



DOROTHY McELHINNEY

BAND * DRUMLINE * COLORGUARD

Fall 2022/Spring 2023 Band Syllabus

Mr. Scott C. Merrin, Director of Bands

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Welcome to the Dorothy McElhinney Middle School Instrumental Music program!

You have chosen to participate in one of the most successful and active middle school band programs in the area. The directors and staff of the Dorothy McElhinney band program are dedicated to offering a comprehensive music education experience to its students. While music literacy and performance are the main emphasis of the program, the student will also develop discipline, dedication, excellence, organization and other life skill concepts. The marriage of musical and personal development makes the band program a great environment to grow musically, physically and intellectually. This syllabus is intended to outline general classroom rules, policies, expectations and opportunities for members of our middle school band program.

Course Description:

Beginning Band (1st Period)

This beginning-level course provides students with the basic skills necessary to develop musical independence. A rudimentary level of music is studied and performed. Basic instrumental technique and music-reading skills are taught through the rehearsal of music and the study of rhythms and fundamentals. This ensemble performs at school concerts. Extracurricular commitment is required. Only band instruments are used in this course (*i.e. – flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, horn, euphonium, trombone, tuba and concert percussion*).

Cadet Band (3rd/4th/6th Period)

This entry/intermediate-level, performance-based course provides students with a variety of concert band experiences. Music is studied and performed from an entry and intermediate level of middle school repertoire. Sight-reading skills and basic theory are intermixed in the education of music styles. This ensemble performs at concerts and community events. Extracurricular commitment is required. Only band instruments are used in this course (*i.e. – flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, horn, euphonium, trombone, tuba and concert percussion*).

Intermediate Band (2nd Period)

This intermediate/advanced-level, performance-based course provides students with a variety of concert band experiences. Music is studied and performed from an intermediate and advanced level of middle school repertoire. Sight-reading skills and basic theory are intermixed in the education of music styles and history. This ensemble performs at festivals, clinics, and other concerts and community events. Extracurricular commitment is required. Only band instruments are used in this course (*i.e. – flute, clarinet, saxophone, oboe, bassoon, trumpet, horn, euphonium, trombone, tuba, and concert percussion*).

Symphonic Band (5th Period)

This advanced-level, performance-based course provides students with a variety of concert band experiences. Music is studied and performed from an advanced level of middle school repertoire and an entry level of high school repertoire. Sight-reading skills and basic theory are intermixed in the education of music styles and history. This ensemble performs at festivals, clinics, and other concerts and community events. Extracurricular commitment is required. Only band instruments are used in this course (*i.e. – flute, clarinet, saxophone, oboe, bassoon, trumpet, horn, euphonium, trombone, tuba, and concert percussion*).



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Course Objectives:

1. The student will develop an understanding of their role as a member of a performance ensemble.
2. The student will develop an understanding of their role in support of community and school functions.
3. The student will develop and demonstrate their musical ability through their performance in large ensemble settings.
4. The student will demonstrate continued learning and mastery of their instrument and literacy in music through the curriculum/literature.

Class Guidelines:

1. Students are required to come to rehearsal (class) with all of the necessary materials (instrument, music, tuner, metronome, pencil and other necessary supplies – reeds, valve oil, mutes, drum sticks, etc.)
2. Students are required to come to rehearsal (class) with all their work completed and assigned music selections prepared. “Prepared” means performance ready (all rhythms, notes, articulations and dynamics correct). Rehearsal (Class) is an opportunity for each individual member to share their part with the ensemble, not the time to work out or practice their individual parts.
3. Attendance is required at all rehearsals and performances. Sectional and full ensemble rehearsals will be scheduled before and after school. Students are expected to attend all rehearsals outside of class and should plan accordingly. Please use the “Absence Excuse Form” in accordance with the DMMS Instrumental Music Department attendance policy.

Class Expectations:

1. **PREPARE** – Students are expected to prepare during personal practice time at home and come to school prepared for rehearsal. A practice log will be provided for each grading period to each band member. Additionally, a practice schedule with regular assessment material will be given to Intermediate & Symphonic Band members.
2. **CARE FOR YOUR INSTRUMENT** – If you own your own instrument, you know how important it is to maintain its care. If you are using a school owned instrument, treat it as if it were your own. All instruments should be clean, in good working order and properly stored in their cases and storage shelves.
3. **CARE FOR THE FACILITY** – This is your band room. Everyone is expected to pick up after themselves, store instruments in their proper location and not bring food, drinks or gum into the room. Storage areas in the band room will be used for instruments and band equipment only.
4. **BE PROFESSIONAL** – This is, perhaps, the most important expectation of all since it embodies and encompasses everything we do from rehearsal, to practice at home, to performance, to attending a concert, to interacting with each other.
 - Be Prepared for Rehearsal – Practice at home, not at rehearsal. Amateurs practice until they get it right. Professionals practice until they cannot get it wrong!
 - Remain Quiet During Rehearsal – Create a focused rehearsal environment.
 - Mark Everything – If it's important enough for to stop rehearsal for then it's important enough to mark on your music.
 - No Phones – Rehearsal will be a cell phone free time (DMMS school-wide rule) where we can “be in the moment” and not worry about outside topics or issues.



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Grading Guidelines:

It is the belief of the DMMS Instrumental Music Staff that the "PERFORMANCE" culminates everything that we work for in class and is VITAL part of the student's music education. Missing a performance is the equivalent of receiving an "F" on a major test in any other academic class. The experience gained from performing is NOT one that can be "made up." Extreme special circumstances for missing a performance should be discussed with Mr. Merrin on an individual basis at least two weeks before a scheduled rehearsal or performance. In addition, students MUST use the "Absence Excuse Form" found on class homepage in Canvas. If a student cannot make the commitment to attend rehearsals and/or performances, then he or she should consider dropping their instrumental music courses.

Daily Participation

10%

Students will be evaluated in and earn up to five points per day for the following areas: attendance/punctuality, having their instrument, all necessary equipment/accessories/method book/sheet music, pencil and tuner/metronome each class period. Participation grades will be entered into the grade book as total points earned over the grading period once every six weeks.

Tests/Quizzes

40%

Includes playing assessments (through Canvas Studio and in class), written assessments and counting assessments.

Extension of Class

30%

Includes all concerts/performances, after school rehearsals and sectionals. (NOTE: concert/performance grades will also be counted under the Tests/Quizzes category in addition to Extension of Class).

Practice Records

20%

Practice records are the weekly homework for band turned in EVERY Wednesday. Each student will receive a digital practice record assignment (Microsoft Form) every week in Canvas. This is one of the first opportunities in the DMMS Band Program for students to demonstrate their ability to manage their time effectively and to stay organized. Students are expected to practice at minimum **140 minutes** per week.

Extra Credit

It is the expectation that each band student attends regularly, has their instrument and all their necessary supplies and is prepared for rehearsal. Each semester, students will have an opportunity to show evidence of "extra effort" they have done. Extra credit can be earned by doing the following each semester:

- Practice **more** than the required 140 minutes per week
- Regularly takes private lessons
- Attends a professional level concert (where their instrument is played) and completes a concert report
- Completes a Research Paper (instructions to be handed out)

Total

100%

In the unlikely event that the student is unable to maintain "C" level work, the grade of "D" will be given with the suggestion that improvement must be made if the student wishes to remain in the program.

The grade "F" will be given in situations where flagrant violations of band policy exist, including, but not limited to:

- Unexcused absences from performances
- Extreme lack of participation or preparation



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As per the attendance policy – Any unexcused absence from a rehearsal will lower the 6-week progress report grade by one letter grade per infraction. Any unexcused absence from a performance will lower the 6-week progress report grade to an “F.”

Attendance Policy:

You have made a commitment to be in the instrumental music program. In order to have a successful rehearsal and performance, it is essential that we have full attendance. Attendance at scheduled rehearsals and performances is required for membership in the program.

Attendance at Performances: It is impossible to “make-up” the experience of a performance. Furthermore, the other members carry an extra burden of someone else’s inconsideration. As a member of the DMMS Performing Arts Department, please understand that the performance culminates everything we work so hard for during the year. It is therefore essential, to your fine arts education, that you experience the performance of your art.

Absences from performances are only permitted in the event of an emergency: SEVERE PERSONAL ILLNESS OR DEATH IN THE FAMILY. Even in those circumstances, a significant written make-up assignment will need to be completed to make up for missing a performance. ALL requests for excused absences must be electronically submitted on an “Absence Excuse Form” to the appropriate director, as soon as the schedule for the semester is received. Any absence submitted after the schedule is presented would have to fall under the “emergency” category. All other absences will be considered “Unexcused.”

“Absence Excuse Forms” can be found on Canvas on the class homepage and the school webpage under Activities>Band Program>Resources. Verbal approval, email or handwritten notes are not sufficient – the “Absence Excuse Form” MUST be filled out.

Unexcused Absence from Performance: Being absent from a performance or leaving early due to homework, birthday parties, other non-essential school activities, non-emergency doctor appointments, tutoring and vacations are not considered excused absences. An unexcused absence from a performance is unacceptable and will result in the student’s grade being lowered to an “F” for that 6-week grading period and may result in automatic dismissal from the ensemble.

Attendance at Rehearsals: Absences from rehearsals are only permitted in the event of SEVERE personal illness, death in the family or other special circumstances that are PREAPPROVED by the appropriate director. If there are problems with leaving early or unexcused absences from a rehearsal or performance, the appropriate consequences regarding performing opportunities will be enforced by the directors. Families should schedule appointments and other events on non-rehearsal days.

Unexcused Absence from Rehearsal: An unexcused absence from a rehearsal is unacceptable and will result in the student’s grade being lowered one letter grade per infraction, for that 6-week grading period. Excessive absences, whether excused or not, will cause severe problems.

Tardiness: Rehearsals and performances are scheduled at specific times and it is expected that you arrive before the start time. If there are problems with tardiness, the appropriate consequences regarding performance opportunities will be enforced by the directors. “To be early is to be on time. To be on time is to be late. To be late is inexcusable.”



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In case of an emergency or sudden illness just prior to an after-school rehearsal or performance, please email Mr. Merrin. smerrin@murrieta.k12.ca.us

Progressive Discipline Procedure: All discipline policies set forth by the Murrieta Valley Unified School District, Dorothy McElhinney Middle School and contained within the Dorothy McElhinney Middle school Instrumental Music Program Student Handbook will be followed and enforced at all times. These policies apply to all instrumental music department activities including, but not limited to: after school activities, off-campus field trips, out of state travel, summer/winter camps or any time the student is representing Dorothy McElhinney Middle School or is under the supervision of Dorothy McElhinney Middle School staff or designees.

Any or all of the following disciplinary actions may be imposed for violations of district, school or band policies:

1. Warning
2. Conversation with teacher
3. Lunch detention (parent notified)
4. Class suspension (parent notified)
5. Administrative referral (parent notified)
6. Removal from band program (parent notified)

In addition, a student's "Citizenship" grade can be changed to "N" – Needs Improvement or "U" – Unsatisfactory.

The disciplinary action imposed in each instance will be at the discretion of the Band Director depending upon the nature and severity of the conduct, the circumstances of the conduct, its frequency, prior warnings or disciplinary action and/or other relevant factors.

Concert Attire:

Black Band Polo, Black Dress Pants, all black socks (above ankle) and black dress shoes (or marching shoes).

Private Instruction:

One of the most important ways to improve on your instrument is through private lessons. There is no substitute for weekly sessions of individualized instruction by an instrumental specialist. Private lesson instructors serve as an ideal model and mentor to assist your child's improvement in the areas of tone, technique and general musicianship. Speak with Mr. Merrin to get contact information for local private instructors.

Performance Calendar:

A full calendar of all band events can be found at www.dmmsmusic.com. It can also be accessed in Canvas. Full calendars will also be posted in the band room so students can stay informed on a daily basis. Stay up to date with band emails to make sure you get the latest information for each band event.

Band Handbook:

Please be aware that most questions can be answered by referring to the DMMS band handbook found on the school webpage. Click Activities, then Band Program. The handbook is under the "Resources" tab. All students/parents should review the handbook. All students are responsible for the expectations and policies found in the handbook.

In Conclusion:

We look forward to an amazing year of growth and performances. Our program has developed a reputation for excellence, and we are confident that this year's students are up to the challenge of maintaining that reputation. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. We can't wait to "band" together with you this year!



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Band Syllabus Signature Form

My child and I have read, understand and agree to the rules, regulations and expectations for membership in the Dorothy McElhinney Instrumental Music Department. He/She has my permission to participate in this elective course which requires attendance outside of the normal classroom day. I will assist my student in fulfilling the requirements and in meeting the course expectations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

_____ We have read and agree to the policies and expectations outlined in the band handbook found on the band website.

_____ We have read and agree to the DMMS band attendance policy as presented in the syllabus and band handbook.

_____ We have received the tentative schedule for the ensemble/group my student is enrolled in.

_____ I understand, as outlined in the MVUSD Instrument Checkout Form that we are responsible for any damage done to the school owned instrument we borrowed from the school. In addition, we also understand that it is our responsibility to return the instrument to the school in the same condition it was checked out to us in. We understand that the instrument was checked out to us professionally sanitized and that there is a cleaning fee assessed upon returning the instrument back to the school.

_____ We have updated our band website account (created at www.dmmsmusic.com) and verified that our email address, phone number and other information on file is accurate.

_____ We are aware that we should be receiving a weekly newsletter from Mr. Merrin every Monday. We are also aware that we should be receiving a regular update from the team mom. We also understand that we are to contact the team mom immediately if we are not receiving the emails.

_____ We have read and understand the requirements to be recognized at the annual awards ceremony.

Student's Name (Please Print) _____

_____ Student Signature

_____ Date

_____ Parent Signature

_____ Date