

Welcome to the 2010 - 2011 West Valley Middle School Band! There is a long-standing tradition of excellence in our West Valley band program, and each of you needs to know that **YOU** are an important part of that tradition, regardless of which grade you are in or which instrument you are playing. At the end of the year, you will be able to look back and realize not only how much skill you have gained as a player, but how much fun you have had doing it!

### **Our Success Formula**

Whether you're on a sports team, in the band, or simply working with a group of people to accomplish a common goal, here are three steps that we need to accomplish **daily** in order to achieve success:

1. Give 100% of your best focus and effort in rehearsal
2. Take pride in your individual progress, as well as the group's progress
3. Keep your thoughts and words about yourself (and others) positive

At the end of the year, we will be able to look back on our performances and see how each of these three steps have made a difference in our band's success.

### **Class Expectations**

#### ***1. Enter class professionally***

- come prepared with instrument/sticks, music, folder, and pencil every day
- NO FOOD, POP/SPORTS DRINKS, OR GUM in class (water bottles are ok)
- **quickly** and **quietly** get your instrument out and sit in your assigned seat
- check the marker board to see what songs we'll be playing, and get them ready

#### ***2. Play and stop playing on cue***

- stop playing as soon as Ms. Ley gives you a cut off
- **DO NOT TALK AFTER A CUT OFF!** Listen to instructions following the cut off

#### ***3. No unnecessary talking***

- there will be times when you will be allowed to talk with others, so please wait until then to chat
- quick suggestions/helping fellow players in your section is ok

#### ***4. Encourage each other!***

- if someone improves or does something well, politely let them know

#### ***5. Leave class professionally***

- put instruments and music away, LOCK your locker!!
- percussionists clean up their area, cover instruments, put things away, etc.
- all items picked up (pencils, etc.) and trash thrown away (old reeds, etc.)
- return to your seat for announcements and dismissal

### **Discipline Policy**

Each band student will be given a monthly calendar to write down their daily rehearsal points (**these points are 40% of each term's grade!**). The back side of the calendar lists how points can be lost in rehearsals. For example, playing your instrument after a cut off will result in -2 points, forgetting to bring your instrument or music to school is -4 points, etc.

Each student has the opportunity to earn 5 points a day (25 points a week) for following the class expectations. And **NO**, there will not be any extra credit!! Once your points are gone, they are gone.

If a student loses all 5 of their daily points in one day for failing to follow the class expectations, the following disciplinary actions will result:

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense: phone call and email home to parents from Ms. Ley
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense: phone call and email home to parents from Ms. Ley, and student will be assigned lunch detention
- 3<sup>rd</sup> offense: phone call and email home to parents from Ms. Ley, and student will be sent to the office with a referral
- 4<sup>th</sup> offense: student will be sent to the office with a referral, and a meeting will be scheduled with the student, parents, principal, Ms. Ley, and the counselor to determine the student's future in band

### **Grading Policy**

Daily Rehearsal Points      40% of term grade  
Recorded by students on their calendars and turned in at the end of each week

Performances      30% of term grade  
***All performances are required!***  
Students must notify Ms. Ley ***in writing*** with a parent note at least **two weeks** before a performance if they cannot attend. A written assignment will be given to make up for the performance, and it will be due before the day of the performance. Emergency absences from performances will be negotiated between Ms. Ley and the principal to determine if a make up assignment shall be given.

Weekly Playing Tests      20% of term grade  
Tests will be played each week individually. You must be able to demonstrate musical proficiency (correct pitches, rhythms, tone, etc.) and playing technique (posture, hand position, stick grip, etc.) to show that improvement and practicing are taking place at home.

### ***Practicing at home is required, not optional!***

If you play a bigger instrument, plan which days of the week you can get a ride home with your instrument to practice, or come in early before school (or stay after school) to practice.

Written Assignments  
and Quizzes

10% of term grade  
We will be having a few written assignments and  
quizzes each month to improve our music reading skills.

### Grading Scale

<b>A+</b>	100 - 99%	<b>B+</b>	89 - 87%	<b>C+</b>	79 - 77%	<b>D+</b>	69 - 67%
<b>A</b>	98 - 93%	<b>B</b>	86 - 83%	<b>C</b>	76 - 73%	<b>D</b>	66 - 63%
<b>A-</b>	92 - 90%	<b>B-</b>	82 - 80%	<b>C-</b>	72 - 70%	<b>D-</b>	62 - 60%

Anything below a 60% will be an F

### Concert Dress

We wear black West Valley Middle School band shirts, black pants, black socks, and black shoes to our concerts. Band shirts can be purchased here at the middle school in the office. A letter will be coming home with your student soon if your student needs a shirt. The letter will have details for you about shirt sizes, cost, and who you can contact in case your family needs financial help with purchasing a shirt.

Please wear nice black pants or jeans (with no holes, non-faded) for our concerts. Black sweat pants, pajama pants, or nylon sports pants are **not** acceptable. Please wear all-black shoes and socks to the concert. Tennis shoes are ok, as long as they look nice and are all black (not black with a white stripes on the sides, stripes along the bottom, non-black shoe laces, etc).

Ladies may wear a long black skirt if they like, instead of pants. The skirts must be long enough to be past the knees when standing, so that they will be the appropriate length when sitting and playing an instrument. Wearing either black or neutral color nylons (no fishnet or other patterns) will be appropriate for concerts. Absolutely **NO** high heels will be worn to our concerts for safety reasons! Please wear black shoes that are either flat, or with a wide, square heel.

### *Remember to . . . . .*

- \* Make sure that you have the right clothes ready for the first concert. Don't wait until the night before to try and find black pants, black shoes, etc!
- \* Parents may call or email Ms. Ley (972-5730, Leym@wvmsd208.org) with any questions or concerns regarding concert dress
- \* If a student shows up to a performance inappropriately dressed, then they will not receive full credit for the performance

### Use of WVMS Instruments

All students who will be using WVMS instruments (percussionists, low brass and low reed players, french horn players, etc.) must fill out a WVMS Instrument Agreement Form. Students will not be allowed to use WVMS instruments or take them home until the form is completed and turned in.

## **Use of WVMS Instrument Lockers**

WVMS band students will be assigned an instrument locker and issued a combination lock. *These locks never leave the band room!* Missing or broken locks must be replaced and will be charged to the student for \$10. Only WVMS locks are allowed to be placed on the instrument lockers. It is each student's responsibility to keep their instrument/stick bag in the locker and locked. **DO NOT** give your combination to your friends! *WVMS will not be responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen instruments.*

## **Required Materials/Equipment**

Each student must have their own band book, labeled with their name on the inside cover.

**Name of Book:** Essential Elements 2000 Book 1 (yellow cover)



The following is a list of equipment needed for each instrument. Some suggested brands and sizes of mouthpiece are also given. Many times you can improve your sound/technique by "upgrading" to a better mouthpieces, stronger reeds, different sticks, etc.

### **WOODWINDS**

Swab  
Mouthpiece brush  
Ligature (Luyben or Bonade for upgrade)  
Reed guards  
Mouthpiece  
(clarinet upgrade= Vandoren B46)  
(sax upgrade = Rousseau 4R hard rubber)  
Reeds (strength 2 or 2.5 upgrade)

**\*Reed players must have 3 - 5 working reeds with them at all times!**

### **BRASS**

Mouthpiece brush  
cleaning snake/cloth  
valve/slide oil  
straight mute  
Mouthpiece  
(trumpet upgrade Bach 3C)  
(trombone upgrade  
Bach 6 1/2 AL)

**\*All brass players must have Valve/slide oil with them at all times!**

### **PERCUSSION**

2 sets of drumsticks  
(5A and 2B)  
Fur timpani mallets  
Yarn mallets  
Hard plastic mallets  
("cannonball" style)  
tuning key  
stick bag

**\*Percussionists must have all sticks with them at all times!**

## **How To Get The Most Out of Your Practicing**

Practicing can be fun and frustrating at the same time. We know that we have to do it in order to get better, yet many times we can feel like a car stuck in neutral as we play stuff over and over and over . . . . . here's some tips to keep moving forward!

1. Always keep a great sound (everyone messes up, but it's easier to listen to mistakes when they sound good!)
2. Practice slow enough that mistakes don't happen, and then gradually increase the tempo (rather than try it fast, mess up, get frustrated and quit)
3. Use full breaths and good stick control at all times (this helps support your sound and create good playing habits)
4. Set goals (decide what you want to improve on before you start practicing,

- rather than sit down and just start playing "whatever." If you're working on something, like scales, set a goal to improve tonguing, speed, accuracy, etc.)
5. Practice the stuff you can't play, not just the same stuff that you can play.
  6. Be positive and patient with yourself (Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither was your playing ability. You sound better now than when you first started, because you've spent time practicing . . . . just keep after it and improve on little things every day)

### **TAKE PRIVATE LESSONS!**

Find someone in town who plays your instrument well, and have them help you get to their level. Plus, they'll give you new stuff to practice all the time, so you won't get bored! There is a list of private lesson teachers for each instrument posted in the band room. See Ms. Ley if you need help finding a private lesson teacher!

### **West Valley Parents Are Our Secret**

Many times community members will ask us what our secret is to a successful band, and we always answer, "It's our parents!" Parents, there is no way that the WVMS band can be successful without you. There's simply too much going on for one band teacher to accomplish, and I appreciate the time, talent, and resources that you volunteer to the band each year. Here's a brief list of areas that we will be in need of some parent help this year:

1. Volunteers at each concert to help video tape the performance, move equipment, supervise students, etc.
2. Volunteers to help transport students to CWU for the regional solo/ensemble festival in February.
4. Volunteers to help chaperone the 6th grade band to the YVMEA Middle School Band Festival in April.

## **WVMS BAND 2010 - 2011 PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE**

October 14 (Thursday)	Fall Concert (6 <sup>th</sup> grade band only)
December 16 (Thursday)	Holiday Concert (5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> grade bands)
February 5 (Saturday)	Solo/Ensemble Competition @ CWU * only for 6 <sup>th</sup> graders who would like to participate
March 8 (Tuesday)	Winter Concert (5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> grade bands)
April 13 (Wednesday)	YVMEA Middle School Band Festival (6 <sup>th</sup> grade only)
May 14 (Saturday)	YVMEA Beginning Band Festival (5 <sup>th</sup> grade only)
June 8 (Wednesday)	Spring Concert (5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> grade bands)

### **Any Questions?**

As we move through the school year, many band students and parents will have questions regarding their instrument cleaning/upgrading, concert dress issues, grades/playing tests, band travel/chaperone information, etc.

Also, check out our WVMS band webpage for all the latest updates and information! Simply go to the WVMS website at [www.wvmsd208.org/ms/](http://www.wvmsd208.org/ms/) and click on "staff" (left side of the page). Scroll down to the bottom of the staff page until you find "Maegan Ley - classroom webpage." Just click the link, and you're there!

Please feel free to call, email, or stop by and see Ms. Ley with any questions or concerns that you may have. Parents are ***always*** welcome to come sit in on our rehearsals, ride along with us on trips, and be involved in our band's continued growth and success.

Best to you,

Maegan Ley  
Director of Bands, WVMS  
1500 South 75<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Yakima, WA 98908  
509-972-5730  
Leym@wvmsd208.org

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We have read through the 2010 - 2011 WVMS Band Handbook and agree to follow the class expectations, performance requirements, grading policies, and concert dress policies, as stated in the handbook.

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Student Signature

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Date

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Email address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone #

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Cell Phone #