

Welcome to the Larned 5th and 6th Grade Band!

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the Larned 5th and 6th Grade band! We thank you for choosing to be a part of our band, and look forward to making music with you this year.

As a member of the Larned Band, you have chosen to embark on a rewarding journey with a fine group of people. Students, band is a place where you can have fun, meet new friends, and build musical skills you can enjoy for the rest of your life. Parents, band will give you the experience of a lifetime, too--the joy of enriching children's lives with music (whether you're musically inclined or not!)

You may find band to be very different from other music classes you've taken in the past. Since band is a team, it functions best when everyone--students, parents, and director--brings forth their best effort. In the Larned Band, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of behavior, and are committed to doing our very best every time we play.

This handbook is designed as a resource to answer your band-related questions throughout the school year. Please read and keep this handbook, and feel free to contact me if you need any band-related help or advice. Best wishes and we look forward to sharing a year of wonderful musical experiences with you!

Musically Yours,

Katie Sperry and Jenny Colglazier

Philosophy

We believe that music is a powerful medium that can help students discover their unique capabilities, build positive relationships with their peers, and foster meaningful connections with the larger community. As directors, our job isn't just waving the baton--it's conducting ourselves and our band in a way that brings the benefits of music into the lives of our band members and community neighbors.

As band directors, we are committed to:

- Providing a safe place for students to grow musically
- Helping students develop a feeling of musical competency
- Guiding students toward creating their signature musical sound and style
- Fostering students' love of music and an appreciation for fellow musicians
- Helping students begin to establish their place in the global community of musicians
- Giving back to the community through music
- Cultivating meaningful partnerships among students, teachers, families, and community members

What Parents Need to Do

Parents are a vital part of children's music education. A child's success in music often depends on the level of support the parent gives. An encouraging comment about your child's practice, cheerful attendance at band concerts, and a positive attitude about your child's efforts can give your son or daughter the confidence to excel musically. Here are four things I ask of all Larned band parents:

1. **Be informed.** Please read this handbook and all band correspondence. You'll not only be "in the know," but you'll also model responsibility and commitment to your child.
2. **Teach your child the value of practice.** Helping your child learn to practice is the single most powerful thing you can do to support your child's musical development. Treat practice as homework, and make it part of your daily routine by setting up a special place and time for your child to play at home.
3. **Realize that greatness takes time.** Beginning musicians are not going to sound like the pros you hear on the radio. When listening to your child practice or perform, train yourself to focus on growth and progress. And please, NEVER joke about your child's sound--it hurts more than you'd think.
4. **Support your director.** Your band director has made it her life's work to help kids through music. She's on your side, and is here to support and nurture your child's musical growth. Please keep this in mind in your interactions with the director, and treat her with respect and kindness. Also, please follow the director's policies and encourage your child to do the same. They are the result of years of successful teaching, and are in place to give you an excellent band experience.

We are introducing a new tool for our students to use in their practice. Our method books now have an interactive website (<https://www.essentialelementsinteractive.com/>) which provides students listening examples and other resources. It is a web-based tool, so after the student has created an account it can be accessed from any computer with internet. Parents will also be able to set up an account. We will be sharing information about this with students as we discover all of the ways this tool can be used. Students will not be required to access this at home. However, we feel it is a beneficial tool and want to share it with our students.

Band Expectations

Band students are typically some of the finest young people in the school. At all times, you should be able to say these things about yourself:

Respect Yourself.

If I make a mistake on a song, I laugh it off and try again.
I practice daily so I'm prepared for band rehearsal.
I am a good example to those around me.

Respect Others.

I don't laugh at or make fun of other people's playing.
I have kind words to say to my fellow band members at all times.
I allow my band director to teach without interruptions.

Respect Property.

I take good care of my instrument and respect my bandmates' instruments.
I hold my instrument securely so I don't drop it.
I put my instrument together the way director showed me.
If I am not a percussionist, I don't touch the percussion equipment.

YOU HAVE A CHOICE!

You are an important member of our band, and your actions will affect everyone else in our group. Your behavior will determine how much we learn and how well we play, and will also show the community what the Larned Band is all about. **When you choose your actions in band, always remember that you are choosing your consequences as well.** When you do your best, band becomes energized with music-making excitement! However, poor behavior can ruin people's good impression of our band--and even worse, it can make learning music more difficult and less fun.

Band Consequences

One of the director's most important jobs is to help band students develop character traits to help them excel both in the band room and beyond. Throughout the year, we will model productive behavior, establish helpful classroom routines, and provide boundaries and guidance to help students learn to make good behavior choices. Behavior issues in the Larned Band will be used as opportunities to help students grow.

1. Verbal warning
2. Verbal Warning with loss of daily points
3. Stay after class and visit with the Director
4. Behavior Contract created by Student, Parent and Director
5. Referral to the Office

Band Procedures

1. Before rehearsal, please use the restroom and get a drink of water. Please finish any food or gum before you enter the band room—remember food and band instruments do not mix!
2. Enter the room quietly, grab your instrument and music stand, sit down and assemble your instrument.
3. Don't play until the Director gives the cue; use this time to quietly count rhythms or practice fingerings.
4. During rehearsal, please raise your hand for permission to leave your seat or to ask a question.
5. In rehearsal, we'll warm up, count rhythms, work on pieces of music together, and learn new things. This is a great time to listen, ask questions, and practice positive behavior.
6. When rehearsal ends, the Director will dismiss you to pack up your instrument, put away your music stand and neatly store your instruments.

Grading Procedures

A student's grade is a balanced reflection of the individual's musical achievement, technical skill on an instrument, participation in band activities, and effort both within rehearsal and at home. The grade is made up of four different factors: Rehearsal Grades, Playing Tests and Quizzes, Performances and Practice Records.

Rehearsal Grade

Each day you will receive a rehearsal grade which is based on the following:

1. **You are prepared: you have your instrument, music, pencil, book and have practiced your music.**
2. **You participate appropriately.**
3. **You are in class and your seat for warm-up.**

Playing Tests and Quizzes

You will be asked to play alone in class. This isn't to torture you; it's a way to monitor your musical progress on your instrument. When you are asked to play a solo, it helps other kids understand specific musical techniques--but it makes you a better musician, too!

There will be written quizzes given periodically to monitor your understanding of musical concepts, vocabulary and rules.

Performances

Performances are an integral part of musical experience. Performances give you a chance to celebrate your hard-earned musical skills and give back to the community with your talents. Therefore, attendance is **mandatory** for all members. We will let you and your parents know in advance of any additions or changes to the concert schedule, and will send reminders as concert dates draw near. If your child cannot attend a concert for any reason, please notify the director at least one month in advance. Our concert dates are attached and posted on the District Calendar.

Practice Charts

Practicing is the most important thing you can do to improve your musicianship. Through practice, you will gain confidence, learn the importance of self-discipline, and eliminate weaknesses in your playing. Practicing is a necessary part in the development of our Band. Each student will be asked to complete a goal setting and self-assessment sheet each week. **These sheets will need to be signed by a parent and turned in each Monday.** Because practice sheets are a part of your grade, it is important to turn in the sheet each week no matter how much (or little) you have practiced. **The frequency of practice is more important than the number of minutes practiced.**

Frequently Asked Questions

Why does the director keep telling me I need to practice?

Daily practice is vital to musical success, and is REQUIRED of all students. Just as doing your reading homework will make you a better reader, practicing your instrument will make you a better musician. At each rehearsal you will be assigned a song, a scale or method book number to practice at home. **It's your job to practice learning your fingerings, counting your rhythms, and making your assignment sound a little bit better every day.** Don't worry if you don't sound perfect! If you practice thoughtfully and do your very best, you've done your job.

Sitting band rehearsal will make you an OK musician; however, practicing on your own is what makes you EXCELLENT and what makes band fun.

Can I still play if I get braces?

Yes, many people with braces are able to play an instrument. If your mouth hurts because the orthodontist just tightened your braces, you will be allowed to refrain from playing in class. We will work with you on this as long as we feel you are not taking advantage of the situation. Follow your doctor's instructions and gargle with warm salt water to help ease the pain.

What if I forget my instrument at home?

If you forget your instrument (or necessities required to play your instrument, like reeds), it means you have to work even harder than normal in class to earn your daily points. You're still responsible for participating and learning the material, even if your instrument is at home. Remember, it's not your director's or your parent's responsibility to bring your instrument to class – it is yours.

What if my instrument breaks?

Band teachers are able to fix minor problems; just show them to us before or after class. If we are unable to fix your instrument, we will tell you to take it to the repair shop.

If you are asked to take your instrument to the repair shop, please do it as soon as possible! Sometimes neglecting a little problem today can make it into a big problem down the road. Also, if you have known something is wrong with your instrument for a while, **DO NOT wait until the day of a performance to tell us**, as we may not be able to help you.

What if I can't make a concert?

Please tell us as soon as possible!! The more advanced notice you can provide, the better. We work hard to prepare for our concerts. Band members who don't show or cancel at the last minute let their band – and themselves – down.

In Closing

Students, in joining band, you have taken your first step onto the path every great musician throughout history has walked. Band is going to be fun, but be aware there will be some spots on your path which will be challenging and hard to pass. When the going gets tough, remember you have the ability to keep practicing and beat any challenges that come your way. Also, remember your directors and parents are here to help you become the BEST musician you can be.

Parents, young people need positive direction in their lives, and our community is in constant need of good music and happy news. Let's make the Larned Band a positive force which provides both! Working together, we can design a band that not only influences students' lives for the better, but also allows our students to influence the world for the better. We invite you, Band Parents, to become active in our program. Communicate with us, encourage your child to practice and volunteer with the Larned Band Boosters, This is your band, too!

Many thanks for your support and best wishes for a safe, happy and successful school year!

Musically Yours,

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Your first assignment is to read through this handbook with your parent(s)/guardian(s), sign the agreement below, and return it to your director by Tuesday August 19, 2014!

Band Handbook Agreement

We have read the policies, practice chart and concert dates in this book.
We understand them and agree to their terms and conditions.

(Parent/Guardian signature)

(Student signature)

(Parent/Guardian Printed Name)

(Student Printed Name)

(Parent/Guardian Contact Number)

(Parent/Guardian Work Number)

(E-mail – Please provide, if possible, as we will be using them for communication purposes.
Thank you!)