

THOMAS A. BLAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL

BAND HANDBOOK 2011-2012



Blake Middle School
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(508) 359-2396

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WELCOME

Welcome back!

I hope you've had a terrific summer! I am looking forward to getting underway and making music again with all of the bands and the students that have made teaching in Medfield the past 12 years so very rewarding.

Your support is essential to your child's success with music. There are many different ways you can support your child's music education. It could mean helping him/her schedule a consistent, daily time for personal practice, or encouraging him/her to perform for family and friends, or enrolling him/her in private lessons, or taking him/her to a concert or recital, or simply offering encouragement regularly. The guidelines that follow are designed to assist you in giving your child the best support possible for his or her musical endeavors.

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 this handbook thoroughly to ensure your child has a rewarding band experience. Thank you for your continued participation and support. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours Musically,

Ryan 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, self-confidence, goal setting, memory skills, concentration, self-expression, 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*
- Perhaps the basic reason that every child must have an education in music is that music is a part of the fabric of our society. The intrinsic value of music for each individual is widely recognized in the many cultures that make up American life — indeed, every human culture uses music to carry forward its ideas and ideals. The importance of music to our economy is without doubt. And the value of music in shaping individual abilities and character are evident. – *MENC*
- “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 from you, 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

Band Bulletin

The *Band Bulletin* is a weekly letter to students and parents containing information about upcoming rehearsals, assignments, performances, and other important events. It is given to students in class.

Website

On the band website, you will find:

- Performance and rehearsal schedules
- Documents/Resources (permission slips, play-a-long audio files & more)
- Private Lesson Information
- Photo Gallery
- Music-related links

To visit the website, go to <http://teacherweb.com/MA/Medfield/Dexter/>

Phone Chain

A phone chain will be created at the beginning of the school year. Any last-minute rehearsal or performance cancellations due to inclement weather or otherwise will be communicated through the phone chain.

Email

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

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.

PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Sixth Grade Band

Sixth grade band meets twice each week. Performances this year include the Middle School Bands winter and spring concerts and the Medfield Band-O-Rama featuring the elementary, middle, and high school bands.

Seventh and Eighth Grade Band

The seventh and eighth grade bands meet twice each week. The seventh and eighth grade bands will be combined for the majority of this year's performances. Performances include the middle school bands winter and spring concerts, the Medfield Band-O-Rama, and the Music in the Parks Festival at Six Flags New England. The Eighth Grade Band will perform with the High School Band on the February "step-up" concert.

Wind Ensemble

Participation in Wind Ensemble is by audition. Auditions were completed at the end of last school year. In the event not all seats are filled, students may be able to audition during the current school year. Rehearsals will be held on Thursdays from 3:00-4:30 PM beginning September 15. Performances include the middle school bands winter and spring concerts and the MICCA (Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association) Concert Festival. Should the ensemble earn a gold medal at MICCA, there will be an additional performance on either April 14 or April 21 at Boston Symphony Hall or Mechanics Hall in Worcester. Gold medal ensembles are scheduled according to a lottery system.

Jazz Ensemble

Participation in Jazz Ensemble is by audition. Auditions will be held on September 6 and 7. Interested students should sign-up for an audition time in the music room. Rehearsals are on Mondays after school from 3:00 to 4:30 PM beginning 9/12. Performances include the middle school bands winter and spring concerts, Medfield Jazz Night, the IAJE Jazz Festival, and the Music in the Parks Festival at Six Flags New England.

Solo and Small Ensemble

All middle school band students are encouraged to perform a classical or traditional solo on the spring Young Artists Recital. Students should also consider performing in a small ensemble (i.e. saxophone quartet, brass quintet, etc.). Interested students should contact Mr. Dexter about music and coaching with a private lesson teacher.

Junior District Auditions

Seventh and eighth grade band students are eligible to audition for the Eastern Junior District Band or Jazz Ensemble. Audition requirements can be found on the MMEA Eastern District website at <http://www.mmeaeasterndistrict.org/index.htm> at the beginning of the school year. A link is available on the band website. Auditions will take place on Saturday, January 28. Interested students should contact Mr. Dexter for more information as soon as possible.

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 is not permitted. **“Listen” and “Silent” are spelled with the same letters!**
5. Do not walk through the percussion section or touch the percussion equipment at any time unless you are a percussionist.
6. Upon entering the band room, immediately set up your instrument. Take your seat and warm-up independently until the start of rehearsal. Do not approach Mr. Dexter at the start of the rehearsal unless it is an emergency. Time will be allotted at the end of rehearsal for individual concerns.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all performances and rehearsals is mandatory. Only absences due to illness, emergency, or other circumstances discussed with Mr. Dexter at least two weeks in advance will be excused. Unexcused absences from performances will result in a failing grade for that term. If you are unable to attend a rehearsal, speak with Mr. Dexter before the day of the rehearsal. Do not ask a friend to deliver the message.

GRADING

Students are graded on the following:

	% – Grade 6	% – Grade 7	% – Grade 8
Performances	30	30	30
Rehearsal Skills	20	20	20
Preparation	20	20	20
Playing Tests	20	20	20
Enrichment	10	10	10

PERSONAL PRACTICE

Personal practice is the key to success. Students cannot learn how to play their instrument in school band rehearsals. The purpose of band rehearsals is to experience the music making process with others. Students need to attain a certain level of facility on their instrument to be able to contribute to and benefit from this experience. This can only be achieved through consistent practice at home. At least 20-30 minutes a day is ideal. Advanced students may require additional practice time. The more you practice, the more fun you will have in band!

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 treated with the utmost respect. If Mr. Dexter is unable to repair an instrument, arrangements must be made with Music and Arts Center. A loaner should be requested in most cases, as repairs may take up to 2-3 weeks.

Storage

On rehearsal days, students must store their instrument in a cubby in the band room 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.

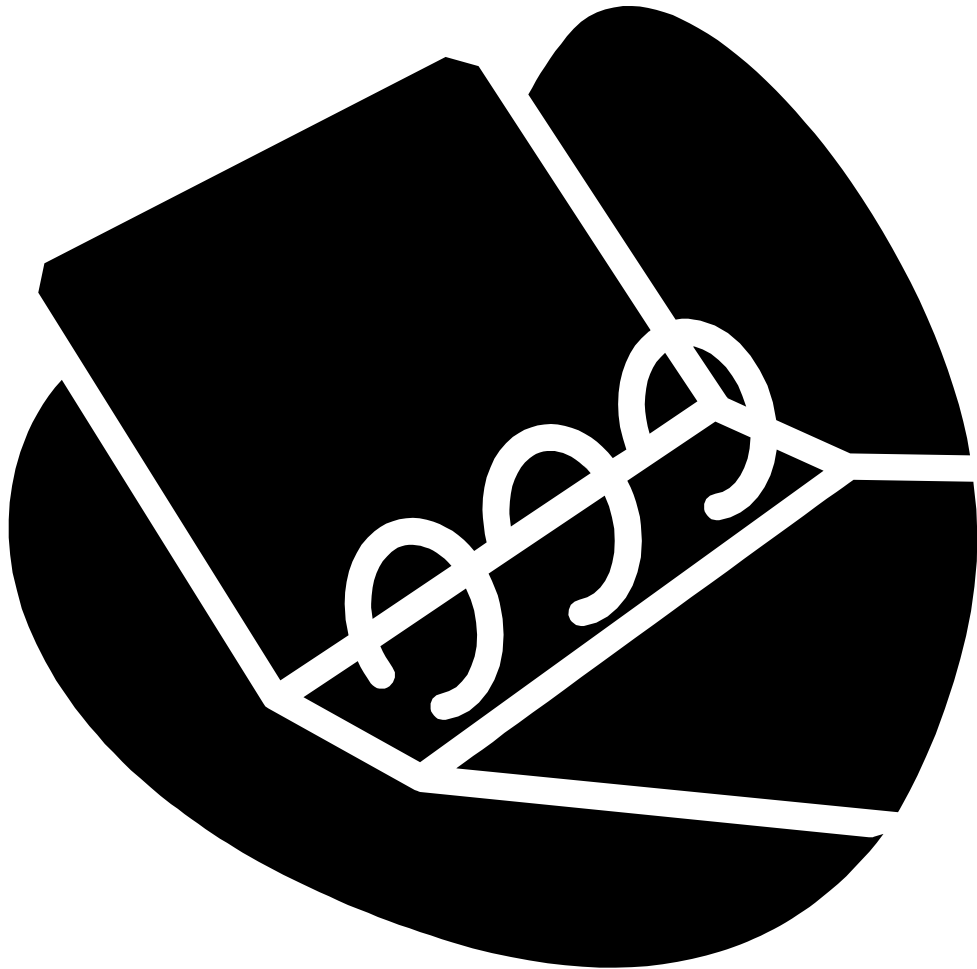
SHEET MUSIC

Students will be provided with various pieces of music throughout the year. The music is the responsibility of the individual student. All measures must be numbered.

Music Binder

A 1-inch black ring binder is required for band class. Students will also need at least 10 sheet protectors (25 are ideal). Hole-punched, unprotected sheet music is easily lost and easily destroyed. Music binders must be labeled with the student's name. View binders work the best.

All BMS band students are required to keep a **1-inch Black Ring Binder**. This binder will contain your music and other resources. Sheet protectors are also required to protect and organize all of the music and other materials you will receive throughout the year.



MEDFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS MUSIC DEPARTMENT
INSTRUMENTAL LESSON PROGRAM
2011-2012

The Medfield music program has long been recognized for excellence within the state, throughout the Northeast, and Nationally in many areas. Excellence is a product of hard work and a strong foundation of fundamentals. Private lessons are an important part of each student's musical experience and growth. The lesson program in Medfield is the foundation of our students' success both individually and collectively. Lessons are essential to continued development on a musical instrument. Music class is not the place to learn how to play an instrument at the secondary level. Great musicianship and ensemble training are the key components of band and orchestra. Middle and high school is a critical time for all students to take advantage of this program. Please read this letter carefully and return the "Lesson Sign-up Form" to your music teacher by Friday, September 9, 2011 if interested. Late enrollments will be accepted, but teacher time slots may be limited.

Instrumental lessons for students are offered after the regular school day hours at Blake Middle School and Medfield High School. All lessons are private. **Collection of lesson fees will be coordinated through the Medfield Adult Education Program (visit their Webpage at www.medfield.net)** There are two payment periods during the course of the year. Payment one covers 14 lessons from October to January and payment two covers 13 lessons from January to May. Lessons officially end in May so that the teachers and students can utilize the rest of the year to conduct make-up lessons as needed (max two per pay period).

	Pay Period 1	Pay Period 2
30 Minutes	\$336.00	\$312.00
45 Minutes	\$504.00	\$468.00
60 Minutes	\$672.00	\$624.00

Please do no use financial concerns as a reason not to participate. Financial assistance may be available according to level of need. In addition, flexible payment plans are available upon request. Any financial assistance will be kept confidential. Please call me at (508) 242-8563 or email at dolsen@medfield.mec.edu.

Our teaching staff is exceptional and each child will receive expert instruction on their chosen instrument. All play or teach professionally throughout the Boston area. Scheduling will be done to accommodate as many students as possible.

Thank you for your continuing support of the Medfield Public Schools music program.

Sincerely,

Douglas Olsen
Director of Music
dolsen@medfield.mec.edu

**MEDFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MUSIC DEPARTMENT
PRIVATE INSTRUMENTAL LESSON PROGRAM**

Student Name: _____ School: _____

Address: _____ Grade: _____

_____ Phone: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Please Check:

I would like to take a half-hour lesson _____

I would like to take a forty-five minute lesson _____

I would like to take an hour lesson _____

____ Alto Saxophone

____ Tuba

____ Tenor Saxophone

____ French Horn

____ Baritone Saxophone

____ Trumpet

____ Flute

____ Trombone

____ Clarinet

____ Bass Clarinet

____ Oboe

____ Bassoon

____ Percussion

____ String Bass

____ Violin/Viola

____ Cello

Please check:

A. Beginner _____

B. Has Studied _____

Lessons will run from 2:30 – 9:00PM (teacher availability will limit scheduling). All lessons are scheduled through teachers directly.

****PLEASE RETURN THIS SHEET WITH PAYMENT MADE TO "Town of Medfield" TO YOUR MUSIC TEACHER BY FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19.**

PARENT/STUDENT BAND CONTRACT

I have read and understand the Blake Middle School Band Handbook and have confirmed all scheduled rehearsals and performance dates.* I understand that attendance at all scheduled performances is mandatory and that absences will only be excused due to illness or family emergency.

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

*The band handbook as well as rehearsal and performance schedules are available on the Medfield Grade 5-8 Bands Website at:
<http://teacherweb.com/MA/Medfield/Dexter/index.html>

STUDENT INFORMATION

Please provide as much information as possible as it will help with the band email distribution lists and communication throughout the school year.

Student _____

Parent(s)/Guardian _____

Address _____

Phone Number 1 (call first) _____

Phone Number 2 (call second) _____

Parent Email _____