

# 2018-2019 WWMS Band Handbook

## WWMSband.org

Hello Band students and parents, and welcome to a great year of making music in our 2018-2019 Concert Band!! There is a lot of information here, so please read it carefully, and let me know if you have any questions.

**Students:** Please read this with your parents. Then go to my website (WWMSband.org). Come to next class being able to tell me one thing that you learned from the website. It could be something about classroom expectations, how to clean your instrument...anything *except* something in this handbook.

**Parents:** Please write me from the email that you'd like me to use for the future. (If you've already received an email from me at the address you'd like to use, then you're all set.) This will help me tremendously in getting information and reminders to you throughout the year. It could be, simply:

Hi, Mr. Sinicrope,

This is [student's name]'s mother/father/guardian. I just wanted to let you know that I have received and understand all the information you sent home.

Mr. or Mrs. X

Thank you so much,  
Aaron Sinicrope, Woodrow Wilson Band Director  
sinicropeam@mpsct.org

*Everything you read about in this handbook can be found on the website:*

**WWMSband.org**

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## **PRACTICING: What do I expect?**

Every band member should *want* to become a better musician. Every band member should *want* to do their part in making the whole group sound as good as it can. Every band member should have pride in themselves and the quality of the group. For all of these reasons...**KNOW YOUR NOTES.** There is an ongoing homework assignment in this class: to review what we did in a given class day and come to the next class prepared to learn more.

If you are having trouble with your music, **THE PENCIL IS YOUR FRIEND!!** Write in the fingerings and rhythms during class, and work on them at home. Ask me for help. Circle difficult sections so you can ask me easily.

I'm happy to spend time after school with anyone who wants extra help. **If you don't know your notes for a concert, you might not be invited to perform with the group.** If you're adding wrong notes to the ensemble because you're not prepared, it wouldn't be fair to those students who put in the effort to practice.

## Accessories

**Flute players** : cleaning rods and a handkerchief.

**Clarinet and sax players** : a string with a handkerchief on the end (and reeds, please see last page).

**Brass players** : valve/slide oil.

**Bass players** : tuners and guitar cables.

**Drummers** : snare drumsticks and xylophone mallets (HARD), each labeled with your name.

## Grading Policy

**Participation: 40%** ...if you participate in class every day, you got yourself an A!!

Of course, we wouldn't progress very well on our instruments if we didn't play during class. Your daily participation grade reflects your effort in class, as well as your conduct.

**Preparation: 40%** ...if you bring your stuff and review a little at home, you got yourself an A!!

You have to be prepared *as individuals* if we're going to make great music *as an ensemble*. Your daily preparation grade includes:

1. **KNOWING YOUR MUSIC** - Come to class having reviewed old material, ready to learn new material. I may give you an "I Have Band Homework" paper; fill it out and return it to me next class, if you don't want your Preparation grade to suffer.
2. **BRINGING YOUR PENCIL** every single class. It is crucial in order to retain the things you learn in class, and it's a huge time-saver!! Just keep one in your case or folder.
3. **BRINGING YOUR INSTRUMENT**...duh (and of course your reeds and cleaning supplies)
4. **BRINGING YOUR MUSIC** (and it is YOUR music--write hints for yourself all over it!)
5. Fingering chart, scale sheet, and list of terminology (available on the website)

**Quizzes & Tests: 20%** - Throughout the year, we will have quizzes on our concert music and scales. We'll also have mid-terms and finals.

## Care and Cleaning of Your Instrument

Mold grows in dark, wet places. Condensation forms when you blow into your instrument, making the inside warmer than the outside, causing the inside to get wet. If you then put it into a dark instrument case, you have the recipe for making fungus that you're breathing in each time you play!!! This could lead to health issues like tremors, chronic fatigue syndrome, or even cancer! Wipe your instrument with a cloth after every use, and have it cleaned at a shop once a year. And be sure to take those reeds off of your mouthpieces when packing up! **Don't store music in your case - it damages your keys!**

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## Think About Switching Up Your Instrument

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade band music requires more of a variety of instruments than elementary music. Think about switching to a more unique instrument (the school can probably provide it for you, but you will be responsible for any damage that might be done to it throughout the year).

From clarinet to **Bass Clarinet?**

From alto sax to **Tenor Sax?**

From alto or tenor sax to **Baritone Sax?**

From trumpet to **French Horn, Baritone Horn or Tuba?**

From trumpet to **Trombone?**

From bass guitar to **Baritone Horn or Tuba?**

## Concert Attire

Concert attire for each performance (except the MHS football game and Holiday on Main) is black bottoms, black dress shoes, and our white polo shirt with the WWMS ram (purchased from me for \$15). We perform better and look more professional when we take care to get dressed up and look nice. If you arrive to a performance without proper concert attire, you will not perform in the concert, and you will be asked to do a make-up assignment instead.

## MHS Football Game (8th Grade only)

Each year, the Middletown High School Marching Band invites the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band to one MHS football game. We get to play along with them in the stands and check out the half-time show (and the game, of course!!). Students get in for free; parents pay. This is a great way to give 8<sup>th</sup> graders a heads up on what they can expect at MHS next year, while having a great time.

## Rental and purchase of instruments and accessories

### Middlesex Music Academy

440 Main Street

Middletown, CT 06457-3366

(860) 344-0525

[middlesex-music-academy.com](http://middlesex-music-academy.com)

### Music & Arts Center

42 Main St. #A

East Hartford, CT 06118-3208

(860) 568-0692

[musicarts.com](http://musicarts.com)

## Instrument repairs

Things happen all the time for various reasons that require an instrument to be repaired. When this happens, you have two options:

1. Take it to a music shop yourself, OR
2. I give it to Music & Arts or Middlesex Music Academy to handle the repairs. If you give me permission to have them repair the instrument, you agree to pay the repair cost.

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# All About Reeds

## BUY A BOX OF REEDS THIS WEEKEND!!

Clarinet and Sax players should always have about **five reeds in rotation**. If you buy a box of 10 now, you'll be all set for the year. Use a sharp pencil or a marker to identify which reed you will use for each day (mark your "Day 1" reed, your "Day 2" reed, and so on). When you've used each reed once, go back to your first reed again. This ensures that you'll always be playing on a "warmed-up" reed.

I will be checking that you have at least **five reeds** during the first couple weeks of school. Please get this taken care of as soon as you can. They are cheaper when you buy in bulk—a box of 10 or 25.

## REED PLACEMENT

When placing the reed on your mouthpiece, a good position for it is when you can see a little sliver of the black mouthpiece over the reed to being a little higher.

## REED NUMBERS

Reeds are numbered from 1.5 to 5, using every half-number (1.5, 2, 2.5, etc.). The higher the number is, the harder the reed will be. As beginners in elementary school, students start on #2 reeds and should try playing on #2.5 as soon as possible (6th grade). The idea is to play on the hardest reed the student can appropriately handle.

Students shouldn't try a reed that is too hard too quickly. A harder reed means that the sound is harder to produce. A student must blow harder and might feel like they have to "bite" the reed. This will produce a small, pinched sound. Students should wait until their embouchure muscles have developed (1 - 3 years of consistent practice) before trying harder reeds. 1<sup>st</sup> clarinets and higher-playing sax players should transition to #3 in 8th grade.

## CARE OF REEDS

Reeds must be stored carefully in a case that allows them to dry and doesn't expose them to excessive heat or cold. Basically, just make sure they can dry and that they don't break. Weather changes, particularly in spring or fall, can cause the reeds to warp. Your reed is warped if you look at the tip of it and it looks wavy. Throw it away; it's difficult to play on and doesn't sound very good.

***That's why you should have at least five reeds!!***

Reeds should also be thrown out if they are chipped or cracked at all. Yes, they often can still be played on, but it'll be more difficult and won't sound very good. ***That's why you should have at least five reeds!!***

Reeds must be "broken in". Don't play on a new reed for more than 10-15 minutes a day. If a reed looks very wet and streaky (as though you could almost see through the tip), it is waterlogged and needs to be put away. After a couple weeks, it will be broken in enough to play on for an entire rehearsal or practice session. A reed shouldn't be overworked -- switch them off and don't play on the same reed two days in a row. And one more thing: ***You should always have at least five reeds!!***