

2020-2021

Thomas R. Fowler Middle School

Virtual Band Handbook

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Welcome to Band!

As you know, due to COVID-19, school will be different this year. Band will be different, too. In some of your classes, you will be able to complete most of your usual activities and assignments through distance learning, perhaps completing many of those tasks synchronously. What we usually do in band, though, is rehearse together as an ensemble to learn music, and then perform that music together for friends and family at concerts. Unfortunately, neither of those activities are an option during a pandemic. Due to latency (digital sound lag), we are not able to rehearse together synchronously either.

So what will we be doing this year in band? Our primary focus will be to improve our individual musicianship, including instrument-specific technical skills and knowledge of music theory, so that when we are eventually able to meet and rehearse as an ensemble again, we will be ready to perform, make music, and create art.

Upon completion of the Fowler Middle School Band Program, our goal as usual is for all of you to be fully prepared for successful participation in a high school band program. Our path to get there may look different this year, but our goal remains the same.

Virtual Band Class Expectations

- Be on time!
 - Join all online class meetings on time, and be ready to participate!
- Be prepared!
 - Maintain your instrument in good working order.
 - Have all required materials for your class and instrument.
- Be responsible!
 - Store your instrument and accessories in a safe place in your home when not in use.
 - Make sure your mouth is clean (you've brushed your teeth since the last time you ate...) before practicing.
 - Practice regularly!
- Be respectful at all times!
 - Keep your microphone muted in online meetings unless speaking.
 - Protect the privacy of all students by not recording or taking screenshots of live sessions.
 - Limit distractions (tv off, music off, cell phone off and away...) during live sessions.
 - Listen actively when others are speaking.
- Be safe!
 - Keep passwords and log-in information private.
 - Use school-appropriate language.
 - No inappropriate comments or emojis in the chat.
- Remember that when you are in a "Google Meet" you are basically at school, and that all school rules apply regarding your language and behavior. Be safe, respectful, and responsible!

Grading Policy

Students in virtual band at Fowler Middle School will earn their grade as follows:

1. Recorded playing assignments (primarily through SmartMusic)≈60%
2. Written assignments and quizzes (music theory, etc.).....≈40%

Talented and Gifted Students

To ensure that students designated as "Talented and Gifted" (TAG) receive academic instruction that is appropriate to their rate and level of learning, the curriculum and instruction of all band courses at Fowler Middle School may be differentiated to include specialized groupings, compacting of curriculum, accelerated pacing, and providing of extension/challenge activities.

What You Will Need for Band

Band is a unique class that requires special equipment and supplies in order to ensure success. Whether you are using your own instrument or renting, it should always be in GOOD playing condition. The following is a list of accessories you will need to have, *even if you are using a school owned instrument*.

INSTRUMENT	ACCESSORIES
FLUTE	cleaning rod, swab, cleaning cloth
OBOE	2-3 cane reeds (or 2 Légère) & holder, swab, cork grease, water container
BASSOON	2-3 cane reeds (or 2 Légère) & holder, swab, cork grease, water container, seat strap
CLARINET	3-4 good cane reeds (or 2 Légère), reed holder, swab, cork grease, neck strap (optional)
SAXOPHONE	3-4 good cane reeds (or 2 Légère), reed holder, swab, cork grease, neck strap
HORN	valve oil, tuning slide grease, cleaning cloth, snake, practice mute (optional)
TRUMPET	valve oil, tuning slide grease, cleaning cloth, snake, practice mute (optional)
TROMBONE	slide cream & water bottle, tuning slide grease, cleaning cloth, snake, practice mute (optional)
EUPHONIUM	valve oil, tuning slide grease, cleaning cloth, snake, small pillow (optional)
TUBA	valve oil, tuning slide grease, cleaning cloth
PERCUSSION	snare drum and/or practice pad, bell kit, sticks & mallets (see below), stick bag
ALL	pencil, folding music stand (strongly recommended!)

PERCUSSION ACCESSORIES:

Required of all percussionists during virtual band:

Snare Drum and/or Practice Pad

Bell Kit

Snare Drumsticks: Vic Firth American Custom SD1 General (2 pair)

Mallets: Mike Balter #92B bell mallets

Stick Bag

Please keep any additional percussion accessories you may have (sticks, mallets, pitch pipe, etc.) in your stick bag, so that you are prepared if/when we are able to return to in-person instruction.

Note: If your private instructor would like you to use a different brand for sticks or mallets, you may do so with Mr. VanDyke's approval.

Mr. V's Picks for Accessories

Some of the items described below are from the "required accessories" list, while others are just recommendations. What I have described below are the accessories and specific models and brands that I have found to help students best succeed.

Woodwinds:

- Reeds: These are probably the most important part of your instrument. Always store them in a reed holder. These holders help the reed to dry flat and straight and be ready for the next use. **Never** leave your reed on the mouthpiece; it will mold! Always have at least 3 reeds (or 2

Légère reeds) you know are in good working condition in your case at all times. (This will probably require that you have at least four reeds in your possession at all times.) There are many different brands of reeds available. Experiment to see what works best for you, but please use only cane reeds or Légère synthetic reeds. For beginning clarinet students, I recommend Légère 2½ (strength) reeds unless your private instructor prefers otherwise. I do not recommend any other brand of synthetic reeds, as most other brands do not create a characteristic tone quality.

- Mouthpieces: As students grow and mature as musicians in school, many will begin to be held back by the quality of their instruments. If buying a wooden clarinet or professional model saxophone is not financially possible for your family, a good first step is to add a professional quality mouthpiece and ligature to your current instrument. All students will greatly benefit from this relatively simple addition. These are strongly recommended for members of Advanced Band. If you are taking private lessons, ALWAYS discuss with your private instructor before purchasing a new mouthpiece.

Clarinet:	VanDoren 5RV lyre or B45
Clarinet Ligature:	Luyben plastic (black or clear), Leblanc Bonade inverted
Alto Saxophone:	Selmer C* (that's C-star), Rousseau New Classic Series
Tenor Saxophone:	Selmer C*, Rousseau 5R
Baritone Saxophone:	Selmer C*, Rousseau 4R
Jazz Saxophone:	see Mr. VanDyke
Sax Ligature:	Rovner dark

As well as improving tone and making all aspects of playing easier, these mouthpieces are all made of hard rubber instead of plastic, so they are also much more durable.

Brasses:

- Mouthpiece brush: This is a handy little brush sized to fit through your mouthpiece and help keep it clean. Every brass player should have a mouthpiece brush, and should use it about once a week.
- Mouthpieces: Just as I mentioned in the discussion of mouthpieces for woodwinds, there are also specific models for brasses that will generally help students best succeed. Again, if you are taking private lessons, ALWAYS discuss with your private instructor before purchasing a new mouthpiece.

French Horn:	Holton Farkas MDC or Schilke 31
Trumpet:	Bach 3C or Monette B6
Trombone:	Bach 6½ AL or Schilke 50
Euphonium:	Schilke 51D
Tuba:	Conn Helleberg standard or Bach 18

- *Mutes: During comprehensive distance learning, no mutes are required. However, please keep any mutes you may already have, so that you are prepared if/when we are able to return to in-person instruction. If you sometimes need to practice quietly (while a sibling is asleep, parent is working from home, etc.) you may want to purchase a practice mute. Since playing with a practice mute both sounds and feels different (much more resistance), I don't recommend using

them all the time. However, if I need to practice while my daughters are asleep, that's what I use, and the Bremner sshhmute (available for trumpet, trombone, and horn) is what I recommend.

Percussion:

- Stick Bag: This is a carrying case for sticks, mallets, and accessories. These bags serve to keep sticks from getting lost, and prolong their life by protecting them while not in use. They are commercially available or, if you sew, you could make one that will work great.

All Students:

- Recordings: Any professional recording of a soloist on your instrument is a wonderful accessory to have at home for listening and imitation.
- Folding Music Stand!

Method Books and Pencils

All band students should have a pencil available for every practice session to mark their music when necessary. All band students will also need to purchase a book for use in class. These books are available at local music stores (Tigard Music, Beacock Music, Wally's Music, Canby Music, for example) for about \$10.

Beginning Band: "Essential Elements for Band" Book One (for your instrument)

Intermediate Band: "Essential Elements for Band" Book Two

Advanced Band: "Tradition of Excellence" Book Three

(Please note this is a change from previous years, as this book is better suited for online learning. If you already have Foundations for Superior Performance from last year, though, please hold onto it, as we will still use some exercises out of it, as well.)

Private Instruction!

Although not a requirement for membership in Fowler's instrumental music program, **private lessons on the student's primary instrument are strongly recommended**. It is an expectation that students will seek out private instruction if at all possible. There are many fine instructors in the Portland area who offer online lessons (usually via Zoom or Google Meets). E-mail Mr. VanDyke to obtain a list of private instructors for your instrument.

SmartMusic

SmartMusic is an online program that enhances the home practicing experience for students. This software allows Mr. VanDyke to assign music selections for students to practice and allows students to practice, record, and submit their playing assignments using a computer, chromebook, or iPad. The software also includes useful practice aids like a metronome and a tuner. Best of all, using a microphone, the software can assess when a student has played right notes or wrong notes and provides instant feedback to the student on-screen.

All Fowler Band students this year will have full access to SmartMusic on their school iPads, provided by the Tigard-Tualatin School District. Students may also access SmartMusic on their home computer if they wish. More information will be provided in class, but for now, here is some key information you should know:

- Every band student will have full access to SmartMusic provided by the Tigard-Tualatin School District.
- When practicing with SmartMusic on an iPad, the use of headphones is recommended.
- When practicing with SmartMusic on a home computer, the use of a SmartMusic instrumental microphone (available from www.makemusic.com) is recommended.

If you haven't already done so, please take the time to visit www.smartmusic.com to see videos and read testimonials of what this software can do.

School Instruments & Equipment

Fowler Middle School maintains a limited inventory of instruments for student use. Students must complete a Tigard-Tualatin School District Instrument Loan Agreement Form to use these instruments. It is important to remember that *while the instrument is checked out to a student, the student is responsible for that instrument.* What that means is ***if the instrument is damaged during the year, it is the student's responsibility to pay for repairs.*** All students renting school instruments (including all percussionists) will be assessed a \$100 rental fee for the school year.

Contacting Mr. VanDyke

Questions about band?

Mr. VanDyke can be reached via e-mail at bvandyke@tsd.k12.or.us.

Thank you!