

Homer Bands Philosophy and Mission Statement

Music is universal, cultural, and individual. The goal of the Homer Band Program is to help participants achieve a personal level of understanding, appreciation, and passion for music. The primary goal for each band class is to heighten each student's aesthetic awareness through the use of their instrument and exposure to different styles of music.

Instrument Rental

I have a catalog of all of the instruments the school owns that are available to be rented by students. In order to have these instruments available, it is necessary to provide for their maintenance. Those students who wish to rent an instrument from the school for one school year must pay a \$50 rental fee to help with the cost of cleaning the instrument at the end of the year. This fee is not refundable if a student leaves the program, however if the student decides to switch to another school-rented instrument there is no requirement for an additional fee, assuming that the first instrument is returned. Students will not be given an instrument until the Instrumental Rental form has been returned to the school. Students and parents are responsible for any damage incurred to the instrument while in possession of the student.

Percussionists must have their own snare sticks. In addition to the sticks, percussionists also need to pay a \$20 fee, to provide funds for upkeep of larger percussion instruments, specialty mallets and replacement of other smaller percussion instruments. Sticks can be purchased at Cornish Music or online. I recommend Vic Firth SD1 or Ludwig SD1 for sticks, and Vic Firth M14 or Musser M424 if a student wants their own mallets. Students could also purchase a combined mallet and stick bag, such as the Mike Balter Band Director Special Kit.

Music

Students are responsible for all music that is given to them. They will also be given a folder that is to have their name on it, or they may provide their own. All music, method books, and fingering charts must be kept in the folder. Students may mark on the music in pencil ONLY.

Any music that is handed out as an original must be returned when the music is collected. Sections found to be deficient in music at the end of the collection period will be expected to replace the music that is missing.

Supplies

It is essential that all students are prepared for class. Each student needs the following supplies:

Instrument – As silly as this may sound, a student who does not bring their instrument to class with them is not prepared, and may slow the progress of the entire band. It is important that students take their instrument home to practice, but also return the instrument for school every day.

Pencil – Please note that pen is not an acceptable option. Pencil marks can be erased much easier in case of a change in articulation or direction, so please make sure to have one in your folder or on your stand at all times. Having a pencil in your case that is not close to your chair will cause a delay for the rest of the class.

Method Book – Middle school students should own Essential Elements 2000, Books 1 and 2. They are available from The Horn Doctor in Anchorage and online. Other books may be handed out, and must be returned at the end of the year.

Fingering Chart –Knowing the correct fingering for a note is one of the first steps to becoming a truly excellent musician. There is a fingering chart in the back of each method book, or students can find one online and print it off.

Reeds/Cleaning Supplies/Valve Oil/Other Instrument Items – Students who require reeds for their instrument must have three (3) playable reeds at all times. 7th and 8th graders should play on a 2.5 or higher reed strength, and High School students must be on 3 or higher. All students must also have the required cleaning and maintenance items in their case. These items can be purchased from a local music store or online. If you are unsure of what to get, please ask Mrs. Johnson.

Suggested Supplies:

Tuner – Tuners can be found for relatively inexpensive costs, but are vital for beginners all the way through advanced players. They are good for beginning brass players to make sure that they are really playing the note that they think they are, as well as for all players to work on their own understanding of what “in tune” means.

Metronome – Essential for making sure that one is playing at a steady tempo, the metronome is a good tool for all levels of players. I have seen it many times where students practice by themselves and then come into rehearsal a bit confused as to why they cannot keep up – because there was no metronome involved in their practicing, they sped up the easy parts and slowed down the fast parts. Unfortunately, it doesn’t quite work like that in a band setting.

Please note, there are now apps that can take the place of a tuner and/or metronome. Links can be found on the Band Blog.

Practice

Practice is not the same as rehearsal! Practice happens at home, and is an individual activity. This is your homework for band, so be diligent – just like your other classes. Maintaining good practice habits is essential to grow as a musician. Proper practice technique will be discussed in class, and any questions may be directed to Mrs. Johnson. Progress in practice will be assessed by playing tests (formal and informal) during class.

What can parents do to help their student be successful?

I understand the concerns of parents who do not know how to help their children be successful in band – perhaps they played a different instrument, or they sang, or they don't even know how to read music! You can still help your student by understanding a few things, and providing your students with the tools for success –

- Be *patient* in reminding your student to practice.
- *Encourage* your student when the going gets rough. Some things in music are easily learned, others require intensive and repeated application.
- Use *common sense* in avoiding undue stress on musical work. Missing one day of practice due to an extra amount of homework, sporting events, or other important occurrences will not derail your student's performance in music. However, a repeated lack of practice will severely limit your student's performance.
- *Provide* for the appropriate practice conditions. Regularity and quality can be promoted, especially if parents will help set up favorable practice conditions.
 - *Schedule* a regular time for practice.
 - *Utilize* proper practice physical conditions – a quiet room, adequate lighting, a folding stand and a chair that will allow the student to sit properly.
 - Keep instruments in *playing condition*. Be sure your child has valve or slide oil, proper sticks, good reeds, etc. If something is wrong with your child's instrument, do NOT attempt to fix it to yourself. Bring the instrument to Mrs. Johnson, and we will get it taken care of as soon as possible.
 - *Praise* work well done. Even if you don't know exactly what they're working on, find something that sounds good – less squeaks? Better tone?
 - *Never* use practice as a punishment.
 - *Spend time* listening to your child practice. Ask them to play their "favorite song", or the part they like best, or something they're proud that they can play. Encourage your student to play for others – be proud of what they have accomplished!

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are not the same as practice! Rehearsals are time for the ensemble as a whole to prepare pieces for our concerts and where we put the various aspects of a piece of music together, not where you learn or practice your part. It is your responsibility to practice at home so that you are prepared for rehearsals. We must work together as an ensemble in order to be successful and reach high levels of musicianship individually and as a group.

Grading Scale for Assignments:

- 90-100%** - Superior Understanding and Performance of Curriculum
- 80-89%** - Advanced Comprehension and Performance of Concepts
- 74-79%** - Proficient Comprehension and Performance of Concepts
- 70-73%** - Basic Comprehension and Performance of Concepts
- Below 70%** - Unsatisfactory (No Credit Earned at High School)

- Students will be given a Weekly Skills Performance Grade of 5 points. Students are graded on if they are performing the skills necessary to succeed in this class, such as:
 -performing the music (and improving upon performances from week to week)
 -marking music (so as to cut down on repetitions of the same information)
 -being prepared – students are unable to demonstrate the improvement of skills without their music or instrument!
- At times, students will be given individual practice time. This is a good time to ask individual questions and practice new parts. However, this time is not enough for students to master their music. Students are still expected to practice outside of the classroom.

Late Work/Make-up Policy:

- Late work will lose 5% per day that it is late (weekends not inclusive).
- All concerts are mandatory. For an absence to be excused, I must have a written note two (2) weeks in advance from a parent. If that condition is not met, the absence will be unexcused, and can receive a maximum of 80% on the makeup. Excused absences will require a make-up assignment.

Chair Seating

I do not do chair seating in either the middle school or high school bands. Instead, I rotate parts for all students. This allows for all students to have equal opportunities for growth on their instrument and to develop their knowledge of the entire range of their instrument through concert repertoire. It allows each student to understand how all parts function in the ensemble, recognizing that middle and lower parts are equally (if not more) important for balance and blend of the ensemble.

Performances

Call time for a concert is half an hour before hand, thus for a 7 p.m. concert, call time is 6:30 p.m. Call time is when the student is expected to be prepared to start work as a full ensemble to get ready for the concert. This is when any last-minute instructions will be given, and it is essential that all students are prepared for the concert at this point. At call time, students must be in their uniform with their instrument put together and music in order. Walking through the door at 6:30 will result in being marked tardy.

Students arriving for the concert will need to check in with Mrs. Johnson as soon as they arrive. This must be done as soon as they arrive.

Borough Concerts

All of the performance requirements listed above apply for all KPBSD Mass and Honor Concerts as well. These concerts have a \$25 fee (for high school) and \$10 fee (for middle school) accompanying them. Participant fees and ticket receipts help pay to bring nationally-known clinicians to the Peninsula to work with our students, pay for the purchase of music for the performance, and help pay the transportation costs of moving hundreds of students around the Peninsula. Festivals these are valuable experiences for

young musicians, and are second only to events like All-State and All-Northwest for providing meaningful musical experiences for our students.

Uniforms

Uniforms are required of all band members. The uniforms will be used for all concerts as well as ASAA and KPBSD events. We will have a formal uniform as well as a casual uniform. The formal uniform is used for concerts, while the casual uniform will be used for pep band event. The high school uniforms are purchased by the student and belong to them. The middle school uniforms are partially provided by the school. Fund-raising will be available to help defray the initial expense of these uniforms.

High School Uniform – Males will wear a tux (jacket, shirt, pants, bowtie, cummerbund) and women will wear a floor length dress. Students are responsible for providing their own black dress shoes, as well as black socks (for males). These uniforms will be ordered at the beginning of the year and must be paid for before the first concert. Used uniforms are available, but you must speak to Mrs. Johnson *prior* to new uniforms being ordered. Students also need a pair of casual pants to go with their HHS Pep Band Shirt.

Middle School – Students will be provided with a tux shirt (wing collar), and a blue bow tie and cummerbund. If a student loses a portion of the uniform, they will have to pay to replace it. Students are responsible for providing their own “black on bottom” – either black pants, socks and shoes; or a black skirt that covers the knees when seated and black shoes.

Fund-Raisers

All fundraisers are optional. Students may raise funds to pay for their uniform, the required Honor/Mass Band fees, trips the band may take, to cover the costs of reeds, etc. As the Homer Bands, we do one fundraiser at the beginning of the year. This is a frozen food fundraiser, where students sell to friends and neighbors. Students receive credit for a portion of their sales to be applied to various fees.

Communication

Because I spend my time at multiple schools, it is easier to get a hold of me through my High School voicemail box. You can reach me this way by dialing 235-4667 and leaving me a voicemail. Voicemails are forwarded to me as emails, so that I can access them at home. I can also be reached by email at AJohnson@kpbsd.k12.ak.us. If you would like a response or confirmation of receipt, please let me know if it is not obvious by the message itself. I also utilize an email list generated by Powerschool, so please make sure that your PowerSchool information is up to date so that you receive all necessary emails. Lastly, I have a blog that I keep up to date – <http://e10375.blogs.kpbsd.k12.ak.us> (linked on both school sites).

Return form for Homer High School/Middle School Band

Assignment worth 5 points, due Wednesday, August 31st, 2016

Student's first and last name (please print): _____

Home phone number: _____

Student cell phone number (optional): _____

Do I have permission to text your student, understanding that these texts would be in regards to class materials and information only? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Parents'/Guardians' work or cell phones (please indicate name of parent):

Parents'/Guardians' email addresses (please indicate name of parent):

Best Way to Contact You: ☐ Phone ☐ Email ☐ Either

I am interested in volunteering, and would like to help with:

☐ Chaperoning ☐ Copying ☐ Anything

Instrument Information (if owned by individual)

Type of Instrument _____ Make _____

Serial Number _____ (see Mrs. J if you cannot find this)

Our signatures below indicate that we have reviewed the grading policies, rules and general policies for the Homer Band Program. We have noted the schedule of performances, and will be responsible to reserve the groups' performance dates so that the student will be available to participate. We understand that failure to appear at a concert without the required two (2) week written notice will result in a make-up assignment being given, and possibly failing the concert.

Student signature: _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____