

AVON MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND

2016-2017 Handbook

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Middle School Band Website: amsband.avoneagles.org

Congratulations on becoming a part of the Avon Middle School Band Program! I am really excited to be working with all of you and certainly hope that this will be a worthwhile experience.

Participation in the Middle School Band program is a very exciting step. I hope it is a step that takes you all the way through the High School Band. I am extremely proud of our band program. There is nothing quite like seeing our students performing at a football game or a concert in the auditorium. Middle School students are faced with many challenges and hurdles. Being a band member is not always easy. Just remember to be proud of what you are doing. Playing an instrument is a very special skill. Just try your best and you will have a great time playing in band.

It is my sincere hope that your band experience will be an enjoyable as well as educational. All that we ask is that you try. It is your responsibility to yourself as well as to the band to not only put effort into each and every class, but also into your personal growth as a musician. That is what makes band different from your other classes. If you do not try to improve on a personal level, the rest of the class will suffer. We have very little patience for someone who is holding us up due to lack of effort.

Being a member of the band involves responsibility to the band as a group, and to each of the individuals who make up that group. Attitude and enthusiasm are as important as the ability to perform. Practice outside of band is also extremely important. Remember that in a class such as band, your behavior and performance affects everyone around you. You not only depend on others in the band, they depend on you too!

To succeed in band, you need to follow three simple rules:

- 1. Respect people and property**
- 2. Be prepared**
- 3. Have a positive attitude**

If everyone in band commits to these rules, we can make great strides this year, and everyone will have an enjoyable time in the process!

GENERAL INFORMATION

CLASSROOM RULES

1. Respect: people and property
2. Be on time (early = on time)
3. No gum
4. Raise your hand to answer questions unless otherwise prompted.
5. When Mr. Jacobs or another student steps on the podium, or is walking down the middle "aisle" of the band, all talking stops.

CONSEQUENCES (per each class)

1. First Offense: warning
2. Second Offense: conference with Mr. Jacobs/Mr. Moellman
3. Third Offense: e-mail or phone call home detailing the issue
4. Fourth Offense: classroom detention
5. Fifth Offense: referral to office

TYPICAL DAILY REHEARSAL PROCEDURE

1. All students must be in the classroom when the bell rings or you will be counted as late
2. You will have 3 minutes to set up after the bell rings or you will be counted as late
3. Attendance will be taken at the end of the three minutes
4. Warm ups and fundamentals
5. Stretch break!
6. Concert Music

THE BAND ROOM

All students will be given a locker to store his/her instrument. Gum, food and drink are not permitted during normal class meetings (*clear* water bottles are allowed). Students may ask for a pass to go to the restroom or get a drink.

INSTRUMENT CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Your full name should be on your instrument case. It is a good idea to record the serial number and keep it at home. All personally owned instruments should be put on your homeowner's insurance policy. All instruments should be kept in good working order.

Woodwinds: Reed players should have at least 4 working reeds (2 for oboe and bassoon players) at all times and they should be kept in a reed guard. You should have cork grease, appropriate swabs and a mouthpiece brush. Your mouthpieces should be cleaned out on a weekly basis with luke-warm, soapy water. Flute players should have a cleaning rod and a cleaning cloth. DO NOT submerge your instrument in water.

Brass: All brass players should have valve or slide oil and a mouthpiece brush. All tuning slides should be kept greased and should move freely. Mouthpieces should be cleaned on a weekly basis with warm, soapy water. Instruments should be given a bath in warm water with gentle soap once per month as well.

***Note: during class, all instrument cases must be stored in lockers. Keeping the floor clear of cases ensures the safety of all students as they move about the classroom. Repeated offenses will result in class detentions.

Percussion: It is the responsibility of percussion students to ensure that all equipment is put away at the end of each rehearsal in its proper place prior to leaving for their next class. Repeated violations of leaving assigned equipment out of its place at the end of class will result in class detentions.

*Percussionists will also be assigned a space in the cabinet near the practice room to store their snare sticks and music binder, both of which are required daily class materials.

PLEASE DO NOT KEEP YOUR BOOK IN YOUR CASE. There is not room for a book in most cases and putting it there will usually damage the instrument. Do not leave your instrument out in the band room, on a stand, or in the care of another student. Do not play another person's instrument. Only percussionists are allowed in the percussion section.

All regular maintenance for school-owned instruments are done as needed, and covered by the school district. Students who play those instruments are responsible for damage or disrepair caused by negligence.

INSTRUMENT REPAIR

If your instrument is not playing correctly, *please have Mr. Jacobs or Mr. Moellman check your instrument* before you decide to take it somewhere for repair. *Many minor repairs can be taken care of by one of the directors.*

If your instrument needs service, you should contact:

Rettig Music
26469 Center Ridge Rd, Westlake, OH 44145
(440) 808-0900

Hawks Music Repair (Formerly Driscolls Music)
3134 North Ridge Road
Elyria, OH 44035 440.244.1979
hawksmusicalrepair@gmail.com

Or...ask Mr. Jacobs for another option if either store is not an option for you.

It is always a good idea to call ahead. Describe the problem (your director can help with this) and ask how much time they will need to repair it. Unless it is an emergency, major repairs should be done over a vacation so that you will not be without an instrument during class. Ask Mr. Jacobs for a loaner instrument if needed.

A NOTE ON EFFORT...

It is my hope that your band experience will be enjoyable as well as educational. All I ask of you is that you try. It is your responsibility to yourself as well as to the band to not only put effort into each and every class, but also into your growth as a musician. That is what makes band different than every other class you have at school - if you don't try to improve on a personal level, then the rest of the class will suffer. I have very little patience for someone who is holding us up due to a lack of effort.

Band Grading Rubric

Daily Grade (20 points per week/4 per day)

Daily grades include having the proper equipment with you at every rehearsal. This includes:

- (1) Instrument, in good working order
- (2) Music Binder, Book and Handouts
- (3) Pencil
- (4) Misc. Supplies: reeds, valve oil, slide grease

Students are expected to participate in a positive manner. Lack of effort and disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and will result in loss of daily grade and/or other disciplinary actions as necessary.

Binder Checks: Binder checks will occur at the discretion of the director. One piece of music or equipment will randomly be selected for check-off. Failure to present the required class material will result in a day's worth of points for the week (5).

*Binders should be at least 1.5" in depth, **black** color

Playing Tests/Written Tests (60 points maximum per test)

Students in 7th and 8th grade will take one playing test per grading period. The first playing test will determine chairs for 7th and 8th grade. The 6th grade band will use a part rotation system, and if there are any solos, an open audition will be held (recorded in practice room). Tests will be recorded in our practice room adjoining the band room.

Test Schedule

Quarter 1: September 22-26 (7th and 8th grade), September 29-October 2 (6th grade)

Quarter 2: December 5-8 (7th and 8th grade), December 12-15 (6th grade)

Quarter 3: February 27-March 3 (7th and 8th grade), February 13-17 (6th grade)

Quarter 4: May 22-25 (7th and 8th grade), May 30-June 5 (6th grade)

Chair Challenges (7th and 8th grade only)

1. Challenges are designed to allow students to reach for a higher chair seating in their section immediately following a concert. The required material will include the following:
 - a. A portion of music from the previous concert
 - b. A single major scale exercise from the back of the book
 - c. Sight-reading (difficulty and length will scale by grade and increase during the year)
2. Challenges are **not** required, but you will earn 10 points of extra credit for participating in a challenge (whether you challenge or are being challenged).
3. If your seat is being challenged, you are required to participate.
4. A week's advance notice will be given for all challenges, and will generally take place the week following a concert.
5. You may only challenge the seat ahead of yours. Some exceptions:
 - a. If an entire section except for one student end up participating in the challenge, all students will be required to participate.
 - b. Example: if first, second, third and fourth chair all participate in a challenge; the section may be reordered with those four students in any order. The current fourth chair could jump to first chair with a great challenge performance!
6. Challenges will be used if a playing test does not fall immediately after concerts to allow for the moving of chairs. For example, this year we will open a challenge window sometime after Band a la Mode because the final playing test of the school year falls after the last concert.

Spot Checks (20 points each)

1. Students may be asked to complete a “spot check” assignment during class to ensure that their skills are developing properly. This is in addition to the quarterly playing test.
2. These will be very short segments of music or a single exercise from the band book.
3. Grades will then be based on preparation, and consistent improvement in the playing test assignment categories.

Playing Test/Spot Check Categories

- **Tone:** this portion of the test measures a student’s ability to produce appropriate sound on their instrument for their grade level and experience. This also measures breath support for woodwind and brass players, as well as proper positioning of hitting percussion instruments for percussionists.
- **Rhythm:** this category measures a student’s ability to perform all notes and rhythms correctly and at a steady tempo for a given assignment. For percussionists, this also includes correct sticking and control of rudiments such as flams, drags, paradiddles, etc.
- **Articulation:** woodwind and brass students should perform all articulation markings accurately in the assignment. In particular, students should be careful in slurring only the notes marked with slurs. For percussionists, this category will track any accents that may occur in a given snare exercise or mallet part.
- **Musicality:** this category will measure the student’s performance of appropriate dynamic markings. This includes crescendo, decrescendo and all dynamic markings (ex. *Piano* or *forte*). For woodwind and brass players, this will also include taking a breath in the appropriate point in the music should there be breath marks indicated or assigned.

Point Breakdown for Playing Tests

Woodwind/Brass Percussion

Tone: 15 points Tone: 5 points

Rhythm: 15 points Rhythm: 25 points

Articulation: 10 points Articulation: 10 points

Musicality: 10 points Musicality: 10 points

*For spot checks, the initial grade will be out of 50 points, and then scaled down to 20 points.

Rhythm/Accuracy

14-15: Notes are accurate throughout performance; No discernable rhythm errors; pitch errors are negligible

12-13: Notes and rhythms are mostly accurate during performance; notes and rhythms are occasionally inaccurate, but do not greatly impact the overall performance

10-11: A few note and rhythm errors negatively impact overall performance

8-9: Several pitch and note errors; Rhythm inconsistent

7: The musical excerpt and/or rhythm is indiscernible

Tone/Pitch

14-15: Maintains mature characteristic tone quality throughout the duration of the performance; an occasional note might be played slightly out of tone/tune (14)

12-13: Tone quality is characteristically acceptable, but still developing maturity; a stronger internal “sound concept” still needs to be developed

10-11: Tone quality is developing; there are elements of mature sound, but not consistently 8-9: Tone quality is not produced with proper breath support for most of the performance. Fundamentally, there may be major changes to embouchure, posture and technique needed

7: Tone quality lacks characteristic sound altogether

Articulation

9-10: All articulation markings are observed and performed appropriately. A perfect score indicates that elements of nuance were present in the performance (where appropriate). Proper articulation technique is used at all times.

8: Articulation markings are mostly observed and performed. Occasional markings are omitted, but do not detract from the overall performance. Some notes are fundamentally articulated with improper technique, but do not detract from the overall performance.

7: Articulation markings are sometimes performed, but not with regularity or consistency. The musical style of the piece is not clear at all times during the performance. There are some fundamental issues with basic articulation.

6: Major omissions to musical style/articulation markings. The basic framework of the music is clear, but the style is not.

5: There are fundamental flaws in basic articulation technique. The musical style is not conveyed.

Musicality

9-10: All dynamic markings are observed and performed correctly; there is an element of musical nuance in the performance where appropriate; musical phrasing is mature (where appropriate)

8: Dynamic markings are mostly observed; musical phrasing is good, but lacks nuance

7: Dynamics are somewhat present in the performance; some phrasing is present, but some basic understanding of the proper phrasing lacking

6: Dynamics are nearly undetectable in the performance; lacks basic understanding of phrasing

5: Dynamics not present in performance; phrasing not evident

Percussionists-Your point breakdown for the Tone and Rhythm categories is as follows:

Rhythm/Accuracy

23-25: Notes accurate throughout performance; Little to No discernable rhythm errors; pitch errors negligible (23 or 24)

21-22: Notes and rhythms are mostly accurate during performance; notes and rhythms are occasionally inaccurate, but do not greatly impact the overall performance

19-20: A few note and rhythm errors negatively impact overall performance

17-18: Several pitch and note errors; Rhythm inconsistent

16: The musical excerpt and/or rhythm is indiscernible

Tone/Pitch

5: Proper placement of sticks or mallets throughout entire duration of performance

4: Proper placement throughout most of performance of sticks and mallets

3: Some consistency lacking in stick/mallet placement. Placement affects musical performance/rhythm.

2: Some major flaws in technique with stick and mallet placement on instrument during performance.

1: Numerous major flaws in technique negatively impact the performance.

Here are some general guidelines to help you prepare for playing tests and challenges:

1. You may come in before school, or make an appointment with Mr. Jacobs to take your test at another time if necessary. This is more ideal, as you will have more time in one sitting to work on the assignment. However, students will be individually taking tests during class, but will be given a very brief period of time to complete the assignment.
2. You will be notified of playing tests at least two weeks in advance before the due date. Occasionally, more than one test may be assigned in advance. Plan accordingly!
3. It is preferable to play your playing test at a slower tempo, and play with greater accuracy. For grading purposes, playing with good fundamentals is emphasized over how fast you can play something.

Practice Logs (10 points)

1. Practice logs are to be turned in Thursday of each week, by the end of the day. If the student is absent on Thursday, the chart must be turned in the next day the student is in school. **Late practice charts are NOT accepted.**
2. Practice logs must be signed by a parent each week in order to receive credit. The parent's signature will tell us that you are aware of how much time your child has practiced.
3. Every daily column should have an amount in it (even if it is zero). Please mark your total minutes in the appropriate column.
4. If a student fails to get credit for a practice chart, extra credit is available to replace it by checking with your teacher for an assignment. ***Attending another Avon musical performance or any other musical performance will earn you a make-up of one practice chart.
5. If the student loses this chart, they may make a new one and turn that one in (a signed note from home with the minutes practiced is sufficient). There will also be a PDF file of the practice chart on the Middle School band website.
6. Even though students are not graded on the amount of minutes practiced, it should be remembered that students who practice more usually do better on playing tests!
7. Practice charts sent via e-mail are NOT accepted.

*****Parents!!!**

Practice outside of class is essential for improvement, and your support in this process is critical. Not only will it help the individual students and the group sound better, it will give players confidence to do their best each day as a musician! Practice charts are provided to help students record their practice time. Here are some guidelines for students and parents about practice:

- *Schedule regular practice times
- *Musical achievement requires effort over a period of time.
- *Have a dedicated practice space that is free of distractions. *Praise your child's efforts and achievements.
- *Encourage your child to play for family and friends.
- *Make sure your child's instrument is in good working order.
- *Expose your child to a variety of music, particularly professional musicians that play your child's chosen instrument.

Extra Credit: This can be earned by attending concerts in which students do not perform. The best recommendations would be to attend any other concert by the Avon Music Department. Middle School and High School Band, Orchestra and Choir all count towards

Concert Attendance

Posted on the website (<http://amsband.avoneagles.org>) is a concert schedule for this school year. The concert dates are also listed below. Please review it and place these dates on your family calendar. Students are required as part of their class grade to participate in all events. You should plan on each concert lasting roughly 75 minutes from beginning to end. Most concerts include at least three performing groups and students are expected to stay and be a great audience for their peers.

Unexcused absences from a concert will result in the lowering of your grade by 15 percent.

2016-2017 Concert Dates

- * 8th Grade Band rehearses with Marching Band: Tuesday, September 20th, 4:00-5:30 PM
- * 8th Grade Band Night Friday, September 23rd ...itinerary posted on website
- * Thursday, December 1st, 6:30 PM-AMS 6/7/8/Jazz Band Concert at Avon HS Auditorium
- * Sunday, December 4th, between 9:00 AM and 12:00 PM, Pancake Breakfast (Jazz Band only)
- * Saturday, February 25th, (afternoon-times TBA)-Band a la Mode performance at Avon HS Auditorium
- * Saturday, April 1st (times TBA)-OMEA Middle School Solo and Ensemble (7th and 8th grade only)
- * Tuesday, May 16th, 6:30 PM-AMS 6/7/8/Jazz Band Concert at Avon HS Auditorium

*Every student is important in band; therefore it is vital that all students attend every concert. Outside of emergency situations, a conflict with a concert must be given to the director in the form of a note from your parent(s) at least two weeks prior to the concert. This note opens dialogue between the director and the student to determine if there is a way to work out the conflict. It is up to the determination of the director what is/is not an excused absence.

*As long as you plan ahead you should find that I am pretty easy to work with. Most conflicts with a concert can be worked around or even avoided altogether with ample advance notice.

*All of our concerts are played in the high school auditorium. We are guests at the high school. In order to use that facility, all students must be in the auditorium or with their parents. Students are not to go anywhere else in the high school unless directed to by Mr. Jacobs.

CONCERT DRESS CODE: Dress for all concerts should be white shirt/blouse, and black pants/skirt/dress. Fully black dresses are also permitted. Please try to avoid athletic shoes with concert attire. Shirts/blouses should have a collar (button up or polo shirt).

The following items are *not permitted* as part of concert attire.

1. Jeans
2. Athletic wear (track pants, sweat pants, etc.). Dri-fit white shirts are OK.
3. Shorts of any kind
4. Any item that violates the dress code policy of Avon Middle School in the Student Handbook.



How to access parent/student information in Charms

- This year, we will be completing some playing assignments through the recording studio application in Charms Office Assistant.
- Log on to www.charmsoffice.com, and click “ENTER / LOG IN” in the upper right corner.
- Locate the “PARENT/STUDENT/MEMBERS LOGIN” section of the web page.
- Login to your student’s program account using the following School Code:

AvonBands

- This will bring up the main “Public” page. This will allow you to look at the “public” calendar for your organization, event list, and handouts and other “publicly shared” files, as well as a few other options.
- The first time you go here, enter your child’s Avon Student ID Number into the **Student Area Password** field. You will be directed to the Change Password screen, to set a personal password different from the ID, for future use. You may also be directed to create both a unique Username and Password for the student.
- Whenever you enter using this Username/password, another more detailed screen appears, with various button options for you to access areas in the Charms account. What appears here is partially up to the Account Administrator or Head Director.
- **Update Personal Information** –you may help make changes to your and your child’s student information page (such as updating phone numbers / cell carriers and email addresses if they change) to help them communicate with you more effectively.
- Students will have a multitude of options at their disposal for completing playing test assignments now:
 - Students will be able to record their test from most iOS and Android devices via the Charms app.
 - Students will also be able to record at a desktop or laptop computer by logging in to their account in Charms on their web browser of choice. Please note that a microphone is required to be plugged in to the computer for this option.
 - Students who do not have a personal electronic device that supports the Charms app, or are unable to complete assignments on their home computer will have access to the Charms app and/or Charms web portal at school, during class.

THIS FORM NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED TO MR. JACOBS BY Friday, September 9th

As a student and member of the Avon Middle School Bands, I have read this handbook. I agree to follow the guidelines in this handbook as a representative of the Avon Middle School Band as well as behavior expected as an Avon Middle School student. I will abide by the schedule of all rehearsals and concerts and will appropriately care for the instrument provided to me if applicable.

Student name (printed) _____ Date _____

Student signature _____

-I/We have read the Avon Middle School Band Handbook and have discussed it with our student. –

-I/We understand that is the responsibility of our student to abide by the rules outlined in this handbook.

Parent name (printed) _____

Parent signature _____

Date _____

Parent email _____

In order to ensure the success of our band and orchestra programs, The Avon Band and Orchestra Boosters kindly requests that families volunteer for at least one of the following functions:

___ Concession stand (football season)

___ Band Banquet

___ Fall Fundraiser

___ Spring Fundraiser

___ Tag Day (October 1st)

___ Trip coordinators

___ Pancake Breakfast (December 4th)

___ Cake celebration/donut day

___ Chocolate Symphony (February 18th)

___ Half-time snacks at home football games

___ Band a la Mode (February 25th)

___ Uniform fitting and inventory

___ Concession stand (Spring track season)

___ Photographer

Volunteer early to receive your first choice by checking two of the boxes above. Sign-ups for Football game and Spring track concessions can be found on Sign Up Genius at <http://www.avonband.co.nr>