductions will be made for failure to comply with classroom rules and/or failure to participate in class.

Performances are an integral part of every student's music education. An unexcused absence from any performance will result in a major deduction for this grade category. The only excused absences from a performance are those, that are determined an excused absence from school.

## How to Practice

Daily practice time is essential for student success in band. All band students should spend a minimum of 20 minutes each day in individual practice. Daily practice time is homework for band. The guidelines below will help to organize your practice time. Remember, practice time is to be spent practicing, not watching the clock.

- Practice in the same place each day. Be sure there are no distractions.
- Begin with long tones. Concentrate on producing a pleasing sound. Think about your breathing. Produce a steady and controlled air stream. You should love your sound. It is yours and no one else's. No two musicians have the same tone. Always make sure that your tone is clear and beautiful.
- Spend time on scales. Play them slowly at first and then work for speed. Work from your method book each day. Try to stay several lines ahead of the class. Work for accuracy and be sure to play everything on the page.
- Practice in front of a mirror to check your embouchure, hand position, and posture.
- Practice your music. Work on the parts that you cannot play. Practice them slowly at first and then increase the speed. Work one measure at a time for difficult parts. Once you are able to play a measure five times without mistakes then you can increase the tempo. The same goes for the entire exercise.
- Pay careful attention to details such as: correct notes and fingerings,

rhythms, key signatures and accidentals, signs and symbols, dynamics and articulations.

- End by playing something just for fun.
- Swab woodwinds thoroughly, empty water from brasses and return instrument safely to case.

## **How Parents Can Help**

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

- Support the goals, policies, and procedures of the director. Your child succeeds when the band director succeeds.
- Require regular practice at home. Provide a daily time and place where your child can practice without distractions or interruptions.
- Ask your child to play for you and encourage performance.
- Teach your child to be punctual by helping him or her to be on time to performances and rehearsals.
- Enthusiastically attend all band functions to show your support. Get involved! Join the Reidland Band Boosters!
- Help keep your child's instrument in good repair.
- Give strong consideration to providing private lessons for your child.

## **Grievances**

If any band member or parent has a grievance, complaint, or problem, it is his or her responsibility to take it through the proper chain of command. First, discuss the problem with the band director. If a higher authority is warranted, the band director will take the problem to the proper administrator. It is NEVER proper to discuss problems within the band with other members of the student body or community.

## **Special Note**

Student photos or videos may be placed on the band web site or in the local media outlets in relation to band activities and subject to board policy. Please ask the director if you have any questions. In addition to the above regulations, band members are subject to all rules in the McCracken County Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, and all M.C.P.S policies and procedures.

In Closing

Young people need positive direction. I see band as an opportunity to shape young lives and to positively influence young people.

Students must understand that their actions will have a tremendous impact on their lives and the lives of others. The nature of that impact (positive or negative) is up to the individual.

Remind your child when the challenge becomes tough that teachers, just like parents, set high standards because we care. Thank you for your support and best wishes for a safe, happy, successful school year.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. My office number is [270-538-4190](tel:270-538-4190) EXT. 8175 My email address is

[CHRISTOPHER.THORNTON@MCCRACKEN.KYSCHOOLS.US](mailto:CHRISTOPHER.THORNTON@MCCRACKEN.KYSCHOOLS.US)

Sincerely,

Chris Thornton