

Wheaton Christian Grammar School

# Concert Band Handbook

2019-2020



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## Concert Band Handbook

August 30, 2019

Dear Band Members and Parents,

I hope you are all as excited as I am about Concert Band this school year! I am really looking forward to working with each one of you in creating the best sounding Junior High 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 concert 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. It is the responsibility of each parent to see that their child practices his / her instrument daily. As the director, my hands are tied without the help of parents. Being an instrumentalist for over 49 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!

Over the past several years I have been working hard toward a balanced instrumentation in Concert Band. We have made some great improvements within the balance and numbers of each section of the band. I will still, however, actively pursue students to fill vacancies that presently exist. We currently could use more players on the following instruments: flute, clarinet, French horn, baritone, tuba, bass clarinet, and bassoon. Perhaps some of you that are in some of the "large" sections of the band would consider learning a secondary instrument for the benefit of the band. Trumpet players are probably the most likely instrumentalists that can make the switch to French horn, baritone or tuba and clarinet or sax players to bass clarinet or bassoon. Please see Mr. Wright if you are interested.

Please read through the following information very carefully. Students and their parents must turn in the signed sheet by Tuesday, September 3.

I'm looking forward to a great year together!

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 middle school 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, and a call to parents. 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 band room 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 **2:45 p.m.** Class begins at 2:43 p.m.
4. Students will not play other students' instruments. **This includes percussion instruments and keyboards.**
5. Band members will have the following at every rehearsal:
  - a. INSTRUMENT (with the necessary accessories)
  - b. ALL MUSIC
  - c. PENCIL
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 rehearsals, concerts, weekly SmartMusic assignments, and weekly sectionals. Points are accumulated for each activity listed above. All students are required to practice and submit SmartMusic assignments at home or school. 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 90 minutes at one time.

This is the percentage break down of the students' band grades:

40% - Playing in rehearsals

20% - Playing in sectionals

25% - SmartMusic assignments

15% - Playing in concerts

## **Additional Opportunities**

**Concerts/Recitals** – Students should look for opportunities to hear live music being performed. Look for opportunities to hear a professional playing your instrument. It will inspire you!

**Recitals** – Playing in recitals is a great way to build confidence, take on a challenge that will push the development of your skills, and help overcome the fear of performing.

**Private Lessons** – Every instrumentalist should consider taking private lessons on his/her instrument. Students that study privately are generally significantly farther ahead in their ability to play their instrument well compared to students that do not take private lessons. See Mr. Wright for a recommendation of local teachers for your instrument.

**IGSMA Solo and Ensemble Contest** – Solo and ensemble contest will be coming up in February. Now is a good time to begin thinking about your involvement in this contest. Mr. Wright will talk with many of you about participating in this event. It is my hope that many students will choose to participate and that we represent WCGS well in this district contest. Information will be sent home when it is available.

**ILMEA District Concert Band and Jazz Band** – This is a district-wide (most of DuPage county) honors band and jazz band for which all 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade band, orchestra, and choir students have the opportunity to audition. You must register to audition through Mr. Wright. The deadline for registration is September 13. Please see Mr. Wright for audition music and details.

## **SmartMusic Practicing System**

The SmartMusic computer software program is an integral part of our instrumental music curriculum. *Each Concert Band student is required to purchase a subscription and enroll in the SmartMusic program.* Weekly assignments will need to be completed and submitted throughout the year. These assignments will make up 25% of the student's quarter grades. Students who would rather do SmartMusic at WCGS may submit their assignments at school either during study hall, before school, or after school as the computers are available. We have several SmartMusic stations in the music department that are available for student use. If you already have a SmartMusic subscription make sure that you renew your license, update your software to the latest version of SmartMusic, and enroll in Cadet Band for the current school year. If you are new to WCGS, or do not have a previous subscription, go to SmartMusic.com to download the program and purchase a student subscription. SmartMusic is also available as a free app (to be used with a subscription) for the iPad. The SmartMusic subscription rate is \$40.00 per year. Practice rooms are open Monday-Friday from 8:30-8:50 a.m., and 3:30-4:00 p.m. for students to use.

Two to three SmartMusic assignments will be given every week to Concert Band students. These assignments will cover a variety of skill development including, but not limited to major and minor scales in all keys, technical studies, etudes and lyrical studies, and current band literature. *Students must complete these assignments within two weeks of their assigned date. Students may submit these assignments during the third week after their assigned date for a reduction of 50% of their earned grade. If a student fails to complete the SmartMusic assignment within three weeks of the assigned date, they will receive a "0" for that assignment. At that point the assignment will no longer be accessible to the student.* I would encourage every Concert Band student to be faithful in their practicing and in completing their assignments, developing consistent practice habits weekly.

## 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** - Al Cass or Blue Juice 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** - Holton Farkas Mouthpiece Medium Deep Cup, Valve Oil, Cleaning snake, Tuning-slide grease, Mouthpiece brush, Cleaning rag

**Trombone** - Polishing cloth, Cleaning snake, Cleaning rod, Cheesecloth, Mouthpiece brush, Tuning-slide grease, Conn SuperSlick 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** - Al Cass or Blue Juice 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) Drum Sticks, Bell Mallets

## Rehearsal Schedule

Concert Band rehearses twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays from 2:43-3:25 p.m. Be on time! Rehearsals are mandatory and may not be missed for any reason other than absence from school. 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. Missing band rehearsal to make up work in another class is **absolutely prohibited**. Attendance and punctuality are a major part of your grading period average.

## Sectionals

All students in Concert Band have scheduled sectionals during the regular school day. Since academic classes will 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**. Students in Jazz Ensemble are encouraged to be at sectionals even though one Jazz rehearsal a week is a "pull-out." Missing a sectional for these students should be the exception rather than the norm. **It is critical that every band student attend these sectionals. They are vital to the success of our band's progress.**

## Class Materials / Curriculum

All Concert Band students will be working out of a method book entitled *Tradition of Excellence - Technique & Musicianship*. Books can be purchased through WCGS and will be charged to your school account.

Prices:

Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Baritone, Electric Bass - \$7.50, Percussion – \$10.50

Each student will be issued a new folder with copies of the music the band will be playing. It is the student's responsibility to take good care of this folder and music and have it present at every rehearsal and sectional. Music and folders that have been lost are subject to replacement fees. ***Students may keep the folders but must turn in all music before the end of the school year.***

## Seating Auditions

In an effort to assign a part to each student that is within his or her range and technical ability, each student will play an audition. This is not an audition to "get into the group," but rather for part and chair assignments. Auditions for seating and part placement will take place in mid to late September during sectionals.

## Challenges

On the basis of the results of the auditions in August, students will be assigned seats within the section. Students desiring to "improve" their position may do so by challenging the person directly ahead of them. A student wishing to challenge simply informs the director who will assign music to both players. At the end of the week the player who exhibits better preparation on the assigned music will take the higher seat. In the result of a tie, the students will stay in their current seats. ***The challenging student must play the music selection noticeably better than the one being challenged, with better tone, musicianship and technique in order to improve their position.*** Challenges will not be scheduled two weeks or less before a concert.

## Concert Uniforms

Since we will be performing at a number of different venues throughout the year, the band will utilize the following uniforms for performances:

1) A WCGS issued polo shirt for all music ensembles.

2) Khaki (tan) colored pants and dress shoes.

Please do not add your own “personal” touches to these uniform requirements. The purpose of a uniform is just that, that we are all “uniform” in our appearance. Our uniforms will be mandatory of all concert band students and will be worn for all performances.

## Parent Volunteers

We are in need of volunteers for our concerts. We need 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 student events listed below are **mandatory** and may not be missed for any reason other than illness or a death in the family. Concert participation makes up 15% of the students’ quarter grade. Students’ grades for concerts cannot be made up with the exception of 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 minimum of a **one-letter drop** of a student’s quarter grade.

Band Auditions (times will be assigned). Mid to Late September (during sectionals), 2019  
Grandparents Day (tentative) ..... (during school day) Tuesday, November 26, 2019  
Christmas Band Concert..... 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, December 10, 2019  
Music Ministry Day..... Friday, March 13, 2020  
(There is a cost involved in the above trip)  
Spring Band Concert ..... 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 5, 2020  
Music Field Trip ..... TBD, May 2020  
Graduation (8<sup>th</sup> grade only) ..... 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 26, 2020

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

In addition to the above concerts, students may **choose** to be involved in the following events:

ILMEA Registration Deadline ..... Friday, September 13, 2019  
ILMEA Music Festival Auditions.....Saturday, September 28, 2019  
ILMEA Music Festival.....Saturday, November 9, 2019  
IGSMA Solo and Ensemble Contest..... Saturday, February 29, 2020  
Fine Arts Solo Recitals..... Monday, April 20, 2020

## Concert Band Commitment Form

I have read the preceding information. I understand and accept the commitment and expectations of becoming a member of the Concert Band. I also realize that I am making a one-year commitment for the 2019-2020 school year to the WCGS Concert Band.

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Student's Signature

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Parent's Signature

**Please detach this form, sign and return to Mr. Wright by  
Tuesday, September 3, 2019.**