

Introduction

Welcome to the Spirit Creek Music Department. I'm excited to start my 9th year of teaching in Richmond County with you.

Please read the information in this handbook thoroughly and keep it in your class binder. There are two copies of the calendar so you can also have a copy at home. Our success ultimately depends upon every student being committed and giving their best every day. As with any team sport, every student matters. Everyone must participate in a cooperative, positive manner.

Again, welcome to the 2017-18 Spirit Creek Middle School Music Department. This will undoubtedly be a year of transition for all of us, but I am looking forward to great things. Please feel free to contact me regarding any questions, thoughts, or concerns you may have. I am thrilled for the opportunity to work with each of you.

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Performing Ensembles

BEGINNING BAND

The Beginning Band is made up of 6th through 8th grade students who want to learn a symphonic band instrument. Members can also participate in chorus.

Beginning Band rehearses during the school day. Since the different grades meet at different times, there will be 3 to 4 mandatory after school full rehearsals (dress rehearsals) prior to each performance. Other after school rehearsals will be utilized as tutoring/group lessons and are optional. A weekly rehearsal schedule is available on the website, in the office, and the band room.

Beginning Band is a graded academic class. Attendance at all rehearsals are mandatory. Students are also expected to attend all required performances. The grading and concert attendance policies are outlined later in this handbook.

CONCERT BAND

The Concert Band is made up of 7th and 8th grade students who have played in band for at least one full year. Students in Concert Band may also participate in chorus.

Concert Band rehearses during the school day. Since 7th and 8th grade band meets at different times, there will be 3 to 4 mandatory after school full rehearsals (dress rehearsals) prior to each performance. Other after school rehearsals will be utilized as tutoring/group lessons and are optional. A weekly rehearsal schedule is available on the website, in the office, and the band room.

Mrs. Rhodes will determine chair placement. Chair placements may change over the course of the year. Students will audition for chair placement with the understanding that strong students are needed on all parts. Placement will also take in account leadership ability, positive attitude, and motivation; therefore, a student's level of musical ability cannot be determined by placement.

Concert Band is a graded academic class. Attendance at all rehearsals are mandatory. Students are also expected to attend all required performances. The grading and concert attendance policies are outlined later in this handbook.

CHORUS

Chorus is made up of all grades and will rehearse during first period (enrichment). This is not an auditioned group, but is dependent on class schedule. Students who want to join chorus but can't due to scheduling conflict can attend a weekly after school rehearsal along with independent practice at home.

Chorus rehearses daily, so after school rehearsals are not scheduled at this time for those scheduled for chorus. Please be advised that there might be additional rehearsals scheduled before Large Group Performance Evaluation (LGPE) in the spring. LGPE is a mandatory requirement for all RCBOE Choral Programs. Other after school rehearsals will be treated as audition preparation and honor choir preparation for those that are interested. A weekly rehearsal schedule is available on the website, in the office, and in the chorus room.

Mrs. Rhodes will determine section leaders around the 4th week of school. Students will audition for section leader with the understanding that strong students are needed and will take in account leadership ability, positive attitude, and motivation, therefore a student's level of musical ability cannot be determined by placement.

Chorus is a graded academic class. Attendance at all rehearsals are mandatory. Students are also expected to attend all required performances. The grading and concert attendance policies are outlined later in this handbook.

ADDITIONAL PERFORMING ENSEMBLES

Additional performing ensembles may be formed throughout the year. Possibilities include: jazz band, show choir, symphonic band, small group ensembles for evaluation festival.

Attendance Policy

OVERVIEW

One of the greatest aspect of joining band or chorus is that it is a mutual CHOICE that you made3 with your child. Nowhere else in the academic curriculum are students given the choice to be in a class. Math is required. English is required. The result is a class in which all students WANT to be there. Since this is indeed the case, it is essential that students remain 100% committed to the choice they made.

An unwavering dedication to excellence has always been a key component of any successful music program. While excellence certainly takes many forms in music, it must begin with the very essence of what we do, which is to perform our art. Since performances require all members to be present to be truly successful (think of a baseball game with no pitcher), attendance at all performances is absolutely crucial. So, celebrate the choice that was made to be involved in music making: be present for all required activities and performances.

REHEARSAL ATTENDANCE

Band and chorus are academic classes during the regular school day. Mrs. Rhodes will take attendance and absences will be reported to the office. Failure to report to rehearsal will be considered cutting class and an office referral will be submitted.

OFFICIAL PERFORMANCE ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is the policy of the Spirit Creek Middle School Music Department that all performances are an integral part of the learning process in music education. It is expected that when students choose to participate in band/chorus, they accept the responsibilities that go along with participation. There will be evening concerts during the school year. These events are considered a part of the course requirements and will be graded. The grade is based on attendance, punctuality, concert dress, effort, and behavior. Students are expected to stay for the entire concert.

It is understood that some legitimate conflicts may arise, but I ask that all participating students and parents check the performance dates as soon as they are announced and make every effort to arrange their schedules accordingly. Missing a performance because of outside activities will be considered unexcused and the student will not receive credit for that part of their grade. If transportation is an issue, understand that there are other students performing and could possibly provide transportation. Excused absences include illness, religious commitments, and family emergencies.

There are guidelines for those students who have a genuine, unavoidable conflict. I should receive a note explaining the problem at least one week prior to the performance. Each conflict will be considered individually. If a student is absent from school, he/she is not allowed to attend the concert and will be excused. In the event of an emergency on the day of the concert, the parent should contact me as soon as possible and/or send in a note on the following school day. Any student who must miss a concert, for an excusable reason, may be required to complete an alternative assignment. Students who follow this procedure, and whose absence is approved, will be excused from the performance and their grade will not be jeopardized provided they complete the alternative assignment. Most importantly, please plan ahead and communicate with me. More than not, there are ways to work around the conflict.

Performing groups are the ultimate team sport because every member is essential to a quality performance. Thank you for your support and cooperation regarding concert attendance.

Band Instrumentation and Instrument Transfers

For our concert band to perform music as the composer intended, it is crucial that we have students playing all the required instruments in the appropriate ratios.

Mrs. Rhodes will make every effort to honor a student's wish in playing the instrument of their choice. It may be necessary to require that a student play a secondary instrument.

Some common instrument transfers include:

Trumpet to French Horn

Trumpet to Tuba

Alto Saxophone to Tenor or Baritone Saxophone

Clarinet to Tuba

Clarinet to Bass Clarinet

Flute to Piccolo

Flute to Bassoon

Flute to Tuba

Beginners will all start on 5 instruments of their choice: flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, and bells. This will allow more individualized instruction and give every student a strong basic knowledge to move on to other instruments if they choose. These instruments are also somewhat more affordable for rental and maintenance.

Private Lessons

Private lessons are not required for participation in band or chorus, but are highly encouraged and will accelerate the musical learning process. Private lessons give one on one instruction that caters to each student's individual needs and unlike school based instruction, private lessons can continue all year long. A list of private instructors can be found on the website and in the band room. Recommendations for piano and guitar are also available.

Transportation for Rehearsals and Concerts

Parents, please make every effort to have transportation for your child for all after school rehearsals (optional and mandatory) and concerts well in advance. If your child is going to be transported with another student (neighbor, friend, cousin) at any time, please give the front office or Mrs. Rhodes written notice at the beginning of the day so that verification can be made. If the need to cancel an after-school rehearsal due to illness, last minute meeting, etc., an alert on the Remind app will be sent out. Also, all students will have use of the band room phone. Transportation to any auditions and honor festivals are also the responsibility of the student. Transportation is only provided for LGPE.

Concert Dress

We are a team and it is important that we present ourselves as such. When we perform, we not only represent ourselves, but we represent a larger whole – the Music Department, Spirit Creek Middle School, our community, and Richmond County. It is the first impression our audience will have of our group and we want it to be a great one. Concert dress is based on GMEA guidelines:

Band: white shirt (polo or button down); black pants/skirts; black socks/nylons; black shoes

Chorus: all black – sandals should be avoided do to safety risk

Please no jeans or sneakers if possible. If you have any difficulty obtaining any of these items, please let Mrs. Rhodes know as soon as possible (not the day of the event) so that we can assist you. It is extremely important that all students adhere to the county dress code.

Equipment, Maintenance, and Required Supplies

BAND

I understand that certain instruments, due to sheer size and financial burden, are not always acquirable for purchase. For this reason, the music department does maintain a limited inventory of instruments for student use when one cannot be acquired outside of school. This includes larger instruments such as bass clarinets, tenor and baritone saxophones, euphoniums, and tubas.

BAND REQUIRED DAILY SUPPLIES

- Instrument
- Pencil
- All music
- Technique book
- 2 or more good reeds and cork grease (woodwind)
- Valve oil/slide grease (brass)
- Pair each of sticks and mallets (perc)

Reeds, oil, grease, books can be purchased from Mrs. Rhodes at school – make checks payable to Spirit Creek Middle School. An order form is included with this handbook. Additional order forms are available in the band room. Other supplies must be purchased on your own. Please let me know if you have trouble acquiring these items. I will do a weekly purchasing run to the music store for orders.

CHORUS REQUIRED DAILY SUPPLIES

- 2 pencils
- ½ inch Black binder
- All music

REPAIRS

Whether the instrument belongs to the school or the student, it is expected that the student will take responsibility for its upkeep. Two local repair shops are Kirkwood's Music Store and Portman's Music. Please do not try to fix any instruments on your own

Woodwind: Whenever a key ceases to work properly, or it appears that something has become bent or a spring is out of place, do not attempt to fix it yourself. Bring it to me immediately. I can determine if it is something that I can fix or if it requires to be sent to a professional repair technician.

Brass: Sometimes a mouthpiece will become lodged in the instrument. This is common if the student hit the mouthpiece while it is inserted into the instrument (yes, it does make a cool sound). Another cause is dirt build up or excessive pressure while playing. If this occurs, do not

try to twist it out. Twisting the lead pipe of the instrument can cause a significant amount of damage if not done properly. See me immediately so that I can use the mouthpiece remover tool. Valves and slides should be lubricated regularly.

Percussion: Changes in humidity and temperature can cause drumheads to lose tension. A loose drumhead will have a dead “thud” sound where a drumhead that is too tight will have a sharp ringing sound. If you think the drumhead needs adjustment, please do not adjust it on your own. They can break if adjusted improperly. See me so that I can show you how to properly adjust the tension.

SUGGESTED MAINTENANCE SUPPLIES

The purpose of these supplies is to care properly for your instrument and protect your investment. If instruments and supplies are treated with care, they will last for many, many years. Reeds will have to be replaced more frequently.

Flute

Flute rod & small clean cloth

Oboe & Bassoon

2+ good reeds
water container

Clarinet & Saxophone

2+ good reeds
Reed case
Mouthpiece brush & cleaning swab
Mouthpiece cap

Brass

Valve oil (slide cream for trombone)
Mouthpiece brush

Percussion

1 pair of 5B drumstick (preferably Vic Firth SD1)
1 pair of yarn mallets

Georgia Music Educator Association Events

DISTRICT X HONOR BAND

This is an auditioned group that is comprised of students from several counties; Columbia, Burke, McDuffie, to name a few. Auditions consist of scales and sight-reading. There is a fee for participation in the audition. Auditions are in December with the event in February.

DISTRICT X HONOR CHORUS

This is a one-day event that is a non-auditioned group. It is open to all 7th & 8th grade chorus members. Mrs. Rhodes can nominate up to 12 students. There is also an opportunity for three 8th grade girls to perform with the high school women's' choir. There is a fee to participate in this event that includes meals.

DISTRICT X 6TH GRADE HONOR CHORUS

This is a one-day event that is a non-auditioned group. It is open to all 6th grade chorus members. Mrs. Rhodes can nominate up to 12 students. There is a fee to participate in this event that includes meals.

DISTRICT X BEGINNING BAND

This is a one-day event that is a non-auditioned group. It is open to 6th grade band members only by nomination. The final membership decision is based on needed instrumentation and is made by the organizer. There is a fee to participate in this event.

STATEWIDE 6TH GRADE HONOR CHORUS

This is a two-day event in Athens, GA. This chorus is made up of 500 students from across the state. Mrs. Rhodes can nominate up to 5 students. There is a fee to participate in this event and the student is responsible for meals and lodging.

LARGE GROUP PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (LGPE)

This is a mandatory event for all Richmond County music groups. Both band and chorus will participate at their own event in March. Transportation is provided by the county. Once the schedule is release, lunch plans will be made. There is no participation fee for this event.

SOLO AND SMALL ENSEMBLE

This is an optional event where students will perform for state judges. There is a small fee for participation in this event. Small ensembles are 2-16 students.

RICHMOND COUNTY HONOR BAND AND CHORUS

This is an auditioned group that consists of students throughout the county. Auditions consist of scales and sight-reading, similar to district auditions. Chorus is not an auditioned but is nominated by Mrs. Rhodes, usually 12-15 students. There is a fee to participate in this event.

Band Grading Policy

The model below allows for great flexibility and ownership on the part of the student, so that it is within every student's ability to earn an A.

PARTICIPATION = 20%

Students are expected to be at all rehearsals and participate in a cooperative and positive manner. Students are also expected to be on time to rehearsals ready to play. Disruptive behavior and/or being unprepared will result in a lowered grade for the rehearsal. Disruptive behavior may also result in disciplinary action and/or removal from the program.

PRACTICE = 20%

Students are expected to practice an average of 100 minutes per week. It is recommended that students practice 20 minutes, 5 nights a week. Students must turn in a weekly signed practiced card in order to receive credit for their practice time.

PERFORMANCE/QUARTER FINAL = 20%

Students must attend all required concerts during the year. Any student who has an unexcused absence will receive no credit for this part of their grade. Students are also expected to arrive on time, have all necessary supplies, be prepared, follow concert dress code, behave appropriately, and stay through the entire concert. In addition to affecting his/her grade, misbehavior may result in an office referral. For a grading period without a scheduled performance, a written and playing final will be administered.

QUIZZES = 20%

Each quarter, students will be assigned at least one playing quiz. Written quizzes may also be assigned, as well as random supply/equipment checks. Playing quiz material may be pulled from current band literature, scales, or other developmentally appropriate material.

QUARTERLY SELF-EVALUATION = 10%

Near the end of each grading period, students will be asked to complete a personal self-evaluation. It will require students to reflect upon their efforts and achievements regarding participation, preparation, practice, performances, musical skills and musical goals.

CHOICE BOARD = 10%

Students will do their choice of projects from the Band Choice Board. Students will be required to earn at least 25 points per grading period. If extra points are earned, they may be rolled over to the next grading period. Complete directions for the Choice Board can be found online and in the band room.

Chorus Grading Policy

The model below allows for great flexibility and ownership on the part of the student, so that it is within every student's ability to earn an A.

PARTICIPATION = 20%

Students are expected to be at all rehearsals and participate in a cooperative and positive manner. Students are also expected to be on time to rehearsals ready to sing. Disruptive behavior and/or being unprepared will result in a lowered grade for the rehearsal. Disruptive behavior may also result in disciplinary action and/or removal from the program.

DAILY ASSESSMENT = 20%

Students are expected to complete a daily assessment upon entering the room prior to the start of rehearsal. If a student is absent, they will be excused for that day's assessment. The daily assessment is to be turned in at the end of class.

PERFORMANCE/QUARTER FINAL = 20%

Students must attend all required concerts during the year. Any student who has an unexcused absence will receive no credit for this part of their grade. Students are also expected to arrive on time, be prepared, follow concert dress code, behave appropriately, and stay through the entire concert. In addition to affecting his/her grade, misbehavior may result in an office referral. For a grading period without a scheduled performance, a written and singing final will be administered.

QUIZZES = 20%

Each quarter, students will be assigned at least one solfege/sight-reading quiz. Written quizzes may also be assigned, as well as random part checks.

QUARTERLY SELF-EVALUATION = 10%

Near the end of each grading period, students will be asked to complete a personal self-evaluation. It will require students to reflect upon their efforts and achievements regarding participation, preparation, practice, performances, musical skills and musical goals.

CHOICE BOARD = 10%

Students will do their choice of projects from the Chorus Choice Board. Students will be required to earn at least 25 points per grading period. If extra points are earned, they may be rolled over to the next grading period. Complete directions for the Choice Board can be found online and in the band room.

Statement of Consent

This form must be signed and returned to Mrs. Rhodes by **Friday, August 25**.

Please initial each line.

Student Parent

I realize that band/chorus is a choice. I also realize that I should do everything I can to be here on time and ready to participate. However, conflicts may arise from time to time. When they occur, I agree to explore options and pursue all other possibilities for transportation. Most importantly, I will communicate with Mrs. Rhodes and let her know in advance when I have a conflict.

I understand that all school based performances are mandatory and that no credit will be awarded for unexcused absences. In addition, a pattern of unexcused absences may jeopardize participation in band/chorus.

I understand the SCMS does not offer band on a "trial" basis. By signing this form, I'm agreeing to a full-year commitment.

I understand that one of the most important contributions I can make to the band is being a cooperative and positive member. I will take this expectation very seriously.

I have read this handbook in its entirety and am aware of the policies and procedures of the SCMS Music Program. I am also aware of the required supplies.

Student's Name (printed)

Parent's Name (printed)

Student's

Signature

Parent's

Signature

Date

Photography Release

Throughout the year, the music department takes pictures of students for press releases, Newsletters, etc. It is your choice whether or not you would like your child photographed. Your choice will not have an impact of your child's grade or participation in the music program.

Please check on of the following:

- I give consent for my child to be photographed, understanding that photographs are used only for public relations purpose.
- I do not give consent for my child to be photographed.