

Grafton Elementary School

Fifth Grade Band Band Handbook 2009-2010



September 3, 2009

Dear Fifth Grade Band Student & Parent/Guardian:

Welcome back to another new and exciting year in the Grafton Elementary School's Instrumental Music Program! I hope you had a wonderful summer and your transition back to school has been exciting.

Playing an instrument can be an enriching activity that can last a lifetime. Although it requires a lot of personal commitment and sacrifice, its rewards can be a wonderful experience. The purpose of this band handbook is to familiarize you with many aspects of the Fifth Grade Band Program, the responsibilities and expectations, great upcoming music events for the school year, and to answer some of the questions that you might have about the music program. It is my sincere hope that you will enjoy Fifth Grade Band.

Please read the handbook, both parent/guardian and student, and return the last page to Mrs. Crockwell by **Thursday, September 10, 2009**, with the appropriate signatures to indicate that you understand the expectations and responsibilities as a band member.

If there are any questions during the school year, please feel free to contact me via email at crockwella@grafton.k12.ma.us or by phone (508-839-0757). Additionally, the band program has a website at <http://mysite.verizon.net/resxalf5/gesband>. You can also access the band website through the GES district webpage (under the "Staff Directory link"). Please check the website frequently for current schedule, important announcements and information, upcoming events, downloadable documents, etc.

Playing your instrument to the best of your ability, having a positive attitude, and setting high personal standards will guarantee your success and the success of the band. Aim for the best! I am looking forward to a great musical year!

Musically yours,

Angie Lee Crockwell
Grafton Elementary School Band Director

GRAFTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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GROUP LESSONS

Each band student is assigned a weekly group lesson time on a rotating schedule. Each lesson is 30 minutes long and it is held during class time on a pullout basis. During lessons, the primary goals are continuing to expand music concepts such as music reading and basic music theory, to further develop playing the instrument, and learning new and challenging music for band. For each lesson, students are expected to have the following items:

1. Instrument
 2. Music folder with the "Essential Elements 2000" book (same book used in fourth grade) and music
 3. A filled out and signed practice chart for each week
 4. A pencil
 5. And any necessary accessories such as reeds, cork grease, valve oil, drum pads or sticks
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BAND REHEARSALS

In addition to group lessons, there are two 45-minute band rehearsals each week. One rehearsal is during the school day (Thursdays during 5th period – 1:40-2:30 p.m.), and the other rehearsal is before school on Wednesday mornings in the cafetorium from 7:30-8:15 a.m.

It is required that all members attend Wednesday morning rehearsals as it is important that students work as a team and it is part of the report card grade. ***Morning rehearsal will begin on September 23, 2009 and a letter with more information will be distributed soon.***

BAND EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Fifth Grade Band offers an opportunity to expand skills such as technique, reading, interpreting, and appreciating music in a unique environment. It is a highly active atmosphere that might not be present in other academic classes. Each member in the ensemble plays an important role because everyone is a team member. Students are expected to:

1. Be responsible for conducting themselves in a proper manner that reflects behavior that is expected of all students.
2. Be cooperative, courteous, and helpful to other members of their section and to other members of the band.
3. To attend all rehearsals, lessons, and performances. Students will be notified of the dates in advance for upcoming performances.
4. **Practicing at home is expected.**
5. Fill out his or her practice chart and get a parent signature prior to the week's lesson.
6. Be responsible for keeping all the music and method book in good condition. Music should be written on using only a pencil!
7. Bring the instrument home at the end of the day. Instruments are not allowed to be left over the weekend or over school vacations. However, if it is necessary for a student to leave his or her

instrument in school overnight, it is safer to store the instrument in the band room rather than in a homeroom locker. The band room is always locked when school is not in session.

PRACTICING

Practicing is an important part of a student's musical experience. The single most important factor in improving on an instrument is **practice**. ***Practice is band homework!*** It is how musicians learn their music, improve their skills, and develop confidence in themselves and their abilities.

It is important to develop a discipline that makes home practice a natural part of the day's routine. Students are expected to make a commitment of quality ***practicing 5 times a week for a minimum of 20 minutes per practice session. It is much more important to practice throughout the week than to practice once a week!***

To keep track of weekly practicing, there is a grading guideline and each student will record his or her weekly practice time on a practice chart. The practice chart will be checked and it will be graded each week during group lessons. Lesson time and band rehearsal does not count as practice time. Here are some practicing suggestions:

- The most effective way to accomplish good practicing habits is to develop a consistent practice time and always follow it. Find a special area in the home and a specific time designated for practicing. For example, practice right after school, before or after dinner or right before bedtime.
- Practice for short periods of time. Do not practice beyond your attention span.
- Break up the practice time into small components. Start with some warm-ups and scales, practice new band music pieces or difficult lesson exercises, review old pieces, and remember to play something just for fun. Get together with a friend and play, or play for a family member to show off your musical talent!
- Parents, encourage your child to set a time for practicing and be sure that your child follows through with it. Please help your young musician with his or her practice. Ideally, spend some time sitting and listening to your child's work and asking questions (even if you are not a musician, your interest will help!). Ask him or her to show you what is being worked on and how it all fits together. Praise goes a long way toward sparking interest in the young musician.
- Consistency is the key! By doing this, it will help establish good practice habits to become a better musician and it will help reinforce the materials learned during lessons and band rehearsals. It is much more important to play throughout the week than to play once a week!

GRADING

Band members will receive a grade on his or her Standards Based Report Card for each semester and a progress report as needed. Students are evaluated in the following way:

1. Lessons/Rehearsals/Group Lesson Attendance

Attending all Wednesday morning rehearsals and lessons is very important for a great sounding band. If a student misses a lesson due to an absence or when it is determined that a student is unable to attend his or her group lesson on a certain week, it is the student's responsibility to see Mrs. Crockwell for any missed work for the week or to reschedule the lesson to another time or day, if possible.

Attendance will be taken at each morning band rehearsal. If there is a conflict or unforeseen circumstance that a student cannot attend a morning rehearsal, Mrs. Crockwell must receive a written and signed excuse note or email from the parent/guardian for the student to be excused. Three unexcused absences each semester will affect a child's grade.

2. Practicing/Practice Charts/Assessments

Students are given weekly practicing assignments and playing assessments throughout the term. *Practicing at home is expected.*

Each band member receives a practice sheet every semester. It is required that students record their practice time on the chart and get it signed by a parent or guardian. Weekly assignments will be graded on a point system (see chart below), depending on the amount of time practiced. ***Practice sheet must be signed by a parent/guardian and checked by Mrs. Crockwell each week in order to receive a grade for that week.***

Grade Earned	Minutes Practiced Each Week
4 – exceeds expectation	Practiced over 110 minutes
3 – meets expectation	Practiced 76-100 minutes
2 – making progress	Practiced 46-75 minutes
1 – not making progress	Practiced 21-45 minutes
0 – making no effort	Practiced 0-20 minutes

3. Preparation

Preparation for lessons and rehearsals is the key. Everyone is responsible and expected to bring their music, instruments, and all necessary accessories to all lessons, rehearsals, and performances.

4. Concert and Performances

The Fifth Grade Concert Band performs at least twice a year. Band members are expected to participate in all of the school's concert performances, as it is part of the cumulative musical experience and a component of the grade. If a band member is unable to participate in a concert due to extreme or unforeseen circumstances, a note is needed to be excused for the performance at least two weeks prior to the event. Excused absences from a performance will require a make-up assignment or project (i.e. write a concert review, paper, etc.). This can be arranged with Mrs. Crockwell.

Supplies, Care, and Maintenance of Your Instrument

Each band member is responsible for having the necessary accessories or equipment at all lessons, rehearsals, and performances.

- o Clarinet and saxophone players should have at least three good working reeds in the instrument case. It is highly suggested that woodwind players should purchase a box of reeds (10 reeds in a box). You can buy a box at a music store. *Rico brand size 2 1/2 is recommended.* One box usually will last a few months. As an emergency, you can purchase reeds from Mrs. Crockwell.
- o Flute players should have a small cleaning rag and rod in the case
- o Brass players should have valve oil or slide oil/cream
- o Percussionist should have their own pair of sticks at all lessons and rehearsals

A musical instrument is an expensive item and needs to be properly maintained. It should be well cared for and in good playable condition. If an instrument is in need of repair, Mrs. Crockwell will be happy to assess the need for repair and/or perform simple repairs, when possible at no cost. In addition, parents can call French Music in Westborough (508) 366-5994. The music store is a reliable music shop that does instrumental repair. As a convenience, students can drop off their instrument at school, and a representative from French Music will pick it up each week, provide a loaner instrument, and will return the instrument to school when it is ready. Here are some tips to keep your instrument in good condition:

1. For brass instruments, valves and slides should be oiled and lubricated. Empty out the spit valves after playing.
2. For woodwind instruments, swab the instrument immediately after playing and have several good reeds handy in the case.
3. Always store your instrument in its closed case when not in use.
4. DO NOT put anything in your instrument case that it was not designed to hold.
5. Never let other children, family members, or friends hold or play your instrument "just for fun." This almost always leads to an "accident" and accidents can be expensive to fix!

PRIVATE LESSONS

Although it is not required, students of all levels and of all abilities are highly encouraged to take private music lessons. Taking private lessons will provide an individual one-on-one attention and it can further develop the individual's playing and musical skills with a private teacher. There are many well-qualified private teachers in the local area. Ask Mrs. Crockwell for a Private Lesson List if interested.

CONCERT PERFORMANCE DATES FOR 2009-2010

Below is a tentative performance schedule for the upcoming school year. Mark your calendars! You can also check the band website for updated information at <http://mysite.verizon.net/resxalf5/gesband>

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| ➤ Group lessons begin | Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2009 |
| ➤ Wednesday Morning Rehearsals | September 23, 2009 @ 7:30 a.m. |
| ➤ Winter Concert | December TBD @ GHS |
| ➤ Exchange Concert with Millbury | March/April 2010 (tentative) |
| ➤ Grafton Little League Parade | April 2010 TBD |
| ➤ Grafton Memorial Day Parade | Monday, May 31, 2010 @ 10:30 am |
| ➤ Spring Concert | June 8, 2010 @ GHS |

CONCERT UNIFORM

There is a standard uniform guideline for concert performances and in accordance with the school's dress code. The concert dress for all students will be:

Boys: black or dark pants (no jeans or shorts), a white shirt, tie is optional, and dark shoes

Girls: black pants or skirt (no jeans or shorts), a white shirt, and dark shoes