

Grundy Center High School Band

2025-2026

Welcome back to one of the finest bands in the state of Iowa!

INTRODUCTION:

Participation in the GCHS Bands is voluntary. However, since you are here I will assume that you are here to again be the best musicians that you can be. This means that you will have a number of new (and renewed) responsibilities. If you are the responsible students that you can be, this year will flow smoothly and we'll have a great deal of fun. This handbook will tell you all of the basic rules, procedures, etc. that you will need throughout the year. Some of the dates of performances are as yet TBA, so be patient and alert!

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Some of the materials you will use throughout the year are provided by the school, while others you will have to purchase for yourself.

- 1) ***Your instrument***, which you are responsible for maintaining in the best possible condition. If your instrument is in questionable shape, see me ASAP. West Music visits every week, when I can send it in for you but you will be without an instrument for a week or three. It is always best to send instruments in over breaks (spring break, Christmas, summer). School owned instruments are maintained for you but you will be responsible for any damage. The cleaner your instruments are, and the more they are taken care of, the better they will play.
- 2) ***Accessories***, such as reeds, sticks, oil, etc.. All of these are available through me but they're not free. All of these items are to be paid for at the office when you receive them. Also, please ask me for these things outside of class. Note: "during class" means any time you are in the band room for rehearsal.

Required Materials: Woodwinds – Instrument, **several** reeds, marching lyre, cork grease, and mouthpiece cap.

Required Materials: Brass – Instrument (all valves and all slides must work), mouthpiece (not stuck in the horn), marching lyre, valve or slide oil.

Required Materials: Percussion – Each percussionist must supply their own snare sticks and rubber and yarn mallets for keyboards. If you do not own any, I can sell you some (not expensive). Do not borrow from others as this results in them not having their own sticks/mallets.

- 3) *A pencil* – The more you write down, the *less* work you have to do when playing.
- 4) *Your music*, which I obviously will provide. *Every student* gets a copy of the music, regardless of whether or not you share a stand with another student. You will need to keep track of it and mark it (in pencil), and return it in good condition. If you lose your music, you will have to pay for it (as much as \$5-10 per part - so be careful!) Once the music is handed to you, it becomes your responsibility until after the performance(s) when it is turned back in.
- 5) *Your uniform(s)*, which will be specific depending upon which ensemble is performing at a given time. See below for additional uniform information. Students are required to pay a yearly uniform rental fee for concert and marching uniforms. In addition, any damage to the uniform will be paid by the student, up to and including cost of replacement. The uniform rental fee is due to the school (checks payable to GCHS Band or Infinite Campus) by the end of the first week of school.

GENERAL POLICIES:

- 1) **Attendance:** Attendance is required at all scheduled rehearsals, lessons, and performances. If you're not here, it hurts everyone. Remember, all of the other players are counting on you to play your part! Failure to meet attendance requirements can result in loss of letter, lowering of grades, or even disciplinary action in extreme cases. A missed concert without reasonable excuse will result in an "F" for the six-week session and likely no higher than a "C" trimester grade (and perhaps lower). Your concert is to be considered your exam for that trimester.

Excuses will only be accepted a minimum of **two weeks** prior to the scheduled performance. The only exceptions are in case of emergency. Please tell me **as soon as you discover the conflict** (i.e. don't wait until two weeks before!).

Examples (including but not limited to):

Acceptable Excuses: Death in the family, serious illness (personal or family requiring your presence)

Unacceptable Excuses: Not having a ride, having to work on the night of a performance (that's why you get a calendar along with this handbook), forgetting, attending other events by your own choice.

- 2) **Rehearsal Discipline:** Your discipline in band (at any time - including times when we are not performing) can be included in your grade as well. This includes being prepared for rehearsals with all proper materials. My discipline system is one of mutual respect. I will have the utmost respect for you and your time. You will do the same for myself and others.

- 3) **Lessons:** Some of your band grade comes from your performance at lessons. Lessons will be scheduled during study time where possible, during class, before and after school where necessary.

It is well-known that the better you are at something, the more you will get out of it and the more you will enjoy it. Lessons give me a chance to hear you all individually, and learn what each of you needs to become better musicians. Band without lessons can be likened to playing any sport without running drills.

- 4) **Uniforms:** Dress for performances will vary by the type of ensemble:

~~*Marching Band: Marching band uniform including coat, pants, shako (hat), plume, and sash (all provided). You will need to provide (purchase or otherwise) SOLID black shoes, black socks, and white gloves. I have gloves here and can order shoes if necessary. Gloves are \$2.00 per pair, and I can order shoes for around \$25-\$30.00. You do not need to go buy new black shoes, but I will require purchase if shoes do not meet appearance guidelines. Old ones, borrowed ones even painted black will be OK – as long as they are SOLID black with no other markings. The slightest color difference will be noticeable on the field. We have been using black pants, shoes and polos in the last few years.~~

~~*Pep Band: The only requirement for pep band is that you wear a maroon or white shirt or sweatshirt of some sort. I am not requiring band shirts as I have done in previous years. I will not require them as long as you dress to support our school. Dress code is still part of grading, so wear your maroon and white! (or band shirts)~~

Concert Band: Concert band dress will be all black. Black dress pants, black socks, black DRESS shoes, black button down dress shirt (long sleeve).

Jazz Ensemble: Dress shirts (long sleeve) and tie for the guys, dress pants, and nice shoes. Ladies, slacks or skirt and blouse or sweater. No jeans, full formal dresses, or shorts.

*varies by year

- 5) **Grading and Letters/Awards:**

Grades are based on, in order:

- 1) Attendance and performance at rehearsals (approx. 50%)
- 2) Attendance and professional attitude at performances, meaning 3 home concerts, large group, some jazz concerts, etc. – see required events (approx 30-35%)
- 3) Attendance and performance at lessons (approx 15-20%)
- 4) Extra projects (can include book reports, concert reviews, All-State, honor bands, solos, etc.) (Extra credit)

5) Your attitude and discipline at all times, including care of equipment
There can be makeups for rehearsals and lessons. Concerts and other performances are not able to be made up (unless you get the entire ensemble and audience to show up with you).

Letters are based on, in order:

- 1) Participation/attendance in band each trimester
- 2) Attendance at pep and marching performances
- 3) "Extras" such as jazz band, honor bands, solo/ensemble festival, All-State, etc.
(NOTE: large group contest is NOT an "extra" - it is required)
- 4) Professional attitude at all times.

In other words, grades are primarily for in-school work, or curricular work. Letters are for out-of-school, or extra-curricular work. Thus, you may get an "A" every trimester, but this does not ensure a letter. Likewise, you may earn a letter even if your grade isn't the greatest. Band is one of very few classes that are *both curricular and extra-curricular*.

Total Points Needed to Letter: usually 50

Participation in band.....	10 points / trimester (30/year)
Attendance at all marching/pep performances.....	15 points maximum
Participation in Jazz Band.....	10 points total
Honor bands.....	3 points each
All-State Band.....	10 points
Solo/Ensemble Festival.....	3 points per entry*
Professional attitude at all times.....	5-?? points, director's discretion!
Band officer.....	10 points
Other.....	??

*Entries that obtain a "II" or higher rating qualify.

- 6) ***Practice Time:*** Everyone is busy. I realize that many students will not have time to practice one half-hour each night after school. You are required to come to your scheduled rehearsals/lessons with assigned parts *prepared to the best of your ability*. I do not expect perfection but I do expect your best. This time allotment will differ with every student, as do ability levels.
- 7) ***Food in the band room:*** There will be days when I allow food (some days after concerts, the day after the "T" at contest, etc.), but mostly...no. Water only!
- 8) ***Schedule for marching and pep band performances:*** For home football games, the band is to report to the band room (dressed and ready to go) by 6:40 PM. This means that if you need to change at school, you need to be here earlier than that.

Kickoff is at 7:00 PM, and we play the national anthem and school song at approximately 6:55.

For home basketball games that we play, the band is to report to the band room by 5:45 PM, dressed in Spartan wear (not uniforms). We will play the national anthem in the stands on the southeast corner of the gym at approximately 6:10. Once pregame is completed, the band is dismissed.

Pep rallies are required band performances.

9) ***Schedule for home concerts:*** All home concerts begin at 7:00 PM in the gym unless you are otherwise notified. Traditionally, the middle school bands will perform first. This means that the HS band should be in the band room warming up until approximately 7:20 – 7:30 PM, when they will go to the performance area to set up during the intermission. If this schedule changes, you will be notified in advance.

10) ***Band Calendar:*** You are provided with our performance dates the first week of school with all known events on it for the entire school year. The reason this is given to you so far in advance is so that you can make sure that you are not scheduled to work or be elsewhere during band performances. I will remind you, but it ultimately is your responsibility to be at required performances.

→ note on #10: I make ***extreme effort*** to avoid conflicts with other scheduled events, even some ***possible*** future events like state athletic dates. If there is a conflict, it means someone did not look at the calendar (or did so but ignored band) and scheduled something on top of a band performance, even after I planned around every other event. I cannot tolerate the assumption that a band performance must be the event to change when conflicts arise after I make such an advance effort. I cannot excuse students for events that do not appear on the official school activities calendar and/or haven't received prior approval and clearance from both myself and the school administration/AD. Band is a graded class and concert performances are treated as a final exam for that class. Graded classes take precedence over **any** extracurricular activity.

I always respect (and encourage) other events and I expect the same respect.

BAND ACTIVITIES:

There are many performance opportunities throughout the year. Those that are required are marked with an asterisk (*). Others are optional, but recommended! **Additions may be made to these requirements throughout the year.**

I - LARGE GROUP ACTIVITIES: (see calendar for dates)

- All Home Concerts* (concert and some jazz band)
- IHSMA Large Group Festival*

- Home Football Games* as assigned
 - Home Basketball Games* as assigned
 - Homecoming Parade*
 - Pep Assemblies* ← these are required
- State Tournament BB or FB Home Games* (depending!)

II - SMALL GROUP/INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

- All-State Auditions
- Solo/Small Ensemble Festival
- Honor Festivals:
 - NCIBA Honor Band(s)
 - NICL Honor Band
 - Other Honor Bands TBA

all dates TBA (see calendar)

In any activity, the director reserves the right to remove any student whom he feels is not prepared and may adversely affect the performance.

FUND RAISING:

Each year, the Band and Choir present a fundraiser for additional \$\$\$. This is to help pay for trips and other things for the music department's use. We need everyone's help for this. Those who sell more will earn more.

BAND OFFICERS:

We will have one or a few band officers who are to be considered the ones "in the know" for things like setup, organization and procedures. Listen to them. They probably are telling you what I told them to tell you.

BAND EQUIPMENT:

All equipment is to be treated with the utmost care. If you have no reason to touch it - DON'T. Equipment=\$\$, so don't take a chance on replacing something you may damage by messing around! It is important to maintain our equipment in the best possible condition.

Instrument Care Guidelines Grundy Center Bands

The purpose of this section is to give parents and students some much-needed information concerning their investment in a musical instrument. Just like in any investment, it is my goal (as well as yours) that you get the most for your money. By following the guidelines included here, not only will your child's instrument function properly (ensuring better quality performance, and therefore more enjoyment), but it will also save you money in the long run.

What do parents need to do?

All that is needed is to take some simple steps, such as following a schedule for instrument maintenance, and help the students remember to properly care for their instrument.

Schedule for maintenance:

Each student should be cleaning his or her instrument on a regular basis. After each time it is played, instruments tend to accumulate water, oil, grease, food (yuk), etc. See below for specific cleaning/lubricating instructions for each instrument. In addition, students need to ensure that instruments are sufficiently oiled and/or greased so that they function properly (see below). Clean instruments play and sound better.

Every musical instrument should be checked for problems a minimum of once per year. A technician other than myself should do this. West Music services our instruments and their sales rep. visits GC once per week. Summer is the best time for this, followed by Christmas, Thanksgiving, or Spring breaks; because the student will not miss class this way. The check-up is free if you bought the instrument at West, and they will call before doing any major repairs needed. The annual "check-up" will prevent 90% of the problems caused by normal wear during the year. It will also eliminate students' missing rehearsals because the instrument is in the shop, except in case of emergency.

During the check-ups, the repair technicians will (with your approval):

BRASS INSTRUMENTS: Clean / chemical flush, remove any dents that impede performance (some dents are only cosmetic problems, and they won't fix those unless you want them to), re-oil and grease tuning slides, and clean the body of the instrument. Normal cost: AROUND \$75, unless additional repairs are needed, or repairs are major dents, etc. (depends upon what's needed)

WOODWINDS: Check mechanics and make sure keys, springs work properly, check pads and replace those that are worn or damaged, make any necessary adjustments.

Normal cost: varies by instrument, but they will call to confirm work to be done before completing it.

OVERHAULS: This is necessary if an instrument has not been maintained properly or has been played for several years without repair. Essentially technicians will "rebuild" the instrument, resetting and cleaning, replacing every last detail. Normal cost: UP TO \$400!!! In some cases, they will even recommend not fixing the instrument, but suggest replacing it at an even higher cost. They will never do an overhaul without confirmation from the owner. The obvious choice here is to maintain the instrument at \$60 per year, rather than \$400 or even more after a few years of neglect.

LIST OF ITEMS STUDENTS SHOULD OWN:

Flute: Cleaning rod (comes w/instrument), cleaning cloth (small - 1/2 handkerchief or the like, polishing cloth

Clarinet: Mouthpiece cap (comes w/instrument), Reed holder, extra reeds, cork grease, swab (cloth or silk NOT chamois)

Saxophone: Mouthpiece cap (comes w/instrument), reed holder, extra reeds, cork grease, swab (any), neck strap

Trumpet: Valve oil (Al Cass), slide grease (any brand), polishing cloth, mouthpiece brush, cleaning "snake"

Trombone: Slide oil or cream, polishing cloth, slide grease, mouthpiece brush, cleaning "snake"

Most of these items I will have to order as they are requested, since I do not have the money in the budget to keep them in inventory. However, you may either order them through me or simply buy them at most music stores (whenever you are up in Waterloo/Cedar Falls, stop by West Music). I do keep reeds and valve/slide oil, slide grease, and cork grease on hand normally.

Hygiene: It is important that students keep the instrument clean on the INSIDE, as well. Food and gum will corrode the inside of brass instruments, and will ruin the pads on woodwind instruments. I have seen \$150 repair bills that were attributed simply to chewing gum while playing. If students are not able to brush their teeth before playing, they should at least rinse their mouth out thoroughly with water (HINT: chewing gum actually helps remove food from teeth after eating, but one must then rinse the sugar, etc. from the gum out of their mouth before playing). A reminder that there is no food candy, pop, or gum allowed in the band room.

Cases: Treatment of the case (and the horn while in it) is another issue. The case was built to hold the horn and mouthpiece, reed, and other small items mentioned above. It is not designed to hold music. Cramming the folder or music into the case can bend the posts on woodwinds, and even bend brass tubing (to say nothing of what it does to the

music!) We have cabinets at school for all folders; the folders should not go in or near the instrument cases.

How to get these items: West Music is our supplier for all of the above repairs and supplies. They have a new program where parents may call their 800 number (800-459-BAND), and order items to be delivered the next time the sales representative visits the school (usually once per week). I live close to the Cedar Falls store, and will gladly pick up / drop off on my way home if they are needed more urgently. I encourage parents to call me at school or at home (319) 269-6925 before taking in instruments for repairs, because sometimes I may be able to save you money by helping with repairs.

If there are any questions, parents or students should feel free to ask me (during lessons is perfect for this) or call (school or home). My goal is the same as yours; to promote the musical well being of our students while saving time and money in costly repairs! Thank you for your time.

Cleaning your instrument:

Brass: Oil the valves or slide regularly. Grease all *tuning* slides (not the same as a trombone slide) so that they all move relatively easily. If they do not move, the horn needs to be sent in. If you grease them regularly, you will not ever have to send it in for the \$80 (or more!) fee to remove them. This is the easiest way to save money. You will still need to send it in once a year for cleaning (chemical flush).

Woodwinds: Swab out the instrument with the swab (do you have one?) after each use. I will give you time at the end of rehearsals for this. Don't just run for the door! Keep all corks and connections (like the neck of the saxophone, flute joints, and clarinet tenon corks) greased so that assembly is easy. If you do not grease these, the corks will tear and they will cost a minimum of \$25 each to replace. USE YOUR REED CAP (clarinets, saxophones). So many times I see reeds broken by catching them on things when people are not playing, in addition to broken mouthpieces, which cost at the very least around \$50.00.

Percussion: I'll show you how to take care of them - just don't break them!

Andrew VanHooreweghe
GC Bands

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