



2023 - 2024

# Band Handbook

Matthew S. Brusseau, Director of Bands

*If better is possible,  
then good is not enough.*

Revised 6/2023



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*We, the members of the Davie County High School War Eagle Bands, will stand together, united as a family of musicians with discipline, integrity, and pride.*

*While holding ourselves responsible for building a legacy of excellence in music, we will strengthen our work ethic, learn life lessons, exceed the expectations of the past, and set the standard for the future.*

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War Eagle Band Students and Parents:

Welcome to one of the most exciting experiences in which you can be a part of...the BAND! Now, more than ever, we have information to justify why we participate in this demanding, yet rewarding, activity. Experts have concluded that the study of music helps with spatial awareness, test taking, and overall quality of life! Factor in social skills, emotional development, leadership training, group interaction, aesthetic perception, music-making, and the discipline of being in a band program, and I don't know why anyone would not want to be involved in a successful band program like ours. The ultimate goal is a lifelong understanding and appreciation for high-quality music and music-making!

*Everyone should read the information in this handbook*, even veteran students and parents. Some of the information has changed, so make sure that you are informed. For those new to the program, this is the “band bible,” which keeps us running smoothly and efficiently. Most questions can be answered by consulting *the handbook*, and policies will be adjusted from year to year as the need arises to clarify issues within the program. It is my hope that the information contained in this handbook will both *inform* and *inspire*! The advocacy article “How Parents Can Help” is designed to give guidance to parents; read it carefully to gain important insights. Students need to know we think that what they do is important. You will quickly find that the band is truly a **family** in and of itself.

This past year was full of successes by our students. In all areas of the program, we saw growth and indications that the program is only going to continue to prosper. As of this writing, we are looking ahead to some wonderful opportunities for the coming year! These include: the marching band traveling to Disney World, the continued focus on replacing old equipment with new, our annual Deweys Fundraiser, many performances, and so much more!

I have renewed my commitment to develop student leadership as well as our private lesson program. We have such tremendous potential in both areas. Many band directors advocate for students to take private lessons. We are fortunate to have many wonderful private teachers in our area. I highly recommend that each and every student take private lessons to help grow their skills on their instrument.

This handbook is designed to answer any questions you might have concerning our band program. Please read all of the information, and sign the form in the back of the book. I am honored to be your Band Director and am looking forward to a GREAT year!

Musically,

*Matthew S. Brusseau*

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### ***Why Music?***

- ***Music is a Science*** - It is exact, and it demands exact acoustics. A conductor's full score is a chart, a graph which indicates frequencies, intensities, volume changes, melody, and harmony all at once and with exact control of time.
- ***Music is Mathematics*** - It is rhythmically based on the subdivision of time into fractions, which must be done instantaneously, not worked out on paper.
- ***Music is Foreign Language*** - Most of the terms are in Italian, German, or French and the notation is certainly not English - but a highly developed kind of short-hand that uses symbols to represent ideas. The semantics of music is a most complete and universal language.
- ***Music is History*** - Music usually reflects the environment and times of its creation, often representing its country of origin.
- ***Music is Physical Education*** - It requires fantastic coordination of fingers, hands, arms, lips, cheek and facial muscles in addition to extraordinary control of the diaphragm, back, stomach, and chest muscles, which respond instantly to the sound the ear hears and the mind interprets.
- ***Music Develops Insight and Demands Research***
- ***Music is all of these things, but most of all, Music is Art*** - It allows the human being to take all of these dry, technically boring (but difficult) techniques and use them to create emotion. That is one thing science cannot duplicate: humanism, feeling emotion...call it what you want.

*This is why I teach music! Not because I expect you to be a professional musician....*

*But....so you will be HUMAN*

*so you will recognize beauty*

*so you will recognize beauty*

*so you will have something to cling to*

*so you will have more love, more compassion, more gentleness, more good:*

*In short....more LIFE!*

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## **BAND CURRICULUM IN BRIEF**

### **Wind Ensemble (Honors Level Class)**

The Wind Ensemble is the most advanced band class at Davie County High School, with membership granted by audition only. It is expected that participants are enrolled in the course for the entire year, that they are serious about music, and that they will practice as needed outside of class in order to perform successfully. Students enrolled in this course are encouraged to study privately throughout the year and audition for regional bands. The Wind Ensemble performs a wide variety of literature, from relatively simple standards to works for collegiate ensembles. The Wind Ensemble rehearses everyday for one period (block) and performs several concerts throughout the year including MPA.

### **Symphonic Band (Traditional or Honors Level Class)**

The Symphonic Band is the intermediate level band class at Davie County High School, with membership granted by director approval only. It is expected that participants are enrolled in the course for the entire year, that they are serious about music, and that they will practice outside of class in order to perform successfully. The Symphonic Band performs a wide variety of literature, from relatively simple standards to works for proficient high school groups. The Symphonic Band rehearses everyday for one period (block) and performs several concerts throughout the year including MPA.

### **Concert Band (Traditional or Honors Level Class)**

The Concert Band is open to all students who have successfully completed at least three years of middle school band. Students who do not meet this criterion should contact the band director to arrange an audition. It is expected that participants are enrolled in the course for the entire year, that they are serious about music, and that they will practice outside of class in order to perform successfully. The Concert Band meets everyday for one period (block) and performs several concerts throughout the year including MPA. Students may audition for Symphonic Band and Wind Ensemble in December of their freshman year.

*To earn honors credit in a band course, students are required to do the following:*

*Fall Semester: Learn the All District Solo and Scales and Audition for All District.*

*Spring Semester: Choose a small ensemble piece (solo, duet, trio, etc) and perform at Solo and Ensemble MPA.*

### **War Eagle Regiment (Extra-Curricular)**

The Marching Band is the heart and soul of Davie County High School Spirit. We work hard each week to promote War Eagle pride at Varsity Football games to ensure each game night is filled with energy and fun.

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### **Jazz Ensembles (Co-Curricular)**

The Davie County High School Jazz Ensembles are open by audition. These ensembles host the annual Jazz and Small Ensembles Concert in May, which is an evening of music and a dessert buffet, including wonderful desserts prepared by some of the finest bakers and chefs in Davie County.

### **Chamber Ensembles (Co-Curricular)**

At Davie County High School we offer the opportunity for students to create and perform in small ensembles such as, Saxophone Ensemble, Clarinet Choir, Brass Quintet, Brass Ensemble, and Percussion Ensemble. Many of those groups are student-led and perform at our district Solo and Ensemble Festival as well as our Year-End Band Banquet and Concert in May.

## **BAND EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **All-District and All-State Band**

Members of the band program are eligible to audition for the All-District Band. If students make the All-District Band and receive a high enough chair, they will be eligible to audition for the North Carolina All-State Band. All-District auditions take place in January and All-State auditions take place in February.

### **Private Lessons**

Private lessons on a musical instrument are the **BEST WAY TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE SKILLS!** The one-on-one approach allows the student to benefit from individual attention as opposed to a teacher monitoring a class of over sixty. Please contact the band director for assistance in the selection of a private teacher.

### **Summer Instruction**

There are many nationally known summer institutes for instrumental instruction. Some of the best are Brevard Music Center, Interlochen Arts Camp, Aspen Music Program, Sawanee, and Tanglewood. There are also North Carolina based University Summer Music Camps. These are located at Mars Hill, Lenoir Rhyne, Appalachian State, Western Carolina, and UNC-Greensboro.

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## HOW TO STAY CONNECTED

### Who to Contact

**Contact the band director (Mr. Brusseau)** about anything related to the Davie County High School Bands. **Please DO NOT call the Davie High School Main Office Staff** for information about band concerts, fundraisers, trips or other functions of the band unless it is truly an emergency. Band is one of the busiest activities at our school and with 150+ students involved, it is easy to overwhelm the office ladies with phone calls without intending to.

**THE MOST UP TO DATE INFORMATION IS OFTEN AVAILABLE IN THE WEEKLY BAND BLAST EMAILS AND THE BAND WEBSITE!**

### How to Stay Informed

**Email List / Phone Messages:** Being on the email list and having an up to date phone number registered with the school is the best way to stay informed. Unfortunately, not all kids can be trusted to bring paper information home. We must be able to contact parents at a moment's notice and this is the best way for it to happen. Please print (clearly) your email address on the signature page of this handbook or email Mr. Brusseau to be placed on the list.

**Band Website:** Information will be posted on the band website for all activities we participate in. Again, our website address is [www.daviehighbands.com](http://www.daviehighbands.com)

### Places to find Information

1. Check email from the band newsletter email list.
2. On our band website click on "Monthly Newsletter" under the home tab.
3. Email - [brusseau@davie.k12.nc.us](mailto:brusseau@davie.k12.nc.us)
4. Sign-Up for the PARENT Band Remind Text Messages
  - Send **@dchsbands1** to the number **81010**.

If you email me, I will work to be back in touch with you as soon as I can. Periodically, we will have meetings during my planning period or I am traveling to our middle schools to help out with their bands. As a result, I am much faster to reach by email. I receive email on my phone, computer, and iPad so I am able to respond more consistently.

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## REQUIRED MATERIALS FOR BAND STUDENTS

### Concert Band

- Approved Instrument in working condition.
- Black, Three Ring Binder with outside window (I suggest 1.5 Inch)
- Sheet Protectors (I suggest at least 50)
- Reeds for Clarinet and Saxophones
  - I recommend Vandoren (Blue Box) and D'Addario Signature. **These companies make the best quality reeds.**
  - These can be purchased at Separk Music (order form at the front of the band room or in store), Counterpoint Music, or Jackson's Music. You can also place an order with Mr. Brusseau (Paid at the time of the order).
- Fundamentals Book (Delivered to students in class)
- Tuners with metronomes are strongly suggested for all high school band students. You can purchase these from Separk Music, Counterpoint Music, or Music & Arts. If you have a smartphone, you can also download **Tonal Energy** (more COST EFFECTIVE).

### Symphonic Band

- Approved Instrument in working condition.
- Black, Three Ring Binder with outside window (I suggest 1.5 Inch)
- Sheet Protectors (I suggest at least 50)
- Reeds for Clarinet and Saxophones
  - I recommend Vandoren (Blue Box) and D'Addario Signature. **These companies make the best quality reeds.**
  - These can be purchased at Separk Music (order form at the front of the band room or in store), Counterpoint Music, or Jackson's Music. You can also place an order with Mr. Brusseau (Paid at the time of the order).
- Fundamentals Book (Delivered to students in class)
- Tuners with metronomes are strongly suggested for all high school band students. You can purchase these from Separk Music, Counterpoint Music, or Music & Arts. If you have a smartphone, you can download **Tonal Energy** (more COST EFFECTIVE).

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### Wind Ensemble

- Approved Instrument in working condition.
- Black, Three Ring Binder with outside window (I suggest 1.5 Inch)
- Sheet Protectors (I suggest at least 50)
- Reeds for Clarinet and Saxophones
  - I recommend Vandoren (Blue Box) and D'Addario Signature. **These companies make the best quality reeds.**
  - These can be purchased at Separk Music (order form at the front of the band room or in store), Counterpoint Music, or Jackson's Music. You can also place an order with Mr. Brusseau (Paid at the time of the order).
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## CONCERT ATTIRE

Students are expected to be dressed appropriately for all concerts. Any student that does not follow the required dress strictly will not be allowed to perform and will not receive credit for the performance. The appearance of the band is important to all of us.

### Gentlemen

- Concert Band and Symphonic Band: Half Tuxedo Package (Tux Shirt, Tux Pants, Bow Tie, and Cummerbund). Information will be provided during the first week of school.
- Wind Ensemble: Full Tuxedo Package (Tux Shirt, Tux Jacket, Tux Pants, Bow Tie, and Cummerbund). Information will be provided during the first week of school.
- All gentlemen must wear **tall black socks**. NO EXCEPTIONS.

### Ladies

- Concert Dress and Pearls (FOR ALL FEMALE MEMBERS) more details provided later.

### All

- Black Dress Shoes (ABSOLUTELY NO TENNIS SHOES), heels for ladies are to be an appropriate height of 3 inches or less.

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## BAND GRADING POLICY

It is my goal for every band member to earn an “A” in band. Grades will be based on the following criteria.

1. **PRACTICE (20%):** A daily minimum practice requirement has been set for each performing ensemble. *Wind Ensemble* - 150 minutes per week. *Concert & Symphonic Band* - 120 minutes per week. A daily practice goal has been set for each student of a mere 30 minutes a day on scales, and fundamentals. PERCUSSIONISTS - Some of you will play instruments that are impossible to take home daily (ex. Timpani, Marimba, etc.) so you may practice before or after school or during lunch or smart block, to meet the practice requirements. Music as well as instruments must be taken home daily. A check for instruments will be made each day by the director.
2. **REHEARSAL/CONCERT ETIQUETTE & MATERIALS (20%):** Following proper concert and rehearsal etiquette is extremely important. Students must show maximum effort to earn the best grade. Students must follow all band rules and procedures. Materials include: pencils, binder, fundamentals book, and your instrument. Students who do not have these materials will receive a lowered grade for that day.
3. **PERFORMANCE TESTS (19%):** Every nine week grading period you will be required to perform some or all of your major scales and your chromatic scales from memory for the band director. You may also be asked to play a passage from your ensemble music or solo as a performance test. You will be allowed to use music for these tests.
4. **CONCERTS / PERFORMANCES (41%):** Attending MPA Reatrea, activating with proper concert etiquette, and performances wearing correct performance attire is required. We will have one concert per grading period. If you do not attend a concert, you will not make higher than a 59 on your quarter report card.
5. **FINAL EXAM:** Please see the exam policy located in the Student Handbook. There is an exam that students will need to take if their grade or attendance require them to take the band teacher made exam.

All classwork should be submitted on or prior to the due date provided. Late work will receive a grade no higher than a 90. Late work will be accepted up until exactly 14 days after the due date and time.

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## DAILY REHEARSAL PROCEDURES

### CLASSROOM ENTRANCE PROCEDURES

- **Use of Travel Time:** Socialize and go to the bathroom on the way to class. Once you are in class you should have no need to leave unless it is an absolute emergency.
- **Entering the Classroom:** Enter quickly and quietly. Go directly to your assigned seat with your instrument and all the things you need for rehearsal. Do not place materials in your seat and then walk away. This is when accidents occur. Have your instrument and music in your possession at all times during transition.
- **Book Bags & Personal Belongings:** NO bags and/or belongings can be under or around your chair. Bags and other belongings should be placed in your locker (if room) or on the floor against the front wall. Please do not put them behind the director podium.
- **Materials Check:** Instruments, music, and pencils will be checked as part of your daily rehearsal etiquette grade. Any student that is not prepared for class will receive points deducted from their daily grade.
- **Start of Class:** When the director steps on the podium, all talking should cease.

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- **Full Rehearsal:** Rehearsal consists of fundamentals (tone, tuning, technique, rhythm, music theory, etc.) and rehearsal of concert pieces. This large ensemble part of the rehearsal involves 50-70 individuals working together to do the exact same things at the exact same times. Silence is required in rehearsal and there are no exceptions to this rule. Your attention and interest in what is happening in rehearsal will determine the success of our group day-to-day, at concerts, and at Music Performance Assessment (MPA).
- **Cell Phone Policy:** Absolutely NO cell phones will be allowed out during band class, UNLESS you are instructed to do so by Mr. Brusseau for an educational purpose. If percussionists do not play on a particular piece of music, they are to be working on homework for other classes, or helping the students who are playing.

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### CLASSROOM EXIT PROCEDURES

- **Clean-Up:** Pick up any material (paper, reed wrappers, trash, etc.) that is on the floor. Nothing can be left in your area except your chair and stand.
- **Placement of Chairs & Stands:** All chairs and stands should be placed back in the organized arcs where they were found (See the seating charts at the front of the room). If this cannot be done, we will put the chairs and stands up at the end of every class.
- **Organization of the Percussion Section:** All parts of the percussion section must be placed back in the proper places on the percussion peg board, in the percussion cabinet, and in the storage room.
- **Instruments:** All instruments have assigned locations; lockers or in the storage room. Any instrument left out will be placed in the director's office and will be given back to you along with a written assignment that is due the following class period.

### INSTRUMENTS & MUSIC STORAGE

- Binders are to be stored in your bags or in your lockers. You are responsible for keeping up with your binder.
- Several students may use the same school owned instruments throughout the day. Please do not leave your personal belongings (mouthpieces, reeds, etc.) in the case unless you want other people using your things.
- All instruments have a locker or storage area that they are assigned to. They are to be stored in these assigned areas when not in use. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
- Be careful when putting instruments in the lockers. Do not pull down or lean on the locker doors. Do not slam instrument cases down in lockers.
- You are not allowed to put locks on your lockers.
- If the instrument is not assigned to you or yours, **DO NOT PLAY/TOUCH IT!**

### CHAIR PLACEMENT

The director will place students in chairs at the beginning of EACH semester. Students will be moved around at the director's discretion throughout each semester. Chair placement is NOT based on seniority. Eerie part is vital and every performer plays a vital role in the ensemble. Remember, a band is NOT about the individual, it is about the GROUP!

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### CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

- A quiet rehearsal is an effective rehearsal. Keep the talking to a minimum.
- Play instruments only when you are asked and stop playing when you are asked.
- The only food or drink allowed in the band room is non-flavored water in a bottle.
- Only percussionists are allowed to play percussion instruments (this includes the keyboard at the front of the room).
- Keep your area and locker clean and tidy.
- Feet belong on the floor...not on classroom or auditorium furniture.
- Students are not allowed in the Director's Office, Practice Rooms, Music Library, and/or Uniform Storage Room without the director's permission.
- Gum/candy is NOT allowed in the band room.
- PER school rules, Cell phones are not allowed during class time. Phones are to be turned off and placed in your backpack.
- Doors in and out of the band room are to be CLOSED at all times. If you see a door open, close it.
- If you have time to COMPLAIN about the music, you have time to PRACTICE.
- Always build others up...never tear them down!

### CONSEQUENCES

- Level 1: Removal of points from daily grade
- Level 2: Parent contact
- Level 3: Office Referral

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### **DUTIES OF BAND MEMBERS**

- Be early to all rehearsals and performances.  
TO BE EARLY IS TO BE ON TIME - TO BE ON TIME IS TO BE LATE - TO BE LATE IS UNACCEPTABLE!
- Abide by the Daily Rehearsal Procedures diligently.
- Come to rehearsal with a POSITIVE ATTITUDE!
- There is no excess playing; only appropriate warm-up materials provided by the director for each instrument.
- Make a real effort to improve on a daily basis and establish a good practice routine for YOU and FOR THE BAND.
- Maintain a strong academic standing in all course work.
- Become responsible for and assume responsibility for your own actions. You are in a safe place, do not be afraid to admit when you are wrong.
- Have a proper respect for yourself, for those around you, and for those in authority.
- Read and play music with insight and have high musical expectations for you and for your program.
- BRING YOUR MOST DISCIPLINED SELF TO ALL BAND ACTIVITIES!

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### WHAT IS DISCIPLINE?

Discipline is how you take pride in quiet rehearsals.

Discipline is how you march to and into the stadium.

Discipline is being early, not just on time.

Discipline is how you enter the band room.

Discipline is how you come prepared to rehearsals.

Discipline is being a focused and musical player.

Discipline is understanding that there is a time to work and a time to play.

Discipline is taking pride in perfecting the little details.

Discipline is presenting yourself with dignity.

Discipline is choosing to be a person of good character.

Discipline is NOT yelling.

Discipline is NOT punishment.

Discipline leads to compliments.

Discipline leads to a tradition.

Discipline leads to sanity.

Discipline leads to togetherness.

Discipline defines who we are and what we are about.

**IF YOU HAVE DISCIPLINE, THERE IS NO NEED FOR CONSEQUENCES.**

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## OTHER ITEMS

### AUDITORIUM RULES (for EVERYONE)

- NO FOOD, CANDY, or DRINK allowed in the auditorium.
- Keep your feet off of the chairs.
- Students and parents are not allowed to use audio/lighting/video equipment unless they are properly trained and have been given permission by Mr. Brusseau.
- Do not leave trash/programs on the floor.
- When leaving the stage to go into the house, everyone MUST USE THE STAIRS. Make them worthy of the name!
- DO NOT touch any of the curtains!
- The stage must be swept after each use.

### BATHROOM POLICY

Go to the bathroom BEFORE class begins. You have THREE minutes after the bell rings to be in your seat with your class materials, ready to begin rehearsal. DO NOT ask to go to the bathroom during class unless it is an emergency. Only one student will be allowed to go to the bathroom at a time. See above for rules regarding cell phones in the hallways.

### BROKEN INSTRUMENT / FORGOTTEN INSTRUMENT POLICY

Every student is expected to be in class each day with an instrument in working condition. This is the most important part of being successful in a band. Not having an instrument will result in loss of daily materials and rehearsal etiquette grades. If your instrument breaks and it is necessary to take it to a repair shop, you must bring a note from home AND a note from the repair shop. If you take your instrument to be repaired KEEP your mouthpiece and music. There is always a possibility that an instrument with them and forget to bring the parent/repair shop notes, mouthpiece, and music will be given an alternate assignment.

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### **CELL PHONE POLICY (Taken from the 2023 - 2024 DCHS Student Handbook)**

Students should keep any electronic devices in a secure place during the school day to prevent loss or theft. Lost and/or stolen electronic items are rarely recovered. Students are not permitted to play loud music inside the building using a loudspeaker or other electronic device. For safety concerns, no student should wear earbuds or other musical headgear during class time or transitions. The only exceptions to this rule are testing accommodations and lunch.

Students are permitted to use their cell phones during class changes, before school, and during their specific lunch period. Students are not permitted to use their cell phone or any other electronic device during any class period unless directed by a teacher as part of instruction. During class time, students may not use their cell phone at all - even when in the hallways, bathrooms, etc. With the exception of lunch, if class is in session, no cell phone usage is allowed by a student anywhere on campus.

If a student is using his/her cell phone during a class period without teacher permission, the student's phone will be confiscated by a staff member and the following consequences will apply.

- 1st Offense - Teacher calls home and a parent must pick up the cell phone from the office after 3:25 PM.
- 2nd Offense - Teacher calls home. 1 day AID and a parent must pick up the cell phone from the office after 3:25 PM.
- 3rd Offense - Teacher calls home. 3 days AID and a parent must pick up the cell phone from the office after 3:25 PM.
- 4th Offense and Further - Other consequences as deemed appropriate by an administrator.

### **FUNDRAISING**

The Davie County High School Band Boosters do host fundraisers and fundraising events throughout the year. These events and fundraisers are to raise money to purchase various instruments, and band equipment. NO ONE likes to fundraise, but it is VITAL to the existence of our band program. We try to keep the number of fundraisers to ONE each semester AND our annual Dewey's Bakery Store. EVERY BAND STUDENT MUST have a parent/guardian, grandparent, family member, or family friend represent them by working ONE 2-3 hour shift at the Dewey's Bakery Store. Dewey's policy states that students are not allowed to work the cash register at the store. The Dewey's Store is open from November 11th through December 24th each year.

### **HOW TO RESERVE A PRACTICE ROOM**

We have three Wenger, Soundproof practice rooms. To reserve one of these rooms for a practice session, students must talk with Mr. Brusseau to sign up for a time slot. Practice room rules are posted and clear. Choosing not to follow these rules will result in the student not being allowed to use the practice rooms.

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### **PRACTICING AT SCHOOL**

We are fortunate to have practice rooms and other areas for students to use to practice. Students may come into the band room to practice during lunch, during Smart Block, and after school until 4:45 pm. You will only be allowed to use a practice room if you sign up with Mr. Brusseau.

### **SICKNESS AND PLAYING IN CLASS**

If students are in school, they are expected to participate in rehearsal. Students sometimes assume that they cannot play an instrument if they have a cold. Playing an instrument while slightly ill will not add to the symptoms or progress the cold in any way. A doctor's note is required to excuse a student from playing their instrument.

### **VANDALISM**

Do your part to keep our facility and equipment clean and in good working order. Encourage other students to do the same. Vandalism of school property is a serious infraction and will have extremely serious consequences. Some students may not consider writing on stands and chairs or drawing on walls as vandalism. It is school property, however. Please consider, as you contemplate any form of vandalism, I consider those immediate grounds for office referral and removal from the band program permanently. Our facility and equipment are not great, but they are in good condition. It should remain this way.

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