

Pomfret Community School Band Handbook 2017-2018

Welcome to and thank you for your participation in the Pomfret Community School Band program! I hope you had a wonderful summer and are as excited to begin this new year as I am. I am especially excited this year because it is my first year as the director of bands at PCS. I'm so happy to teach again many students that I had as elementary students and many students that have joined our school as middle schoolers. I have high expectations for the year to come.

As members of the band family at PCS, we have many aspirations, activities and events, and responsibilities. Meeting our goals requires cooperation and dedication from all involved: students, directors, parents, teachers and administration. This handbook explains the policies, guidelines and expectations of members of the PCS band family.

As a student, you have the responsibility of developing your own abilities. Having a well maintained instrument, the proper materials, enthusiastic class participation and regular practice will benefit you immensely in your work in this class. *You will get out of this class what you put into it.* As the director, I am always available to offer support and encouragement.

It is vitally important and expected that every student and parent read this handbook and return the signature form to me as an indication that each student and his/her parents/guardians have read and discussed the information contained in this handbook. In addition, please watch for forthcoming information regarding other opportunities within our community to make music.

If you have any questions regarding the information in this handbook, please contact me and I will be glad to answer any questions you may have. I will always do my best to respond to any email within 24 hours.

Finally, membership in the Pomfret Community School Band program is an honor and a privilege. Along with this honor comes certain expectations and responsibilities. We must put forth the hard work and dedication that accompanies such an honor. We strive to do what is best for the entire ensemble and individual students are expected to keep that in mind as they pursue their individual goals. It is important to the success of our ensemble that students are respectful, hardworking and express a positive attitude regarding the musical selections and goals of the group.

I look forward to a great year together! Let's make music!

Monica March
Music Educator
Pomfret Community School
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Performing Ensembles

Pomfret Community School offers several opportunities for students to perform in instrumental ensembles. Participation in band is a full year commitment to the ensemble. Just as one cannot “drop” math or reading, one must commit themselves to the ensemble as well.

The **Fifth Grade Band** and **Sixth Grade Band** are open to students in those grades who are interested in the band experience. The fifth grade band specifically is open to beginners who are interested in learning a wind or percussion instrument. The students in these ensembles are expected to practice at least 20 minutes daily and are required to participate in the Winter and Spring Concerts. These students will learn the fundamentals of music and of their instruments in fifth grade and continue to develop their technique and strengthen their skills in sixth grade. Students participating in the Sixth Grade Band receive a grade on their report card that is factored into their overall GPA. (See Grading Procedure for more information.)

The **Seventh and Eighth Grade Band** is our premier instrumental ensemble at Pomfret Community School. These students are expected to practice at least 30 minutes per day and display a high quality of musicianship. Students are required to participate in the Winter and Spring Concerts. They are also encouraged to participate in the Quinebaug Valley Middle School Music Festival. Students participating in this ensemble receive a grade on their report card that is factored into their overall GPA. (See Grading Procedure for more information.)

The **Jazz Band** is an ensemble open to sixth, seventh and eighth graders that meets on Wednesday and Thursday mornings before school from 7:45-8:20AM. Students must be a member of their grade level band in order to participate in Jazz Band. Students in the Jazz band are required to perform at the Winter and Spring Concerts as well as the Art Show.

Expectations

It is important for our community as an ensemble that we all understand and own the expectations that are set upon us. Below, you will find the expectations for students, parents and the teacher of this course.

Expectations for Students

- I will be on time to all lessons and rehearsals with all necessary materials (instrument, reeds and accessories, music and a sharp pencil). I will be prepared for surprise music checks and pencil checks!
- I will come to each rehearsal prepared to contribute to the success of the group by practicing my music outside of class.
- I will be responsible for having all the necessary materials that go along with my instrument.
- I can bring a bottle of water to rehearsal; however, I understand that no other food or drink will be allowed (including gum/candy).
- I will help keep the room neat and clean at all times – this room is shared by students of all ages throughout the day.
- I will treat all members of our ensemble, including the director and any guests, with respect.
- I will keep a positive attitude and open mind.

- I will maintain my commitment to the group throughout the year.
- I will attend all performances. Extenuating circumstances may be excused – parents should consult with Mrs. March at least a week in advance.
- I will take pride in my membership of the Pomfret Community School Band program.

Expectations for Parents/Guardians

- I will support my child's desire to make music.
- I will encourage them to practice at home.
- I will help them be sure they have the materials necessary to be prepared for class.
- I will help my child organize their time and balance their activities to support their education and development.
- I will check my email regularly to ensure that I am up to date on any home-school correspondences.
- I will keep a line of open communication with my child's teacher to ensure his/her success in this class.

Expectations for Teacher

- I will be on time and prepared for each rehearsal.
- I will have high expectations for myself.
- I will have high expectations for my students and hold them accountable for their actions.
- I will assess students fairly based on the course grading procedure.
- I will provide a safe, orderly, and nurturing learning environment.
- I will be responsive to learning differences and cultural diversity within my classroom.
- I will keep a line of open communication with my student's parents/guardians to ensure their success in this class.
- I will be a fierce advocate for the music program at Pomfret Community School and will work hard to ensure the support of the community.
- I will do my best to ensure that all school instruments and materials are in working order. I will keep on hand necessary materials for small instrument maintenance.

Grading Procedure

Students participating in the Sixth Grade Band and the Seventh and Eighth Grade Band will receive a grade for their efforts in the ensemble. Their grade will consist of the following:

- 50% Performance Attendance
- 25% Rehearsal Behavior/Participation
- 15% Rehearsal Preparedness/Technical Skill
- 10% Instrument/Music/Pencil Checks (This check will be done in each rehearsal within the first five minutes!)

Storage and Personal Equipment

Band students may choose to store their instrument in the music room during the school day; however students should not leave their instruments in music room storage when school is not in session (i.e. overnight, weekends, etc.) **unless** they have express permission from the director. An example of this

may be that a student had band today and has a cross country meet tonight that requires bus travel. That student may ask for permission to store their instrument overnight in the music room. About 30 classes travel through the music room per week and our instrument storage is not always secure. We cannot be responsible for items students leave in the music room.

Supplies and Renting

Supplies, such as reeds, oil, cork grease, etc., are part of the students' responsibilities as a musician. We are lucky enough to have a convenient service provided to us by Gerry's Music Shop, Inc. out of South Hadley, MA wherein Gerry's visits our school every Wednesday morning. Students who need to purchase supplies from the music store should have their PARENTS contact the music store so that an order may be placed. **PLAN AHEAD!** Class participation grades depend on students having their equipment and supplies in class.

Students who play **reed instruments** should have at least three (3) working reeds at all times. Others should have valve oil, cork grease, etc. on hand at all times.

Our Music Delivery Store

Gerry's Music Shop, Inc.

80 Lamb Street

South Hadley, MA 01075-2959

Phone: (413) 534-7402

Toll Free: (800) 724-7402

www.gerrys-music.com

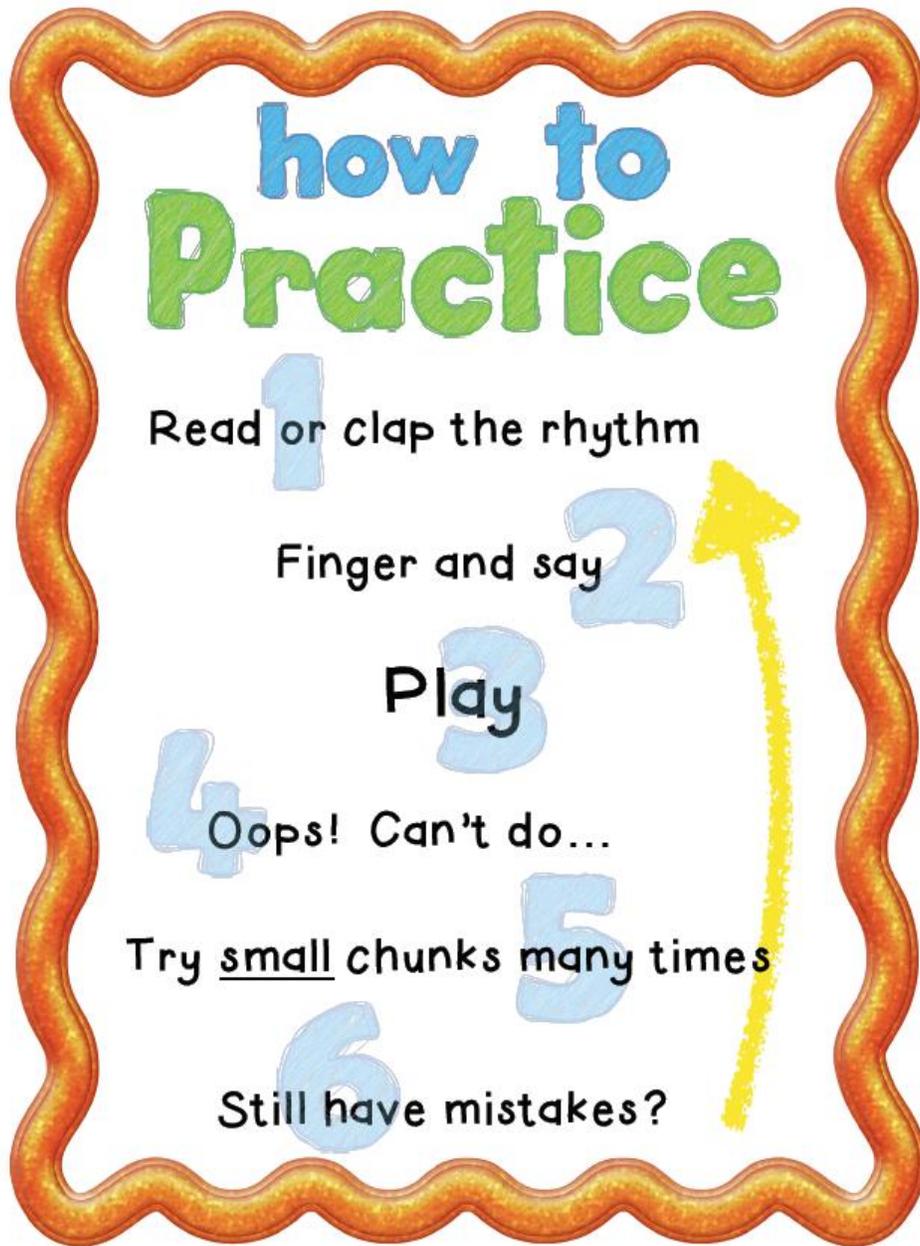
Feel free to use any music store you wish, however this is the only store that delivers directly to Pomfret Community School. All purchases need to be handled directly through Gerry's Music Shop and **not** through Pomfret Community School.

Private Lessons

Private lessons are absolutely not required but are always strongly encouraged to students who are serious about improving at their instrument. PCS 5th graders are lucky enough to receive small group instruction in addition to full band rehearsal each week, however the value of private instruction is huge to a dedicated musician. Band class is ensemble practice. With a private teacher, students can progress individually at a much faster rate. If your young musician is interested in taking private lessons, their director can be a great resource in finding an instructor in our area.

Practice Strategies

Practice makes progress... how you practice determines how much progress you will make. All practice should start slow and deliberate in order to train your fingers to play the passage correctly. Below is a graphic to help with the process of practicing.



Concert and Performance Etiquette

- Concert attire includes black pants and a white shirt. Black shoes and socks are preferred as well. No jeans, athletic pants, or shirts with logos or pictures on them are acceptable.
- Band members should plan to arrive on time, if not early, for performances with all necessary materials for the performance.
- Performers, parents, family and friends in the audience should plan to stay for the entire performance of each ensemble at school concerts. All members of the audience should stay seated, except in an emergency, throughout the performance. **Our performance may take place in the gymnasium, however during a concert it is an auditorium.**
- The final moments before a performance set the tone for the entire performance. Strive to focus your attention on the task at hand.
- While en route to the stage, you are already performing. The audience deserves polite performers just as the performers deserve a polite audience.
- Once on stage, be aware that the audience is watching. Look proud and prepared for your performance. While getting yourself settled, stay focused on the task at hand and stay alert for instructions from your director.
- When off stage as a member of the audience, members of the Pomfret Community School music department should be displaying role model behavior for concert etiquette. Appropriate applause and performance appreciation is expected from all members of the PCS music department.
- While cell phones may be used for photography by audience members (not by members of the Pomfret Community School music department) at appropriate times during the performance, be sure to silence your phones and refrain from taking calls or answering emails/text messages during the performance. It is considered rude to be talking, texting or playing games during a performance.
- Please remember to always be courteous to others.

Pomfret Community School Band Handbook Contract

Please return this form at the next band rehearsal.

We have read the Pomfret Community School Band Handbook and understand the information it contains. We know that we may call or email Mrs. March, the band director, if we have any questions or concerns about the band program at Pomfret Community School.

The success of any music program is dependent on teamwork with each student completing his/her assigned task. With that understanding, all students who enroll in the band program and their parents/guardians are to sign this contract. As a performance-oriented activity, attendance is required for rehearsals and performances that take place outside the regular school day. Mrs. March will insure that you have ample notice about any performances or rehearsals. It is understood that attendance at these functions is mandatory and an unexcused absence may affect the student's grade.

Student's Name (please print): _____

Student's Signature: _____

Parent's Name (please print): _____

Parent's Signature: _____

Best phone contact: _____

Best email contact: _____