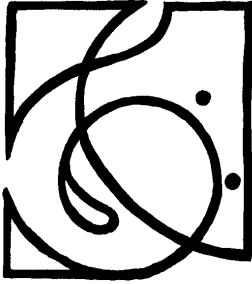


ST. GERARD BAND HANDBOOK

2023-2024



Welcome to the band program at St. Gerard! Participation offers students the opportunity to learn about music through performance in band. Making music with others provides an environment that fosters cooperative learning, creativity, high level thinking skills, an appreciation for culture and enriches one's quality of life.

Daily Objectives in Band Class:

Play with a characteristic tone that is in tune, while reading the right notes at the right time, demonstrating proper technique, and adding musical expression.

Students in band are expected to:

- Come prepared with one's instrument, music, and a pencil.
- Participate in rehearsal with appropriate effort, behavior, and attitude.
- Attend scheduled performances.
- Practice at home an appropriate amount for their level.

Band Calendar

Required Concerts for All Band Members:

- **Thursday, December 7** at 6:30 p.m. at LCHS
- **Tuesday, May 21** at 6:30 p.m. at LCHS

Additional Required Dates for Junior High members:

- **Wednesday, October 25 – 7:00 pm** Costume Concert at LCHS.

Optional Opportunities for Junior High members:

- **November 18–** Middle School Solo & Ensemble Festival at Grand Ledge Beagle Middle School. Participation is encouraged. Registrations are due September 22, 2023.
- **April 20–** Middle School Solo & Ensemble Festival at Onsted High School. Registrations are due February 1, 2024.

Concert Attendance Policy

Being a member of the band carries with it the obligation to attend performances. Every student's performance is directly related to the performance of the entire band.

When there is a foreseeable conflict with a band date, please follow these procedures:

1. Requests for an excused absence by the parent/guardian should be given to Mrs. Darling **at least three weeks prior** to the performance. Absences affect the

band as a whole. With lots of notice, sometimes we can minimize the negative impact an absence causes an ensemble because we can reassign parts.

2. Make-up work will be assigned to take the place of an absence from a performance.
3. Students absent due to illness or a serious family emergency will not have make-up work.
4. If a student is absent *unexcused* from a performance, he/she will receive a grade of “unsatisfactory” in effort.

Concert Uniform

All Band Members:

- White shirt, blouse, or sweater.
- Black slacks that fall at the natural waistline. Girls may elect to wear a black skirt, but the skirt length must abide by the official school policy. Please keep in mind that the students are sitting on an elevated stage for the concert so long skirts are best.
- Any black dress shoe or any school uniform shoe.
- Black socks.

Classroom Conduct Guidelines

- **Be organized.** - Check the board for the agenda, assemble your instrument quickly, put your music in order, and warm up smartly (scales, long tones, or lip slurs).
- **Obey the “podium move” and quiet sign.** Stop talking or playing whenever the director is on the podium.
- **Use our rehearsal time wisely.** - While the director is rehearsing another section of the band, use that time to number your measures, check a fingering, a rhythm, or just listen. Usually what is said to a specific section of the band will also apply to all other sections at some point.

Required Class Materials

In order for students to be successful, they need to have their materials at class every band day. Fifth grade band meets on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Sixth grade band meets on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Junior High Band meets on Tuesday and Thursday. Junior High students will also be assigned a short small group lesson. This will be scheduled within the first couple of weeks of school. Here is what each student is expected to have at band each day:

- Working instrument
- Assigned Method Book (Essential Elements book 1 for beginning band)
- Music folder with any of the current music
- Pencil

Home Practice Expectations

Fifth and sixth grade students are expected to turn in weekly practice cards through Google Classroom or in class (these will start mid/late- September). These

serve as a record of homework done outside of the regular school day. 5th-6th grade students should strive to practice 10 minutes per session, three-four (or more) days a week. Short 10-minute practice sessions are more effective in developing motor skills, muscle memory, and embouchure endurance than one or two long sessions weekly.

Junior high students will not have practice cards but should strive to practice 15+ minutes per session, four or more days a week. Students may have a playing test each quarter. Some of those will need to be recorded and submitted using Google Classroom.

The more frequently one practices, the more proficient one becomes. The more proficient one becomes, the more enjoyment can be had.

Practicing can be hard work. Quite often the biggest obstacle to practicing is simply getting the instrument out of the case and assembling it.

Band Membership Policy

After the first month of band, students are expected to remain in band for the entire school year. Exceptions are made only after consultation with the student, his/her parents, Mrs. Wade, and Mrs. Darling. Band fees are non-refundable.

Band Fees

The St. Gerard Band Fee is \$170, payable through Blackbaud. This will be billed in November.

Jazz Band (second semester*)**

Students need a certain level of proficiency for jazz band so jazz band will be offered second semester to students in grades 6-8.

Jazz Band (6th-8th grade) meets from 2:40 - 3:30 on Mondays during 2nd semester.

During jazz band, we will explore the jazz idiom by playing music in the swing style, Latin genre, the blues, and jazz-rock. **Performers on any band instrument are eligible to play in the jazz band.**

- **Those who play in the jazz band become more proficient.** These students have band three times a week rather than just the two concert band days. This increase in contact time enables students to improve more quickly.
- **Retention in the band program is highest among those who participate in jazz band.**

Professional Private Lessons

Many students would benefit from 30-minute professional private lessons, *particularly those high interest students seeking more challenges.* The one-on-one tutoring in a private lesson pushes students to work on more advanced music and

techniques than I can present in a group setting. Contact me for names of recommended private teachers.

Summer Music Camps

It's never too early to begin thinking about summer music camps. The **Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp** near Muskegon offers 11-day sessions. Informational booklets will be available in January and scholarship auditions might be held again this year at our school. For those desiring to stay closer to home, the **MSU Community Music School** holds a one-week day camp with a concluding concert at the Wharton Center. The information for this camp comes out late in the spring. And, for those who truly love music, the **Interlochen Arts Camp** is internationally known for excellence.

Box Tops for Education

Support our music programs by saving "Box Tops for Education." Proceeds earned through this fundraiser are used for purchasing expensive school-owned instruments, repairing our inventory and purchasing music. Each box top brings us 10 cents. Please give the band program a helping hand by scanning your receipts using the app. Your participation makes a difference!

Reeds and Accessories: When in doubt, contact Mrs. Darling. Reeds are available to purchase at school for ease of the student/parent.

All students should have a music stand at home in order to play with good posture, subsequently producing better tone and technique. **If you do not have one, talk to Mrs. Darling as we have some foldable ones available to borrow.

Flute:

- Clean cotton handkerchief for cleaning after playing. Students will be taught in class how to clean.

Oboe:

- Emerald or Jones Reeds. medium or medium soft strength

Clarinet:

- Rico Royal by D'Addario or Juno brand, strength #2.5 for beginners, usually strength #3 for second year players
- 7th-8th graders: Vandoren strength 2.5 (sometimes #3) or Mitchell Lurie #3 or 3.5.
- **Bass Clarinet:** Rico Royal #2.5 or 3 reeds.

Alto Saxophone:

- Royal by D'Addario or Juno brand, #2.5 for fifth grade and #3 for 6th graders.
- Vandoren or D'Addario strength #3 for Junior High
- **Tenor and Baritone Saxophone Reeds:** Rico Royal, strength 2.5 or 3.

Trombone: Students should consider using Slide O'Mix (rather than oil) for slide lubrication. It seems costly (around \$14) but it lasts a long time and is superior to oil for young students.

Instrument Hygiene: Mouthpieces should be cleaned regularly. Use warm dish soap (but don't use the dishwasher). Alcohol prep pads can be used to disinfect mouthpieces. Brass instruments can be given a bath. You can find instructional videos on You Tube. Instruments under a rental plan from Meyer Music are eligible for a yearly maintenance cleaning and adjustment. To schedule, just email Mrs. Darling.

Consultation is available to parents by phone, e-mail, or appointment. Because we are partners in education, *please don't hesitate to contact me.*

Amy Darling

E-mail address: adarling@stgerardlansing.org

Handbook acknowledgement form
for all band members, grades 5-8:

Please return this form to Mrs. Darling
by September 13, 2023.

We have read the band handbook and have made note of all required
concert dates.

Parent's Signature

Name(s) of band student(s)

Email address: _____
