

Dear Band Parents,

Greetings! I would like to take this opportunity to welcome (or welcome back) you to the band program and to introduce myself as your band director. My name is Sharon Walker and this is my third year teaching with Music Education Services and my fifth year teaching music.

The following is a list of expectations and is very important to the success of your child in band. Please read this with him/her so they will understand the road to success.

1. Attend all the lessons. This will keep new music and ideas being presented fresh and the band will be able to progress every day.
2. Attend all the performances and be a contributing member of the band.
3. Practice every day for the asked/preferred amount of time. This time will vary based upon ensemble level, as well how much the student feels they need to practice in order to be successful.
4. Bring the four required items to every lesson – instrument, music (book), music stand, and a pencil. *Some schools will have stands for students to use during lessons, but ALL students will need a foldable stand for the concerts.*
5. Complete the practice record every week. This is a visual tool for both myself and the student to track their progress over the year.
6. Bring letters home the same day you receive them and return it to band on time if required.
7. Always do your best and have fun playing the music and being part of a valuable group.

Parents hold a vital role in the success of your child. The experience in band will teach them responsibility, self-discipline, work ethic, and group cooperation. They will be part of a special group that is unique at their school. Due to the fact that I only see your student/s twice a week, **practice at home is crucial**. Music is learned by trial and error and lots of repetition. Practice must be treated like any other homework in that it must be consistent to expedite the learning process. I ask you as parents to please assist your child in a regular practice routine. Practice logs are provided for your student each month, and can be always be found on our band website if misplaced. Students can also make their own practice log if they find a better visual tool to use.

The band will be performing at different times throughout the year. It is a wonderful experience and I can hardly wait to have you hear the progress. Information regarding concert dates, times, and locations – including other important information throughout the year – can be found on a separate hand out inside your student's folder, as well as on our band website. I frequently update the site throughout the year, in which you can find it at www.musicedservices.org/sharon-walker. You're also welcome to contact me at Walker.band@musicedservices.org, or by phone at (630) 991-0062. Calls after 7:00PM will be returned the next business day. The MES office is also open Monday through Friday from 6:30AM -5:00PM, and can be reached at (847) 805-1800 for questions regarding billing.

I am looking forward to working with your student/s, your family, and our school communities, and to another music year!

Best Regards,
Ms. Sharon Walker – Director of Bands

Class Attendance/Participation

Students are required to attend all band lessons. **Excusable absences can include:** absent from school, taking a test for class, or communication between parent (and/or teacher) with the director prior to the lesson. Due to the limited amount of teaching time, attendance at every class is necessary for the success of the student. **All students should come to band lessons, even if they forgot their instrument/music.** We cover important information within each lesson, and a student can miss out on those details should they choose not to come.

****Note** *Students are responsible for any work missed in band or in their regular classroom due to absence.***

Before School Classes

Students that attend before school classes should arrive 5-10 minutes before the class period starts. The starting time of the lesson is **NOT** the arrival time for students. This allows class to start on time.

After School Classes

Students must be picked up from after school classes no later than 15 minutes past the class time. After this 15 minute window, parents will be called and/or students will be sent to the aftercare program.

****Note** *It is the student's responsibility to arrange rides and be aware of class times.***

Make-up Lessons

Make up lessons are when the Band Director had to cancel lessons and was unable to find a substitute teacher for that day. I will do my best to schedule a make up lesson within the academic year should this occur. Make up lessons are not subjected to single students who miss and/or choose to miss lessons for the week.

Excessive Absences

If a student has acquired three (3) missed lessons in a row, parents will be contacted and progress reports will be sent home regarding their failure to attend class. **Six (6) or more lessons missed in a row will result in the student being dropped from the program immediately.**

Student Responsibilities

1. Students are responsible for attending all regularly scheduled classes.
2. Students are responsible for bringing all necessary materials to class.
3. Students are responsible for bringing home and making parents aware of any letters sent by the teacher.
4. Students are responsible for completing all necessary in-class and homework assignments.
5. Students are responsible for attending all schedule performances.
6. Students are responsible for providing proper maintenance to their instrument.

Band Director Responsibilities

1. I am responsible for creating a positive and loving environment for all students.
2. I am responsible for preparing lessons geared towards the ensemble's level and readiness.
3. I am responsible for ensuring that all students have a firm understanding of the principles of music.
4. I am responsible for communicating to students and parents any necessary information concerning the program, updates on events, and most important, a student's progress.

Performances

Students are **required** to attend all scheduled performances throughout the school year. There will be three major concerts: one in December, March, and May. Combined concerts will have combined rehearsals before the concert date. **All students are required to attend these extra rehearsals. Failure to attend the rehearsal may result in not being allowed to participate in the concert.** The only exception to this rule is absence due to illness which kept the student from attending school, family emergency, or is approved ahead of time. Dates and times of these concerts and rehearsals will be posted on the band website at www.musicedservices.org/sharon-walker.

Additional Performance Opportunities

Solo fest

Students have the opportunity to perform at solo festival held in March. All students will be expected to perform their required scales and a solo. More detailed information will be sent home in December/January as well as a packet of acceptable solos. Every student will either perform at the solo festival (for an automatic grade of 100) or for me (graded according to performance). Those who attend solo festival are required to attend 2 additional piano rehearsals held outside normal rehearsals.

Honors Band

Students in the Advanced Band will have the chance to be nominated for Honors Band, normally held in late April/early May. **Students must show exemplary work, practice habits, behavior, and excellent attendance throughout the year and be committed to practicing extra time in order to be considered.** Information for Symphonic Band auditions will be sent home in October, and nominations for Concert Band will be sent home in February. Students who have also previously attended (or were nominated) for previous Honor Bands does not automatically qualify them for Honors Band this year.

Instruments and Supplies

Each student is responsible for their **OWN** instrument as well as any supplies related to that instrument. Students are responsible for the maintenance of their instrument as well. Please **DO NOT** let anyone touch or try to play any instrument other than their assigned instrument. Failure to do so may cause serious damage and cost to repair.

Students are asked to bring their instrument with them in the morning when they arrive at school. Excuses such as “My parents are bringing the instrument” and “I left my instrument at home/in the car” are not acceptable. Schedules have been provided with all class times and dates in order to eliminate forgetfulness.

Each student is given an assignment that he/she will work on in between lessons.

Students should NOT to leave their instrument at school overnight.

Practicing and Homework

Each student is assigned lines out of the book to work on for the week as well as concert music. Students will also have regular playing quizzes from the assigned music. An excellent amount of practice is 120+ minutes each week. A good amount of practice is 100+ minutes each week. **The minimum amount of practice each week is 90+ minutes.** Students are also responsible for filling out the band practice log and returning it to class on the assigned day designated by the Band Director.

Although a practice log is a great visual tool for both the student and Band Director to track a student’s progress, it is not the only tool used to know when a student is not practicing. Since we have the privilege of having smaller class sizes, resulting in one-on-one personalized instruction, every student needs to pull their weight within the class, as well as the ensemble as a whole. It is *obvious* when a student has not practiced, and ultimately will result in frustration and/or a repeat lesson for that week of the same material. Students are most successful when they find a **regular** and **scheduled** time at home each day to practice. **If it becomes a habit, it’s no longer a chore.** Encourage your student through those tough times and find fun and exciting rewards (besides the fact of being able to play an instrument!) to keep our students motivated.

Classroom Rules and Discipline

In order to maintain a positive learning environment, your school's policy concerning classroom rules and violations of these rules will be enforced. My rule in class is that **anything** which prohibits me from teaching will be cause for verbal or written reprimand, or refrained from participating in class that day.

Progress Reports

Students will be graded on practice sheets, scales, attendance, behavior, playing quizzes, written assignments, and musical progression. **NEW: Progress reports will only be mailed in December and May.** If your student does not attend Solo Festival, a separate progress sheet will be sent to you via mail in March with comments from me. I encourage you to read these over with your student, as they have detailed information on how your student is progressing throughout the year, and any concerns I may have of that progress.

Social Events

As the year progresses, there will be some fun social events which may not be music related. More details will follow. *Previous social events included our December pizza party, and 'End of the Year' Roller Skating party.*

Contact Information

Sharon Walker

Walker.band@musicedservices.org

(630) 991-0062

www.musicedservices.org/sharon-walker (check here for frequent updates)

Music Education Services Office

Open Monday – Friday, from 6:30AM – 5:00PM

Main Office: (847) 805-1800 – Carol or Julie (front end receptionists)

Mr. Steve Nierman – Owner and CEO of Music Education Services

Mrs. Kim Taube – Director of Education

Mrs. Rebecca Rome – Instructional Coach

NEW: Find us on Facebook! Search "Music Education Services" and like us!



PLEASE RETURN TO MS. WALKER



We have read the Band Handbook, and understand and agree to the rules and guidelines of the Band program.

Student's Name: _____

School: _____

Parent email address: _____

Additional email address: _____

Student signature: _____

Parent signature: _____