

GRADING POLICY

The nine-week letter grade is based on an average of three grades:

1. PRACTICE GRADE
2. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT
3. PERFORMANCE PROJECT GRADE

DAILY PRACTICE

A practice calendar will be collected EVERY Monday, and is expected to be accurate and include a parent or guardian signature. 6th grade students are responsible for 25 minutes for 6 days a week (150 minutes total); 7th grade students are responsible for 30 minutes a day for 6 days a week (180 minutes total); 8th grade students are responsible for 45 minutes a day for 6 days a week (270 minutes total). This grade is a cumulative grade for the marking period, and is total practice minutes divided by number of minutes required for your grade level per marking period. It will not be accepted without a signature. Each school day it is late, 25 percent will be deducted from the total.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

We will have periodic assessment opportunities, which we call “performance assessments”. Students will perform material worked on in class and at home, in several formats, and will receive a grade based on a rubric of what we expect in terms of a musical performance (an example rubric is attached). Because we are working towards mastery of basic skills, students will consistently be able to raise their grade with improved performance.

PERFORMANCE PROJECT

We are performing arts ensembles, and therefore, much of our assessment comes from performance projects. They are very important to the class and its objectives. **All performance projects for the year are required.** Performance grades are determined by attendance, attitude, dress (see “CONCERT DRESS”, page 3), and a student self-assessment assignment.

If a student must miss a performance, a note from a parent or guardian is needed at least two weeks prior to the event, so that the director may make necessary arrangements for covering that student’s part. Emergencies are excused with a note from home, but are still responsible for the make-up assignment.

If the student will miss a performance, the make-up assignment is due the day of the concert (see MISSING PERFORMANCE MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENT, attached). Please note that it is the STUDENT’S responsibility to make any make-up arrangements with the director – NOT the other way around.

When considering conflicts with athletic events, please consider:

1. This performance is a large part of your child’s grade.
2. Just as your student’s teammates need him/her, his band classmates need him/her as well. No one sits on the bench in band.
3. Compare the number of events the sport has in a season to the number of concerts your student has in the same season.

CITIZENSHIP GRADE

Each nine-week citizenship grade will be determined by observed student behavior and attitude. Please see the attached citizenship rubric.

SUPPLIES

All instrumental music students must provide the normal supplies needed to maintain their instrument properly. This includes, but are not limited to, appropriate reeds, oil, cleaning supplies, swabs, strings, and mutes. If a student is using a school-owned instrument, s/he must provide normal supplies (reeds, oil, etc.). It is recommended that all students get a metal folding stand for at-home practice, and an inexpensive metronome, which will help them keep the beat at home. Both of these items, while not required, would greatly improve the quality of at-home practice. Please note: We do not sell reeds or other supplies from the school. You will need to purchase these from an outside source, preferably a reputable music dealer, like Eastside Music or Marshall Music.

SOLO & ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL

All 7th & 8th grade students are encouraged to participate in the Solo and Ensemble Festival held in February. The director is available for before or after school help for ANY event. Transportation to the event is up to the student and his/her family. The sign-up deadline is in November, and there is a small fee. Please realize that any solo event will require piano accompaniment, which is usually an additional charge. Students will receive more information as the sign-up deadline nears.

PRIVATE LESSONS

All students are strongly encouraged to take private lessons on their instrument. There are many fine teachers in the area. Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. Payne also work together to provide a list of competent, experienced high school students who provide lessons at a minimal cost, determined by that lesson teacher. Please encourage your child to bring home information on this valuable program. Even just six months of private study will enable a student to greatly improve his or her musicianship and playing ability.

SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS

All students who use school-owned instruments have a responsibility to take proper care of them. Routine cleaning and maintenance of the instrument (such as adjustments, pads, bent keys, broken strings, etc.) are the responsibility of the user. All instruments must be returned clean and in good condition. All students using a school instrument must have a school instrument use form on file with the director.

INSTRUMENTAL INSTRUCTION

Instrumental education is offered sequentially at JMS. Beginning students need to develop fundamental skills on basic band and orchestra instruments. 6th grade band students may play flute, clarinet, trumpet/cornet, or trombone for first semester, and have the opportunity to switch to alto saxophone and percussion for second semester. 6th grade orchestra students can play violin, viola, cello, or bass. Once proper embouchure (mouth formation), hand/bow position, and tone have been developed, they can move on to the next tier of instruments, usually in 7th grade, with consent and direction from the teacher. In band, these include bass clarinet, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, oboe, bassoon, horn, baritone/euphonium, and tuba. The music literature that we use in class to help teach the curriculum also dictates when and how often certain instruments can be played in class. In band, piccolo, contrabass clarinet, English horn, and A clarinet are considered “coloratura” instruments (meaning they add color, and are not fundamental to the band sound), and are not played as a full-time instrument, nor are there many pieces in the middle school literature that call for them. This is why they are offered on a limited basis, according to literature demands and student ability, only in 8th grade.

The middle school orchestra program is a continuation of the elementary string program, with the addition of the string bass. Students in the 6th grade have a basic understanding of music notation, hand and bow position, and are also large enough to be able to learn the string bass. Again, the music played in 6th grade requires a bass part to be played, as well.

Instruments that are not discussed here are not offered in the middle school instrumental music program because students are not developmentally ready yet, and the music literature does not call for these instruments.

MARCHING BAND IN THE 8TH GRADE

Students may elect to join the high school marching band in 8th grade. It is an extra-curricular activity. Students who participate in the marching band put in many hours of hard, musical work. Therefore, students will receive 1/3 of their practice chart minute requirement just for participating in the marching band. For 8th grade students, that means 90 minutes can be added to their practice book. The remaining 180 minutes should be spent practicing concepts from the 8th grade band class.

INSTRUMENT STORAGE

Please be aware that within the band and orchestra rooms, we have shelves available for storage of your child's instrument during the day. The band and orchestra rooms are locked when a teacher is not in the room. However, using these storage areas within the room as "lockers" is at your own risk. **Lakeview Public Schools assumes no responsibility for student instruments.** It is also a good idea, whether you rent or own your child's instrument, to take the serial number down and keep it in a safe place. You may also want to investigate whether or not you can put your child's instrument on your homeowner's insurance policy. It helps a great deal when your student's name is on their case (even a piece of masking tape on his/her case is better than no identifier at all).

CONCERT DRESS

Appearance is a very important aspect to performances. In order to present ourselves and our school in the best way possible, the following dress guidelines are REQUIREMENTS. If a problem arises, and it was not brought to my attention before the day of the performance, the student will NOT be allowed to play.

Band:

Boys should wear dark dress pants (No denim), and your nicest pair of shoes with dark socks (no athletic socks, please). **7th and 8th grade boys** should wear the JMS Band polo shirt, and navy blue or black pants. **6th grade boys** should wear a white or light-colored dress shirt.

Girls should wear dark dress pants or a dress skirt, and your nicest pair of shoes (no heels, please). Girls should also wear dress socks or dark hose. **SKIRTS AND DRESSES MUST FALL BELOW THE KNEE WHEN SITTING. 7th and 8th grade girls** should wear the JMS Band polo shirt and navy blue or black pants or skirt. **6th grade girls** should wear a white or light-colored dress shirt or blouse. Spaghetti straps, tanks, or sleeveless tops are NOT acceptable, unless covered by a sweater or blouse.

Orchestra:

Boys should wear black pants (no blue jeans), JMS Orchestra shirts, and nice shoes (preferably no tennis shoes) with dark socks (no athletic socks, please).

Girls should wear black pants (no blue jeans) or LONG black skirt, JMS Orchestra shirts, and nice shoes. Girls should also wear dress socks or dark hose.

We realize that it is hard to keep children clothed because they grow so fast. Anyone who has any reservations or problems with this dress code should call the director as soon as you know there is a problem. Most of these can be cleared up easily, and we would like to avoid as many last minute dress code problems as possible.

Please keep this handbook as a handy reference to policies and information regarding the Jefferson Middle School Bands and Orchestras.

Please sign and return this page to indicate you have read and understand the material contained in this handbook, and are aware of all performance dates.

Student's signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

- Yes, I am interested in chaperoning or helping out with events this year!
Please email/call me at _____.

If there are any questions at any time, PLEASE do not hesitate to call or e-mail us. Mrs. Smith's prep hour is zero hour, but if I am not available my voicemail will be activated and you can leave a message. If it is urgent, please leave the message with the secretary as voicemail messages are not immediately relayed to us. We are ready and willing to answer any of your questions, or help come up with solutions for any situation.

Sincerely,

Anna I. Smith
Director of Bands
Jefferson Middle School
586-445-4130 x. 2652
asmith@scslakeview-k12.com

Lisa Payne
Director of Orchestras
Jefferson Middle School
586-445-4130 x. 2653
lpayne@scslakeview-k12.com

ATTACHMENTS:

Sample assessment rubrics

Missing Performance Make-up Assignment

Citizenship rubric

Event Calendar