

2021-2022
Greenbrier Middle School



Band Handbook

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Inspiration for this handbook was drawn from

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Welcome All!

From The Band Director

Hello Greenbrier Middle School Band Family! It is with great excitement that I welcome all band students to join in on a new and exciting experience for this upcoming school year. To all experienced and returning members, welcome back! I am eager to serve as your band director in another year of fun and enriching experiences as you progress through your musical journey. As for new and incoming students, I want to personally make known how happy I am for your commitment to be a part of the GMS Band. I look forward to getting to know you and guiding you along your path through your middle school years.

This handbook is very important in providing students and families with a thorough guide to the basic principles and policies of the Greenbrier Middle School Band program. It is very important for all students and parents/guardians to carefully read through the contents of this handbook. Always know that if you have any questions, feel free to contact me. I have listed my contact information under my name below. I anticipate a tremendous year of learning and growth with you all.

Mr. Jon Gerdom

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Behavioral Expectations

The Band Director's Vision

Band holds a very important place in my heart, and its influence in my life carries over into the person I am today. Not only did my band directors push me toward excellence in musicianship, but also toward growth and maturity as a person. At Greenbrier, it is my passionate goal to create an environment where musical achievement and development of strong character go hand-in-hand. Additionally, students in this Band should strive to learn from, and cooperate with, fellow students during our time together. As a Band Family, we rise and fall with one another. This is a basic principle of a great band.

Foundational Markers of Strong Character

Respectful

Promptly follow all instructions given, and pay quiet attention to your teachers. Avoid being disruptive and distracting others.

Mature

Actions have consequences. Steer clear of misbehavior, and exercise self-control when things do not go your way. Learn from your mistakes.

Honest

Be true with yourself and others. No matter what, never lie or take credit or ownership over something that is not yours.

Hard-Working

Always put forth your best effort to reach the goals set for yourself and the band as a whole. Stay strong in the face of adversity.

Aware

Be conscious of your behavior at any given time. Take notice of your surroundings and the example you are setting for others.

Prepared

Arrive with all required equipment/materials and a great attitude. Be on-time and ready to begin all rehearsals/performances.

Responsible

Do not rely on others to do your job for you, and accept full responsibility for your actions. Always clean up after yourself and take appropriate care of yourself and your belongings.

Trustworthy

Never make a promise that you cannot keep. Stand by your word.

Positive

Always be thinking about what you can do instead of focusing on what you cannot do. Avoid complaining, pouting, and negativity!

Disciplinary Action

Band students at Greenbrier Middle School are expected to represent the school with class and integrity and build a positive reputation. However, that reputation can be easily destroyed by a single band member behaving inappropriately. Therefore, the consequences of misbehavior are very serious, and both the band director and school administration (if necessary) will be quick to respond to poor behavior.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS MAY INCLUDE...

Verbal Warning
Private Conversation
Office Demerit
Discussion With Parents
Conference With Parents And Administration
Dismissal From The Band Program

Basic Expectations (Non-Behavioral)

Proper student preparedness and participation is crucial for the success and progress of both individual band members and the band as a whole. Unless instructed otherwise, each student is expected to show up to every class, after-school rehearsal, and performance with all required materials (instrument included) and a positive attitude that is ready to listen and cooperate. Students should make a practice of arriving before the requested arrival time for every band function, always dressed appropriately. Students who come to band functions ill-prepared are subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the director and negative impacts on their grade in band.

The most basic level of preparedness for a band student is to show up to class with a working instrument and music. Unexcused students who come to class without their instruments or music will suffer **an automatic twenty point deduction to their weekly participation grade**. Additionally, students will **receive a zero** on any playing tests that take place on a day he or she neglects to bring their instrument or required music. Any student that neglects to bring his or her instrument to an after-school rehearsal or performance will be asked to leave and be counted as absent. Any student who makes a habit of neglecting to bring his or her instrument and/or music to class **may be dismissed** from the GMS Band Program.

Instrument Maintenance/Repair

Students are expected to maintain a good working condition and cleanliness of their instruments to the best of their abilities. This means always taking the basic daily, weekly, and monthly steps to ensure that the instrument is working properly and is clean, inside and out.

With that said, it is not uncommon for instruments to need basic repairs and maintenance over a period of time. If a student encounters a problem with his or her instrument, they should take it to Mr. Gerdom for inspection and/or repair. **Never try to repair an instrument without consulting the band director.** If the problem is one that cannot be fixed by Mr. Gerdom, the instrument will be set aside for repair by a professional. Students who do not have their instrument due to repair/maintenance without consulting Mr. Gerdom will suffer grade deduction.

Attendance and Make-Up Policy

It is **incredibly important** that each member of the Greenbrier Band is in attendance for each rehearsal and performance. The Band's success faces a threat when there are students absent. Below you will find the information you need to know should something arise that causes a student to miss a rehearsal or performance.

Student illness, death in the family, special religious observance, or emergency (as deemed by the director), will constitute an excused absence from an after-school rehearsal or performance. In case of an emergency situation, please contact Mr. Gerdom as soon as possible so that needed arrangements can be made.

In the event that a band function conflicts with another event on a family's calendar, there are "Excused Absence Request" forms that can be retrieved from the band website or Mr. Gerdom's office. Parents/guardians must fill out the form and submit it at least two weeks prior to the scheduled band function for it to be considered. A response to the request will be given within forty-eight hours of submission. All unexcused absences will result in a zero for a rehearsal/concert attendance grade.

IF A CLASS IS MISSED...

- Talk to Mr. Gerdom about what you missed that day.
- Work with Mr. Gerdom to schedule a time for making-up any missed playing or written assignments.

IF AN AFTER-SCHOOL REHEARSAL OR PERFORMANCE IS MISSED...

- A doctor's note for illness and/or a signed note from a parent/guardian explaining the absence is required (excused cases).
- Meet with Mr. Gerdom to schedule a time to play the performance music for him (unexcused cases).

Beware!

Attendance for performances and evening rehearsals are a crucial part of each student's grade and is massively important to the function of the band. If a student has an unexcused absence from a performance or evening rehearsal, they are subject to performing their music as a playing test for the band director. Multiple unexcused absences from such functions will result in removal from the Band Program.

Course Offerings

At Greenbrier Middle School, there are three different band classes that make up two different ensembles (Beginning Band and 7th and 8th Grade Band). Below is a list of these classes that includes a short description and prerequisites.

Notice:

Anyone who wishes to enroll in band at GMS must start in the 6th grade. Few exceptions will be made for students who wish to join band after the 6th grade.

Beginning Band

Prerequisites - Sign up!

Course Description - Students will be introduced to the fundamentals of reading music and instrumental technique. The 6th grade year in band is crucial for steady, gradual growth in musical knowledge and ability. The Beginning Band typically performs two concerts per year - one in the winter and one in the spring.

7th Grade Band

Prerequisites - Students must have completed one full year of Beginning Band with a grade of 75 or above and be recommended by Mr. Gerdom for placement in the group.

Course Description - Students will further develop their knowledge of music and instrumental technique, as well as being exposed to more challenging music and musical opportunities never seen before. Students will be able to perform in ensembles with older peers and audition for regional and/or statewide honor bands. The 7th Grade Band typically performs at least two concerts per year in conjunction with the 8th

Grade Band - one in the winter and one in the spring, in addition to an annual performance at Concert Performance Assessment that typically occurs in early March.

8th Grade Band

Prerequisites - Students must have completed one full year of 7th Grade Band with a grade of 80 or above and be recommended by Mr. Gerdom for placement in the group.

Course Description - Students in the 8th Grade Band have made it to the top rung of middle school band at GMS. In the 8th grade, students will continue to develop their skills in music and do so while mainly performing the top-tier parts of higher level middle school band literature. The 8th Grade Band typically performs at least two concerts per year in conjunction with the 7th Grade Band - one in the winter and one in the spring, in addition to an annual performance at Concert Performance Assessment that typically occurs in early March.

Equipment and Supplies

All band members are responsible for coming to class each day prepared and ready with all required materials/supplies. Some of these items are required for every band member, and some are needed specifically for the instrument that the student plays. See below for the list of needed items for all GMS Band students.

In addition to a working instrument, all members should come to band with these items each day:

- 1" Black, 3-ring Binder
- Clear Sheet Protectors
- Band Book/Provided Music
- Working Pencil

All woodwind players should come to band with these items each day: *****

- Cleaning Cloths/Swabs for Instrument Cleaning
- At least 3 working reeds. (clarinet and saxophone) - ask Mr. Gerdom for brand recommendations
- Cork Grease (clarinet and saxophone)

All brass players should come to band with these items each day: *****

- Valve Oil (trumpet, horn, euphonium, tuba)
- Slide Cream (trombone)
- Slide Grease

All percussionists should come to band with these items each day: *****

- Concert Sticks
- Rubber Mallets
- Yarn Mallets
- Practice Pad
- Stick Bag

*****Each 6th grade student will be provided these instrument-specific items upon initial rental of an instrument. All small items are to be kept in the instrument case of each student.

Instrument Rental/Purchase

The school owns a limited number of instruments for students to use, so it is **anticipated that each student (with the exception of low reeds, euphonium, and tuba) rent or purchase their own instrument.** The GMS Band is very fortunate to be partners with *Amro Music*. Amro Music is a company based out of Memphis, Tennessee that has upheld its excellent reputation for providing grade 6-12 band students with instrument rental and repair services at affordable costs. Amro Music has customer service that is second-to-none and is always working to provide the best deals and bargains for band students and families. Each year, typically in late August or early September, the GMS Band hosts an Instrument Pick-Up Night for 6th grade band families. At Pick-Up Night, families are explained in great detail the options they have as it pertains to obtaining an instrument.

In the case of **financial difficulties** that would prevent a family from renting an instrument, the school may be able to provide students school-owned instruments by way of a **loan contract**. Students that wish to play instruments that they or their families own should first take the instrument to Mr. Gerdom to ensure that it is in **good playing condition**.

Families that are invested in the musical progression of their child should consider upgrading from a beginner model instrument to an intermediate model instrument after a year or two of band. Students and families will be given this opportunity at our annual Instrument Upgrade Interest Meetings with Amro Music. A VERY large portion of money put toward beginner instrument rental will be applied to purchase of an upgrade instrument with all the features necessary to last a student through high school and college. Greater details on these events will be sent to families well in advance of the scheduled dates.

Private Lessons

Band students who desire to take their playing to the next level ought to consider private lessons. Typically, a student studying privately will receive a thirty minute or hour lesson on his or her instrument from an instructor each week. Parents/guardians of students and the private instructor should set up a payment schedule at their mutual convenience. Students and parents should seriously consider investing in private lessons **with trusted teachers**. Lessons can help students expand their playing abilities in ways that a typical band class cannot. Also, time spent in lessons will help ready students for regional auditions, giving them a higher chance at success in those areas. **Before you officially schedule private lessons with a professional teacher, please contact Mr. Gerdom, as he should be able to give you advice on who to trust to teach your child privately.**

Required Performances/Attire

Beginning Band:

All performance engagements for the Beginning Band demand student attendance. These engagements typically include performance at an annual Winter Concert and Spring Concert. Official dates for these performances are placed on the GMS Band calendar and may be found on the GMS Band website.

Required dress for these events is black and white dress clothing. Absolutely no shorts, leggings (unless worn under a skirt), sweatpants, jeans, or flip-flops. Students should wear dress clothing that adheres to school dress policy. Any student that fails to meet the dress requirements will be asked to leave and counted absent for the event.

7th/8th Grade Band:

All performance engagements for the 7th/8th Grade Band demand student attendance. The 7th/8th Grade Band typically performs at least one concert in the winter and one in the spring, in addition to annual performance at Concert Performance Assessment (not this year). Official dates for these performances are placed on the GMS Band calendar and may be found on the GMS Band website.

Required dress for these events is black and white dress clothing. Absolutely no shorts, leggings (unless worn under a skirt), sweatpants, jeans, or flip-flops. Students should wear dress clothing that adheres to school dress policy. Any student that fails to meet the dress requirements will be asked to leave and counted absent for the event.

Musical Objectives

Part of the GMS Band curriculum are sequenced playing assignments that hold students accountable for practice and continual improvement. Band students are assigned playing assignments each quarter based on band book songs, technique exercises, and musical scales. The list of these objectives will be provided for each student and kept for retrieval in the band office and on the band website documents page.

Please note that these playing assignments make up a large portion of the student's class grade. Students may complete the assignments for Mr. Gerdorf during our open bandroom time each morning from 7:25 to 7:45 AM. Playing assignments must be completed in the order they are listed on the objectives sheet and performed at the written tempo provided on the sheet.

Any student who does not perform a required playing assignment will receive a zero for the assignment as part of their classwork grade. Student performance will be evaluated based on:

- performance of correct rhythms, pitches and articulations
- Proper, steady tempo
- Musical expression (phrasing, dynamics, etc.)

Greater detail on our playing test system will be sent out soon, and the information will be made available to both students and parents.

Personal Practice

The advancement of the GMS Band relies heavily on individual student commitment to practice diligently at home. Ninety minutes of at-home practice a week can make a huge difference in the technical and lyrical instrumental performance of a band student. GMS Band students are asked to practice the above-listed times, **submitting completed practice records** on Friday of each week. The practice record sheets can be retrieved from Mr. Gerdom in the band office and online at our band website.

“I Want to Quit Band”

Ideally, once in band, always in band. Quitting something as involved and rewarding as band should never be a quick decision. If a student expresses interest in quitting band, he or she should discuss his/her concerns with Mr. Gerdom.

After conversation, if the desire to quit still remains, a student-and-parent-signed form requesting removal from the band must be returned to Mr. Gerdom. The form will then be turned over to the office in order for a schedule change to be made. This form will be available in the band office and on the band website.

Dental Work

It is extremely common that middle school students need dental work/braces during their years in school. However, braces and other major dental work often create big problems for student musicians, as it leaves very noticeable effects on quality of performance. These negative effects can take weeks, even months, for students to overcome and push past.

With this in mind, **I politely ask that each parent/guardian refrain from having major dental work performed on their child within three weeks of a performance date. Additionally, minor dental procedures (tightening, spacers, etc.) should be avoided within one week of a performance.**

Parents/guardians, please consider the musical progress of your student when scheduling dental procedures. If your child is in need of dental work, please contact Mr. Gerdom to discuss the best time for appointment(s) given the interest of the individual student musician and band as a whole.

Fundraisers

Due to the high costs of operating a band program, the GMS Band typically participates in fundraisers on a regular basis. Money from these fundraisers go toward things such as equipment, music, travel and event expenses, etc. The GMS Band typically performs one to two fundraisers each year. Details of each fundraiser will be sent to parents in advance of the starting date.

Parents/guardians, please be serious about participation in these fundraising events, as the money is always used for the betterment of your child’s experience in music. Prizes will be offered regularly to encourage fundraiser participation.

Grading

Fifty percent of the final grade is based on classwork. The classwork portion of the grade can be broken down as follows:

Weekly Participation	Playing Tests	Written Assignments
10%	30%	10%

Fifty percent of the final grade is based on student attendance at scheduled rehearsals and performances. The grading for this is simple. All students in attendance will receive full credit for each rehearsal and performance. All students that arrive after the scheduled start time without good reason (based on director discretion) will receive a 75% credit for the event and all students with an unexcused absence will be given a zero for the event.

Honor Bands

Greenbrier Band students are highly encouraged to audition for regional and state-wide honor bands. Involvement in honor bands are fantastic opportunities to spend a few days playing music with the best student musicians in the region and state, typically under the direction of a nationally-acclaimed conductor and teacher. Honor band audition opportunities will be communicated to band students and families well in advance of audition dates. Those who are interested in auditioning for these groups will begin early preparation for auditions with Mr. Gerdorn.

For any students that take private lessons: do not miss out on this opportunity - begin work for the auditions early. Students who place in honor bands will be recognized annually at the final spring concert of the year.

Closing Remarks

I am extremely excited to invite students and their families to another year of band at Greenbrier Middle School. In addition to providing students with the tools they need to be successful as young musicians, we also aim to foster an environment of friendship, camaraderie, and teamwork. We believe that these things are integral to any successful musical ensemble.

I hope that as you have read through this handbook, you are able to see the value I place on this Band Program, but more importantly on the students who are part of it. The GMS Band strives for excellence each and every day, operating as a team unified by common goals and expectations. Let us make this year a success, no matter what challenges we may face.

Mr. Jon Gerdom

Band Director, Greenbrier Middle School

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