

Welcome to the Lead Mine Elementary School Band!



It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Lead Mine Elementary School band! I thank you for choosing to be a part of our band, and look forward to making music with you this year.

As a member of the Lead Mine Band, you have chosen to embark on a rewarding journey with a fine group of people. Our band isn't just something to do after school; it's a team and a family. Students, band is a place where you can have fun, meet new friends, and build musical skills that you can enjoy for the rest of your life. Parents, band will give you the experience of a lifetime, too--the joy of enriching children's lives with music (whether you're musically inclined or not!)

You may find band to be very different from other music classes you've taken in the past. Since band is a team, it functions best when everyone--students, parents, and director--brings forth their best effort. In the Lead Mine Band, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of behavior, and are committed to doing our very best every time we play.

This handbook is designed as a resource to answer your band-related questions throughout the school year. Please read and keep this handbook, and feel free to contact me if you need any band-related help or advice. Best wishes, and I look forward to sharing a year of wonderful musical experiences with you!

Your Band Director,

Christina Thompson

my philosophy

I believe that music is a powerful medium that can help students discover their unique capabilities, build positive relationships with their peers, and foster meaningful connections with the larger community. As director, my job isn't just waving the baton--it's conducting myself and our band in a way that brings the benefits of music into the lives of our bandmembers and community neighbors.

As band director, I am committed to:

- Providing a safe place for students to grow musically
- Helping students develop a feeling of musical competency
- Guiding students toward creating their signature musical sound and style
- Fostering students' love of music and an appreciation for fellow musicians
- Helping students begin to establish their place in the global community of musicians
- Giving back to the community through music
- Cultivating meaningful partnerships among students, teachers, families, and community members

what parents need to do

Parents are a vital part of children's music education. A child's success in music often depends on the level of support the parent gives. An encouraging comment about your child's practice, cheerful attendance at band concerts, and a positive attitude about your child's efforts can give your son or daughter the confidence to excel musically. Here are four things I ask of all Lead Mine band parents:

- 1. Be informed.** Please read this handbook and all band correspondence. You'll not only be "in the know," but you'll also model responsibility and commitment to your child.
- 2. Support your child.** Make practice a part of your daily routine by setting up a special place and time for your child to play at home. Ask your child to play for you often, and show an interest in what your child is learning in band. Attend your child's concerts and let your encouragement flow freely!
- 3. Realize that greatness takes time.** Beginning musicians are not going to sound like the pros you hear on the radio. When listening to your child practice or perform, train yourself to focus on growth and progress. And please, NEVER joke about your child's sound--it hurts more than you'd think.
- 4. Support your director.** Your band director has made it her life's work to help kids through music. She's on your side, and is here to support and nurture your child's musical growth. Please keep this in mind in your interactions with the director, and treat her with respect and kindness. Also, please follow the director's policies and encourage your child to do the same. They are the result of years of successful teaching, and are in place to give you an excellent band experience.

how a band kid should act

Although our band meets after school, the expectations for behavior are the same as they are during the school day. Our band joins the rest of the Lead Mine Community's efforts to "Show Your Spots," and band students are expected to practice good character traits at all rehearsals and performances.

Band students are typically some of the finest young people in the school. At all times, you should be able to say these things about yourself:

Show Your Manners

I don't laugh at or make fun of other people's playing.
I allow my band teacher to teach without interruptions.

Productive and Prepared

I pay attention in band, and am willing to try new things.
I practice daily so I'm prepared for band rehearsal.

Ownership, Take Responsibility

I take good care of my instrument and respect my bandmates' instruments.
I understand that I am responsible for my progress in band.

Think First

I make sure the words I say to my fellow band members are kind.
Instead of giving up when something seems hard, I think of new solutions to try.

Safety

When it's time for rehearsal, I WALK to the band room.
I keep my band materials neat, so people don't trip over them.

YOU HAVE A CHOICE!

You are an important member of our band, and your actions will affect everyone else in our group. Your behavior will determine how much we learn and how well we play, and will also show the community what the Lead Mine Band is all about. ***When you choose your actions in band, always remember that you are choosing your consequences as well.*** When you do your best, band class becomes energized with music-making excitement! However, poor behavior can ruin people's good impression of our band--and even worse, it can make learning music more difficult and less fun.

HOW MS. THOMPSON WILL HELP

One of Ms. Thompson's most important jobs is to help band students develop character traits to help them excel both in the band room and beyond. Throughout the year, Ms. Thompson will model productive behavior, establish helpful classroom routines, and provide boundaries and guidance to help students learn to make good behavior choices. Through group reflection and teacher-student meetings, behavior issues in the Lead Mine Band will be used as opportunities to help students grow.

a typical band rehearsal

Before rehearsal, please use the restroom and get a drink of water. Also, finish up your food, candy, or gum before you enter the band room. Remember, food and band instruments *do not mix!*

During the first few minutes of band, your job is to set up your instrument and stand, and get ready to make great music. You may talk with your friends, but make sure you're ready to rehearse by 3:10!

Please don't play until Ms. Thompson gives the cue for everyone to warm up together.

If you have a question, do not come up to Ms. Thompson before class; instead, raise your hand and wait for her to call on you. During class, please raise your hand for permission to leave your seat or to speak.

In class, we'll warm up, count rhythms, work on pieces of music together, and learn new things. This is a great time to listen, ask questions, and Show Your Spots.

Sometimes, Ms. Thompson may ask you or your section to play alone in class. This isn't to torture you; it's a way to make our music sound better. When I ask you to play solo, it helps other kids understand specific musical techniques--but it makes you a better musician, too! Also, anyone who plays alone in class gets a round of applause for their courage. 😊

When class ends, the director will dismiss you. Pack up carefully, and enjoy the rest of your day!

financial, attendance, and weather policies

Because the Lead Mine Band does not receive funding from WCPSS, we cover our operating expenses by charging a nonrefundable tuition fee for each child enrolled in band. Tuition includes band camp, a regular rehearsal facility, performances, sheet music, and twice-weekly rehearsals with a licensed music educator. **Band tuition is \$160 per child, per semester.**

You have three payment options:

- 1. Pay in full**
- 2. Monthly Payment Plan** - Pay \$40 at the first rehearsal of each month.
- 3. Volunteer Discount** - Volunteer 4 times per semester with the Lead Mine Band, and your tuition is only \$125 per semester.

If you enroll more than one child in band, you will receive a \$25 tuition discount for each additional child. Please make all checks payable to Summer Glen Music.

Band Tuition does not cover the cost of purchasing an instrument, music stand, cleaning supplies, concert attire, or a band book for your child.

No portion of the Band Tuition will be refunded if your child is tardy or absent from a rehearsal or concert, or if your family decides to withdraw from band before the semester is over. If your teacher must miss a rehearsal, she will offer a make-up time before the end of May.

If Wake County Schools are closed for inclement weather on a rehearsal or concert day, our band will not meet. If the schools are operating on a 2-hour delay, we will meet as scheduled. If we must miss a rehearsal or concert due to inclement weather, the director will do her best to arrange a make-up date.

all about virtual band camp

The beginning of one's musical career is a very demanding time, packed with new skills that need to be mastered. To give our Beginning Band students a strong start on their instruments, our band offers Virtual Band Camp each August.

Virtual Band Camp includes video lessons, Strong Start sheets, and support from Ms. Thompson. Customized for each instrument in the band, each video teaches specific skills students will need to play their instruments well, and Strong Start sheets feature fun and effective exercises to practice. Students can pause, rewind, or replay the lessons as many times as they like, and if they need help, Ms. Thompson is just a click or a phone call away.

What will students learn at Camp? Instrument assembly and cleaning, mouth position, hand position, and fingerings for 3-5 notes.

When is Camp available? Virtual Band Camp is available from August 1-31 each year.

Is there a deadline for completing Camp? Students are asked to have the skills in the first three videos mastered by our first rehearsal.

What supplies does my child need for Camp? Instrument, supplies (listed below), and pencil.

all about instruments

Choosing an Instrument:

Each May, our band holds an Instrument Show and Tell for 3rd-5th grade students who are interested in band. Ms. Thompson will play each instrument and briefly discuss its characteristics and challenges. Then, students may try each instrument. By the end of Show and Tell, each student should have an idea of which instrument he or she wants to play in band. **Students should have their instrument and supplies by August 1, the first day of Virtual Band Camp.**

A NOTE ON PERCUSSION

Percussion is a very popular instrument family, but often for the wrong reasons. Many children mistakenly think percussion is "easy" or that playing percussion is all about "rocking out" on drums. Many of these

children are sorely disappointed when they discover that percussion is challenging, and requires that they learn more instruments than anyone else in the band. I strongly encourage parents of future percussionists to discuss the following with their children:

- 1. Percussion is more than just drums. You will start on bells, and will have to learn to read music just like everyone else. Drumset comes later, much later.
- 2. Percussion instruments are as difficult as every other instrument in the band.
- 3. You have to build a strong foundation to "rock out" successfully.

Four ways to get an instrument:

1. USE A LOANER.

Our band has a limited supply of instruments available for band students to use free of charge during the school year. These instruments are available on a first-come, first served basis, and can be reserved when you sign up for band.

2. RENT IT.

Many music stores rent instruments for a monthly fee. (See the list of music stores on the next page.) This is a good short-term option, but usually ends up costing more than buying a nice used instrument.

3. BORROW IT.

If you know a friend or family member who has a band instrument they don't use, ask if your child can borrow it to use in the Lead Mine Band. This can be an easy, low-cost way to obtain an instrument for your child. Make sure, though, to make an agreement with your friend and put all the details in writing; for example, who will pay for repairs, and when the instrument needs to be returned.

4. BUY IT.

There are three basic types of band instruments: beginner, step-up, and professional. For our students, I recommend beginner instruments. These instruments are designed with the young student in mind and will take a moderate amount of abuse.

While new instruments look pretty, many families find that used instruments are a better choice for their child's early years in band. Used instruments have withstood the test of time, are less expensive, and often are better made than their new counterparts. There are many places to find high-quality used instruments at great prices--at Marsh Woodwinds, Music-Go-Round, and even on Craigslist! If you find a Craigslist instrument, call Ms. Thompson before you buy--she'll be glad to visit the seller and check it out for you..

Changing instruments:

Switching instruments early in one's musical career tends to make learning music more difficult and more time-consuming. Every instrument in the band is equally difficult to play, and each has its own set of problems for the player to solve. You will not be able to conquer these problems overnight—just like with a friend, you have to spend many years with your instrument to really know it. So, I ask students to commit to learning only ONE instrument while at Lead Mine Elementary.

Required class materials:

Students should have their instrument and supplies by August 1, the first day of Virtual Band Camp.

For flutes:

- Handkerchief (to clean flute)
- Cleaning rod
- *Standard of Excellence*, Book 1 for Flute
- Music stand

For clarinets:

- FOUR reeds- Vandoren reeds, strength 2 or 2.5
- Swab
- Cork Grease
- *Standard of Excellence*, Book 1 for clarinet
- Music Stand

For saxophones:

- FOUR Vandoren reeds, strength 2 or 2.5
- Swab
- *Standard of Excellence*, Book 1 for alto saxophone
- Music Stand

For percussion:

- 1 drum practice pad
- 1 pair of Vic Firth SD-1 snare sticks
- 1 bell set
- 1 pair hard plastic mallets
- *Standard of Excellence*, Book 1 for Drums & Mallet Percussion
- Music Stand

For trumpets:

- Valve oil
- Tuning slide grease
- *Standard of Excellence*, Book 1 for trumpet
- Music Stand

For trombones:

- Slide oil or cream
- Tuning slide grease
- *Standard of Excellence*, Book 1 for trombone
- Music Stand

Where to get your supplies

Burrage Music Company

4900 Green Road, Raleigh (872-0211)
(great for sheet music, but NOT for repairs)

Marsh Woodwinds

707 N. Person St., Raleigh NC 27604 (839-0536)
(vintage instrument sales, very good repairs)

2112 Percussion

1003 E. Whitaker Mill. Rd, Raleigh
(833-0046) (For all things percussion!)

Music-Go-Round

421 Crossroads Blvd., Cary (851-2252)
(Used instruments)

all about concerts

Lead Mine Band students will have many chances to perform throughout the year. We will perform at several school functions at Lead Mine; plus, we'll play some exciting "gigs" around town. Our concert dates are listed online at <http://www.leadmineband.com/events.html>.

CONCERT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Performances are an integral part of every student's band experience. Performances give students chances to celebrate their hard-earned musical skills and give back to the community with their talents. Therefore, attendance at concerts is **mandatory** for all members of the Lead Mine Band. I will let students and parents know in advance of any additions or changes to the concert schedule, and will send reminders as concert dates draw nearer. If you cannot attend a concert for any reason, please notify Ms. Thompson *well* in advance (months and months ahead of time is best!)

FAQ's

Why does Ms. Thompson keep telling me I need to practice?

Daily practice is vital to musical success, and is REQUIRED of all band students! Just as doing your math homework will make you better at math, practicing your instrument will make you a better musician. At each rehearsal, Ms. Thompson will assign you a song, a scale, or several measures to practice at home. It's your job to practice learning your fingerings, counting your rhythms, and making your assignment sound a little bit better every day. Don't worry if you don't sound perfect! If you practice thoughtfully and do your very best, you've done your job.

Sitting in band class will make you an OK musician. But practicing on your own is what makes you EXCELLENT, and is what makes band so fun. **Practice for 15 minutes a day--it works!**

Can I still play if I get braces?

Yes, many people with braces are able to play in band. If your mouth hurts because the orthodontist just tightened your braces, I will allow you to refrain from playing in class. I will work with you on this as long as I feel you are not taking the situation for granted. Follow your doctor's instructions and gargle with warm salt water to help ease the pain.

What if I forget my instrument at home?

If you forget your instrument (or necessities required to play your instrument, like reeds), it means you have to work even harder than normal in class that day. You're still responsible for participating and learning the material, even if your horn is at home. Remember, it's not your director's or your parents' responsibility to bring your instrument to class--it's yours. Good musicians come prepared!

What if I can't make it to a concert?

Please tell me as soon as possible! The more advance notice you can give, the better. We work hard to prepare for our concerts. Band members who don't show up or cancel at the last minute let their band--and themselves--down.

What if my instrument breaks?

In many cases, I can fix minor problems myself; just show them to me **before or after class**, and I'll see what I can do to fix them. If I'm unable to fix your instrument, I'll tell you to take it to one of the music stores listed in this handbook. If I tell you to take your horn to the shop, please do it as soon as possible! Neglecting a little problem today often creates a big problem down the road. Also, if you've known something is wrong with your instrument for a while, **DO NOT wait until concert day to tell me**, as I won't be able to help you.

