

Wheaton Christian Grammar School

# Beginning Band Handbook

2021-2022



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## Beginning Band Handbook

August 24, 2021

Dear Band Members and Parents,

I am really looking forward to working with the Beginning Band students this school year. It is my desire to work with each one of you in creating the best sounding band we can be. In this handbook you will find my policies and procedures of the band program as well as information concerning this school year.

### **Parents**

Thank you for allowing your son or daughter the opportunity of playing a band instrument. Playing in a band is a unique experience like nothing else. It is crucial that I have the support of parents as we partner in training your children in becoming great musicians. Please encourage your children to practice their instrument. Being an instrumentalist for over 50 years I know that the only way to improve as a musician is to spend time practicing. A musician's expertise on an instrument is directly proportional to the time spent practicing – it's as simple as that!

### **Response**

Please read through the following information very carefully. Students and parents must sign and return the attached sheet by Friday, August 27.

I'm looking forward to working with your children!

Sincerely,

Mr. David Wright  
Director of Bands

# Discipline

Band by its very name suggests oneness, teamwork, ensemble, and cooperation, with everyone striving for a common goal. This all comes at a student's life when individual identity is desired. As Christians, we all recognize the importance of working together cooperatively, for one goal – bringing glory to God. A very small number of students find they cannot make this kind of sacrifice and become disruptive discipline problems in the band rehearsal. These students will not be allowed to affect the quality of learning taking place in class. Continued problems will result in that student being removed from rehearsal, and ultimately dismissed from the instrumental program. Consequences may include a one-on-one conference with the director, after school detention, call to parents, and a reduction of the student's daily grade. Band members need to accept *responsibility* for their actions, good or bad. Students should be looking to glorify God and work toward the success of our band program.

## Daily Rules and Procedures

The following rules are set in place to create an atmosphere of learning and success. Students who violate these rules are responsible for reducing the amount of time for rehearsal and consequently hurting the entire band.

1. Show respect to your band director and your peers.
2. Enter the Commons in a quiet, courteous, and orderly manner.
3. BE ON TIME! Students are considered late to class if they are not **in their seats, instruments ready, music on their stands, and ready to play** by **11:17 a.m.** Class begins at 11:15 a.m.
4. Students will not play other students' instruments. **This includes percussion instruments and keyboards.** Band members will have the following at every rehearsal:
  - a. INSTRUMENT (with the necessary accessories)
  - b. ALL MUSIC
  - c. PENCIL
5. Students will be spaced three feet apart during rehearsal. Masks will be required in the band room and may only be lowered to play your wind instrument. Percussionists will stay masked for the entire rehearsal. Brass and Woodwind players (except flutes) need to use bell covers for their instruments. If you do not own a bell cover, they may be purchased from Music and Arts Center. Go to this web address:  
<https://www.musicarts.com/search?q=bell%20cover>
6. Good posture is of great importance at all times.
7. Instruments MUST be stored in instrument lockers when not being played at school. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR INSTRUMENT ON THE BAND ROOM FLOOR OR IN HALLWAYS!** If you would like to lock your instrument in your instrument locker, locks are available. Please use WCGS locks only.
8. **Practice, practice, practice!** More is accomplished in band rehearsal when you have learned your music at home. Leaving your instrument at school overnight should be the exception rather than the rule.
9. Absolutely no gum, food, or drink in the band room or practice rooms. (Water is OK.)
10. Accept responsibility for yourself and your learning.

## Grades/Points

Grades are based on progress that includes at-home practicing, rehearsals, concerts, SmartMusic assignments, and sectionals. Points are accumulated for each activity listed above. All students are required to practice at home. A minimum of 100 minutes is required. Consistent, daily work is essential to improvement on your instrument. Practice is most effective when it is broken into smaller practice sessions. For instance, practicing 20 minutes, 5 days a week, or 30 minutes, 4 times a week is much more beneficial than 60 minutes at one time.

This is the percentage breakdown of the students' band grades:

40% - Playing in rehearsals

25% - Playing in sectionals

20% - Playing assignments

15% - Playing in concerts

## Sectionals

All students in Beginning Band have weekly scheduled lessons (sectionals) during the regular school day. Since some academic classes may be missed for sectionals, IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK! The only exception for missing a sectional is if a teacher is giving a test during that period in class and it cannot be made up at another time. **It is critical that every band student attend these sectionals. They are vital to the progress of the student's and our band's success.**

## Rehearsal Schedule

Beginning Band will rehearse twice a week on **Wednesdays and Fridays, from 11:15-11:45 a.m.** At the beginning, most of the work learning the instruments will be done during sectional lessons. We will continue to work progressively through the method books at weekly lessons. If you know you will be out of school on a particular day, please see Mr. Wright ahead of time to cover what you will miss.

## Playing Assignments

For the past several years our instrumental students have been using a program called SmartMusic for submitting weekly assignments. In 2019, SmartMusic changed to a new browser-based version of their program. WCGS made the switch to the new Smartmusic last school year. Mrs. Mittlestaedt (formerly Miss Baldwin) and I were increasingly disappointed with the quality of this program as were many students as well. Because of this, we have decided to discontinue using SmartMusic for weekly assignments and will not require you to have a subscription for that program. We are still evaluating alternatives to use for students to submit playing assignments. Playing assignments are one of the few ways to gather formative assessments from our instrumental students. We still desire for students to complete these assignments, but until we find an alternative method, we will be putting recorded assignments on hold until we roll out a new platform. We expect to decide in the next two to three weeks and will keep you informed. In the meantime, I will be grading students' performance during sectionals. Practice rooms are now open Monday-Friday from 8:30-8:50 a.m. and 3:30-4:00 p.m. for students to use.

## Class Materials / Curriculum

All Beginning Band students will be working out of a method book entitled *Essential Elements Interactive, Book 1*. Books may be purchased through Music and Arts Center.

Prices:

All non-percussion instruments - \$11.50

Percussion – \$18.50

## Practice Records

I would like students to keep track of how long they practice each day. Please use the chart inside the cover of your method book to write down assignments and practice times. Even though this will not be graded, it is a good practice to write down times to develop good habits and consistency.

## Instrument Care and Maintenance

All students' instruments must be clean and in good playing condition. Students are expected to maintain proper care of their instruments throughout the school year. This includes reeds, mouthpieces, mutes, valve oil, slide cream, cork grease, etc. Music and Arts, Inc. visits our school weekly and can be utilized for repairs. I recommend the following companies for purchasing supplies: Sam Ash Music [samash.com](http://samash.com) (at Main Street and Roosevelt Road in Lombard), Music and Arts Center - [musicarts.com](http://musicarts.com) (on Irving Park Road east of Rt. 53, Itasca), The Woodwind Brasswind – [wwbw.com](http://wwbw.com), Musician's Friend – [www.musiciansfriend.com](http://www.musiciansfriend.com), or Amazon - [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

Here is a list of accessories each student will need for the proper care of their instrument(s)

**Flute** - Cleaning rod, flute, polishing cloth

**Oboe** - A minimum of 3 medium strength reeds, Oboe Swab, Cork grease

**Clarinet** - A minimum of 4 Vandoren 2.5-3 clarinet reeds, 4-reed holder, Yamaha 4C mouthpiece or similar, Cork grease, Mouthpiece brush, Clarinet swab

**Saxophone** - A minimum of 4 Vandoren 2.5 saxophone reeds, 4-reed holder, Yamaha 4C mouthpiece, Cork grease, Mouthpiece brush, saxophone swab

**Trumpet** - La Tromba T2 Valve Oil, cleaning snake, Tuning-slide grease, Mouthpiece brush, cleaning rag, Bach 7C (4<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> grade) or 5C (6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade) mouthpiece.

**Horn** - La Tromba T2 Valve Oil, Holton Farkas Mouthpiece Medium Deep Cup, cleaning snake, Tuning-slide grease, Mouthpiece brush, cleaning rag

**Trombone** - Polishing cloth, cleaning snake, cleaning rod, Cheesecloth, Mouthpiece brush, Tuning-slide grease, Yamaha Trombone Slide Lubricant, Slide-O-Mix, or Trombotine slide cream, Water spray bottle, Bach 61/2 AL or 5G (7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade) mouthpiece.

**Baritone/Tuba** - La Tromba T2 Valve Oil, Tuning-slide grease, Polishing cloth, cleaning snake, Mouthpiece brush

**Percussion** - Snare/Bell Kit, Stick Bag, SD1, 5A or 5B (7A for Jazz Ensemble) Drumsticks, Bell Mallets

## Concert Dress Code

Performing groups will be uniform during performances. This year all band, choir, and orchestra students will wear "concert black" for performances:

**Boys:** Black shoes, black socks, black dress pants, black long-sleeve dress shirt with buttons.

**Girls:** Black shoes, black dress skirt, dress, or pants, black top.

## Parent Volunteers

We need volunteers for our concerts. It is very helpful to have parental supervision for concerts and people to help tune instruments before performances. If you would like to sign-up to volunteer, email Mrs. Beth Wright at [bwright@wheatonchristian.org](mailto:bwright@wheatonchristian.org) as soon as possible.

## Concerts and Important Dates

The concerts and events listed below are **mandatory** and may not be missed for any reason other than illness or a death in the family. Student's grades for concerts cannot be made up except for illness or death in the family. These events are to be viewed as a final exam. Failure to attend any of these events will cause a drop in the student's quarter grade.

Christmas Band Concert .....7:00 p.m., Tuesday, December 7, 2021  
Spring Band Concert .....7:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 10, 2022

**All Concerts will be held in the WCGS Commons unless noted otherwise.**



# Beginning Band Commitment Form

I have read the preceding information. I understand and accept the commitment and expectations of becoming a member of the Beginning Band for the 2021-2022 school year at WCGS.

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Student's Name (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

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Student's Signature

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Instrument

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Parent's Signature

**Please detach this form, sign, and return to Mr. Wright by Friday, August 27, 2021.**