



Welcome to the Rosa Parks Middle School Instrumental Music Program!

This handbook is designed as a resource to help students, parents and the director maintain a successful and efficient instrumental music department in the tradition of this school. We can achieve this goal only through a clear understanding of how individuals function effectively in the group.

The overall goal of the Instrumental Music Department is to create a pleasant and meaningful experience for all students, and to help prepare students for future endeavors through a well-rounded, aesthetically stimulating, and thorough, music education.

This handbook is based on the MCPS “Instrumental Music Objectives” taken from the county’s Program of Studies. I hope this handbook serves to answer any questions you may have about the instrumental music program. Feel free to call me at Rosa Parks or e-mail Jennifer_L_VanPetten@mcpsmd.org

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC OBJECTIVES

The student should be able to:

- Follow *Classroom Rehearsal Procedures* as outlined in this handbook.
- Meet individual responsibilities for care and preventative maintenance of a musical instrument and music.
- Meet all performance obligations listed in the school instrumental music calendar and follow the *Concert Expectations* outlined in this handbook.
- Care for a concert uniform where applicable.
- demonstrate proficiency of instrumental performance in the following musical areas:
 - a. Tone – demonstrate a suitable characteristic tone or sound and blend the tone with the members of the ensemble.
 - b. Ensemble – demonstrate the ability to play with precise rhythm and follow the conductor.
 - c. Intonation – demonstrate the ability to play in tune individually and with an ensemble.
 - d. Technique – demonstrate the ability to control the instrument in the areas of range, endurance, finger dexterity, flexibility and memorized scales.

- e. Style – interpret the different types of music and respond to musical directions of phrasing, dynamics, and articulations.
- Perform and sight-read appropriate grade level music as defined by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC).

**Taken from the MCPS Program of Studies, Instrumental Music, Grades 6-8, p.2*

GRADING POLICY

The overall grade for your Instrumental Music Course is reported as follows:

90-100%	= A
80-89%	= B
70-79%	= C
60-69%	= D
50-59%	= E

Each student’s grade will be based on the following:

40% Formative Assessments

Demonstration of Daily Performance Objectives

Students will be assigned points for demonstrating daily performance objectives. These objectives will be demonstrated through performance on his/her instrument both with the group and individually upon request.

Written Assignments

This grade includes mini vocabulary and rhythms assessments and any other handouts or writing assignments used for instruction.

50% Summative Assessments

Performance Skills

Formal assessments that reflect the student’s quality and improvement in the following areas; posture, hand position, tone production, pitch control, knowledge of fingerings, range, endurance, hand coordination, ensemble playing (making adjustments and corrections – listening to what others in the ensemble are playing), and dynamics.

Written Assessments

This grade includes formal assessments on the completion of a rhythm or vocabulary unit.

Concert Expectations

This grade represents the student’s ability to follow the *concert expectations* including: attendance, stage performance, and preparedness of music. **If there is no concert in the grading period, a greater emphasis will be placed on *performance skills*.**

10% Practice Journal (Practice and Preparation)

The student will hand in a practice card every week, which documents the amount of home practice, completed in the previous week. **It must be signed by a parent or guardian each week.** The entire “**Practice Journal Policy**” should be reviewed by the parents and the student. Productive home practice is an essential part of a quality music

****Class Minimum Standard****

Students are expected to practice and be contributing young musicians within their appropriate ensemble. In all assessments and elements of grading student performance **MUST** reflect some regard to the skills being taught, practiced and learned. If a student does nothing they receive a zero.

PRACTICE JOURNAL POLICY

It is the student's responsibility to turn in a signed practice journal each week. The student must practice their daily class objectives to keep up with the ensemble and to achieve their individual performance objectives. Maintenance of the journal will affect student performance on individual and ensemble assessments.

Practice journal due dates are every **Monday**. It will display the objectives of each practice session and the amount of home practice completed in the previous week. Each week will begin on a Monday and end on the following Sunday. The days and the minutes practiced should be marked on the card and given to Ms. Van Petten. Ms. Van Petten will return it after its grade is recorded. The grade distribution is as follows:

5 points = 120 and above minutes per week
4 points = 100 to 119 minutes per week
3 points = 80 to 99 minutes per week
2 points = 60-79 minutes per week
1 point = 0 to 59 minutes per week
0 points – no practice card received

Practice Journals will be accepted until the deadline which is 1 day after the due date. After the deadline, practice journals will not be accepted. Practice Journals turned in after the due date will be reduced 1 letter grade. **Practice Journals are 10% of the overall course grade reflected on the report card.** If for some reason no practicing has occurred during the given week, the signed card should still be turned in showing 0 (zero) minutes

There will be opportunities for students to retake assessments if needed. **A large element for allowing a retake would be if the student has been maintaining an accurate practice journal.**

Just as in other subject areas practice is essential in mastery of objectives. Students are expected to practice everyday to review material covered in class. It is strongly suggested that **at least 30 minutes of practice within the weekend.** Also, the student will receive maximum benefits from practicing if it is spread out over the entire week rather than lumped into two or three days. Practicing is a team effort and we can only improve as an ensemble if everyone does their part.

ATTENDANCE

1. **Attendance at all rehearsals is essential for a quality performing group.**
2. Students absent from class are responsible for making up missed work.
3. Unexcused absences will be handled according to the Rosa Parks Middle School handbook.
4. Students who are tardy must enter the class with a signed pass from the office or another teacher.
5. Unexcused tardiness will be handled according to school policy.

DAILY REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS

The student:

1. Will arrive to class on time, assemble their instrument, and be seated promptly.
2. Will be prepared for class with: a) working instrument, b) music, c) pencil and, d) any needed assignments and e) supplies (i.e. At least 3 working reeds, rosin, valve oil, etc.).
3. Will be seated and ready within 2 minutes after the start of class and will warm-up at his/her seat. Do not play your instrument out of your chair. Warming up should consist of easy exercises to warm your face and finger muscles. Loud or strenuous playing during the warm-up can reduce your sound quality and endurance. Check the board for announcements, and the rehearsal order.
4. Will respect all equipment, music, instruments, and fellow students.
5. Will never handle an instrument that does not belong to him/her. Only percussionists are allowed to handle the percussion equipment.
6. Will keep his/her instrument in good working condition. The student will protect his/her instrument so that it does not get damaged by never leaving it on a stand, chair, or the floor.
7. Understands that if he/she cannot play due to illness, dental work, etc., the director requires a note from the parent/guardian on that day.
8. Understands that attendance at all rehearsals is essential for a quality-performing group.
9. Will cease talking and socializing once rehearsal has started. Talking is detrimental, especially when the director is working with another group of students.
10. Will listen intently to his/her own playing in relation to the ensemble and attempt to make any corrections.
11. Will ask the director questions that the student may have about the music.
12. Understands that **gum, candy, soda and food** are not permitted in the instrumental music room or in the storage area.
13. Will be supportive of classmates; never criticizing another individual's performance.
14. Will pack up his/her instrument and place it in the appropriate storage area upon dismissal. When the bell rings, leave the classroom in an orderly manner.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

I encourage mutually designed consequence arrangements. Some alternatives include:

- verbal warning
- phone call to parent/guardian or conference
- lunch detention / after-school detention
- administrative referral

Serious infractions will result in an immediate referral to the office. These include:

- willfully hurting someone
- deliberately destroying property
- harassment of any kind (verbal, physical or sexual)

SECTIONALS

After school sectionals are a very important part of preparing the Symphonic Band and Orchestra for our performances and Music Festivals. Students will not attend every week, but will rotate with other sections of their performing group. The frequency of the sectionals will be determined by the needs of the musicians. For example, violins may attend the string sectional week one, but the basses week two. In the spring the Concert Band will also be involved in the sectional rotation for their spring festival.

A schedule will be posted in the music room and will be based on the following guidelines. A monthly newsletter will be sent home every month so parents are informed ahead of time.

Tuesday – Advanced Orchestra

Wednesday – Symphonic Band for Festival Prep, Jazz Band (Starting mid-October/November)

Thursday – Symphonic Band

All sectionals will be held 2:55-4:10 p.m.

Additional Student Support

Students are welcome to request help during their lunch period and before or after-school. **6th graders are encouraged to seek extra help in the fall months especially those learning a new instrument.**

CONCERT EXPECTATIONS

- 1. Concert Attendance Policy:** Concerts are the culmination of many hours of hard work and complete the learning process. They are a vital part of the course objectives and the grading policy. “Students are required to participate in a limited number of special evening and weekend performances. Students and parents may wish to consult the instrumental music teacher before registration to determine specific performance commitments.” *
- 2. Because performances are part of the course objectives, attendance is mandatory.** Family vacations, sports events, lack of transportation, etc., are **not** considered legitimate reasons for missing events. Arrangements can be made if a ride is not available. Please call the school as soon as possible so Ms. Russell can assist with arrangements.
- 3. Arrive 45 minutes** before the scheduled concert time for set-up, tuning, and any last minute equipment adjustments.

4. **Appropriate concert dress is necessary.** Only students who are dress appropriately will be permitted to participate. The following is acceptable dress for public performances:

Girls

Black skirt/dress pants, (skirts must be ankle length), white blouse (no t-shirts or similar), stockings, black socks and black dress shoes

Boys

Black pants, black dress shoes (no tennis shoes) , black socks, and a white collared shirt (no t-shirts or similar). Please, no jeans.

5. Upon arrival, unpack your instrument in the music room and go to the assigned areas as indicated on the board. You must remain in their assigned location.
6. During the concert, relax and concentrate. This is where it all counts.
7. Remember good posture. This will enhance your performance and appearance. Stage presence is an important aspect of a live performance.
8. Your conduct as an audience should be exemplary. Remember that the entire *concert procedures* are graded.
9. Remain for the **entire concert**. Give the other musicians the courtesy you would expect. Attendance for the entire concert is necessary for an “A” concert procedures grade.
10. At the conclusion of the concert, students are responsible for returning their instruments and equipment to the designated areas.

A concert is a presentation to family and friends. Act and perform in a professional manner before, during and after your performance. Classroom and concert procedures are to be followed. Whenever you are in your concert attire you represent your ensemble and school so you should always act as if you were on stage.

*** Taken from the MCPS Program of Studies, Instrumental Music, Grades 6-8, p.1)**

**** Each performance is worth 20% of the grade, making this a substantial part of the student’s grade.**

EQUIPMENT AND MUSIC CARE

Music

1. Each music folder must have the student's name and school listed on it.
2. Use on a **pencil to mark your music**. **Do not** use any type of pen.
3. Music must be treated with the utmost care, and must be returned, when requested, in the same condition it was received. **The destruction or loss of music will result in a fee to purchase new music**. It is quite costly to replace single parts of an arrangement.

Equipment

Music stores can assist in the purchase of the supplies needed for proper preventative maintenance.

1. The student's name, address, phone number and school name should be on the case, both inside and out.
2. Keep the instrument case free of objects not intended to be kept in the case. Store small supplies in their designated space.
3. Always assemble your instrument gently. Small amounts of force can easily damage an instrument. Woodwind players should not grasp the keys while twisting sections together.
4. When not playing, the instrument should be either in the student's lap or in the case. If the instrument is left unattended, unnecessary repair costs will result.
5. Plastic mouthpieces should be cleaned with luke warm (not hot) water to prevent the growth of mold. The mouthpiece will discolor if hot water is used.
6. Instruments need to be kept clean, both inside and out for sanitary reasons and for better playing response. Do not run water through any woodwind instrument. Do not chew gum, drink soda, or eat while playing an instrument.
7. Woodwinds (that includes saxophones) need to be dried out with a swab after each playing. Reeds should be stored in a ventilated case (not on the mouthpiece) or they will mold.
8. Percussionists will learn how to maintain the school percussion equipment. They will be responsible for keeping the percussion section in a neat and orderly manner.
9. String players need to wipe the rosin dust off the instruments with a clean cotton cloth. Students using school instruments are responsible for keeping their instruments clean.
10. Brass instrument valves need to be oiled regularly. The tuning and valve slides need to be greased monthly. Trombone players need to properly maintain their slide with a light coating of slide cream and misting it with water before playing (slide oil is not recommended).
11. A pencil and all music should be kept in your folder.
12. Do not store music in your instrument case unless it has a specially designed compartment for its storage.

13. Instruments and music are to be stored in their designed spaces in the band storage room. Students will **not** be permitted to return to their lockers during class for forgotten items. i.e. Music, valve oil, assignments, etc...
14. Students must treat all instruments with great care and respect, especially those that are rented or borrowed. **If a borrowed or rented instrument is damaged due to negligence of the student, it is his or her responsibility to pay for the repairs (as per MCPS instrument bonding policy).**

School owned instruments must be taken to L and L Music.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Students are not required but are strongly encouraged to take private lessons. It is an invaluable experience intended for a student who has an interest in showing great improvement on his/her instrument. Taking private lessons can provide the opportunity for musical success and wonderful musical and social opportunities, including getting into county/state honors groups, the top ensembles in high school and or college scholarship programs. There are many alternatives in taking lessons (through music stores, the school system, community members, or other outside sources, etc.) Some teachers will travel to your home while others require you to go to their home or studio. Fees vary. Contact Mrs. Van Petten for more information.

ORTHODONTICS

Braces can have a severe impact on a wind musician, especially the brass player. Keep some of the following points in mind as you consider orthodontics:

1. **Consider the timing of adding or removing braces.** Instead of putting them on directly in the time of concerts, solo / ensemble festivals, band festivals, please delay them until summer or early in the school year with a minimum of 4 weeks (preferably 8 weeks) from any auditions or performances.
2. **Summer is the best time to add orthodontics** since most students do not have the performance obligations that occur during school. This would allow students to slowly rebuild their strength over the course of the summer.
3. **Seek guidance from a private teacher.** Steps can be taken from day one, which will greatly help the students overcome the difficult adjustment period. Too often students try to overcome braces on their own and as a result develop poor playing habits.
4. Once having braces installed, **try not to have them adjusted within 2 weeks of a performance** as students often experience several days of discomfort, thus making practicing almost impossible during that time.