

Sarasota Middle School Panther Bands Handbook



*Tamara K. Lewis, Director of Bands
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Sarasota Middle School Panther Bands

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to a wonderful and exciting new year here at Sarasota Middle School. Your child has chosen to be a part of the Panther Bands. Panther Band members demonstrate respect, musical excellence, and overall achievement in the school and the community.

Studies show students involved in music are more successful in other academics and they do better on standardized tests. Students of the arts also learn about teamwork. The school's administration realizes the impact that music has in your child's life, including their schoolwork, and fully supports the program.

Your child's success depends on their input – by attending all events and practicing their instrument on a daily basis. One student missing from a concert affects the success of all students involved. The bands are well balanced **and everyone plays an important part.**

In the Panther Band Handbook, you will find all the information your child needs to be successful in band this year. I am always available to talk to you about any concerns or questions you may have. Please feel free to call me at school (941-361-6464) and I will return your call as soon as I possibly can. You can also send a note or email me at Tamara.Lewis@sarasotacountyschools.net.

Please read the policies on the following pages and sign and return the last page for your child's first homework grade. **Please take the time to sign up to volunteer. Volunteers are vital to this organization.** Without parental support and volunteers, we could never achieve all that we do.

Sincerely,

Tamara K. Lewis
Director of Bands

<http://teacherweb.com/FL/sarasotamiddleschool/LewisTamara/>

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Ensemble Descriptions

Beginning Band – Band 1

No previous musical training necessary. Open to students interested in learning to play an instrument, including and limited to flute, oboe, clarinet, alto saxophone, bassoon, trumpet, French horn, trombone, euphonium (baritone), tuba, or percussion. Students are taught fundamentals of music theory, appreciation, and instrumental technique. The Beginning Band will perform in the Fall, Winter, and Spring Concerts.

Symphonic Band – Band 2

7th and 8th grade students with 1 or more years of experience on one of the band instruments listed above. The focus of this course is on performance of music literature, utilizing and developing good technique. The Symphonic Band performs in three concerts a year, at the Florida Bandmaster’s Association Concert Band Music Performance Assessment, and the FBA Solo and Ensemble MPA as well as other school events. **Participation in this ensemble is by Director Recommendation.**

Wind Ensemble– Band 3

7th and 8th grade students with 1 or more years of experience on one of the beginning band instruments above. The focus is on performing advanced level music, utilizing advanced technical and musical skills. The Wind Ensemble performs three concerts a year, at Florida Bandmaster’s Association Concert Band Music Performance Assessment and the Solo and Ensemble MPA, in addition to other community and school events. **Participation in this ensemble is by Director Recommendation.**

Jazz Band – Meets Before School

6th, 7th, and 8th grade students with musical experience. This class accepts traditional band instruments as well as bass guitar, guitar, piano, and drum set. Jazz Band participates in all band concerts and selected school and community events. Students must participate in a band class during the school day to maintain their membership in Jazz Band.

Participation in this ensemble is by Director Recommendation and audition.

Additional Ensemble Opportunities

Brass Choir
Flute Choir

Woodwind Choir
Jazz Combo

Percussion Ensemble
Brass Quintet

Clarinet Choir
Quartets, Trios, Duets

These groups will rehearse before or after school, to be determined by the members.

Expectations and Guidelines

The following information is very important. Members should adhere to these guidelines. Please read this carefully and thoroughly!

Rehearsal and Performance Guidelines

Rehearsal time is very valuable and every minute needs to be used efficiently. In order to achieve success, every band member must follow these guidelines.

1. Be on time. Early is On Time!
2. Be prepared, including:
 - a. Band binder/Beginning Band Book/Music
 - b. Sharpened pencil
 - c. Properly-working instrument
 - d. All necessary accessories: 3 good reeds, neck strap, mouthpiece, ligature, mutes, valve oil, etc.
3. Place backpacks and other personal belongings on the shelves or table. Do not block the path to the door.
4. Instruments should be stored in a locked band locker during the school day and should be taken home each night for home practice.
5. Students are expected to participate each day in class. Those who cannot play should have a note from their parents explaining the problem. Whenever possible, students should follow along in the music and finger the notes on their instrument.
6. Only play your instrument with the group or when given permission by the director. Warm-ups will be done with the full ensemble, unless otherwise noted.
7. No talking is allowed during rehearsal unless permission is given by the director. When conductor gives a “cut-off”, please stop immediately and listen for instructions.
8. Always maintain correct posture and proper playing position. Respect and full attention should be given to any authorized person that is in front of the band.
9. If the director is working with another section, follow along and practice the fingerings on your instrument.
10. Ask questions. Don’t hesitate to ask for information that relates to the music at hand.
11. Always strive to maintain a positive and enthusiastic attitude during rehearsals.
12. Do not begin to pack up until you are “dismissed” by the director.
13. Always have fun making music!

If you forget your:

Instrument	See Mrs. Lewis before class to see if she has an instrument to borrow. If not, sit in your assigned seat and follow along on your music.
Mouthpiece	See Mrs. Lewis before class for a mouthpiece to borrow. Clean the mouthpiece with sanitizing spray before and after use. If not, sit in your assigned seat and follow along.
Reeds	See Mrs. Lewis before class to see if she has a reed. If not, sit in your assigned seat and follow along on your music, with your instrument.
Music/Book	Share with the person next to you.
Pencil	Borrow a pencil from the pencil box. Leave a collateral item in the box until the pencil is returned.

Behavioral Expectations

It is important that each member of the Band program maintains a high standard of behavior inside and outside of school. Students must remember that they are representing the school and the community at all rehearsals and performances. Part of a student’s grade is based on performances. As such, one’s behavior will be taken into account for that portion of the grade.

Conduct is especially important when a substitute teacher or guest conductor is in charge. Substitute teachers, guest conductors, bus drivers, parent chaperones, and any other adult guests are to be treated with courtesy and respect. Students who are disrespectful to responsible adults will be reprimanded and a re-evaluation will be made as to their participation in the band program.

Concert Etiquette

As with any performing ensemble, it is the responsibility of each musician to be prepared prior to the performance. This would include having one's instrument, music, and necessary musical accessories. Also, it is important that each band member arrive on time in their full and proper uniform. The uniform should be worn correctly for the entirety of the concert.

There will often be times when students are asked to participate as audience members at concerts or Music Performance Assessments. Students are expected to behave appropriately and respect other band members by listening carefully to the performance. Students may not use cell phones during a performance for any reason. Students should turn their phones off completely, or leave them locked in their locker. Talking or walking around during another band's performance is unacceptable. Do not do anything that could be distracting to the performers. It goes without saying that there is no food or beverage in a performance auditorium. (NO GUM) It is appropriate to applaud when an ensemble completes a piece. For jazz, it is appropriate to clap at the end of a solo. The rules for applause are simple, don't be the first to start or the last to stop.

Students are always required to stay for the ENTIRE performance. These performances provide educational experiences that cannot be duplicated in the classroom.

Any exception to this must be arranged with the Director PRIOR to the performance. When the band is traveling as a group, all students must ride the bus to and from the event. If you wish to request to be exempt from this rule, please provide an absence request form before the day of the event. If a student needs to leave the event early, advance notice is also required.

Riverview HS Performing Arts Center

We are lucky to have a Performing Arts Center so close to our school. Our continued use of the facility at RHS requires all of us to maintain a professional and courteous manner during these events.

Field Trips

Students may attend band trips only if they meet the minimum eligibility requirements. A complete list of rules, regulations, and trip schedules will be provided to students and parents in a timely manner before all trips. They will also be covered during class. All school rules and school board policies apply on all band trips. Only the most exemplary conduct and behavior will be accepted from band members. Students must have a signed Parent Permission Form to attend any band event that does not occur on the SMS Campus.

Students must follow the itinerary and stay with the band or their group (including riding the bus to and from the event) for the entire trip. Any exception to this must be arranged with the Director PRIOR to the trip.

To be eligible for the Spring Band Trip, students need to participate in all required rehearsals and concerts throughout the year, as specified by the Band Calendar. Unexcused absences from performances may be cause for students to be ineligible to attend the Spring Trip. Excused absences will be considered on a case by case basis, but the final determination of eligibility is made by the director.

Misc

Students need to make every possible effort to stay organized and keep track of all of their assignments and music. If a student loses a copy of their music they need to notify the director immediately in writing. Once a written request is received, the director or class librarian will honor the request in a reasonable amount of time. Remember that the director (nor the librarian) lost your music – you did! Be patient and courteous.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance for Band Events

In order to achieve our goals for excellence and success, it is vital that all members be willing to give up free time and arrange personal schedules around the activities on the band calendar. For performances or before/after school rehearsals:

1. Advance notice, of at least 2 weeks, is mandatory for all absences from events outside the school day. Students should fill out an absence request signed by their parent or guardian for an excused absence. Absence request forms are available from the directors.
2. Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to, did not have transportation, wanted to stay home, had homework in other classes, did not complete the necessary preparation for the performance, did not obtain the band uniform and had to baby sit or work. Unexcused absences will result in reduction of grade and possible removal from performance ensembles. In an emergency situation, excuse notices may be received the following day, however, the Director should be given as much advance notice as possible. Remember that the band is counting on you for the performance.
3. Students with pre-excused or excused emergency absences will be allowed to complete work to recover 100 % of the missed performance grade. Students with an unexcused absence will be allowed to complete work to recover 70% of the missed performance grade.
4. Please note that rehearsals and performances cannot be made up – the logistics and planning that go into a rehearsal or concert cannot be duplicated for one student. Grade Recovery is available for missed rehearsals or performances, regardless of reason.

To recover a missed rehearsal grade, please coordinate a time with Mrs. Lewis to work on the selections from the missed rehearsal. Partial credit will be given for unexcused absences and full credit will be given for excused absences.

To recover a missed performance grade, complete a written report of no less than 800 words on a musical subject of your choice. Mrs. Lewis must approve the subject BEFORE you start your report. The makeup assignment is due no later than the tenth day following the absence and will be graded on content, spelling and grammar, and a bibliography or resources page. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Late assignments will not be accepted.

Practice (Homework)

Individual home practice is a crucial part of the development of any musician at any level. Parents should closely monitor the practicing habits of their student and encourage daily practicing. **Students are expected to practice every day.** There are no exceptions. Students should never say that they do not have to practice.

Instruments go home every day. No exceptions for walkers, bus riders, or bike, riders, skate board riders, or any other form of transportation. Make arrangements to take your instrument home every day.

Practice is done at home, individually to improve on the skills for a specific part of music. Rehearsal is done at school with the whole section or band with the purpose of putting the individual parts together.

Students should use the following practice regimen as it will be the most effective use of your time:

1. Check your instrument prior to beginning your practice session to make sure that it is in proper working order.
2. Begin with long tones. The best way to develop proper tone and pitch center is to play long tones for 10 min. each day.
3. Loosen the fingers by playing scales - slowly first – then increase the tempo.
4. Practice your lesson or band parts. Be sure to work on sections that give you trouble. Work out problem spots slowly. If you have trouble with a section talk to your Director.
5. After practice, clean your instrument and wipe fingerprints off of the lacquered areas. Doing this daily is the best way to ensure your instrument is always in proper working order.

Officers

Officers will be selected for each class based on leadership, responsibility, and overall musicianship. To apply for a position, please see Mrs. Lewis for an application.

Captain

The band captain leads the class through warm ups, tuning and other activities. The captain should lead by example and demonstrate appropriate behavior every day.

Secretary

The secretary is responsible for keeping the log of activities and make up work for students who are absent. This officer is also responsible for announcements on the board. The secretary should not only demonstrate appropriate behavior and lead by example, but also have an outstanding attendance record.

Equipment Manager(s)

The equipment managers are responsible for keeping the room neat and clean. They are responsible for making sure stands are put away at the end of class and chairs are neat and straight. They are also responsible for setting up before and cleaning up after performances, including all stands, chairs and percussion equipment.

Librarian

The librarian assists the director with the music library. They should be available occasionally before or after school to file music. They are responsible for keeping the music files in order and making copies of missing parts. The librarian should be someone who is very organized and likes filing.

Music Suite

All rooms must be kept clean and neat. Students are expected to pick up after themselves and return all equipment to its rightful place. Students are not to lean back in chairs, lean on stands, or other equipment. No one should place anything on the percussion equipment.

1. Band Room
All band members are to assist in keeping the band room clean and in good order.
2. Instrument Storage Room
This room is for instruments only. Other materials left in the room will be thrown out or turned in to the office. **Instruments are to be in cases**, cases are to be **latched** and placed in the appropriate **locker**. **Locks should be locked! Do not share your locker combination with anyone.**
3. Middle Room
The restrooms are located in the middle room. You are not allowed to take your cell phone into the middle room for any reason.
4. Director's Desk and Music Library
The Director's Office and Music Library are off limits to all Band students.

Chaperones and Volunteers

Our program runs smoothly based on the work of all the volunteers – at concerts, with fundraising, chaperoning events, etc. It truly takes a village – and we need your help!

All Volunteers must be approved through the Volunteers Count system with Sarasota County Schools. Chaperones are requested when permission slips are sent home. Chaperones are selected from the approved Volunteers Counts list on a first come, first serve basis. Those who volunteered at concerts are given first priority for the end of the year trip.

Equipment and Materials

Instruments

Instruments can be rented or purchased through local music stores. Some of the larger instruments can be rented from the school.

1. Privately-owned instruments are the responsibility of the individual student. There is no insurance for lost or damaged equipment. If the equipment is to be covered, it must be through a parent's insurance. All private owned or rented instruments must be labeled with your name, class period, school name and your home phone number. See Mrs. Lewis if you need a tag.
2. Some instruments can be rented through the school. The rental fee is \$53.50 for the entire year. Home practice instruments are available for large instruments only. The instrument will be assigned in good condition and is to be returned in the same condition. Brass players are expected to give their instrument a thorough cleaning before the instrument is returned. If the instrument is not cleaned, the student is responsible for the cost of getting the instrument professionally cleaned.
3. All percussionists are required to pay a \$26.75 rental fee for use of the percussion equipment in the band room, including but not limited to, snare drum, bass drum, xylophone, marimba, bells, tambourine, woodblock, chimes, timpani, triangle, crash cymbals, suspended cymbal, toms, and drum set.
4. In addition, percussionists are expected to obtain the following:

Beginning Band	Bell Kit with practice pad or snare drum Drum Sticks 5A, 1 pair medium hard xylophone mallets
Advanced Bands	Beginning Band supplies and 1 pair medium soft marimba mallets, 1 pair medium soft timpani mallets, Stick Bag
Jazz Band	The above supplies and 1 pair of snare drum brushes

Music and Folders

Intermediate and Advanced Bands students are required to have a 1" 3-ring binder. Binders are to be used for band music and materials only. Each student must have a pencil during each rehearsal/class.

Please be aware of the following guidelines:

1. Mark the music with a pencil only.
2. The student may be issued warm-up books or various other technique books. Students are responsible for the price of these items if they are lost or damaged.
3. Music should always be kept in your binder. Binders, music, books, etc. are not to be stored in your instrument case.

Uniforms

Uniforms will be worn by all groups at all public performances. Shirts should always remain tucked in. Remember that you are representing Sarasota Middle School.

Beginning Band Uniform includes: SMS Band Polo Shirt (\$15), Black pants (purchase from local store), Black socks or stockings (purchase from local store), Black dress shoes (purchase from local store).

Symphonic Band and Wind Ensemble includes: for Girls, black concert dress (rent from school) and black shoes, and for Boys, black long sleeve dress shirt, black pants, black shoes and black dress socks (all purchased from local stores).

If you have outgrown uniform items, especially black pants, black dress shoes please consider donating them to the school. We always have someone who needs a larger size shirt, forgot their shoes, needs a belt, etc.

Financial Assistance

Financial Assistance is available. Please send your request in writing to the director as soon as possible. Please note that most items are funded through our fundraising program. Students receiving financial assistance are strongly encouraged to participate in any fundraising effort.

Care of Equipment

It is every band member's responsibility to show the utmost care for all band equipment. Percussion players are expected to take care of all percussion equipment and keep the percussion cabinet clean and organized.

Repairs

All school-owned instrument repairs must be made through the Band Director. Students and parents should seek out a professional repairman for privately-owned instruments. Do not attempt to perform repairs at home.

Communication

The SMS Band program continues to maintain a high level of success due to many factors. One of the most important is communication between the director, students and parents.

- I. Communication between Director and Student
 1. Daily verbal communication during class time
 2. All relevant information, dates, and materials will be accessible on BlackBoard.
 - a. Students are expected to check BlackBoard nightly for practice assignments.
 - b. Some information may require students to print out documents from the web. If a student is not able to do so, they need to see Mrs. Lewis for a hard copy.
- II. Communication between Director and Parent
 1. An e-mail list will be compiled at the beginning of the school year. If you are not receiving quarterly emails, please notify the director.
 2. The Remind App will be used to send reminders about events, classwork, homework, etc. Please sign up using the code for your child's class.
 3. BlackBoard will inform all families of relevant information and dates needed.
 4. Telephone call from the Director

Please take note of each form of communication. It is important that we continually keep the lines of communication open between all parties involved.

Please remember the director is teaching classes throughout the day and is only available to return messages before school and during lunch.

Student Information

Thank you for taking the time to review the Sarasota Middle School Band Handbook.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE INFORMATION BELOW:

Student Name _____

Family E-Mail address (for Band communication to parents) _____

Parent/Guardian Names (first and last) _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Zoned High School _____

Do you own your own instrument? Yes No If Yes, Instrument: _____

Make of instrument (Yamaha, etc.) _____ Serial No. _____

Signatures

I have read the documents provided and I have discussed the policies and information that it contains with my child. I understand that there my child must participate in events outside the school day, and their participation in these events will be reflected in their grade.

Please initial to indicate completion:

_____ Review Handbook

_____ Review Syllabus

_____ Review Calendar

_____ Sign Up for Remind

- Please Check Here if you would like to be contacted about volunteer opportunities.

Student Name _____ Student Signature _____

Parent Name _____ Parent Signature _____