



2023-2024

Welcome to a new school year and a chance to explore music in a unique new setting! This year is shaping up to be a great experience for musicians of any skill level, and I am determined to make it fun and engaging for everyone. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or needs.

This handbook has been assembled to explain to students and parents the expectations of this class, and to outline some of the material we will cover this year. Please review the handbook, discuss the information it contains, and ask questions if any arise. Teams will be our communication gateway this year; it will be used in conjunction with Moodle to conduct lessons and collect assignments. Powerschool and the Music Tech Website will also be used to share content, so please take time to get acquainted with these resources and the tools they bring to the music tech program.

****Teams:** <https://teams.microsoft.com> ******

****Moodle:** <https://moodle.helenaschools.org> ******

****Powerschool:** <https://hsd.powerschool.com/public> ******

****Music Tech Website:** <https://cleary.xyz/musictech> ******

1. Classroom Boundaries

Mr. Cleary's Expectations

- Students will treat all members of their class with respect – Exploring music thoughtfully means taking risks, so show each other support in all classroom activities. Refrain from derogatory language and actions at all times.
- Students will arrive to class on time – To make the most of our lessons, it is expected that you be in the physical or virtual classroom on time. Please also set up your materials quickly and carefully each class period.
- Students will take responsibility for personal materials – Bring everything you need to class each day and care for school owned materials as if they were your own.
- Students will participate in classroom activities – This class has no concert performance component, but everyone is expected to participate in classroom projects and presentations. Class members should get involved, ask questions, and follow instructions every day.

Student Expectations

- Each of you undoubtedly has ideas about what will make the classroom experience productive and enjoyable. We will take time in class to discuss *your* expectations of *me*.

2. Consequences

When expectations are met

1. You will earn classroom privileges
2. You will receive the respect of your peers
3. You will learn to enjoy music in new and different ways

When expectations are not met

1. Parents or guardians will be called
2. Detention will be assigned
3. A referral will be made to the assistant principal

3. Materials

Each student is expected to bring the following materials to class each day.

- Pencils with erasers
- Middle School Music Curricular Textbook Supplement (Red Book)
- Spiral notebook or a three ring binder containing loose-leaf paper
- ChromeBook or district approved personal computer
- Other materials as needed to complete assignments associated with specific units of study

4. Course Outline

The following units of study are planned throughout the year; details about assignments, additional materials, and timelines will be added to the Teams and Moodle classrooms as the year progresses.

- Unit One* – Music Theory
- Unit Two* – Piano
- Unit Three* – Guitar
- Unit Four* – Percussion
- Unit Five* – Songwriting
- Unit Six* – Audio Production
- Unit Seven* – Video Production
- Unit Eight* – Music in Our Lives

5. Grading

Although change can be frightening, I overhauled my grading system two years in accordance with a philosophical realignment throughout CR Anderson Middle School. The general consensus from students is that this has been a good change, so this year will see a continuation of those practices.

For your context, I used Ken O'Connor's *A Repair Kit for Grading*, particularly the premise that grades should only communicate student achievement, as a guide for changing grading practices. With Mr. O'Connor's central premise in mind, I will only grade work in which students demonstrate knowledge or skills.

Skill practice, classroom participation, and effort are still critical to success in any music class, so they will continue to be a part of our daily learning activities. They will simply not factor into a student's grade. What follows is the basic structure I will follow during the school year, but I thank you for patience as we explore new territory.

Classes

Skill Check

- Observation of skills will form the primary evaluative tool when we engage with instrumental skills.
- I will assign between two and eight skills checks each quarter, all of which will be built around "I Can" statement standards that are outlined in the Music Supplement. (That is the Red Book issued to every student.)
- Each skill check will include a rubric defining how students can demonstrate their mastery of the standard.
- When grades are published, they are intended to communicate student achievement as of that moment. Students are expected to use skill check feedback to guide their practice and build their skills.
- Within each quarter, students can correct skill checks by scheduling time to share their progress.

Quizzes

- Some skills are tested rather than observed. A rubric will define expectations and corrections will be permitted.

Writing

- National and district content standards call for students to write about music, so writing assessments will sometimes be administered. A rubric will define expectations, and corrections will be permitted.

Missed Classes

- I plan to record at least the start of our classes using the methods learned and tools developed in our 2020-2021 school year. These recordings will be stored in each class Team.
- When a student misses a class, they are expected to watch the recording and participate in class activities.
- Graded assignments from a missed class period will need to be completed. Students may schedule time outside of class to learn skills or content and demonstrate their mastery.