



# **BLUFFS**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

# **BAND HANDBOOK**

**2020-2021**



## **Introduction**

**WELCOME** to the Bluffs Middle School Band program! The purpose of this handbook is to inform all students and their parents of the policies and expectations of the Scottsbluff Middle School Bands. We hope that it can be a helpful guide for defining the boundaries that are important in keeping our band program at the highest level of quality.

The Middle School Bands strive for improvement in performance skill through student involvement, dedication, and hard work. We need the help of students and parents working together with the directors and administrators to accomplish this goal. Through this concerted effort, we feel that the Scottsbluff Middle School Bands will continue their strong tradition of improvement and excellence which is a source of pride for the students, parents, school, and community. Remember, the more you invest of yourself, the more will be your reward. Together we can make this the best year ever.

I appreciate all of your support and look forward to another exciting school year.

## **Communication**

### **BMS Band Web Site:**

The Bluffs Middle School Band maintains a website that has all the information needed for participation in band. This is a very convenient resource for the latest information, updates, pictures, calendars and more. Please go there regularly to keep up to date on information regarding the band.

[www.sbps.net/bmsbands](http://www.sbps.net/bmsbands)

### **E-Mail:**

[mkoch@sbps.net](mailto:mkoch@sbps.net) – Parents

[mkoch@sbbearcats.net](mailto:mkoch@sbbearcats.net) - Students

### **BMS Band Twitter Page:**



Follow us  
[@bluffsmsband](https://twitter.com/bluffsmsband)

### **Telephone:**

635-6287 (BMS Music Department)

### **Remind:**

Remind is a free, safe, and simple messaging tool that helps teachers share important updates and reminders with students & parents. We will use the Remind app to communicate important announcements and reminders.

## **Grading Policy**

### **Classwork/Daily Class Participation 30%**

Students who arrive on time to class with all necessary equipment and supplies and participate during class will receive 10 points each day. If a student is tardy to class, does not have their instrument/equipment, or does not fully participate during class, they will receive a reduction in the points that they can earn that day.

### **Playing Assessments 30%**

Students will be given playing assessments to determine mastery of various performance concepts learned in class.

### **Written Assessments 10%**

Homework assignments will be assigned to reinforce concepts presented during class and as checks for learning. Students are to promptly return written assignments by the stated due date. Students may also be administered written tests periodically to determine mastery of various musical concepts learned in class.

### **Performances 20%**

Performances are a vital part of the Band curriculum. Students are expected to participate in all required performances.

### **At Home Practice 10%**

Students are asked to practice at home on a daily basis. **20 minutes of practice will count as one day of practice.** The students will earn points based on the number of days that they practice each week. 10 points for 5 days of practice, 9 points for 4 days of practice, 8 points for 3 days of practice, 7 points for 2 days of practice, 6 points for 1 day of practice, and 0 points for no practice. Practice sheets are due every Monday. Practice sheets will **not** be accepted after the week that they are due or without a parent signature.

## **Class/Rehearsal Participation Policy**

- **All students are expected to play each day in band class.**
- **If a student's instrument is in the shop, he/she must present the directors with the following information:**
  - The name of the shop performing the repair
  - The date the instrument was taken to the shop
  - Parent/Guardian signature
- **In general, if you are well enough to be at school, you are well enough to participate in class.** We realize that this is not always the case. Students who are not well enough to play will be sent to the health office. Incidents of this nature will be handled on an individual basis.

## **Make up for not having your instrument in class**

Students earn a daily grade for their participation in, and contribution to, our daily rehearsals. Students who do not have their instruments for class may complete make up time with Mr. Koch after school. Students choosing to not make up daily class work will not receive participation points for the day that they didn't have their instrument.

## Smartmusic

As part of the school's DALI program, band students will be using a program called Smartmusic. Students will be able to use Smartmusic as a practice aid for their method book assignments and concert music. Playing assessments will also be completed using Smartmusic on the student's Chromebooks outside of class.

Students will receive feedback on how they are playing in several ways. Students can record themselves playing and listen to their performance. Smartmusic can provide visual feedback to help the students understand what may still need more practice. After they submit their playing assessment, I will be able to send the students feedback on how they can continue to improve.

This is a program that I have found to be helpful and fun in my own practice and the practice of just about every student who uses it. More information will be given to the students about how to use this program after they have received their school assigned Chromebooks.

## Performances

Music performances are the means by which the students display the skills that they have developed through classroom rehearsals and individual practice. A performance may be thought of as a test of the skills and knowledge that were worked on during those rehearsals.

- **All performances are required and will count as part of the student's grade** (see Grading).
- Students who miss a performance are expected to do a make-up assignment.
  - Excused absences may be made up for full credit. Unexcused absences may be made up for partial credit.
- If a student misses a performance and does not do a make-up assignment, they will not receive points for that performance.
- If a student does not act in an appropriate manner while attending a performance his/her performance grade will reflect their behavior.
- To be excused due to illness from a performance, a student must have been ill from school on the day of the performance.
- Unexcused absences can result in a failing grade.

## Solos

The Bluffs Middle School Curriculum states that students in Band will learn to play **alone** and with others a wide variety of music. The students will be asked to prepare and perform a solo of their own choosing every semester. Students may also prepare a solo for the **Western Nebraska Middle Level Solo and Large Ensemble Contest** to be held in February. At this contest, students will be evaluated by a judge and given comments and suggestions to help them improve their playing skills.

## Uniform

### **Marching Uniform (grades 7-8):**

- All Black Socks and Shoes
- Black slacks
- White BMS Band shirt

### **Concert Uniform (grade 6-8)**

- Nice dress clothes. No jeans, tennis shoes, or T-shirts.

I suggest slacks, dress shirt and tie, and dress shoes for the boys.

I suggest a skirt and blouse or a nice dress with dress shoes for the girls. (Please be mindful of skirt length when on stage – knee length)

## School Instruments

Students using a school instrument and their parents will be asked to fill out and sign an Instrument Check-Out Sheet. This agreement states that the student is to maintain the instrument and keep it in good repair and playing condition. It is expected that the instrument will be returned in the same condition as when it was issued. The parents and student are assuming full responsibility for any damage, loss of the instrument, and any repairs or replacement of this instrument.

The student must provide their own reeds, oils, and other accessories.

## Lockers

Each student will be assigned a locker which they may use for their instruments and music. **Instruments should be stored in their cases and the cases latched at the end of each rehearsal.**

**Band lockers will not be used to store materials for other classes (books, notebooks, pencil bags, etc.) Only the student's instrument and music should be stored in their Band locker.**

**If the student would like to lock their locker, the student will need to provide their own combination lock. Your combination will need to be given to Mr. Koch.** For your own protection, locker combinations should not be given to other students. Having a locker for your instrument is a privilege, not a right. If you mistreat the lockers in any way or fail to keep them neat, you could lose that privilege.

Instrument lockers at school should only be used to store instruments **during school hours only!** Students should take their instruments home each night.

## Music

Printed music is the "Textbook" of the Band. Music should be put away after each rehearsal and not kept in the instrument case where it could possibly damage your instrument. Students will need to have a 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  inch Binder with 10-20 plastic sheet protectors for their music. It is the students' responsibility to take care of the music checked out to them. They are to have all music in rehearsals. Students will not be allowed to share music.



## **Bluffs Middle School - Band Supply List**

### **ALL Students:**

- Instrument with identification tag
- One 1-inch Binder with 8-10 plastic sheet protectors for individual sheet music
- Pencil with good eraser
- Combination Lock (MasterLock is best) for instrument storage locker– Combinations will be given to Mr. Koch ... **NO LOCKS WITH KEYS** (Optional – if the student wants to lock their Band locker. The school is not responsible for stolen items.)

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Beginning and Regular Band:**

- **Essential Elements for Band – Book 1** for the correct instrument

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade Band:**

- **Essential Elements for Band – Book 2** for the correct instrument
- **BMS Band Shirt for Marching Performances** (will need to be purchased for \$15... more info. coming in September)

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band:**

- **Essential Technique for Band – Book 3** for the correct instrument

### **Woodwind Instruments MUST ALSO HAVE:**

- 3 working Reeds in case at all times (*broken reeds do not count!* ☺)
- Cork Grease
- Cleaning Swab

### **Brass Instruments MUST ALSO HAVE:**

- Valve Oil
- Slide Oil
- Tuning Slide Grease
- Cleaning Cloth

### **Percussion Instruments MUST ALSO HAVE:**

- Drum Sticks (Size 2B with wood tips)

We always need **Kleenex** ... if you would like to donate a box or two to the Music Department throughout the year, it would be **MUCH APPRECIATED.**

## Expected Behavior

**BE SAFE**



**BE RESPONSIBLE**



**BE RESPECTFUL**

The important question for students to ask themselves before they take action is, “How will this help the band get better?” If it won’t help the band, then don’t do it.

- 1. Be On Time to Class!** – Students should be in the band room by the bell and in their seat with their instrument ready to play two minutes after the bell rings.
- 2. Get Rid of the Gum!** – No food, drink, gum, or candy is allowed in the band room at any time.
- 3. Bring Your Stuff!** – Students must bring their instrument, their music, and a pencil to class every day.
- 4. Take Care of Your Stuff!** – Students are held responsible for cleaning up after themselves and putting their equipment away at the end of every rehearsal.
- 5. Respect Your Teacher!** – Please respect your teacher by not talking during rehearsals. If you have a question, please raise your hand and wait to be recognized.
- 6. Respect Your Classmates!** – Show respect to your fellow band members at all times.
- 7. Respect Our Equipment!** – Your instrument is for you to play, and only you. Instruments are extremely expensive, so students should never play each other’s instruments. In addition, only percussionists should ever play the percussion instruments in the band room!
- 8. Turn in Homework!** – The year-long homework assignment of all BMS Band Students is the Practice Record. Make sure you turn it in every week in order to receive full points. Make sure that you also turn in any playing assessments and/or written assessments that are assigned.
- 9. Be Ready and Willing!** – When you walk into the band room, you should always be Ready to Work and Willing to Learn. I won’t ask for perfection, but I will insist that you do your best!
- 10. Have Fun!** – Being a part of band should be a fun experience for all students. If you try your best to meet the first 9 expectations, I’m certain this last one will happen all by itself.

## Other music opportunities your child may want to participate in

### 8th Grade All State Band

Eighty 8th graders from across the state are selected from a recorded audition to participate in this very select Honor Band. Audition tapes are due in October. This Honor Band will be held in Kearney on Saturday, January 16, 2021.

### Western Nebraska Middle Level Contest

This is an event where students in grades 6-8 will have the opportunity to perform a prepared solo for a judge who will offer written comments and suggestions. This event will be held on Saturday, February 20, 2021.

### Lessons

I have time available after school to give students extra help. There are usually several time slots available each day from 3:30-5:30 p.m. If these times do not work due to other activities, please talk to me and we will arrange for a time that will work. Each lesson lasts 30 minutes. There is a sign up sheet on my office door and there is no cost for these lessons.

### Jazz Band

Jazz Band is open to all band students in grades 7 and 8. Jazz Band meets before school from 7:00 until 7:40 a.m. on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. More information will be given to the students as the start date for Jazz Band approaches.

**Welcome, once again, and please accept the challenge to  
BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE!!!! Remember...EFFORT = SUCCESS**

Sincerely,  
Mr. Koch



### **BMS BAND HANDBOOK RESPONSE SHEET**

I hereby acknowledge that I have received and read the BMS Band Handbook.

Students Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return this form to Mr. Koch within five (5) school days of receipt.*



## 2020-2021 **BMS** Band Calendar

Michael A. Koch, Director

- Monday, October 5**      **Homecoming Parade**  
(7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Marching Band)  
Location & Time TBA
- Thursday, October 15      BMS Jazz Band "FALL BLAST!"  
Location & Time TBA
- Saturday, October 17**      **Old West Weekend Parade Competition**  
(7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Marching Band)  
TBA (Usually around 10:00 a.m.)
- Wednesday, November 11**      **Veterans Day Parade**  
(7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Marching Band)  
11:00 a.m.
- Friday, December 11**      **BMS Holiday Band Concert**  
(6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Bands)  
Location & Time TBA
- Saturday, December 12      BMS Jazz Band  
(Tentative date - pending mall availability)      Monument Mall - TBA
- Saturday, January 16      NSBA 8<sup>th</sup> Grade All-State Honor Band at Univ. of NE - Lincoln  
(For those 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students selected)
- Saturday, February 20      17<sup>th</sup> Annual Western Nebraska Middle Level  
Instrumental Music Contest  
(6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Bands)  
Location & Time TBA
- Tuesday, March 9**      **BMS Band Mid-Winter Concert**  
(6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Bands)  
Location & Time TBA
- Thursday, March 18      BMS Jazz Band Concert with WNCC "Fire In The Pan" Swingers  
(Tentative date - pending WNCC Calendar)      Location & Time TBA
- Tuesday, May 6**      **Spring Band Concert**  
(5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Bands)  
Location & Time TBA
- Friday, May 7      BMS/SHS Jazz Band Concert  
Location & Time TBA
- Saturday, May 8**      **'Music in the Parks' Concert Band Festival**  
(8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band)  
Elitch Gardens - Denver, CO - All Day

Events in **BOLD** are required BMS Band performances