Somerset Middle School

7th and 8th Grade Concert Band

2016-2017 Handbook

**Mrs. Justine MacKechnie, Director**

Welcome back! I hope you have had a great summer and are looking forward to another exciting year in the SMS Music Program. The purpose of this handbook is to outline exactly what will be expected of you this year as a member of the 7th & 8th Grade Concert Band. Please pay special attention to the grading policy, concert dates, and all order forms at the end of this packet.

There is an agreement to be signed by **both parent/guardian and student**. Please read through the handbook together and return the signed portion indicating your commitment to the program. This will be counted as your first assignment in band for Term 1. Additional paperwork is also attached.

Please note, all Somerset Teachers have new email addresses; mine is below.

I look forward to working with you! Welcome back and have a great year!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Justine MacKechnie

*Director, 7th & 8th Grade Concert Band and Jazz Ensemble*

Phone: (508) 324-3140

Email: Justine.MacKechnie@somersetschools.org

Website: [www.somersetband.weebly.com](http://www.somersetband.weebly.com)

**CLASS OVERVIEW:**

In the SMS band program, students will begin to explore their band music in more depth and from a variety of angles. Students are offered opportunities to receive small group instruction in addition to the full band rehearsals. In addition to the traditional sit-down performance skills they will learn to play standing, while marching, and learn about traditional parade formations. Students will also be taught appropriate community repertoire.

The 7th & 8th Grade Concert Band is intended for students who have had prior band experience. The concert band meets on days B, C and F of the 6 day rotating SMS schedule. The content literature is based upon the Standard of Excellence Books 1 and 2 for the concert band. This method book will be used to reinforce the musical concepts and terminology that students have learned in prior music/band classes. Students will also work with appropriate grade level sheet music throughout the entire school year. All music performed and practiced will aid in the development of the student’s individual musicianship while stressing the technique of ensemble playing. NOTE: The *Standard of Excellence Book 2* is a method book that ALL students MUST purchase for this school year. Please see the attached order form.

**ART/MUSICIANSHIP:**

Students will learn about different styles of music through vocabulary and aural examples, and in doing so will learn to make creative and informed decisions about their music, both individually and in a group setting. Some examples of topics we will cover are balance, blend and intonation, tempo and dynamic levels (and the vocabulary taken from our own and other languages that are associated with tempo and dynamic levels), concert pitch, articulation, etc.

## HISTORY:

## Students will be able to discuss some pieces from a historical standpoint. The repertoire chosen for this ensemble will feature pieces that reflect ideas from a variety of different cultures and time periods.

## THEORY:

## The theory part of the repertoire revolves around its mechanics. The notes used in each piece, the form, the modes that the different pieces are set in, and even the rhythmic aspects of the music all are concepts students will explore in each band rehearsal.

**CONCERT DRESS:**

Unless otherwise specified, concert dress is as follows:

LADIES: Black skirt or black pants, white shirt, black shoes

MEN: Black pants, white dress shirt, black tie, black socks, black shoes

**Blue jeans, t-shirts, white socks and white sneakers ARE NOT appropriate.**

**CONCERT ATTENDANCE:**

Attendance at concerts is **MANDATORY**. For each concert, you will receive either an A or an F. As long as you show up for the concert, *on time,* and preparedyou get an A. Your concert attendance will be part of your grade in all marking Terms. Concert dates are listed in the back of this handbook. These dates are subject to change with adequate notification. If you have a problem with a concert date, please let Mrs. MacKechnie know via email or note at least 2 weeks prior to concert.

NOTE: If you provide adequate notice, you will receive an “N/A” grade **NOT** an “A”. Please be aware that this might impact your grade. Refer to the grading criteria in the handbook.

**PLAYING TEST:**

There will be playing tests frequently in all terms this year. Students will be given at least 5 days notice of a playing test. There will be NO SURPRISES! Material chosen will be from students’repertoire or Method Book. Each playing test will be worth a total of 8 points. The following rubric will be used:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 8 pts | 0 mistakes, good tone and posture, positive attitude |
| 6 pts | 1-4 mistakes, nice tone and posture, positive attitude |
| 4 pts | 5-8 mistakes, ok tone and posture, positive attitude |
| 2 pts | Excessive mistakes, bad tone and posture |
| 0 | No instrument on testing day, bad attitude |

**VOCABULARY ASSESSMENT:**

During term 3 there will be an assigned list of vocabulary terms that each band student should learn (if they do not know them already). There will be a test to ensure students have learned the material. Students will have at least two weeks’notice before the assessment.

**PRACTICE TIPS:**

1. It is more beneficial to practice for a short amount of time, more often during the week, than to practice less often for more time.
2. You should always be aware of posture when practicing at home. Finding a good chair and music stand will help immensely.
3. Concentrate each practice session on a section of music that is difficult for you. Don’t simply play the music you are good at already when there are sections of the music that are causing trouble for you.
4. You don’t have to practice ALL the difficult music in one practice session. If you put in the time to get better at your instrument, you will improve your playing and feel good about yourself AND improve the quality of the ensemble at the same time!

**Performance Schedule:**

* Music Town Parade - Sunday, October 22, 2016 at 12:30 pm at SBRHS (Report time TBA)
* 7/8 Grade Winter Concert – Wednesday, December 14, 2016 at 7:00 pm at SMS
* All District Band Festival – March 16, 2017 at 7:00 at SBRHS (Report time TBA)
* 7/8 Grade Spring Concert – Wednesday, April 13, 2017 at 7:00 pm at SMS
* Memorial Day Parade – Monday, May 29, 2016 TIME TBA at SBRHS

**GRADING POLICY:**

All terms will be graded with the following breakdown:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Effort and Cooperation | 25 % |
| Materials/Preparedness | 25 % |
| Playing Tests & Assignments | 25 % |
| Concert Attendance | 25 % |

At the beginning of each new term, all students will receive 100 points in the Effort and Cooperation category and the Materials/Preparedness category. For each class that a student is uncooperative or us unprepared, they will lose 5 points in the respective category. In the event that a students instrument is broken and/or being repaired, a note from home will result in no credit lost.

Please sign and return this page of the handbook to Mrs. MacKechnie by **Thursday, September 15th - (C DAY)**

*Both my parents/guardians and I have read the syllabus and we understand and agree to support the schedule, attendance, policies and expectations. We understand that the 7th & 8th grade Concert Band at Somerset Middle School is a full year commitment.*

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Instrument: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**ORDER FORM FOR METHOD BOOK 2:**

All students in the 7th & 8th Grade Concert Band are REQUIRED to purchase their own copy of the method book, *The Standard of Excellence Book 2,* that we will be using during rehearsals. I will be ordering from the Symphony Shop, but the books are available at all music stores. Students in 8th grade should have their books from last year. **Incoming 7th graders must purchase their own copy.**

If you would like to order from Symphony Shop, please fill out this form with a $7.35 check to “Symphony Shop” by **Thursday, September 15 - (C DAY)**

CASH WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Instrument: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Check Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_