

**SIGNAL MOUNTAIN MIDDLE
SCHOOL
BAND HANDBOOK**



2015-2016

DIRECTOR OF BANDS, DREW BUCKNER

PRINCIPAL, ROBIN COPP



SIGNAL MOUNTAIN MIDDLE SCHOOL BANDS

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Director of Bands
Drew Buckner

August 1, 2015

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Signal Mountain Middle School Band Program! This handbook has been designed to familiarize and navigate you through the middle school band experience, as well as ensure the best experience for our kids. **Please read the entire handbook!** After you have read the handbook, please print, sign and return the final TWO pages by the end of the first full week of school (Aug. 15th). All members of the middle school band will be expected to abide by the expectations laid out in this handbook. Therefore, please feel free to print a copy for future reference.

I am looking forward to you and your student becoming part of the rich history and tradition at Signal Mountain Middle School. Together, we can change the lives of these students and use music for all of our benefit.

Again, I cannot express how excited I am that your student will be part of our organization, and to know that you as a parent will be an asset to our success. I encourage every parent to get involved and be part of something great. We have many opportunities for you to help us lay the foundation that will supply the needs for our band today, and for years to come. If you have any questions about this document, please do not hesitate to contact me or visit our website www.smmsbands.com . Once again **WELCOME**, and **GO EAGLES!!!!!!**

Sincerely,

Drew Buckner
Director of Bands

SMMS BAND STAFF

MIDDLE SCHOOL DIRECTOR.....DREW BUCKNER

HIGH SCHOOL DIRECTOR.....SHELBY WALKER

PERCUSSION DIRECTOR.....MATT BROOM

ASSISTANT BAND DIRECTOR.....TOMMY BULMAN

ASSISTANT BAND DIRECTOR.....DAVID DEMARCHE

ASSISTANT BAND DIRECTOR.....BOBBY DUGAN

PRIVATE INSTRUCTORS

FLUTE INSTRUCTOR.....SAM SENCEBAUGH

CLARINET/SAXOPHONE INSTRUCTOR.....GORDAN INMAN

TRUMPET INSTRUCTOR.....TOMMY BULMAN

FRENCH HORN INSTRUCTOR.....DAVID DEMARCHE

LOW BRASS INSTRUCTOR.....JORDAN PITNER

PERCUSSION INSTRUCTOR.....CHIP HANCOCK

GLOSSARY

Music Boosters - The Music Boosters provide financial and physical support to the music programs of Signal Mountain Middle/High School. They are the life blood of our organization, handling all finances, volunteer work, and organization needed to make our program operate to its best potential.

Concert Band - Signal Mountain Middle offers 3 different concert bands, one in each grade level. During the school day, these bands are divided into the following classes: 6th Grade Brass/Percussion, 6th Grade Woodwind, 7th Grade Band, and 8th Grade Band. Each of these bands rehearse strictly during the school day and require no after school commitments other than concerts. Our concerts each year include, but are not limited to our Christmas on the Mountain concert at the Tivoli Theatre in downtown Chattanooga, Concert Festival at Bradley Central High School, a Spring Concert held at the school, as well as the traditional Disney World trip taken every other year. Leading up to each of these concerts, 6th grade students are asked to come together during a portion of at least two Directed Studies classes to put together the entire ensemble that is normally separated during the school day. Students are asked to take care of homework and other school work prior to these rehearsals, so that we do not require an after school commitment.

The Concert Band is the nucleus from which all other facets/ensembles stem. The stronger our Symphonic program is, the stronger all other areas will become. Therefore, without 100% attendance within the ensemble it is extremely difficult to give the level of consistency that is needed for proper musical development, both individually and as an ensemble.

Jazz Band - Extracurricular ensembles such as Jazz Band practice after school a minimum of 1 day a week, and operate in late fall (after marching band season), winter, & spring. The Jazz Band will perform a minimum of 1 concert late in the spring semester, as well as possible events outside of school in the Signal Mountain community. Only 7th and 8th grade students are invited to audition for this group.

The importance of rehearsal, attendance & student commitment to make the Jazz Band a successful organization cannot be overstated. If a student is not able to fulfill his/her commitment to the ensemble he/she will not be allowed to participate.

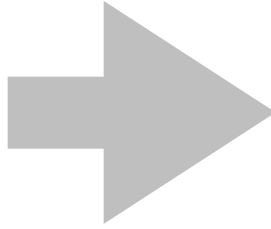
Chamber Ensemble - This is also an extracurricular ensemble that meets after school a minimum of 1 day a week starting in late fall. This ensemble is dedicated to grouping small numbers of students together to play a variety of musical genres. Playing in small groups is one of the most valuable and rewarding experiences that our students have. I cannot express the importance and value of this group! Their work can be seen at our Spring concert, as well as possible concerts around town.

Percussion Ensembles - 6th, 7th, and 8th grade percussion ensemble class meet during the school today to learn the fundamentals of their instruments and concert band music, but also work together to play “percussion-only” pieces. The product of their work can be seen at most of our concerts!

Private Lessons - ALL students are encouraged to take private lessons on their instrument. This is NOT for students that are struggling, or are well advanced; it is for everyone. While it is not required, we want every student to get the utmost enjoyment out of music, and we, therefore, strongly encourage it. We have the special opportunity of having a great private teacher for every instrument at the Mountain Arts Community Center (MACC) just down the road from the school. Please take the time to consider making a trip there on your way home from school!

RULES

1. No talking while the teacher is talking. Raise your hand before speaking and wait patiently to be called on.
2. Cut off immediately with the conductor, and bring horns up immediately with the conductors' hands.
3. Treat all teachers, students, and facilities with respect and care

**CONSEQUENCES**

1. Detention

GRADING SCALE

A = 93 – 100 B = 85 – 92
 C = 75 – 84 D = 70 – 74
 Below 69 = Failing

Classwork Grades -

40% of grade. Earned by having all materials and equipment needed in class, participating in all activities, as well as tests and quizzes.

Homework Grades -

10% of grade. Take-home assignments and/or Smart Music assignments

Exam Grades -

50% of grade. Includes any performance in which the concert band may be participating.

“PRACTICE IS FOR HOME, NOT FOR CLASS”

Our band program is very unique with its classroom structure. We learn all of the tools necessary for an individual student to teach himself/herself any given piece of music. We break down each specific concept that comprises music and practice these skills on a daily basis. Therefore, when given a piece of music for a concert, we expect all students to learn their individual parts on their own. Students that are not prepared to play their parts will be asked to not participate in parts of class until they have learned their parts. Band is a team sport, and by setting this expectation, our band rehearses “music” every day. It is a unique environment in which we talk about emotion, communication, balance, blend, and so many other elements of musicality. In other band programs, students are subject to repetitive drilling of each section of the music until all students “learn” them, and they are never able to experience what music is all about: Making Music. Simply stated, we are not here to learn notes and rhythms (that is the students’ responsibility); we are here to be musicians.

SMHS BAND PRACTICE TIPS

1. Correct rhythm. This comes first!!! Make sure you can count the part. This includes counting through rest and sustained notes!!!
2. Correct notes. This is second because the right note at the wrong time is still wrong. Finger and count through the part. Be careful of key and accidentals.
3. Correct articulations. This is the difference in knowing the music and being able to “get through it.” This is what the good player does automatically.
4. Dynamics.
 - Gradually steps 1 and 2 will start happening together, before you know it, so will 3, but only if you practice correctly following all these steps.
 - Always be aware of good tone quality in all registers. What is the angle of my horn? Also, correct tonguing style. Where is the tongue hitting the reed? Am I tonguing between my teeth?
 - Always start slowly then work for speed. We do not have time to learn things fast and wrong, this only teaches us bad habits that take more time to fix later. Once you feel you have the passage mastered at one tempo, be able to play it perfectly three times in a row before bumping up to the next speed.
 - Remember that practice doesn’t make perfect. “Perfect practice makes perfect.”

Smart Music

Signal Mountain has implemented Smart Music into the band curriculum, to effectively eliminate the need for practice records. Smart Music is a computer program designed to assist students in practicing and improving on their instrument. SmartMusic.com states:

Music students learn more quickly and have more fun in the group context, but that's only possible a few hours a week at school. In order to learn and participate effectively, they need to practice musical skills at home. SmartMusic recreates the group setting by providing the context, or accompaniment, as if they were in the larger group.

More importantly, SmartMusic gives your child the feedback to learn efficiently and have fun at the same time. As they get involved in more activities, finding those learning solutions to accomplish this is critical to their continued participation. SmartMusic is the innovative practice solution that will keep your child participating while developing music skills and appreciation.

Students in band, grades 6-12 will be required to take tests on Smart Music.

Using Smart Music, students will be able to take their test and quizzes from the comfort of their own home and e-mail Mr. Buckner their results! They will be able to practice their tests/quizzes as many times as they want, slow down their music, listen to professional recordings and look up fingerings of notes they missed. Smart Music shows you exactly what you played correctly in green and the note you missed in red. Imagine the class time saved!

SmartMusic is available through subscription and will be purchased with your board approved \$40 class fee to be paid at registration. Mr. Buckner encourages you to go to SmartMusic.com and view the parent resources and demo videos. SmartMusic also requires a microphone for your computer (most computers already have one that is compatible). The SmartMusic microphone is an additional cost, but the microphones used with a USB connection for any gaming system are also compatible. So those students who own Rock Band for XBOX may not need the microphone. Apple computers do not require the microphone.

Students who do not have Smart Music at home may use the practice room iPads from 6:55-7:20am, after school from 2:30-4:00pm, or during the student's directed studies block.

PAYMENT OF FEES/EXPENSES

We are very fortunate that the only fee students pay to be in middle school band other than rental/purchase of their instrument and equipment is the \$40 school fee which is used for the purchase of each students' Smart Music subscription. Other than that, students are simply asked to do their fair share with our ONE fundraiser, the Cheesecake Sale. This is the easiest fundraiser you'll ever do on Signal Mountain, because the community members, teachers, and parents are all waiting for it every year. It's been a tradition since the early 1990s, and the food items we sell are great!

Other than the \$40 school fee, ALL payments directed toward our band program need to be placed in the secure black box on the band room wall or mailed to: SMMHS Music Boosters, P.O. Box 272, Signal Mountain, TN 37377. Checks may be written out to "SMMHS Music Boosters."

Important Dates!

Sept. 28 - Cheesecake Sale Begins!

Nov. 21- Junior Clinic Auditions for 7th/8th grade (McMinn County High School)

Dec. 11-12 - Junior Clinic Rehearsal and Performance (Cleveland Middle School)

Dec. 15 - Christmas on the Mountain (Tivoli Theatre)

Feb. TBD - All County Auditions (location TBD)

Feb. TBD - All County Rehearsal and Performance (location TBD)

Mar. 17 OR 18 - Concert Festival (Bradley Central High School)

April TBD - 7th/8th Grade Band Disney World Trip: Orlando, FL

SMMHS BAND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

OUR BAND PROGRAM ROCKS! The reason it is such an awesome program is because of the dedication of parents like you. The following committees exist to make this band the best! Please take the time to read this and CIRCLE which areas you would like to help with. It takes a little hard work and A LOT OF FUN to make a band a family! No one could do it alone.

Name(s): _____
 Phone # _____
 Email _____

Awards & Recognition (MS/HS) – Coordinates with Hospitality as needed and ensures students are recognized for musical achievements, etc.

Band Camp - Assist with student needs during Band Camp i.e. snacks, set up, etc.

Documents – Provides, collects and updates Spring Commitment and Contact Information

Junior Clinic/All-County - Help with chaperoning 7th/8th grade students to and from auditions and clinics, as well as monitoring them during the event itself.

Grant Writing – Write grant proposals for our Band Program.

Hospitality - Helps with and provides refreshments/snacks/meals for Band Events.

Instruments - (MS/HS) helps maintain school owned instruments and manage Rental Agreements & Fees.

Publicity - Seeks ways to promote and publicize SMMHS Music Program accomplishments and events; provide pictures, articles, advertisements to Community News and other media.

Sponsorship – Helps to find sponsors for our Trailer, Programs, Events, and Web Site.

Trailer –Volunteers needed to pull Band trailer and/or rental truck to the Tivoli Theatre and other sights.

Uniforms/Concert Wear - Volunteers needed for MS Uniform Check-out & Check-in for concerts, as well as the maintenance and upkeep of our uniform items.

THE FOLLOWING ARE FUNDRAISING EVENTS THAT WILL NEED EVERYONE'S HELP

Please CIRCLE your Committee choice & CHECK Chair/Co-Chair if you are willing to help organize the event.

Cheesecake Sale (October)

Chair/Co-Chair _____

Christmas on the Mountain Concert (December)

Chair/Co-Chair _____

Concert Festival (March)

Volunteer _____

2015-2016 BAND COMMITMENT FORM

TO: Students and Parents of the Signal Mountain Middle School Band

FROM: Drew Buckner, Director

RE: **Signal Mountain Middle School Band Handbook**

In order for us to know all parents and students have been duly informed concerning details and guidelines related to the Signal Mountain Middle School Band, please read, sign and return the following statement. This statement **MUST** be signed and returned without modification prior to your student being allowed to participate in the SMMS band program.

We, the undersigned member of the Signal Mountain Middle School Band and Parent or legal guardian thereof, acknowledge that we have received, read, and understand the entire document referenced above. We further acknowledge that the student named below will accept the terms set forth in this document.

(Signature of Parent / Guardian)

Date: ____/____/____

(Signature of Student)

Date: ____/____/____