

## **Welcome**

The start of a new school year is an exciting event, especially for the band members at East Cary Middle School! You will be walking the halls of a School of Excellence, a tradition that you are challenged to continue.

East Cary Middle School Band classes are filled with excitement, energy, and passion for the art of music. A positive attitude, personal commitment, and hard work are expected of all members of the East Cary Bands.

As a member of East Cary Middle School Bands, you have chosen to associate with some of the finest scholars, athletes, musicians, and student leaders in our school. Our expectations are high. Each Band member will be held accountable for his/her actions, attitudes and performances.

All students and their families are asked to read and become thoroughly familiar with the contents of this handbook in order to avoid any misunderstandings as we progress through the school year. This handbook contains policies and procedures that will be in effect for the 2016-17 school year. Parents, you can contact me at [cbranam@wcpss.net](mailto:cbranam@wcpss.net) or 919-466-4390 with questions that you may have. I look forward to an exciting and musical school year.

Sincerely,

Chris Branam

Band Director

## ***East Cary Middle School Band Handbook p.2***

### **Philosophy**

Band was a very special experience for me when I was growing up in small town, "Cary" at that time. Many of my friends were in band. I met my wife (Jane) in band class. A great deal of my time was spent involved in some aspect of the program. Band, like sports and other wholesome organizations, gave me a place to grow and succeed. It is my desire to create a band program at East Cary Middle School that will have the same positive impact upon my students. The East Cary Middle School Band Program is designed to:

Provide each student with a comprehensive music education, while teaching the skills and attitudes necessary to succeed as a young musician and as a young adult.

Benefit the school and community through public performances of quality music, while promoting and enhancing the dignity and reputation of East Cary Middle School.

Foster the development of essential character traits to include a strong work ethic, personal integrity, a commitment to excellence, and respect for self and others.

Provide each student with a positive emotional outlet, a good social experience, and a worthy use of leisure time.

### **Basic Expectations**

Be present and on time.

Be prepared for and engaged in learning.

Be a person of character.

Be safe and comply with ECMS and WCPSS policies

Take pride in yourself, your band, and your school. Celebrate success together!

### **Daily Procedure**

Band classes will begin each day with students arriving on time and prepared for class with their pencil, music, method book and instrument. Students are to be in their seats no later than one minute after the start time. We will warm up and tune together.

Students are to raise their hands during rehearsal for permission to leave their seat or speak.

Do not raise your hand to ask a question once the director's hands are raised for playing. If you have a bathroom emergency, let me know, discreetly, and go. When class ends, the director will dismiss you. Students should return all instruments to their assigned storage areas. Students are to keep the band room clean and neat at all times. Trash containers are at the room entrances. Please be careful not to track dirt or mud into the room.

When a school instrument needs repair, the director must be notified immediately so that arrangements can be made to an approved repair shop. Anyone assigned a school-owned instrument *must* have a completed and signed Instrument Loan Agreement on file with the directors. Please find it on the reverse side of the Personal Property Waiver in the back of this handbook.

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## **Behavior Consequences**

Responsibility to the group is essential to the East Cary Middle School Band program. An individual's behavior and performance have a major impact on the other members of the Band. Students are expected to exhibit their best behavior at all times. Occasionally, we have visitors in our classes and many people will see our concerts and festival performances. One incident of poor behavior can ruin the public's good impression of our band program and our school. Consequences for behavioral infractions will be handled on an individual basis and are based on a continuum ranging in severity. The consequence(s) will depend on the severity and frequency. Steps in the continuum may be skipped based on severity. The Behavioral Consequence Continuum is as follows:

**Verbal Warning**

**Temporary Placement in Time-Out**

**Conference with Student**

**Telephone Call Home**

**Parent Conference**

**Administrative Discipline Referral**

Horseplay of any kind in the band room or instrument storage room will not be tolerated. These rooms are filled with instruments and equipment, which can easily be damaged. Any such infraction will result in, at minimum, an immediate telephone call to parents.

## **Changing Instruments**

Some students will be allowed to change instruments, so that our bands can have full, well-balanced instrumentation. This is a perfect opportunity for students to learn to play a new instrument. Typically, woodwind players will switch to woodwinds and brass players will switch to brass. There are some exceptions to the rule, however. Students interested in switching instruments need to speak with the director for further information.

## **School-Owned Instruments**

Our school has a limited inventory of instruments, which include oboes, bassoons, bass clarinets, tenor and baritone saxophones, horns, euphoniums and tubas. These instruments are assigned at the discretion of the director. When a school instrument is used, a contract must be completed per Wake County policy. The student is responsible for any damage to the instrument or loss of the instrument. When a school instrument needs repair, the director must take it to a shop approved by the school system. The county will pay for all routine maintenance of the school owned instruments.

Anyone assigned a school owned instrument *must* have a completed and signed Instrument Loan Agreement on file with the directors. Please find it on the reverse side of the Personal Property Waiver in this handbook.

## **Take Your Instrument Home**

Students are expected to take their instruments home each evening for practice. The school's insurance does not cover the loss or damage to student property. Students who leave their instruments in the school overnight, weekends, and over holidays do so at their own risk. I strongly recommend that you add your child's instrument to your homeowner's or renter's insurance policy.

## **Bus Overcrowding**

Some busses are crowded due to the growing student population here at East Cary Middle School. Bus drivers may request that students leave larger instruments at school. If this occurs, be polite, follow their instructions, and see me the next day. These situations will be handled on an individual basis with the administration.

## **Class Participation Policy**

All students are expected to play each day in Band class. Class participation is a large portion of each student's quarter grade. Below are the "top four" leading excuses for not participating in class. Each excuse is followed by our policy on the subject.

**Braces.** Many students have braces. I realize that these are sometimes painful, especially if the orthodontist tightens them in the morning and you have band in the afternoon. I will work with you. Follow your doctor's instructions. Sometimes. Gargling with warm salt water will help ease the pain.

**"I forgot my instrument."** This will result in a deduction from your participation grade for each occurrence. Without an instrument, you cannot participate in class. The same consequence applies for not having any reeds or any other accessory, which renders your instrument inoperable.

**"My instrument is in the shop."** No instrument should go in for repair until I see it first. I may be able to repair it much quicker if it is minor. If your instrument is taken to the shop before I see it, you must bring a note from your parents, which includes the following:

1. What is wrong with the instrument?
2. Which shop is it in?
3. What is the estimated time needed for repair?

**"I don't feel good."** In general, if you are well enough to be at school then you should be well enough to play. I realize that this is not always the case; therefore, situations will be handled on an individual basis.

## **Purchasing New Instruments**

As a student's interest and commitment to music and Band grows, parents often seek to purchase a higher quality instrument. There are three basic types of instruments available.

**Beginner:** Used by students in beginning band. These instruments are designed with the young student in mind and will take a moderate amount of abuse. Generally, sound quality gives way to durability.

**Step-up:** Nicer than a beginner instrument, this type is built with the older student in mind. Step-up horns will have nicer features and will not endure as much abuse as a beginner model.

**Professional:** Used by serious middle and high school music students, college music majors and professional musicians. These instruments are of the highest quality and will not take any abuse. They produce the truest symphonic sounds and cost substantially more than beginner models. Parents who wish to purchase an instrument should contact me. I will be happy to suggest a brand and model that will suit your child's needs.

## **Mouthpieces**

All woodwind students are encouraged to purchase a step-up mouthpiece. These mouthpieces are designed to withstand the air supply provided by a growing student. They also cause a *noticeable* improvement in the quality of sound produced by the player and are an appealing option when compared to the purchase of a new instrument. A beginning instrument with a step-up mouthpiece will give young players the opportunity to produce a more mature tone. The brass mouthpieces listed are step-up sized mouthpieces and are the ones on which we start our brass students. If your child's instrument was supplied with any other size brass mouthpiece, return it to the dealer and exchange it for the listed size.

### **Step-Up Mouthpiece Examples**

**Clarinet** (Bb and Bass): Vandoren 5RV, Vandoren 5RV, Vandoren M15, Vandoren M30, Rovner ligature. Specify Bb or Bass Clarinet.

**Saxophones:** Alto/Tenor: Meyer, Selmer C Star S-80, Larry Teal, Rovner ligature. Bari: Yamaha 5C

**Trumpet:** Bach 3C

**Horn:** Farkas MDC

**Trombone and Euphonium:** Bach 6.5 AL or Schilke 51 (pronounced 'shill kee)

**Tuba:** Schilke 66

***-If you are studying with a private teacher, follow his/her instructions regarding reeds and mouthpieces.***

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**Percussion Equipment and Materials**

**7th and 8th Grade percussion students** are expected to purchase necessary books, mallets, sticks, and a mallet bag. A list of necessary sticks/mallets is given below. Percussion students will only be allowed to play the instruments with the correct mallets. With proper care and storage these mallets will last through high school. Percussion students should not depend on other students to provide them with these materials. As you can imagine, these items are small and easily lost or stolen. You are responsible for caring for them.

**Stick Control for the Snare Drummer by George Lawrence Stone, pub. Alfred**

**Mallet Bag:** Used to carry, protect and store mallets.

**Vic Firth SD-1 Snare Drum Sticks:** Used for snare drum and cymbals.

**Medium-Hard Rubber Mallets:** Used for xylophone

**Medium-Hard Yarn Mallets:** Used for xylophone, vibraphone, and suspended cymbal

**Lexan Clear Plastic Mallets:** Used for orchestra bells and xylophone

**Vic Firth Medium-Hard Timpani Mallets:** Used for Timpani

**Music Stores**

Following is a partial list of musical instrument retailers in our area. We strongly encourage you to call around to find the best price on a *quality* instrument along with the best *service*. Additional music retailers may be found on-line.

**BigNote Music:** [www.rentmyinstrument.com](http://www.rentmyinstrument.com) our Code is ECMS

**Marsh Woodwinds** 707 N. Person Street, Raleigh (839-1154) *Instrument sales and repairs*

**Music & Arts Center** Crossroads Plaza 426 Crossroads Blvd., Cary, (854-0024) *Instrument sales and repairs*

**Music-Go-Round** Crossroads Plaza 421 Crossroads Blvd., Cary (851-2252) *Used instruments*

***Flying Squirrel- Raleigh NC***

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### **Private Lessons**

A good private teacher is perhaps the most valuable investment a parent can make for their child. Band directors are trained in the instruction of every band and orchestral instrument, but their knowledge cannot compare to that of a professional player who makes a living teaching and performing on one instrument.

Private teachers are excellent for the student who wishes to grow faster or for the average student who is having isolated problems. Such requires the knowledge and skill of a specialist. I urge all Band students to assist their pursuit of excellence through private instruction.

### **Class Materials**

Most music stores will have all required band books and supplies. I suggest calling music dealers to make sure your needed material is in stock before leaving your home to make a purchase.

#### **6th Grade Band**

Essential Elements Book 1

Clarinet and Saxophone Reeds (four in good shape): Mitchell Lurie or Vandoren (strength 2 or 2.5)

Pencil

#### **7th Grade Band**

Essential Elements Book 2

Clarinet and Saxophone Reeds (four in good shape): Mitchell Lurie (3 or 3.5), or Vandoren (3)

Pencil

#### **8th Grade Band**

Essential Technique Book 3

Clarinet and Saxophone Reeds (four in good shape): Mitchell Lurie (3 to 4) or Vandoren (3 to 3.5)

Pencil

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### **Also Required for All Bands**

Valve oil and tuning slide grease for brass players

Slide **cream** and water sprayer for trombone players

Cleaning snake & mouthpiece brush for all brass players

Sticks/Mallets for percussionists

Four good reeds (not chipped) with reed guard for saxophone and clarinet players

### **Pencil (not a pen) on the stand at all times**

Every instrument case must have an identification nametag on it at all times as well as a cleaning kit inside.

## **Facilities and Equipment**

All band classes at East Cary Middle School meet in the band room. **The Band office** is for the use of teachers. Students are not to enter the office without the permission.

**The instrument storage room and instrument lockers** are used to house student instruments during the school day. Students are to keep them neat and clean at all times.

All instrument cases are to be latched with all latches. *The only items to be stored in the instrument storage room are instruments with completed name tag.* Students are required to take their instruments home each evening for practice. **The Percussion instruments** are located in the back of the band room and in Steel Drum Room. These instruments are very expensive and are to be played by percussion students only. If you are not in the Steel Drum Band **you should not be in this room.**

## **Rehearsals and Performances**

Band students at East Cary Middle School have a variety of opportunities to perform for the public and at state-sponsored events. Attendance at all performances is mandatory and is a part of each student's quarter grade.

After-school rehearsals will be called periodically and before performances. This will allow split classes the opportunity to rehearse together. It will also give students more individualized attention in many cases. It is imperative that we have 100% attendance at these limited rehearsals.

**Winter Concert:** This will likely be the first performance for all bands this year. All bands will perform in the gym or auditorium, depending on the number of band students in the program.



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**All-County Band:** Each year around October/November, middle school students from Wake County schools have the opportunity to audition for a spot in the Wake County All-County Band. Auditions are usually held at Carnage Middle School. The clinic, which consists of rehearsals and a concert, will take place all in two consecutive days, which are typically Thursday and Friday. The audition solo is the same solo for All-District Band auditions. 7th and 8th grade band students are ***urged*** to audition and should plan on purchasing the solo. Audition material is largely based on the same material used for All-District Band auditions, which can be found at [www.ncbandmasters.org/cdba](http://www.ncbandmasters.org/cdba)

**All-District Band:** 7th and 8th grade band students are ***urged*** to audition for All-District Band in January. Students who are selected will attend a two-day clinic/concert in February, much like that of All-County Band. Students need not qualify for All-County in order to qualify for All-District Band, but it is highly recommended that students audition for All-County first. Audition material can be found at [www.ncbandmasters.org/cdba](http://www.ncbandmasters.org/cdba)

**All-State Honors Band:** Students who make top seats in the All-District Band may audition for the North Carolina All-State Honors Band. Students who make this band will attend a three-day clinic at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The auditions are in March in Greensboro. The clinic is at UNCG in April. Students who qualify for this ensemble are North Carolina's very best musicians.

**Spring Concert:** All Bands will perform on the Spring Concert in the gym or auditorium. Attendance is required for all Band Members. All requirements are the same as the Winter Concert.

## **Performance Attire**

Students are ***required*** to wear a standard outfit when performing with the East Cary Middle School Bands. Students who come to the concert without the required attire will not be allowed to perform. Please see me in advance (at least two weeks prior to performance) if you need assistance in obtaining this attire.

### **Gentlemen**

White dress shirt, neck tie, black trousers, black dress shoes with black socks.

### **Ladies**

White blouse and black dress pants or black skirt. \*\*\*\*All skirts must be below the knee when sitting\*\*\*\*. Black dress shoes are also required.

***Absolutely no jeans or sneakers of any color will be allowed.***

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## **Grading Policy**

The grading policy for East Cary Middle School Bands have been designed to ensure that the grade clearly and accurately reflects the performance quality of each individual and further ensures that the band experience is fair and equitable to all who participate. Below is an explanation of the grading formula used for each quarter.

Each student's quarter average is based on two categories; tests/weekly practice charts (50%) and daily participation (50%).

**Tests/Practice Charts:** Students will be given both playing and written tests periodically on assigned music exercises and concepts. Music being rehearsed in class may be tested. Practice charts will be checked periodically for a grade. Students should be honest when reporting their times.

***Students must make up all test and practice records within 1 week of the date of the test or practice record.***

***If a student is uncomfortable playing (solo) for their test/quiz they can send me an mp3 file the same day as the test/quiz to [cbranam@wcpss.net](mailto:cbranam@wcpss.net). If a student does not take the test (via email) they will be deducted 10pts. each day it is not taken.***

**Participation/Performances: Participation in class is vital to overall success!**

Deductions will be made for failure to participate in class activities.

**Performances** are an integral part of every student's music education. An unexcused absence from any performance will result in a major deduction for this grade category (participation). The only excused absences from a performance are those, which are determined an excused absence from school as outlined by WCPSS policy 6000. Prior written notice (two weeks) to the director should be given for students that are tracked out and have planned a family vacation.

## **Curriculum Guide/Standards**

Parents and students will find a link below to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and National Standard for Music Education grades 6-9.

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/acre/standards/new-standards/arts/music/k-8.pdf>

## **How to Practice**

Daily practice time is essential for student success in band. All band students should spend a minimum of 30 minutes each day (5x weekly) in individual practice. Daily practice time is homework for band. The guidelines below will help to organize your practice time.

Remember, practice time is to be spent practicing, not watching the clock.

Practice in the same place each day. Be sure there are no distractions.

Begin with long tones. Concentrate on producing a pleasing sound. Think about your breathing. Produce a steady and controlled air stream. You should love your sound. It is yours and no one else's. No two musicians have the same tone. ***Always make sure that your tone is clear and beautiful.***

Spend time on scales. Play them slowly at first, then work for speed. ***The slower you practice, the faster you learn.***

Work from your method book each day. Try to stay several lines ahead of the class. Work for accuracy and be sure to play *everything* on the page.

Practice in front of a mirror to check your embouchure, hand position, and posture.

Practice your music. Work on the parts that you cannot play. Practice them slowly at first and then increase the speed. ***The slower you practice, the faster you learn.*** Work one measure at a time for difficult parts. Once you are able to play a measure five times without mistakes then you can increase the tempo. The same goes for the entire exercise.

Pay careful attention to details such as: correct notes and fingerings, rhythms, key signatures and accidentals, signs and symbols, dynamics and articulations.

End by playing something just for fun.

Swab woodwinds thoroughly, empty water from brasses and return instrument safely to case.

Log your practice time!

## **Jazz Band**

The Jazz Band is open by audition only and meets after school, one day per week for approximately one hour usually starting in October. Instrumentation will be based on standard big band instrumentation: trumpet, trombone, alto sax, tenor sax, baritone sax, and a rhythm section consisting of drum set, piano, bass, and guitar. Audition material is largely based on the same material used for All-District Band auditions, which can be found at [www.ncbandmasters.org/cdba](http://www.ncbandmasters.org/cdba)

## **Steel Drum Band**

Captain Dixie's Spud and Suds Band began in 2007 when East Cary was re-opened as a Middle School. The staff asked, "What can we do at East Cary Middle School that's musically different and can bring positive recognition to our school?" The answer was Steele drums and the group was formed under the direction of Mike Hopkins.

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The band quickly began receiving great honors and recognition throughout Wake County. 2011 marks the third year in a row the band was chosen to perform at Wake Education Partnership's Pieces of Gold Concert. In 2010 & 2012 Captian Dixie's received great praise when they performed with Appalachian State University's steel drum band. The Steele Drum Band has performed at Town of Cary Festivals, International Celebrations throughout Wake County, and at the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida.

The students are chosen for the group based on the work ethic they show every day in class. While music knowledge is helpful, it is not required. Each student finds the time to learn their parts on their own. Practice is held after school and on some weekends. Auditions will be held in the fall. We are fortunate that Mr. Hopkins has agreed to continue to help with this ensemble and we will be posting a schedule for rehearsals and future performances as soon as possible.

### **How Parents Can Help**

Regardless of musical background, a parent's support and encouragement will have a tremendous impact on a child's progress in band. To assist in the musical growth of your child, you can:

Support the goals, policies, and procedures of the director. Your child succeeds when the band director succeeds.

Require regular practice at home. Provide a daily time and place where your child can practice without distractions or interruptions.

Ask your child to play for you and encourage performance.

Teach your child to be punctual by helping him or her to be on time to performances and rehearsals.

Enthusiastically attend all band functions to show your support. Get involved! Join the **ECMS PTA and/or Band Boosters**.

Help keep your child's instrument in good repair.

Give strong consideration to providing private lessons for your child.

### **In Closing**

Young people need positive direction. I see band as an opportunity to shape young lives and to positively influence young people. I enjoy sharing my love of music and the life lessons that I learn through my journey as a band member and educator.

Students must understand that their actions will have a tremendous impact on their lives and the lives of others. The nature of that impact (positive or negative) is up to the individual.

Remind your child when the challenge becomes tough that teachers, just like parents, set high standards, because we care. Thank you for your support and best wishes for a safe, happy, successful school year.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. My office number is **(919) 466-4390**. My email address is [cbranam@wcpss.net](mailto:cbranam@wcpss.net). The East Cary Middle School Bands website is [www.eastcaryband.com](http://www.eastcaryband.com)

Sincerely,

Chris Branam, Band Director