

**2018-2019**  
**Baker Middle School**  
**Band Handbook**



**Baker Middle School**

**1215 Benning Drive**

**Columbus, GA 31903**

**Phone: (706) 683-8721**

**Mrs. Horn, Principal; Mr. Coffey, Assistant Principal**

**Mr. Claiborne, Band Director**

## Introduction

Welcome to the Baker Middle School Band program. Congratulations for embarking upon a journey that I hope will continue at least through your middle and high school years. As a former Muscogee County band member myself, I can tell you that you follow a rich musical tradition in Muscogee County that myself and other Band Directors are working every day to restore. This is not a decision anyone should make without serious consideration of the time, money, and commitment involved, or without the knowledge and full backing of their parents. This handbook is intended to inform you just how much work it will take, and what will be expected of you to be a part of what we do in the Band room.

Middle school Band will be the first organized group experience many students have, while others gain that experience through sports and cheerleading. It is important that Band members begin learning the responsibilities of taking care of expensive and delicate equipment, as well as the accountability of keeping commitments to other people who are affected by their behavior and attendance, as well as their commitment to becoming quality musicians.

## Communication

It is difficult to stay in regular phone contact with every parent. The best way to stay up-to-date on assignments, practice schedules, events, or anything else regarding the Band program is to e-mail me. Students are expected to have all materials for class daily. Students must get beyond finding excuses and take on the attitude of “making it happen” for us to be successful as a group.

For parents that would like to get in contact with me, I can be reached at (706) 683-8721, my e-mail is [claiborne.anthony.c@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:claiborne.anthony.c@muscogee.k12.ga.us).

## Financial Commitment

It is important for everyone to realize that **musical instruments cost money**. So far, there are no “band fees” at most high schools. Playing an instrument should not be viewed as a “class”, but as the beginning of a life-long learning process (or at least as the discovery that you do *not* want to take on that life-long process). Students will not be required to buy, rent, or lease instruments to be a part of the band program. There are school owned instruments for students to use. Smaller, less expensive costs along the way such as cork grease, sticks, mallets, valve oil, reeds, method books, minor repairs, etc.

## Equipment/Uniform Checkout

Students will be allowed to check out school-owned instruments or uniforms will need to sign a form of commitment that they are responsible for their safe return. Damage to school property will be the responsibility of the student/parents checking out the instrument or uniform. Holds may be placed on report cards, transfer paperwork, etc., until the matter is satisfied.

## Instrument Selection

To make a long story short, “everybody can’t play the drums.” I understand the attraction, but a Band program must have a balanced instrumentation, and the physical features and learning style of each student will play a large part in determining which instrument he or she is most likely to be successful playing. Based on my previous experiences, it is becoming increasingly problematic that not only are percussion students not learning their notes on the staff; they are not learning how to read rhythms as well as beginners on other instruments, either.

Students will be taught to read music and rhythms before playing percussion instruments. Only students who are registered for a band class will be allowed to play percussion. In addition, those students on the percussion instruments may be required to purchase necessary equipment.

It is my belief that starting percussionists on wind instruments first will make them much better percussionists later. This is a life-long learning process, and one year out of so many yet to come will be a very useful investment. Students not willing to take that time to learn to read music successfully first may not have the commitment needed or the right sense of priorities to be successful in band. This will likely be the first step in young students learning how to be a part of an organization where they think of the needs of the group as highly as their own individual ones.

## Classroom Discipline

Class rules and procedures will be explained and discussed with each class during the first session we meet. These are not suggestions. They are requirements. Any student that can not comply is not only preventing themselves from learning, but is taking attention away from students who truly *want* to learn and look forward to Band class as a treat during a day otherwise filled with course work. This is an age and an activity where students should begin exploring new freedoms while not abusing them, lest they be taken away.

Food and drink of any kind (gum included) will not be permitted to be out in the Band room. Not only does food cause the typical problems – carpet mess, bugs, etc. – it is very damaging and problematic for wind instruments to be played after eating/drinking.

The Band room is filled with lots of expensive, easily broken equipment, some of which belongs to me personally. **ANYONE RUNNING, HORSEPLAYING, PUSHING, JUMPING, OR THROWING IN THE BANDROOM WILL BE GIVEN AN AUTOMATIC OFFICE REFERRAL.** There is **NEVER** a good reason (including a fire alarm) to **RUN** in the Band room. **PERIOD.**

Attendance is very important. Band requires a lot of new information to learn, as well as physical mastery of an instrument. It is already very difficult to teach this when Connections classes do not meet every day, and nearly impossible when students miss the class time that *is* available.

## Grading Policy

Grades in Band are not just “given”. There will be in-class assignments, occasional homework, playing tests, written tests, notebook checks, etc. Playing tests are always announced at least 1 week in advance. I am very clear, thorough, and specific about what will be on each playing test. The test is re-announced every class period until the day-of. Students are told to ask me questions, study with a friend, and dig through the book to prepare. Saying “I don’t understand” on the day when I call on you to play is grounds for a low grade. These tests are meant to test music *reading* ability, therefore students will usually be selected randomly by the Band Director from a given range of exercises in the book.

Each student is encouraged to have a band notebook. This needs to be a three-ring binder into which assignments can be secured, and in which notes can be taken from the whiteboard. Plastic sheet protectors would be useful for sheet music, but they are not required. I will try to make sure all handouts have holes pre-punched in them for the purposes of placing in the notebook.

### **ALL STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE A PENCIL WITH THEM EACH AND EVERY DAY.**

Band class/rehearsal is a time to “put it all together” – work on balance, blend, uniformity of style, phrasing, dynamic levels (volume). Very little, if any, time should be spent telling students how to count a measure, how to finger a note, etc. This is a matter for *individual* practice time. Both are necessary for a successful program. Many times, there will be a week between consecutive class periods. **HOME PRACTICE IS A MUST** for students to become proficient at their instruments.

### **Grades will be determined as follows:**

Nine Weeks Test/Performances & Rehearsals (Concert Band)

Quizzes/Playing Tests

Daily Participation Grade (DO NOW)

homework/notebook checks

## Performances

Performing band members will be determined by behavior and playing ability. Students who participate in performances will be required to be at after-school rehearsals. Rehearsal and performance participation will be factored into their classroom grade. Rehearsals are currently planned from 4:30-6:00PM (once we start). Participation in another activity (especially one that meets every day, such as cheerleading, basketball, or track) is not a satisfactory reason to be absent. Absences from rehearsal should be discussed ahead of time with the director, and should be supported by a valid excuse in writing or a parent phone call. Students who miss practice may not be allowed on stage to perform.

## Commitment Form

As a member of the Band, I understand and agree to the following,  
with the full backing of my parent or legal guardian:  
(Students please initial each line.)

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read, I understand, and I agree to abide by the policies of the Band Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will be responsible for obtaining an instrument once assigned by the Band Director. It will be my duty to properly maintain and care for it, and keep it in good repair.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will be required to practice at home between class sessions on the material we cover in class, at least 20 minutes three times a week.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am required to have my instrument, any accessories (mouthpiece, ligature, reeds, valve oil, cork grease, sticks, mallets, books, notebook), and **A PENCIL every time** we meet for class.

\_\_\_\_\_ I must provide a written excuse for any class or rehearsal tardies or absence. Failure to do so will impact my grade.

\_\_\_\_\_ Acceptable behavior is part of my grade, and I will be expected to follow all class rules.

\_\_\_\_\_ If I am provided with a school-owned instrument or uniform, I will be required to return it in its original condition, or fees will be assessed, and my grades and student records may be held until I rectify any discrepancies.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name(s) (Please Print) : \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes I will be able to attend Parent Night on Monday, August 11th, 2014 in the band room at 6p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_ No I will not be able to attend Parent Night