

Limestone Middle School
6th Grade Band
Mr. Cooper

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to band! I am so excited that you have chosen to be a part of this group! By choosing to pursue a music education, you will not only learn to play your instrument, but you will gain important skills that will help you for the rest of your life. In this class, you will learn to work as an individual, a team in your section and throughout the ensemble. You will learn to be leaders. You will develop your listening and critical thinking skills. You will have opportunities to be creative and to share your thoughts and ideas.

Remember that band is a class and is a lot of fun, but also takes a lot of hard work. This includes daily practicing, being prepared for class, attending in-school lessons and demonstrating improvement each week, being at all performances, and being a positive example for your fellow students. Also, keep in mind that band is a co-curricular activity. This means that there will be a few instances where your attendance will be required outside of the school day. Band is a team activity and any absence from a rehearsal or performance greatly affects the band and all of your classmates. Parents, thank you for supporting your child's decision to join our band program. I understand what a commitment this is of your resources, time, and energy. I so appreciate this commitment to your child's music education and I'm looking forward to beginning this journey with your students!

It is important that both parents and students read all of this handbook. It contains a lot of important information for this class. At the end of the handbook is a contract to be signed by both the student and their parent or guardian. This lets me know that you have read and understood everything in this handbook and are willing to commit to all of the responsibilities of being a member of this ensemble. Thank you again for joining band and I can't wait to get started making music with all of you!

Sincerely,

Mr. Cooper

Classroom Expectations

- 1) Be on time and prepared for class and lessons with all necessary
- 2) Only drink water in the band room (no chewing gum or eating).
- 3) Respect your teacher, classmates, music, and equipment (listen and follow directions the first time).
- 4) Be ready to learn and to be an active participant in our music-making process!
- 5) Follow all Band Room rules

Required Materials

We cannot make music together if all students participating in the band do not bring their required materials to every rehearsal and lesson during the school day. If a student does not have their materials, only partial credit will be given for that day's daily grade. The following are required materials:

- Instrument in great playing condition with name tag on the case or mallet bag (This includes percussionists bringing their sticks and mallets!)
- Accent on Achievement (Book 1) Lesson Book for full band
- Any method book you might be using for your individual lessons
- Band Music in Folder (It is important to take good care of music when it is handed out, so it should be kept in folder.)
- Pencil
- Woodwind Players: 3 good, playable reeds for reed woodwind instruments, 2 reeds for double reed players
- Cleaning/maintenance supplies for your instrument (oil, grease, cleaning kit, etc...)

In-School Lessons

A very important aspect of each student's success in learning music is their individual weekly lesson. This allows for specific attention to be given to each student and their personal needs for growth on their instrument. Each student is scheduled a time to work with the director individually or in a small group once a week for 20 minutes. Attendance at these lessons is required. In the event that a student has to miss a lesson due to a class conflict (test, field trip, etc), it is the student's responsibility to let Mr. Cooper know. There is no penalty for missing a lesson due to a class conflict, as long as there is prior notice. Missed lessons or not having your folder or instrument at your lesson will result in a lower lesson grade, but more importantly will cause a student to fall behind. It is the responsibility of the student to make-up any work they missed in their other classes due to in-school lessons.

Students will be given the opportunity to make-up any lessons missed for partial credit. Students must submit a recording of themselves practicing the lesson material for 20 minutes to Mr. Cooper by the end of the grading period.

At-Home Practice

As with learning any new skill, daily practice is crucial in learning to play an instrument. Students are expected to regularly practice their instrument by taking their music and instrument home on most school nights, and over weekends and holiday breaks. Practicing for 20 minutes each day is far more effective than a marathon practice session the night before a lesson.

Private Lessons

Although the director will work with all students on an individual basis, the value of private lessons cannot be overstated. Private lessons are NOT required, however they are highly encouraged. Band class is essentially ensemble practice, but with private study, students can progress individually at a faster rate. If you are interested in your child taking private lessons, please contact Mr. Cooper for suggestions on available and recommended teachers. The following guidelines should be applied when seeking out a private teacher. The best private teachers:

- Specialize in ONE OR TWO instruments ONLY
- Play their instruments for their students during the lesson
- Set high standards of performance for their students
- Help students choose music for Solo and Ensemble Festival and help to prepare them for the festival
- Insist students learn their scales
- Refuse to teach students that do not practice or come to lessons unprepared

Grading Procedure

Students receive a grade A B C D F for their hard work in band. Grades will be based on the following four factors:

Rehearsal Participation (25 points weekly)

- Necessary materials present
 - If a student forget their materials, they have the opportunity to make up half of their daily points by filling out a rehearsal detective worksheet.
- Classroom expectations followed
- Actively engaged in rehearsal
- Occasional written assignments completed in class

In-School Lessons (25 Points Weekly)

- Necessary materials present
- Effort and progress shown in assignment
- At lesson on time!

Assessments--Written and Playing (Varies)

- Students will periodically have written or playing quizzes that they will be informed of in advance
- Each quarter students will complete an appropriate benchmark playing test in their lesson

- Students will complete worksheets and assignments in class with regard to their instrument, music theory, music history, etc.

Performances (100 Points per performance)

- Attendance at performance
- Active participant and audience member
- On time and ready to play

Performances

Performances are our chance to show off all of the hard work being put in throughout the semester. It is crucial to this class that students are present at all performances. All performance dates can be found on the attached sheet, and should be placed on the family calendar. Performances are not optional. Unexcused absences at performances will lower your band grade. Any advance knowledge of an excused absence from a performance must be submitted to Mr. Cooper in writing at least 2 weeks prior to the event. (Some examples of excused absences would include (not all with advance warning): Student illness with doctor's note, a death in your immediate family, attending a family wedding. Students with an excused absence will be given an alternate assignment to make up the points that other students are earning by performing in the concert. All unexcused absences will result in a zero for that performance. Some examples of unexcused absences would be attending your cousin's birthday party, being away for a family vacation or trip, attending a dance class/recital, oversleeping, not having a ride to the school (if a ride is necessary, parents should contact other families, or myself to arrange a ride!), or any non-Limestone School athletic event.

It is my belief that students should be allowed to participate in as many activities as they wish, in an effort to become well-rounded young adults. In the event that an activity conflict with a performance, please contact me ahead of time so we can work out a compromise. I understand that life happens, and will work to create a solution that is best for everyone involved. When a student is absent from a performance, it greatly effects the entire group.

Eligibility

In the event a student is considered ineligible as determined by rules set forth by IESA and LMS (a grade of F in any class), they are still expected to attend after school performances. The ineligible student will not be permitted to attend IESA contest and any field trips/performances that take place during the school day. Eligibility is determined based on the students grade for the week prior.

SmartMusic

The HCUSD2 Music Department will be using SmartMusic this year to assess students on playing exams and to measure student musical growth. This is a great technological tool with many advantages. Students will use a school "practice room" subscription and microphone at school, but families may also choose to purchase a Student Subscription and microphone for home use. Having a student subscription would allow me to create individualized assignments and practice material for them. Students would also be able to practice with accompaniments, leading to more enjoyment of their practice time! Please ask me, or visit www.smartmusic.com for more information!

Reeds, Percussion Equipment, and Other Accessories

I will sell reeds and accessories to keep your instrument in working order here at school. All you have to do is send money (Cash or Check made out to The Music Shoppe) and I will give you the supplies. I will hand out recommended lists, with prices, specific to each individual instrument. It is my expectation that everyone has all of the necessary materials to be successful. You may also purchase supplies at King Music in Bradley.

Clarinets and Saxes: Good brands of reeds for clarinets and saxes are: Rico Royal, Vandoren, and La Voz (No flavored reeds!). Sixth Graders should start on number 2.5 reeds, and should be playing on number 3 reeds by Seventh Grade and on an individual basis by 8th grade.

Oboes and Bassoons: will be playing on Jones reeds, at an appropriate strength for your playing level (soft or medium).

Percussionists are to all own Yarn Mallets, Timpani Mallets, Plastic Bell Mallets and Snare Drum sticks, as well as a stick bag. A list of recommended brands will be handed out to all students.

Keep in mind that all of the wind instrument players spend thousands of dollars on their clarinets, trumpets, etc... and that the school spends thousands of dollars on the large instruments that you play on. Mallet and stick bags will be your own responsibility.

Brass Players: Valve oil is a must! If you have sticky valves, you can't play your instrument! The mouthpiece you have included with your instrument is just fine for now, however I may recommend at points during the year a different mouthpiece to try.

Trombone: Slide O' Mix is a fantastic slide lubricant and I highly recommend it. You will also need a small spray water bottle to keep your slide in working order.

Concert Attire

6th grade band members do not have a set uniform. Students should wear nice, "dress" clothes for all performances. Ideally, boys would wear a shirt and tie, and girls would wear a dress, skirt, or dress pants and top. Students should not be wearing t-shirts, jeans, or tennis shoes. Concerts are special events and we should dress accordingly!

Contact Information

Parents please do not hesitate to call or email with any questions or concerns throughout the year!

Mr. Chris Cooper

cooperch@hcsd2.org

Phone: (815) 933-2243 Ext. 5269

Welcome to band! I'm looking forward to a great year!

Please join our Remind group! This is a way for me to communicate reminders and class updates with you conveniently to your cell phone. Simply text the message @lms6band19 to the number 81010. If you are having trouble, please let me know!

6th Grade Band Dates:

Thursday, November 7th: Grade 6 Fall Concert, LMS Gym

*Friday, December 13th: LMS Holiday Assembly****

Monday, February 3rd: District Band Concert, HHS

Thursday, May 21st: Spring Band Concert, LMS Gym

**** During school day*

All concerts will begin at 7:00 p.m. Students are expected to be in the band room ready to play at 6:30 p.m. Any changes to the schedule will be communicated far in advance of the date

Student & Parent/Guardian Contract
Signed Contract due Friday, September 7th

We have read this Band Handbook and agree to these policies. We have placed the band performance schedule on our family calendar and agree to let Mr. Cooper know of any conflict far in advance of the performance.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Email address _____

Any questions for me? (Please write below and I will contact you!)