Welcome to the Seventh Grade Beginning Band at Meadowlark Middle School! We are excited about your participation in one of our school’s most outstanding organizations. Learning to play an instrument takes patience, hard work, dedication, and home practice. The results of this work can pay huge rewards for you later as you progress through the many different levels of musical opportunities that will be available to you!

It is important to understand that band is unlike any other class that you will take. Although you will receive a grade in band, as in other classes, your effort not only affects you individually, it ultimately affects the entire group. We must be willing to work together as a team in order to achieve our goals. We have very high expectations for our students and know that with hard work each student can meet these expectations! Again, we are thrilled that you have chosen to be a part of the MMS 7th Grade Band and look forward to watching and hearing the students improvements over the course of the year.

The 7th grade beginning band class is unique among the band classes at Meadowlark. Students in this class need to realize that they are a full year behind their fellow 7th grade classmates that are participating in the continuing band class. Beginning band members will be expected to work hard as they will be attempting to cover two years of instruction in only one year. This is the only way that they will be able to participate as members of next year’s 8th grade advanced band. Students that are not willing to put forth the amount of effort and time that is necessary to progress at a steady rate should consider participating in another elective class.

Instruction in the 7th grade beginning band class will be limited to flute, clarinet, trumpet and trombone unless a student has had prior instruction on another instrument. We will complete a mouthpiece try-out session with each student during the second full week of school to help the students determine which of these instruments will be best suited for them. Following the instrument selection process we will send home information to parents about the procedure for acquiring an instrument for their child. Parents are highly encouraged to participate in a rental program through one of the local music companies that are experts in school band instrument rentals and service.

We ask that each parent go over the band handbook with his/her child. It is important that students and parents understand the expectations and policies of the band program. After reading the following pages regarding participation in the 7th Grade Beginning Band please complete the online handbook contract located on the “Forms” page of the MMS Band Website on or before Friday, September 9th.

Communication is a vital part of our band program. Emails will be sent out to parents on a frequent basis. If you find that you have a question that was not answered in the handbook please call Mr. Liner at (336) 703-4228 or email him (msliner@wsfcs.k12.nc.us). Email is the best and quickest way to contact him.

Mr. Liner will set up a 7th grade parent email group as the main method of communicating information to parents. Emails concerning upcoming band events and opportunities will be sent out frequently throughout the school year. It is vital that we have the correct email address for each student’s parent/guardian. Parents and friends of the Meadowlark band program should also visit the MMS band webpage located under the encore music department tab in the teams area of the Meadowlark Middle School website for news and updates about the MMS Bands.
**Goals of the Meadowlark Band Program**

1. To prepare all band students for the next level of band participation.
2. To learn the “language of music” and become fluent readers of musical notation.
3. To learn the correct method of playing and performing on a wind or percussion instrument.
4. To learn that every student is important to the success of the group. The overall good of the group is more important than individual selfish needs or desires.
5. To learn the value of hard work and discipline and their relationship to being successful in any endeavor.
6. To strive for musical excellence in both individual and in group performance.

**Grading Policy**

It is the school’s philosophy that students should not be given grades, they should earn their grades. Students will earn their grades based on the following assessment areas. These are listed in weight order towards the quarter grade average. The weight of each area will vary for each grading period depending on the scheduled performances for that grading period.

1. Participation in **ALL** scheduled concerts and performances (Performance/Concert Grades)
2. Student rehearsal skills based on attention, cooperation, posture and effort resulting in the improvement of musical skills and knowledge as noted through teacher observation (Daily Grades)
3. Practice outside of regular band class (Practice Sheet/Playing Tests)
4. Class Work and Written Tests/Assessments (Class Work & Written Assignments/Tests)

1. **Performance/Concert Grades** – Performance/concert grades are based on student participation at ALL band performances and required events. See the section on “Concerts and Performances” for details. **ALL concerts are required for ALL band members in the Meadowlark band program.**

2. **Daily Grades** – Daily grades are based on the quality of student work displayed during each class as observed by the instructor.
   - **Participation** - All students are expected to fully participate each day.
   - **Listening and Following Directions** - Band members should pay attention and follow instructions.
   - **Focus and Concentration** - Students are expected to stay on task and be an active participant in class.
   - **Proper Techniques** - Musicians should sit with correct posture, use proper hand position, etc.
   - **Teamwork** - Band members are expected to work together and assist one another.
   - **Preparation** - Practice outside of class will help students to be prepared for the days activities.
   - **Promptness** - Students should move quickly to the band room and prepare their materials for class. “Early is on time & on time is late”.
   - **Organization** - Musicians should have ALL materials in class each day. These materials include an instrument in good working condition, pencil on music stand, band books, band folder, music, and handouts. Students should also take the effort and time that is necessary to put their materials in their proper place following rehearsal.

3. **Practice Sheets/Home Practice/Playing Tests** – Practice sheet grades are based on student preparation for and achievement on weekly playing tests. A regular home practice routine is essential for success in music. Students will write down their weekly playing test assignments on their practice sheet and the director will notate the results of each playing assessment in the result column. Students will then take their practice sheet home for parents to review and sign. See the section on “Practice Sheets and Playing Tests” for practice sheet procedures.

4. **Class Work and Written Assignments/Tests** - Class work and written assignment/test grades are based on student achievement on such evaluations.
Performances/Concerts

Band is a PERFORMING arts class and concerts and other performances are a very important part of what band is all about. They are musical assessments that demonstrate what has been learned and worked on during class. The concert experience cannot be duplicated through any other means. Every student is equally important to the success of the band and has a responsibility to the group in the area of concerts and performances. The 7th grade beginning band will generally have three concerts, one in December and two in May.

As with chorus and orchestra, band is a co-curricular elective class that has a component that can only take place outside of the school day. These concerts/performances will be a graded portion of each student’s participation in the band program. As stated earlier, ALL PERFORMANCES OF THE BAND ARE MANDATORY/REQUIRED FOR ITS MEMBERS. Parents are encouraged to seek a course change if transportation or other conflicts will prevent students from participating in concerts. Performances will count for a minimum of 40% of the quarter grade during grading periods in which concerts are held. Students must be seated by the stated time and stay for the entire concert in order to get full credit for their concert/performance grade. Hearing other groups that may be scheduled on the same performance is a big part of a student’s music education and cannot be duplicated.

Students are expected to be present for any full band rehearsals that lead up to a performance and are also expected to be in attendance at school on the day of a concert. Unexcused absences from dress rehearsals will result in a lowered performance grade and may prevent a student from participating in a concert. The director will handle rehearsal absences due to illness or an emergency on a case by case basis. Please avoid scheduling dentist or doctor appointments on the day of or days prior to a concert.

As stated before, the concert and performance experience cannot be made-up or duplicated. Excused absences from a performance for something rare or unforeseen will be handled by the director on a case by case basis. The following would be examples of an excused absence from a band performance: 1. death of a family member 2. serious illness of a band member 3. family tragedy. The following would be examples of an unacceptable reason to miss a performance: 1. no ride (Transportation issues should be communicated to the director in the days/weeks prior to the concert so that he can help the student find a ride). 2. sports event (Curricular events such as concerts must be a higher priority than extracurricular events.) 3. you forgot. For any absence to be considered without a negative affect on the band grade the director must receive a parent note/email stating the reason for the absence. If the absence is for an excusable reason the director will then issue a make-up assignment to be completed in order to earn credit for the missing performance grade. An unexcused absence from a concert will result in a zero for that performance grade. The bottom line is each and every band student is expected to be at ALL band performances throughout the school year.

The 7th grade beginning band will perform a Winter concert on Friday, December 9th (with the 6th grade beginning band), the Spring Concert on Thursday, May 11th (with the 7th grade continuing band) and the City of the Arts Band Festival on Saturday, May 13th (with the 7th grade continuing band). More performance opportunities may arise throughout the year.

Concert Attire

The expected dress for band students for all performances is outlined below. It is very hard on a student when they are not allowed to perform due to improper attire. Because our concerts this year will be shared among the chorus, orchestra and band we will need for all of our students to follow the same concert attire requirements.

Gentlemen: Black dress slacks, black belt, black calf-high socks, solid black shoes, collared white dress shirt, pressed and tucked in neatly (no colored shirts underneath) and a necktie. Color and style of the tie will not be specified.

Ladies: Black bottoms that can be in the form of an ankle length dress skirt, full length solid black dress, or dress slacks with a solid white top with sleeves (no low-cut necklines, spaghetti straps, midriff skin showing, or colored shirts underneath) and black dress shoes with flat or low (2” or less) heels.

Please make sure the white shirt/top is pure white and not off-white, ivory, etc. Undershirts and camisoles should be pure white as well. Check your outfit at least a few days before the performance to make sure that it is appropriate and still fits.
Policies & Procedures for Classroom Participation

It is essential that certain policies and procedures be established and maintained in order for a high level of student learning to take place. By adhering to these policies and procedures we will set a standard that leads to excellence.

- **School Rules** - All school rules are always in effect during class and during any events in which you are representing the band. It is vital that each member of the MMS band program be aware of emergency procedures to ensure that we maintain the highest level of student safety at all times.

- **Promptness** - Be on time for class. Once arriving in the band room, immediately get your instrument and other required materials and go directly to your seat. All students should be seated with all materials ready for class no later than two minutes after the tardy bell. If you are held over by another MMS staff member, get them to write you a tardy note.

- **Participation** - Each student in the Meadowlark Middle School band program is expected to participate and play in class everyday. If a student is too sick to participate then they are probably too sick to be at school and it is recommended that they go home and get well. If a student has a damaged instrument, then they should follow the procedure listed below under repairs. Students not playing/participating in class will see a reduction in their class participation grade.

- **Materials** - Bring all materials to class every day. Materials include: all music, band books, handouts, band folder, instrument, and a pencil.

- **Instrument Repairs** - Always consult the band director before taking an instrument to the repair shop. If the director is unable to repair it, then it should go immediately to a qualified musical repair professional. Once the instrument has been taken to the repair facility parents should notify the director via a written note or e-mail. (Note: with the exception of flute, students should always keep their mouthpiece for use on a loaner instrument) Be sure to notify the band director of the repair facility where the instrument is being repaired and of the claim ticket number. If the director contacts the repair facility sometimes that helps prevent the time for repairs from dragging on and on. Upon receiving the parent note the director will provide the student with a loaner instrument to use if one is available.

- **No Food, Drinks, Gum or Candy in the Band Room** - Deposit gum in the trash can upon entering the room.

- **Percussion Instruments** - Only Meadowlark percussionists are allowed near the percussion instruments. If you are not a MMS percussionist, do not touch the percussion instruments.

- **Office Area** - Be respectful of the director’s office area. If you see that I am working or on the phone patiently wait to get my attention.

- **Talking/Disruptions** - There is to be no non-essential talking or other disruption when the director is teaching or any student is asking a question.

- **Posture** - Good bands have good posture when playing. Whether in the band room or at home, always sit with proper posture when playing your instrument. A student’s use of correct posture and hand position will be reflected in their daily grade. It is a good idea to have a music stand for home practice.

- **Organization** - Put all items in their proper storage area at the end of class. Return your chair and music stand to the position it was in upon entering the band room. Do not leave music, books or folders on the music stand. Return all instruments to their proper storage locker. Misplaced items will be placed in the band lost and found.

- **Cleanliness** - Keep the band room and all rehearsal/practice rooms clean and neat. Put trash in the trash cans. Take care of all band equipment. Any mistreatment of school facilities or equipment will result in a monetary fine.

- **Noise** - Play your instrument during class only when directed to do so.

- **“Vomit Rule”** - No student is to leave the band room or their seat during class without the permission of the band director. The one exception is the “Vomit” rule.

**Materials Needed**

Students must bring all materials needed to each band class. Failure to do so will interfere with their ability to participate with the rest of the class and will negatively affect their daily classroom participation grade.

1. **Instrument in Proper Working Condition** - Students without an instrument for class will fall behind and will not be able to earn credit for the daily participation grade.

2. **Music Book(s)** - Students will need the following band books: “Standard of Excellence” Book 1 (The Red Book) as well as “Standard of Excellence” Book 2 (The Blue Book). These books may be
Purchased at any local music store that carries band supplies.

3. **Pencil** - Keep a pencil in your instrument case for class use and place it on your music stand at the beginning of each class period.

4. **Band Folder** - All students will be issued a band folder. This folder should be brought to each band class. Any materials that are given out during class should be kept in the band folder. These items would include handouts, scale sheets, concert music, band books, etc...

5. **Reeds** (reed instruments only) - Reed players are expected to have 4 good reeds at all times.

**Securing An Instrument For Your Child**

An instrument is required for band class. Information concerning obtaining an instrument will be distributed to students once they have completed the instrument selection process. If a parent/guardian does not take care of acquiring an instrument in a timely manner it places much undue stress on the child and places the teacher in a very uncomfortable situation. We plan to begin instruction with instruments on September 26th. If you have not secured a quality, brand name instrument that is in good playing condition please do so as quickly as possible. The first lessons are very critical for future success and we do not want any child to fall behind. We highly recommend participating in a rental program that is offered from a full service music dealer. If you need assistance securing an instrument please let Mr. Liner know and he will assist you in any way that he can.

**Practice Sheets and Playing Tests**

The only homework assigned in band, aside from the occasional written task, is to practice. Students will receive a weekly practice grade based on the Band Practice Sheet, which is completed by the student and the director and then signed by a parent. Having the band practice sheet filled out and signed is how each student will earn a substantial portion of their grade for each quarter. It is vitally important that students and parents understand the practice sheet requirements for band class.

There is not a specified amount of time that students are expected to practice. The amount of time will vary depending on the assignment. The purpose of using a practice sheet and having playing tests is to provide purpose and direction to a student’s practice session.

Students are expected to write each playing test assignment in the “Assignment” area of the practice sheet. Following the student’s attempt of the playing test the director will write either “Pass” or “Fail” in the grade column of the practice sheet and the sheet will be returned to the student. The band member will then take their practice sheet home and have their parent sign in the parent signature column beside their grade from that week’s playing assignment. Following the next weeks playing test attempt the director will note the results of that week’s assessment as well as record whether there was a parent signature beside the grade from the previous week’s test.

In addition to correctly performing the material from each week’s playing test students will also be expected to pass off a minimum of 9 pass off lines during each grading period. These lines can be passed off during in-class or at afterschool pass offs. Please see the “Parent Progress Monitoring” section for more information on pass off’s.

**Practice Sheet Procedure:**

1. Write down the assignment for the playing test.
2. Practice daily to prepare for the upcoming playing assessment.
3. On the day of the test the director will note the results of the playing test in the grade column of the practice sheet.
4. The student will then take the practice sheet home to have their parent(s) sign in the parent column beside the assessment results.
5. Following the next playing test attempt the director will note whether or not the student got their parents to sign their practice sheet.
6. Pass off 9 lines out of their method book during each grading period.

If the student is practicing and preparing for the next playing test, passing the test, and getting their parent’s signature after the director has written down the grade from the test then the student should be doing well in band. However, if the student is not passing the playing tests then their practice sheet/playing test grade for that week will be a zero(0). Students must pass the playing test and have their parent’s signature to earn a 100. Students may retake a failed playing test anytime prior to the end of the quarter for partial credit. For a student to be successful in band, students must practice for and pass their playing tests, get their parents to sign their practice sheet and pass off lines out of their band book.
**Interventions**

Our goal is for all students to have an enjoyable time and to be successful in making music and learning to play their instruments well. Failure to follow the policies and procedures outlined in the band handbook will result in negative consequences. Any student who makes the decision not to adhere to school rules or the band’s policies and procedures is subject to the following interventions:

1. Warning
2. Student/Teacher Conference
3. Parental Contact
4. Office Referral usually resulting in ISS (In School Suspension)

Disrespect shown to the director, other students, or band property will not be tolerated.

We have chosen to be involved because we love to learn about and make quality music. In order to reach a high standard of musical excellence a certain level of discipline, regulation and self-control must be established and maintained. Our band members are expected to conduct themselves as ladies and gentlemen.

**Parent Progress Monitoring**

In addition to looking at their child’s grades on the PowerSchool’s Parent Portal, parents should be aware of their child’s progress in band by signing the practice sheet weekly and observing their child’s progress through the band book pass off lines. Practice sheet monitoring was covered in the “Practice Sheets and Playing Tests” section. In order to see your child’s progress through the book, parents should look for passed off lines. When a student correctly performs a “pass off” line for the director he will initial beside the line. Parents should open their child’s band book and look for the director’s initials beside the lines that have been “passed off”. Parents are encouraged to incorporate weekly “home recitals” to provide an opportunity for their child to perform their prepared pass off lines or other literature in an informal recital setting for the family.

The most successful band students have parents who take an active role in making sure practice time is taking place on a regular basis and is well used. The director will notify parents of academic or conduct deficiencies via emails, phone calls or notes written on the practice sheet.

**Individual Performance Opportunities**

Seventh grade beginning band members will not have as many additional performance opportunities as their more experienced seventh & eighth grade peers. Continued participation in the band program results in the opportunity to audition for all-county band, all-district band, the MMS jazz band, and west region jazz band. Students also participate and Solo & Ensemble MPA.

Other performing opportunities will be announced as they are scheduled. Students are encouraged to perform as often as possible to continue to develop their musicianship. All students are encouraged to strive for excellence in performance.

**Dates of Interest:**

Beginning Band Winter Concert: December 9, 2016
Solo & Ensemble MPA: TBA
7th Grade Band Spring Concert: May 11, 2017
City of the Arts Band Festival and Carowinds Trip: May 13, 2017
**OTHER INFORMATION**

- **Each band member’s instrument case** (self or school-owned) must have a name tag that clearly labels the instrument owner, owner’s address and telephone number. **Students must have a name tag on their case in order to use a band room instrument locker.** Only band instruments and band materials should be kept in the locker. **Students should place their instrument in their band locker before going to homeroom and may pick it up before going home.**

- **Students may purchase reeds from the school’s band store which is located in the band room.** The director will make recommendations on what kind and strength of reed to use. Woodwind players will not be allowed to play on plastic or inadequate reeds. Brass players will not be allowed to play on plastic instruments or mouthpieces.

- **Students who deface, or lose school-owned music or instruments will be charged a fee for the replacement or repair to those materials.**

- **Percussionists are encouraged to provide their own sticks and mallets as they are needed throughout the year.** Stick bags containing all the mallets that will be necessary are available for purchase from the school.

- **All students should invest in a folding music stand for home practice.** Poor posture during home practice time will restrict a student’s progress and could cause bad muscular and embouchure habits to develop.

- **Students should invest in a metronome or metronome application and a tuner or tuner application.** These are invaluable tools for home practice.

- **Students are strongly encouraged to take private lessons from a qualified professional that is an expert on their instrument.** The director keeps a list of preferred private lesson instructors that can recommended for private lesson instruction. **Email Mr. Liner** to receive more information on getting your child involved in private lessons.

- **Students who will play a school owned instrument** (such as tuba, baritone, French horn, etc...) will be given the appropriate forms to fill out and return to school. School owned instrument use fees will be used for annual maintenance/repair.

- **Students are encouraged to upgrade the quality of their band equipment** (instrument, mouthpiece, etc...) whenever possible. **If you are interested in purchasing a better quality instrument please consult the band director** for advice and guidance before making a purchase.

- **Each band member is expected to behave as a young gentleman/lady both inside and outside of class.** Being a good representative of the Meadowlark Middle School band program is an important responsibility that each student is expected to take seriously.

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**THE EIGHT KEY WORDS FOR SUCCESS IN BAND AND IN LIFE**

- **TEAMWORK** - Everyone in the group must work together for the common good and success of the group. **Together Everyone Achieves More!**

- **SELF-DISCIPLINE** - Doing the right thing without having to be told.

- **RESPONSIBILITY** - Doing things that must be done for the good of the group, even if you really do not want to do it. Being where you are supposed to be when you are supposed to be there.

- **ATTITUDE** - Displaying a good attitude is important. Bad attitudes can spread like a deadly disease, and often like with a disease, have to be cut out.

- **IMAGE** - We want a classy image. It only takes the careless act of one band member to tarnish the good reputation of the band.

- **HARD WORK** - Nothing worth having comes easily. The willingness to work hard is the key element to success in band and in life.

- **EFFORT** - Be willing to give your best effort everyday. Don’t take vacations when you should be working! A little effort goes a long way on the road to success.

- **RESPECT** - Give respect. Get respect. Show respect for your teachers, fellow students, and school property. This is also how one earns respect for themselves.