



HANDBOOK

**Including policies, procedures,
suggestions, and requirements**



2023-2024

www.meyzeekbands.com

Dear Meyzeek Band Family:

Welcome to the 2023-'24 school year! I am very happy that you and your family are members of our band program. Whether you are new to music, or have already been in band, I am delighted and proud to be able to work with you at this stage of your musical journey!

Music has been an incredibly powerful influence in my life, and in the lives of those close to me. Because of my participation in band, I have been able to make musical memories as a performer, a parent, and a traveler in many states and countries. Each experience, has been made FAR more memorable because of my fellow musicians, friends, and family members. It is my fervent hope that you will, in the coming years, enjoy the many rewards of band, as millions of others have before you.

This class is far more than merely an academic pursuit. You will grow in several ways because of your involvement in band. You will be expected to develop and grow:

- ...musical prowess,
- ...self-discipline,
- ...confidence in yourself and your musical skills,
- ...personal goal-setting skills,
- ...an awareness of music's important role in the enrichment of the human spirit,
- ...and develop a team approach and responsibility to the ensemble and the performance.

Make no mistake; learning to play a musical instrument is NOT easy. If it were, EVERYONE would be a great musician! There will be some challenges along the way, but there will be far more successes. We will improve, together, as a team. I will ask nothing of you that I would not be willing to do (or have already done, already!), nor will I expect anything that you are not capable of! You will do great things!

Instrument rental fees (\$50) will only apply to students who are using Meyzeek instruments, including percussionists. If there is any way in which I could be of assistance, please feel welcome to email me.

The required Band Fee of \$50 is due as soon as possible. Please send cash or use the "MySchoolBucks" app. We have a budget just under \$10,000 this year. These monies go towards the repair of instruments, purchase of new ones, as well as guest clinicians if the opportunity arises. We've ordered several instruments last year, and this year's budget includes purchases of a new electric keyboard, amplifier, and $\frac{3}{4}$ size tubas.

The last page is to be signed by both the parent/guardian and student, and then returned to Mr. Daniel by Friday, September 1. This is going to count as an assignment for the 1st six weeks. A copy of the last page will be provided to your Bandling on Thursday, August 17.

Again, welcome to our program! Let's have a fantastic year!

James W. Daniel
Director of Bands

Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

Contact Info for the Band Department:

www.meyzeekbands.com

You will want to visit the site frequently, as it contains our calendar, policies, documents, tips, links, and wonderful recordings of the best of concert band music. **I have designed the page to be helpful to students AND parents.** I suggest bookmarking it right away.

My school email is: james.daniel@jefferson.kyschools.us

Prepared when the director begins
Respect for equipment, others and self
Involvement at all times
Directions followed the **FIRST** time, **EVERY** time
Expectations will be kept high!

Expectations:

It is a privilege to be a member of this organization. No member has the right to keep others from learning, treat others with disrespect, or in any way fall short of the expectations of our ensemble. All members are expected to know their music, participate in all band functions, and be the productive team member that is required for any group to be a success.

Some specifics of our classroom expectations are as follows:

- At the beginning of class, students are given time to assemble their instruments at their seat and begin warming-up. A student doing something other than setting-up and warming-up is a detriment to the ensemble, and they will be considered “tardy.” The grade book will reflect this.
- No food, gum, candy, or drinks are allowed in the band room.
- IF IT’S NOT YOURS, DON’T TOUCH IT! This applies, especially, to the percussion equipment or instruments and/or equipment that belong to others.
- Because our students are involved in many other activities, I try to limit the number of after-school rehearsals. At these rehearsals, attendance is **most definitely required**. Please remember to arrange transportation ahead of time, and be punctual. *(Please bear in mind that teachers have families! Also, our dogs would be MOST appreciative if I were home on time!)*

- CELL PHONES or other electronic devices are to be turned off, and completely out of sight when in class, after-school rehearsals, and especially at performances! The device may be confiscated per Meyzeek/JCPS policy.
- When a **call time** is announced, students are required to be at the indicated location, prepared to play. NO STUDENT is allowed to leave their assigned area without the express consent of Mr. Daniel!
- Families, please assist us with chairs, stands, or other equipment that needs to be put away afterwards!** Thank you!

Band Trips and/or Performances:

- Students must have turned in the appropriate permission slip
- Students must follow all school rules and dress code.
- Students will represent Meyzeek Middle School the best way possible at all times by being respectful and polite.
- Students must follow all bus rules.
- Students must ride school transportation to and from an event unless approved by Mr. Daniel IN WRITING no later than 24 hours prior to the scheduled departure.

Funding:

Our program needs funding for fees, buses, substitutes, new equipment, music, and the expensive instruments. The JCPS Board of Education is able to provide some money for repairs, but this usually lasts only a few months at best.

We NEED every band member to participate in our fundraisers and contribute to a strong program. We have seen many parents participate in fundraisers, and they do especially well when they sell at work! If you cannot or do not wish to participate in a particular fundraiser, we understand. However, it is possible to simply send c, and it will be counted as a donation. This has been a VERY popular option, recently, and our band keeps 100% of the money!

There will be some registration fees for participation in JCPS All-County Honor Bands, Solo and Ensemble Contest, or honor bands hosted by the University of Louisville or Morehead State University. Details will be released about those in due time.

This year, we will be collecting a nominal \$50 Band Fee from each student. The JCPS Board has approved that we collect up to \$65 per student, but we feel that, at this point, this nominal amount will offset some of our more minor expenses in a more equitable manner.

My School Bucks:

“My School Bucks” allows you to pay your student’s fees online. Set-up is simple, and took me less than a minute to do. There IS a 3.95% (non-refundable) fee above the base cost. **If you are going to send a check with your student for two different fees (such as their Instrument Rental AND their Band Fee), PLEASE DO NOT COMBINE THEM! These go into separate accounts, and one check cannot be divided. Thank you very much!**

If you are interested in our finances, and how we are budgeting and planning for them, please feel welcome to make an appointment with me, and I would be happy to review them with you!

Uniforms:

The members of all our bands must have concert uniforms. This will consist of **black** dress pants (not jeans, stretch pants, or khakis). **BLACK** dress shoes also required! Black tennis shoes *will* look like tennis shoes on stage, and if there is any colored trim on them, they look even worse. We ask that everyone helps the ensemble look its best! THANK YOU!

Instruments:

It is **HIGHLY** recommended that each student **RENT** their own instrument. Meyzeek does have a **VERY** limited inventory, primarily of large instruments such as baritone sax, baritone horns, tubas, and large percussion equipment. In contrast, we have only a couple of flutes, a handful of clarinets, and a few alto saxophones and trumpets. *Many of these are in poor condition.* We are aggressively repairing as many instruments as we can, however, we still have a very long way to go. Details will be given in class on how your student can request a horn.

The student is responsible for obtaining the book, mouthpieces, reeds, oils, and other materials for school-owned instruments, as well. These items will be discussed in class, and a complete list (based upon their specific instrument) is posted on the Band's website under the "Supplies" tab.

Renting Instruments: (this is the BEST choice!)

- Renting an instrument is **STRONGLY** encouraged.
- The quality of the instrument **WILL** be better than anything Meyzeek currently owns.
- Insurance plans are frequently available.
- Rent can be applied to purchase at a later date.
- One-stop shopping—get your supplies (book, reeds, etc.) at the same location.
- **DO YOUSELF A FAVOR!!!** Go to "Meyzeekbands.com," and then the "Beginners" tab, where there is a **LOT** of information on what **KIND** of instrument to get!
- **DO NOT PURCHASE AN INSTRUMENT!** I want to help your student be successful. I've seen too many kids end up with the wrong instrument because they were too eager to purchase too soon. **PLEASE** contact me if you have questions about this!

Meyzeek Owned Instruments:

Because these are in very limited supply, we ask that all families that are able to rent do so. School-owned instruments are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. There is a JCPS BOE-required \$50 fee for the entire school year. If the student withdraws from Meyzeek, we can reimburse at a prorated rate. Please contact Mr. Daniel in order to request an instrument. The student is responsible for obtaining the book, mouthpieces, reeds, oils, and other materials for school-owned instruments, as well.

Purchasing Instruments:

This is the LEAST desirable option. All directors have seen horror-stories, including the purchase of instruments which cannot be repaired, are in need of hundreds of dollars of repairs (before they can play one note!), are worn-out, need repair or repad jobs, or aren't right for the student because of any number of reasons. **PLEASE** contact me if you are considering the purchase of an instrument! I will be happy to assist you!

Ensembles and Performance Opportunities:

6th and 7th Grade Beginning Band: No previous musical experience is necessary, only a desire to practice daily, and improve with the ensemble! Students will be introduced to the major instruments of the concert band. We will, together, agree on instrument assignments based upon student choice and ensemble needs. Instruction will include instrument assembly, care, safety, and maintenance, characteristic tone production, air support, the comprehension, interpretation, and composition of notated music, aural skill development, and the role of the individual in the ensemble, both as musicians and team members. Successful completion of this class as well as its end-of year written and performance tests allows advancement to the 7th Grade Symphonic Band or 8th Grade Wind Ensemble.

7th Grade “Symphony” Band: Students will continue to develop their instrumental technique, both as individuals, and ensemble members. The students’ musical skills will develop to include all 12 major scales, the chromatic scale, as well as band literature of at least a grade II level. Instruction will include performances at adjudicated Solo and Ensemble Contest, KMEA Large Ensemble Festival, as well as other performance throughout the year. Successful completion of this class as well as its end-of year written test and audition allows advancement to the 8th Grade Advanced Band

8th Grade “Wind Ensemble:” Students will continue to develop their musical prowess to include all 12 major scales, some in two octaves and minor, the chromatic scale to the full range of their instrument, as well as performing literature of at least a grade III level. Instruction will include performances in adjudicated Solo & Ensemble Contest, KMEA Large Ensemble Festival, as well as other performances throughout the year.

OTHER ENSEMBLES: Additionally, students may audition into the “**Monday Blues**” **Jazz Band** which will meet after school on Mondays, and the **Percussion Ensemble**, which will meet after school on Fridays. Every year, the band program performs at least three major concerts, including the **Winter Holiday Program**, the **Concert Festival Pre-Concert**, and our year-ending **Spring Concert**. Some years we also perform at **8th Grade Commencement**.

Students are encouraged to audition for several other ensembles throughout the year. During the early fall, auditions are held for the **Louisville Youth Orchestra**. This is an elite organization, offering several ensembles which many of our students would qualify for!

Solo and Ensemble:

Each spring, hundreds of thousands of American band students from elementary grades to seniors in high school participate in their local **Solo and Ensemble Contest**. This is NON-COMPETITIVE. Students prepare a solo that is appropriate to their experience level, go to Atherton High School, and perform for one judge, who is usually a band director from the outlying areas or a retiree. There is NO audience, so there should be no pressure! Students are also encouraged to prepare a duet with another band student. In some cases, trios or larger can be formed. There is a nominal fee associated with each event (\$7 for each solo, \$12 per ensemble). This is a required event, please see “Grading,” later in the Handbook.

Honor Bands:

Every year, there are several honor bands that select top students from around our area. I VERY STRONGLY encourage each of our students to audition for these. They are wonderful ensembles that allow students to meet friends from other schools, while getting to know high-quality band literature, while surrounded by other very dedicated musicians.

Some of the honor bands include:

- JCPS 7th and 8th grade Honor Band (auditions are in the middle of fall.)
- Jefferson County/Oldham County Service Band (information will be given in fall)
- Morehead State University Honor Band (hosted in November.)
- JCPS 5th and 6th Grade Honor Band (auditions held in the spring.)
- University of Louisville Middle School Honor Band (held in June.)

Private Lessons:

Band directors can do only so much...Private lessons are STRONGLY encouraged out of every student in any band. If we could make them a requirement, we would—they are THAT important! The improvement in your child will be impressive, and it is money well invested in their future.

Most teachers will teach hour-long lessons, once per week. Far less is accomplished in 30 minutes. If you would like assistance in finding a teacher or want to check the qualifications or reputation of a possible instructor, you can contact me or good music store!

Practice:

Before School:

99% of the time, I arrive in time to open the band hall at 7:00 AM for practicing. All students are encouraged to use this time, but especially those who have instruments that are too large to transport home on a nightly basis. If transportation is an issue, I suggest car-pooling with another family that is able to arrive early.

- The room is open for PRACTICING, not socializing.
- This is an opportunity for individual practice, not group playing.
- Please straighten the chairs and stands on the way out, in preparation for the next class. (Leave the room cleaner than when you arrived!)

There is NO way possible for a musician to succeed without practicing. We all expect athletes to practice; *how can a musician succeed without it?!*

Practice Smart!

- Try to schedule a time every day to practice
- NEVER practice without clear goals. Identify exactly WHAT will you be able to do when you are done, then GET IT!
- Set short-term AND long-term goals. Short-term would be a particular measure or phrase. Long-term would be technique, such as cleaner articulations, hand/grip discipline in percussion, better air support, etc.
- Use a metronome, especially if you think that you don't need one!
- Practice someplace quiet and free of distraction. NO other music or noise should be in earshot!
- Use a mirror, at times, to check your embouchure for problems.

- Yes, you need to practice for the required amount of time each week. The minutes should NOT guide your practicing! **Set your goals; work on those**, plus scales, range, rudiments, tone, etc., and you will have plenty of minutes logged!
- Use correct posture and hand position at all times
- Practice in small segments – 15 minutes here – 15 minutes there. Long, marathon-like sessions will do more harm than good. It’s physical exercise, plus, there is brain research that shows us HOW we most effectively retain skills. Trust me! Spread the work out in short bursts!
- Isolate difficult passages and practice them slowly. It is better to play slow and accurate than fast and sloppy.
- **STAY POSITIVE!** Not everything will be easy. If you are getting frustrated take a break and come back to it another time.
- Always strive for your best sound! **SOUND IS EVERYTHING!**
- Play for others as often as possible. Play for your family, church, dog or anyone that will listen!
- “Practice, practice, practice! And when you’re done? **PRACTICE SOME MORE**”

Grading:

We assume that every child will come to class prepared to participate and ready to learn. Grades will be computed based upon informal and formal playing checks, ear training assignments, music theory and notation assignments (70%; “Mastery”), and in-class work, ensemble preparedness (equipment, book and/or sheet music, pencil, and supplies), ear training assignments, musical development, and Practice Records (see below) (30%; “Progression”).

Performances:

This is a performing ensemble. Every class (rehearsal) is devoted to the culminating activity which, in the Performing Arts, is the performance. While we understand that there are sometimes emergency illnesses, each student is a valued piece of our team, and their absence takes away from our success. With prior notice, the director has the discretion to excuse a student from a performance due to the illness. If there is an unexcused absence, the student will be given an assignment which will include performing their concert music in class and/or a written assignment. For grading purposes, performances are generally treated as playing tests, and count as a demonstration of “Student Mastery”.

Performances may be held during the school day or in the evening, at locations which include Meyzeek, other high school auditoriums, retirement or nursing homes, et cetera. It is fairly common that students carpool with other families if there is a transportation need. Please contact Mr. Daniel if there is any way your Banding needs assistance in attending any performance. If it is apparent that a student will miss a performance, the student or their parent/guardian must provide forty-eight hours’ notice to Mr. Daniel in order that we might find a solution.

Members of band are expected to be prepared, able to play their part on any given day. *Students who are unable to perform their music may be cut from a performance, and their grade may be reduced at the discretion of the director.*

Practice Records:

Just as athletes need to practice in order to prepare for games, all musicians need to practice as well. Weekly practice records are required of our Bandlings. Very simply, they keep track of the minutes they practice per day on the form, and turn it in on Monday for the full 5-point credit. Parent/guardians sign the card to verify the time. These will be counted under the “Progression Assessment” category.

Solo and Ensemble Contest:

This event is a VERY effective teaching tool. The increased musical and performance skills that are developed are no less than critical to the health of the entire ensemble. For these reasons, and many more, Solo and Ensemble is a requirement of our program. Please reserve the date as far ahead of time as possible. The calendar is located on our web page. Grading for this event will include the preparation process, as well as the student’s involvement.

Conduct Grades:

The conduct grade included in the report card is a separate grade. It is not to be confused with the *participation* of a student in class.

TOP TEN RULES OF CONCERT ETIQUETTE:

1. Refrain from talking. The first and greatest rule. It also includes whispering to or disciplining your other children.
2. Refrain from noisy wrappers during the performance. If the composer wanted to include crinkly-paper-noises in the music, he/she would have written it into the parts.
3. Turn off pagers, cell phones and watch alarms. While many cell phones and pagers have symphonic-like rings, they don’t always fit into the musical score, nor do they provide pleasant sounds for your neighbors.
4. Do not wave to your children during the concert. After all, they do know who you are already, and they know you are there; you most likely brought them to the concert.
5. Do not take flash photography. You do not want your child to fall off the stage from blindness, do you?
6. Do not walk down the center aisle with your video camera. Video cameras work just as well from the back of the auditorium. (Besides; the light is usually not good enough for videotaping anyway.)
7. Do not leave as soon as your child’s portion of the concert is over. All of the students deserve a full audience for their performances. (*Remember, next time, your child’s performance could be last!*)
8. Applaud at appropriate times. Some musical selections have several sections. Remember, it’s not over until all of the sections of that selection have been performed.
9. When you need to briefly step out, or return, PLEASE: wait until you hear applause to move. (*Unless you are carrying an upset child!*)
...and, most importantly:
10. BE THERE!

-adapted from *musicfriends.org*

Meyzeek Band Pledge

I, _____ have received my *Band Handbook* for the Meyzeek Band Department or read it (online at www.meyzeekband.com). I fully realize that I am important to **everyone** in the band and everyone is important to me. I also recognize each rehearsal and performance is very important and I will do my best to be at each one on time, prepared mentally and physically, ready to think positively and to work toward the mutual goals of **our** program.

I realize that all people are equal in **our** band program and I will pass off all musical assignments on time, with the best quality I am capable of.

Most of all, I recognize that honesty and integrity among my fellow band members and directors are my most important contributions to myself, and our band program. Without them, I believe we all lose.

I understand that the director's role is to instruct and I will accept those instructions openly in order to make our band program better.

I will also work toward keeping up with all of my materials, supplies, and instrument. I will also do my best to help other people with this.

I will do my best to think positively, create a positive atmosphere with my actions, and do my part to make this an enjoyable and successful class.

Student Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Director's Signature: _____

(It is important to note that this pledge was written by a high-school student from Mississippi many years ago. Their devotion, care, and concern for the well-being of their band program is obvious, and it is our hope that each of our students will also develop a similar commitment to music and our program.)

Parents/Guardians, the Band students have reviewed this Handbook in class. Please go to our Band's website (www.meyzeekbands.com) in order to review this document. This is more than just a syllabus...it is designed to be of assistance to you!

When you have looked through the Handbook, sign this page and send it back with your Bandling to Mr. Daniel. Then, please feel free to contact Mr. Daniel if you have any questions! This will be a graded assignment for the First Six Weeks.

Due to Mr. Daniel by Friday, September 1.

Thank you!