

# **Ashland Middle School**

## **Band Handbook 2026-2027**



**Steffanie Skiles, Director**

## **Welcome!**

Welcome to the Ashland Middle School Band program! The AMS Band program has an established tradition of excellence and we are glad you have chosen to be a part of it!

Your child's participation in our band program is beneficial in many ways. Band students are engaged daily in a highly creative performing art that stimulates growth in areas of the human brain that no other discipline can. This growth effortlessly transfers into your student's academic life. In addition, our band students will develop traits such as teamwork, responsibility, dedication, self-discipline, social skills, confidence, leadership, and dependability. Membership in our band program will give all a sense of accomplishment, pride, and respect as the students develop musical and personal skills that will enrich their lives.

More importantly...IT'S FUN! We are in for an awesome school year- let's fire it up!

**Steffanie Skiles**, director

AMS Band Director/Paul Blazer HS Assistant Band Director

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## **Social Media**

**Facebook:** Like/follow us at "Ashland Middle School Band"

**8th Graders/Parents in the Paul Blazer Marching Band:** See Mr. Doss for details on how to connect with the HS Band on the Ashland App, and like/follow the "Paul G. Blazer High School Band" page on Facebook!

## **Financial Obligations**

**No student will be denied being in band due to financial hardship.** Accommodations CAN and WILL be made to ensure that everyone wanting to be a part of the band has the opportunity.  
WE WILL HELP!

## **Attendance**

**In order to have and maintain a high-quality band program, each member's attendance is essential.**

Absences from activities held outside the school day will be excused at the discretion of the director. **Appointments, birthday parties, family gatherings, etc. are not excuses for absence.** Absences due to personal illness requiring medical attention, death in the family, or other extenuating circumstances (approved by the director) may be considered for excused status. Any absence due to illness WILL require a doctor's note.

## **Grading Guidelines**

Since band is an academic music class with some extra-curricular activities attached, the band student's grade will reflect achievement in both curricular and extra-curricular areas. A student's final grade will be based on a point-based system.

- **Participation (10 points per day)**
  - This is a weekly participation grade based on the student being: prepared for class (instrument, music, pencil) and being respectful in their behavior.
- **After-school rehearsals (250 points per rehearsal)** (if needed, 7th/8th Band only)
  - These rehearsals will be as minimal as possible, but may be used in the spring semester as the band prepares for Concert Band Assessment.
  - These rehearsals will be announced to students weeks in advance.
  - Attendance is required!
- **Public performances and events (500 points per concert/event)**
  - **Concert attendance is non-negotiable; attendance is required by all students.**
  - All performances are scheduled months in advance. Students will be notified well in advance of when they are taking place.
  - Missing a public performance has the potential for the student to not only receive a zero for the performance, but may also be dismissed from the band program.
  - Excused absences will be granted at the director's discretion.
- **Playing/Written Tests, Virtual Assignments, Practice Logs (points vary per assignment)**
  - Each student is expected to practice at home on a regular basis. In-class instruction alone is not adequate for a developing musician. To grade this type of homework, scheduled or "pop" playing quizzes will be given to assess knowledge of written and playing musical knowledge.

## **Concert Attire**

**Each student is expected and required to wear the AMS Band polo with khaki pants.**

- *Gentlemen:* Polos should be worn tucked in and with a belt.
- **No dresses, skirts, jeans, leggings/jeggings, jogging pants, hats, flip flops, sandals, etc. are allowed.**

## **Important Events**

- August 27, 2026: Instrument Rental Night - Online (For any interested in purchasing their own personal instrument, method book, and any other band-related equipment)
- October 6, 2026: Century Resources Fundraiser starts (All)
- October TBA 2026: AMS Powderpuff Games (TBD & 8th Grade, During School)
- October 23, 2026: Football MS Band Night @ AMS (8th Grade)
- November TBA: Veterans Day Concert (7th/8th Band, During School)
- November TBA, 2026: All-District Band Auditions @ Rowan County HS (Optional 7th/8th Grade)
- Early December TBA: Winter Concert @ AMS - 6:30pm call time, 7:00pm start, Gym (All)
- January 11-12, 2027: All-District Band Weekend @ Paramount Arts Center (Select 7th/8th Grade)
- February 27, 2027: Solo & Ensemble Festival @ Boyd County HS (Optional to All)
- April 13 OR 14 2027 (We only play one day, I will let you know which date that is as soon as I am able.): Concert Band Assessment @ Morehead State University (7th/8th Grade)
- Late April/Early May TBA 2027: Spring Concert @ AMS - 6:30pm call time, 7:00pm start, Gym (All)

## **Instrument Night**

Our band has set up a “rent-to-own” program through Sweetwater Band & Orchestra (Fort Wayne, IN) and Music & Arts (Huntington, WV), whose rental program is done via a self-paced virtual platform. Sweetwater’s platform is [here](#), while Music & Arts’ can be found [here](#). I will send a separate flier with info/instructions on this process. Sweetwater is known for INCREDIBLE customer service, top caliber instrument quality, and competitive pricing; I have personally used them for over a decade. Music & Arts is geographically closer and is also a great company to use.

**FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR: This year’s instrument night is being done VIRTUALLY at your convenience anytime on 08/27/26.**

The many benefits of renting an instrument include: renting to own with no finance charge; having a new, quality instrument; insurance with maintenance/repair and the ability to return the instrument should your child decide not to participate in band.

**You can also purchase your band method book and any other equipment you need through the virtual program link!**

**Beginning Band Students:** At the beginning weeks of the school year, Ms. Skiles will demonstrate all available instrument options to you. Afterwards, Ms. Skiles and Mr. Doss will begin “testing” [having you try out] your top three instrument choices. After everyone has been tested, Ms. Skiles will assign and tell you which instrument you will be playing. The instrument testing process is a combination of fitting a student with an instrument they originally liked/chose AND what the directors believe sets you up the most for your success! If you have questions, please let us know!

### ***Individually-Owned Instruments***

***If you are considering purchasing an instrument for your child, please contact me so I can help you make an informed purchase.*** Beware of instruments with flashy color as these instruments are almost always of poor quality! While much cheaper in cost, these instruments are generally made in much cheaper (and likewise poorer) conditions, creating subpar equipment that is very difficult to play on and often break. Sometimes if it is too good to be true, it is.

### ***District-Owned Instruments***

AMS has a **limited number** of **school owned instruments** available for those who **NEED** them.

**If you CAN afford an instrument from another source, please do not abuse this option.**

***Please do not “use a school instrument to see if they like it first,” as this takes a school instrument away from someone who needs to use it.***

Sweetwater rentals average \$5 or \$20 (trial month), then \$20 or \$60/month depending on the instrument. Music & Arts starts at \$10 for the first two months of renting, then slightly increases depending on your instrument- they are comparable to Sweetwater. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to me! I am flexible and will work with you on this!

## ***Handbook Signature Page***

I have read the 2026-2027 Ashland Middle School Band Handbook and the requirements for being a band member. I realize it takes full cooperation and dedication (100% from me) to help our band meet its potential. I also realize that my failure to follow policies and directions could result in disciplinary action, which could lead to dismissal from the band program. I have received a copy of the band handbook for the current school year, and am aware that further copies and information exists on the AMS Band website.

As a member of the Ashland Middle School Band, I acknowledge the following as responsibilities I must fulfill if I wish to remain a member. I will:

- Understand that band is a full-year commitment
- Be punctual and prepared for each rehearsal and performance
- Practice with a purpose
- Demonstrate my best on playing assignments and additional written work
- Attend all concerts, clinic, rehearsals, and other events as required for my grade level
- Treat my peers and teachers with respect, and maintain appropriate conduct
- Maintain my grades for eligibility and self-achievement
- Have a high standard for improvement in class and on my own

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Student Signature

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Date

Parent/Guardian, please read and sign below.

I have read the Ashland Middle School Band Handbook and am willing to support it and my child. I also understand all policies and procedures set forth by the Ashland Middle School Band Program, as outlined in this handbook.

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Parent Signature

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Date

### **Polo Size**

----- Size

----- I already own an AMS Band Polo

### **Instrument Intention (please check)**

\_\_\_\_ I will need to use a school instrument

\_\_\_\_ I already own an instrument/intend to buy during the instrument night

## AMS BAND - EQUIPMENT USAGE PERMISSION - FORM

The purpose of this form is for parental/guardian permission allowing the use of AMS Band Equipment (described below) by their respective band student.

- ♪ For students whose instrument will be a school-owned (AMS) instrument, the signing of this form will allow that instrument to be checked out to the student for the current school year.
- ♪ For students whose primary instrument will be through Sweetwater via their rent-to-own plan or personally-owned instrument, it is not necessary that a school-owned instrument be checked out on a regular basis. However, the signing of this form will allow use of a secondary or temporary instrument should the primary instrument need to be sent off for repair or is for any other reason unattainable. This would also serve as permission for the student to use a temporary school-owned instrument should the primary instrument be left at home by accident.

**Please sign below to give your child permission to check out any of our resources. By signing this agreement, you acknowledge that your child may use/check out band equipment which belongs to Ashland Middle School. While in possession of the student, you will accept responsibility for any damage which may occur to the band equipment. If repair is needed, you will be responsible for the cost of the repair. If the band equipment is lost, stolen, or for any other reason not returned, you are responsible for the full replacement cost of the equipment.**

*(Please see the school instrument section of the band handbook for more information.)*

**Failure to complete/turn in this form will prohibit the student from using any Ashland Middle School instruments/equipment.**

**Student Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade (circle)**    6       7       8

**Parent /Guardian Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature**\_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_