

# Welcome to Castle Bands!

Congratulations on your decision to learn an instrument and be a part of the Castle North Middle School Band! As a part of the nationally-renowned Castle Band Program, our middle school students are a part of a long tradition of excellence in the performing arts. Our program's success is built upon a cooperative effort involving the student, teacher, and parents. It is with that in mind that we publish this handbook of information in order to build a foundation for an enjoyable and rewarding experience in our school band program.

Please read and discuss this information as a family. Familiarize yourselves with the academic and behavioral expectations and performance responsibilities that membership in these performing groups requires. Feel free to contact Mr. Miller or Mr. Wantland with any questions or concerns that you may have.

We are looking forward to a great school year!

Castle Band Faculty	Expectations/Attendance.....	2
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Castle Band Website: This information and more can be found at [castlebands.org](http://castlebands.org)

## Expectations

Band at Castle North Middle School is defined as a Co-Curricular Class under the WCSC Policy Manual. This means that band is not an activity that students participate in, but rather a class whose curriculum relies on credit that is earned during lessons both during the school day AND after.

Members of a performance ensemble have a responsibility to one another that is unique in the school setting. Every student in our program is important and the success of our ensembles is dependent upon each and every member's contribution. In a math class, the best student in class is not affected by the student who fails to prepare for a test while in band, every student suffers at the hand of the student who fails to prepare for the performance.

Music performance is not a passive endeavor. It is an activity that requires its participants to be both physically and mentally engaged throughout every rehearsal and performance. Students should be ready to be engaged in class from bell to bell, even during those times when they might not be active participants in class.

We consider band to be a year long course. As such, we assume that students who enroll are committing to participation in the entire school year. The directors encourage communication about any issues that may arise that would jeopardize the student's ability in fulfilling this commitment. Schedule changes will be considered in the first five days of each marking period. In the case that a schedule change is necessary, please contact your child's counselor for a drop form which the student, parent, and director will need to sign before the change is made.

## Attendance

As previously stated, our success as a band relies on the engagement and contribution of every member. As such, there is no path to success that includes students being absent from rehearsals and performances.

Students earn credit for their participation in class. Failure to participate for any reason (tardy, no instrument, no music, class disruption, etc.) will mean a reduction in the participation grade. Excused absences from school will not impact a student's participation grade in band class.

In addition to the classroom experience, participation in group rehearsals and performances is an essential part of the student's education. Academic credit toward the student's grade is earned through this participation. Therefore, participation in all scheduled rehearsals and performances is required. Absences will be excused for personal illness or a death in the family. Written explanation from the parent or guardian is required upon the student's return. If no explanation is provided it will be assumed that the student skipped the concert and a grade of zero will be assigned. **Absences for any other reason must be requested in writing on the "Music Event Absence Form" at least three weeks prior to the event. APPROVAL OF THE REQUEST WILL STILL BE AT THE DISCRETION of the director and will generally only be considered for "once-in-a-lifetime" experiences. An unexcused absence will result in loss of academic credit for that event.**

We request that you place band events on your family calendar now so that conflicts may be avoided later as well as compare them with any extra-curricular, faith-based, or other activity calendars you may have.

## CNMS Bands Absence Request Form

*This form must be submitted to Mr. Miller a **minimum** of three weeks prior to the scheduled activity. In the event that the absence is the result of a student's personal illness or a death in the family, this form must be submitted within two days of the student's return to school*

**Failure to meet required deadlines for absence request may result in an automatic unexcused absence**

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*I am requesting permission for my child to be excused from the activity listed below:*

Event: \_\_\_\_\_ On Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please state the reason you are requesting your student be excused from this commitment below. Be as specific as possible.

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**Approval of the request will be at the discretion of the director and will generally only be considered for "once-in-a-lifetime" experiences.** Mr. Miller will appreciate as much advance notice as possible. An unexcused absence will result in loss of academic credit for that event.

Parent  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### FOR DIRECTOR USE ONLY

- Request for absence granted - alternate assignment required to earn full credit  
 Request for absence granted - alternate assignment required to earn partial credit  
 Request for absence denied

Date Received (by director): \_\_\_\_\_ Performance group: \_\_\_\_\_

# Concert Attire

As a band we aim to give a unified musical performance. An effective way to communicate this is through our attire. When we dress the same we are unified before we ever play a note! In addition, our goal is for the audience to be able to focus on the musical experience alone without visual distraction. The student is responsible for providing all parts of the concert uniform. This dress code should allow for the student not only to be themselves and comfortable, but also to match each other.

The Castle North Middle School band students wear a black Castle North Band Polo for all of their performances. We ask that students wear this with black pants, shoes, socks, and belt. We will hand out order forms for the polos during the first nine weeks of school to order the polos. The rest of the attire is at your discretion for what you get and when.

***All concert attire must fall within the WCSC dress code requirements.***

The Following clothing items are NEVER appropriate:

- Yoga pants
- Leggings
- Athletic shoes
- Sandals

In general, follow the school dress code and do not wear anything that may be a distraction from the performance.

## Private Lesson Info

Private music lessons are a part of a comprehensive performing arts program. They are a fantastic way to help your child achieve their goals and increase the likelihood of an enjoyable and fulfilling experience with music. Private lessons can help the struggling student become a confident musician, and they can turn the promising music student into an outstanding young musician. In order to understand how private music lessons can benefit your child, let's take a look at what you can expect.

During a private lesson, a skilled musician shares his or her knowledge and expertise with a student who plays the same instrument. Because lessons are one-on-one, the teacher tailors instruction to your child's unique and specific strengths and weaknesses. During the weekly lesson, the private teacher will assist the student, introduce new skills and concepts and assign exercises for practice during the week. Although the material is taught during the lesson, your child is responsible for mastering the skills and exercises at home through daily practice. When the student does his or her part at home, the private teacher can build upon that foundation at the next lesson. Therefore, in order to get your money's worth, it's important that your child understands that a little daily practice is part of the agreement.

When looking for a private teacher for your child, make sure that you consider experience and expertise. In the past, we have some of our most advanced high school students offer very cost effective lessons to our 6th grade students. Most students, however, will benefit from an experienced teacher with a proven record of positive student growth. Be cautious of lessons with a family member or an older band student. While they are likely a wonderful student and capable performer, they likely do not possess the pedagogical knowledge necessary to nurture a young student's development. Also be wary of the teacher who claims expertise on every instrument. The phrase "Jack of all trades, master of none" applies to private lessons and, if you are going to spend money, you deserve to get detailed and specific instruction from a master teacher. As you are looking for a private teacher also be aware of personalities and teaching styles. With the right fit, the relationship between private teacher and student quickly becomes a very special part of a child's musical upbringing.

Most middle school students will benefit from a 30 minute lesson once per week. You can expect to pay around \$15-\$30 per lesson (although some very highly qualified teachers may charge more). Should you decide that lessons are right for your child, Please contact your director for qualified teachers in our area. We are happy to help!

# Private Teachers

## Flute

Leanne Hampton	UE Professor	501-590-4549	<a href="mailto:lh255@evansville.edu">lh255@evansville.edu</a>
Jill Dean	NES Music Teacher		<a href="mailto:jdean@warrick.k12.in.us">jdean@warrick.k12.in.us</a>
Kevin Dong	H&H	812-499-7656	<a href="mailto:ydongflute@gmail.com">ydongflute@gmail.com</a>

## Oboe/Bassoon

Dr. Elizabeth Robertson (oboe spec.)	UE	812-488-1004	<a href="mailto:er33@evansville.edu">er33@evansville.edu</a>
Dr. Ed Lacy (bassoon and sax spec.)	UE	812-488-2227	<a href="mailto:el2@evansville.edu">el2@evansville.edu</a>
Dr. Mary Stuckemeyer (bassoon)		480-381-1609	<a href="mailto:marystuckemeyer@me.com">marystuckemeyer@me.com</a>
Erin Thomas (oboe)	Director, Henderson N MS		<a href="mailto:ethomas017@gmail.com">ethomas017@gmail.com</a>

## Clarinet

James Goodhue		812-631-2664	<a href="mailto:jtg2664@gmail.com">jtg2664@gmail.com</a>
Laura Kierspel		812-490-3832	<a href="mailto:lkierspel@gmail.com">lkierspel@gmail.com</a>
Amy Patterson		812-477-2038	<a href="mailto:klpamp@gmail.com">klpamp@gmail.com</a>

## Saxophones

James Goodhue		812-631-2664	<a href="mailto:jtg2664@gmail.com">jtg2664@gmail.com</a>
Jonathan Hogan		812-205-5701	<a href="http://www.hogansmusic.com">www.hogansmusic.com</a>
Laura Kierspel		812-490-3832	<a href="mailto:lkierspel@gmail.com">lkierspel@gmail.com</a>

## Trumpet

Tom Dean	Retired Castle Director	812-598-4722	<a href="mailto:tdeanband@me.com">tdeanband@me.com</a>
Cory King	Band Director, Tecumseh		<a href="mailto:cking@warrick.k12.in.us">cking@warrick.k12.in.us</a>
Dr. Tim Zifer	UE	812-760-6457	<a href="mailto:tz3@evansville.edu">tz3@evansville.edu</a>
Dave Jarrett	H&H	812-459-9630	<a href="mailto:ddjaret@hotmail.com">ddjaret@hotmail.com</a>

## Horn

Art Adye II	Retired Director		<a href="mailto:aradye1957@hotmail.com">aradye1957@hotmail.com</a>
Faril Bunner	EVSC Director		<a href="mailto:fabunner@gmail.com">fabunner@gmail.com</a>
David Wantland	CNMS Assistant		<a href="mailto:davidmwantland@gmail.com">davidmwantland@gmail.com</a>

## Low Brass

Dr. Ken Steinsultz	UE	217-840-3873	<a href="mailto:ks306@evansville.edu">ks306@evansville.edu</a>
Dr. Pat Stuckemeyer	Band Director, KWC	480-371-6381	<a href="mailto:patstuckemeyer@gmail.com">patstuckemeyer@gmail.com</a>
Izaak Atherton	UE		<a href="mailto:izak.atherton@gmail.com">izak.atherton@gmail.com</a>

## Percussion

Nikki Miller	CHS Percussion	765-881-0111	<a href="mailto:nmpercussion@gmail.com">nmpercussion@gmail.com</a>
Zack Stewart	Castle Percussion Staff	615-509-1515	<a href="mailto:zsdrum@gmail.com">zsdrum@gmail.com</a>
Ross Erickson	UE Professor	812-488-2887	<a href="mailto:re51@evansville.edu">re51@evansville.edu</a>

If you should have any questions about selecting a private teacher please ask a director

# Instrument Repairs

Just as regular maintenance on an automobile extends its life and improves its performance, regular maintenance is a part of owning or renting an instrument. I always say that you want to start your musical performance at 100%. If you start your musical performance with slow valves or leaky pads, your performance is already diminished to less than 100%. Then, any performance errors continue to lower the quality of the performance. In the case that something breaks or stops working properly, please reference the following procedure:

1. Take the instrument to your band director. Describe the problem and demonstrate the issue you are having. If you are lucky, the problem could be as simple as a spring popping out or a screw coming loose. If the band director is not able to fix the problem...
2. Notify H&H Music that a repair is needed and **request a loaner instrument** by visiting <https://handhmusic.net/pages/need-a-loaner-instrument> or by getting a repair tag from your director and filling it out. A representative from H&H visits every Thursday to pick up/drop off instruments and often can save you a trip to the store/repair shop in Evansville. Of course, if the problem makes the instrument unplayable on a Friday, it might be best to try to drop it off on Saturday to expedite the process.
3. If sending it through our rep, leave the instrument with your band director on Wednesday after school or Thursday before school. Make sure to keep your mouthpiece, reeds, neck strap, and any other items you need to participate in class.
4. H&H will repair your instrument while you continue to participate in class. Upon completion and payment, H&H will return the instrument to you and we will swap it out with the loaner.

# Accessories

Band students will, from time to time, need accessories for their instrument. Whether it's new reeds to replace their chipped reed, a new mouthpiece, valve oil, or a new case you have several options:

1. Call H&H Music or visit [handhmusic.net](http://handhmusic.net). On the website, if you click on Buy/Accessories and enter "Castle" you can see some of the accessories that we use and endorse for our students. In the checkout process you can select "school delivery" and they will bring your purchase out to CNMS on the next visit.
2. The school stocks a small supply of reeds for emergency purposes. While students should have at least 3 working reeds in their case at all times, if they find themselves without a working reed, they can visit the band director to purchase a reed so that they can participate in class.
3. Visit any vendor of your choice (online or in store) to make your purchase. Please contact your band director for recommendations about appropriate products for your student.

## Grades

### Participation/preparation

Every student is given a weekly ten-point participation/preparation grade. This breaks down to one point for preparation and one point for participation every day. The preparation part of the grade is earned by coming to class with an instrument, music, pencil, and all necessary accessories like reeds, mouthpiece, and valve oil. Participation is earned by doing the right thing at the right time.

### Performance

It is imperative that every student be at every performance. This is covered more in-depth in the Attendance section of this handbook. Each performance is a 100-point grade. Each after school rehearsal is a 50-point grade.

### Playing tests

While we will occasionally hear playing tests live, we mainly use a software called SmartMusic for performance assessments. Your score out of 100 turns into a 20-point grade in the gradebook. Smart music tests are done in class. SmartMusic can grade the ability to play the right note at the right time. Accuracy is only a small portion of making music, so we often begin 6th grade band with live tests to ensure the best for every student.

## Extra Credit

Students who attend a live instrumental music performance will be eligible to earn 5 points extra credit per performance. The purpose of the extra credit is to intentionally attend a performance. Sporting events and church services that *have* music are not the same as a specific event that is *solely* about the musical performance and therefore do not count for extra credit.

### Eligible events

- Castle Marching Knights -performance not football
- Castle MS concert that your student ISN'T performing in, or other schools band concert
- Old Dam Community Band River Brass Band (follow on Facebook)
- Evansville Philharmonic
- UE concert band
- *Open to others, don't be afraid to ask!*

### Ineligible Events

- Sporting events where a band plays
- Your favorite boy bands tour
- Any "rock/pop/country/bluegrass/etc" band that contains lead vocals, guitar, etc.
- Weekly church services
- Extra Credit is up to the director, ask in advance to be sure

### How to get the Credit

- Extra Credit is due within 3 school days of the performance. No exceptions.
- If there is a Concert Program, have a parent sign it and turn it in to your director
- If there's no program, take a selfie with the group in the background (do NOT interrupt the performance), and email it to your director



# Practice

**Focused practice is the only way to be successful. Not only in band, but in anything.**

In the very beginning stages, we are not asking for a lot of time at home. For the first week or so we actually prefer that all playing happens under director supervision. Once good habits are in place we'll start asking for 5-10 minutes a day or every other day. This time is simply to reinforce skills we work on in class. Once we start adding pieces of music to the equation, practice should consist of a warm-up where the student focuses on the most basic aspects of sound while preparing their body and mind to play, followed by 10-15 minutes of focused, goal oriented practice on the music. After the first year, aim to practice for longer periods of time to increase endurance.

More Advice on practice, since it is the most important thing you can do:

- Use a metronome. Practicing out of time will reinforce improper timing. We strongly recommend the Tonal Energy app, it has many resources on a phone, tablet, or other device that would normally cost hundreds of dollars to buy in separate devices.
- Go slow, until you're ready to speed up. Practicing too fast too soon will also only reinforce bad habits.
- Be focused. Focus your practice on a few measures at a time. Only move on when you are satisfied with those. To work on 8 measures for fifteen minutes will make you better at those measures, but working on a whole piece for fifteen minutes does not allow time to focus on anything and will slow progress or reinforce bad habits.
- Go slow, again. Because it really is that important.
- Play everyday, and at minimum, never miss two days in a row. Not actively getting better is getting worse. There is no stasis in learning an instrument.

# Calendar of Events

**The Rehearsal/The Event** - 8th Grade Only - September 21 and September 23. Large-scale music event at Castle High School.

**Recital Nights** - 6th Grade Only November 6, 7, or 9 depending on instrument (one night per student). More details to come. Performances in CNMS Cafeteria, Media Center, or Band Room

**Winter Concert** - 7th and 8th Grade Only December 12, 2023 @ 6:30PM in the CNMS Gym A  
School Day Performance - December 19 for student body

**Solo & Ensemble** - Sign-up (regardless of method) is due Friday, November 17th

All students' are required to perform a solo, they must ***choose one option*** below:

- CMS Solo & Ensemble (cost associated, but less than ISSMA)
  - Saturday, January 27th @ CHS
  - Strongly encouraged for all students
  - This solo & ensemble includes a mini-lesson with a teacher

- ISSMA Solo & Ensemble (cost associated)
  - Saturday, February 3rd @ AIS (Old North HS)
- Smartmusic Recording
  - Due Wednesday, January 31st
  - Only suggested for students with conflicts on other days.

**Fat Tuesday Concert** - Jazz Band Only February 13th - CHS - time TBD

**ISSMA District Jazz Festival** - Jazz Band Only March 2nd - Whiteland Community HS

**Pre-ISSMA Concert** - 7th and 8th Grade Only - March 12th @ 6:30 PM in the CNMS Gym A

**Knight of Jazz** Jazz Band Only - TBD

**ISSMA Concert Festival** - 7th and 8th Grade Only - March 15 or 16 (Time and location TBD)

**Castle Clinic and Clinic Performance** - 6th Grade Only - April 17th

*Clinic will be during class time*

*Clinic Performance will be a formal evening concert at Castle High School*

**End of Year/Pops Concert** - May 14th @ CNMS Gym A

*required - all students*

## **Optional Events:**

- Jazz Band/Rock Band
  - 7th & 8th grade only
  - Information will be made available around November
- IBA Jr. All-State Honor Band - 7th/8th Grade Only
  - Recordings Due November 10th
  - Jr. All-State Weekend (Ft. Wayne, IN) January 11-13
- IBA All-Region Honor Band - 7th/8th Grade Only
  - Applications due September 8th
  - All-Region Weekend November 11/12

## • 2023-2024 HANDBOOK CHECK-OFF LIST

**This completed form is due Monday, August 14th**

1. \_\_\_\_ I know how to *contact* my teacher (Pg. 1)
2. \_\_\_\_ I understand the *Expectations* and *Attendance* requirements (Pg. 2)
3. \_\_\_\_ I know the location of the *Absence Request Form* and understand that this form must be submitted at least **three weeks** prior to the event (Pg. 3)
4. \_\_\_\_ I understand what is needed for *Concert Attire* (Pg. 4)
5. \_\_\_\_ I understand the benefit of private lessons and know who to contact to set them up (pg. 5)
6. \_\_\_\_ I understand what to do if my instrument needs repair, or if I need to order supplies from H&H Music (pg. 7)
7. \_\_\_\_ I understand how grading works and how much practice time needs to be completed each week (pg. 8/9)
8. \_\_\_\_ I know when our performances and rehearsals are and have put them in our calendar as well as where to go to find information (pg. 9/10)
9. \_\_\_\_ My Student has all of their supplies including: instrument care items, music books, pencils, reeds, sticks, mallets etc.
10. \_\_\_\_ I know where to find a copy of this handbook in the case that I need to access this information at a later date

*I, (We), as parents, have read and understand the policies of the Castle North Middle School Band program and agree to support our child in this endeavor.*

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

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*I, as a member of the Castle North Middle School Band program, have read, understand, and agree to abide by the foregoing policy.*

Student Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_