

EVG Band Handbook

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Welcome to Elementary Band!

Learning to play an instrument is a fun and rewarding experience that will clearly benefit your child throughout their school time and well beyond. Instrumental music instills discipline, stirs natural curiosity and creativity, and develops critical thinking and character. Being a member of band is just like being on a sports team. Your individual efforts contribute to everyone's success. The best part of this team is that everyone is a starting player. Everyone contributes to an incredible musical experience!

My goal is to help each student realize their full potential and find enjoyment in making music. Some may adapt more quickly than others, but every child can succeed. It does take dedication and practice. As with anything in life, the only way to get better at something is to keep doing it until you get it right. That boils down to one word: PRACTICE! That is the key to success with an instrument and there is no other way.

There are many great things to look forward to as a member of band at EVG; Great concerts, making friends, playing in different groups, and maybe even some fun trips. But above all, your child will gain knowledge, skill, and an appreciation that will continue to enrich their lives for many years to come.

The Elementary Band Program consists of:

1. **Lessons (small group instruction)** - provided to every student in the program during school
2. **Elementary Band (large group instruction)** - provided after school

Lessons – Lessons are provided during school to all students enrolled in the band program. Lessons are 40 minutes, once a week in groups of 8 or less. Students will learn the basics of making sound on their instruments, reading music, and playing familiar songs. Students need to know when their lesson day and time is scheduled, and bring their instrument and lesson book on that day each week. **Even if there is a change in the school schedule (i.e. testing, half day field trip, etc.) students should still plan to bring their instrument;** the lesson schedule may be altered so lessons can still take place. Students in the band program will miss 40 minutes of class time during their lesson. Band students are responsible to make up missed class work. Lessons are scheduled on a rotating basis so that students will not miss the same work more than twice in any quarter. If the student's class is involved in a special project, test, etc. he/she may reschedule the lesson, or will be excused for that week. **A student that misses twice in a row will be asked to stay after school and make up a lesson.** Students that repeatedly miss lessons without a valid excuse will be dropped from the instrumental program. While the lesson times change each week, the day of the lesson does not. Each teacher receives a copy of the week's schedule in advance; the schedule is posted outside the band room, and published to the music department website each week.

Elementary Band - Starting in the last week of September, band students will participate in Elementary Band (Blue Band: Anyone grades 4-6, Gold Band: Audition only after 1 year). We work on ensemble skills and preparing students for concerts. We will practice and perform fun and challenging music. Elementary Band rehearsals will take place after school, once a week.

Responsibilities

Parents

Students

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing an instrument and required materials – see “Required Materials” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicing at least 20 minutes a day, 6 days a week (10 minutes for first year)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervising daily practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filling out weekly practice record
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signing weekly practice record 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handling instrument carefully
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining supplies as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing your lesson day
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranging instrument repairs as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing instrument and book to weekly lessons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranging transportation to evening rehearsals and concerts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making up any class work missed during lessons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacting band teacher before withdrawing student from the program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending rehearsals and concerts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performances: Winter Concert / Spring Concert
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice, Practice, Practice!

Here is an example of how to fill out the practice record in the back cover of the lesson book. Each week we will fill out the date and assignment in class. Students and parents are responsible for filling out the practice minutes and signature at home. **USE ONLY ONE LINE FOR EACH WEEK, EVEN IF YOUR LESSON IS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WEEK.** In other words, you will “wrap” back to the beginning of the line after Sunday.

Do not go down to the next line. Write the number of minutes you practiced in the box for each day. A parent should initial each week. Practice records will be checked and graded each week during lessons.

Name _____

Date	Assignment	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total	Parent Signature
9/20										

Assessment

Every student in the band program receives two progress reports: one in December and one in June. They will come home with your child's report card. Band progress reports provide a rubric for the following categories:

1. Preparedness – Attendance at lessons/Prepared with Pencil, Instrument, and music
2. Posture and Instrument Position
3. Valve/Key/Hand Position & Stick technique (percussion)
4. Rhythm and Articulation
5. Pitch and Tone
6. Reading Music

Important Dates

Winter Concert: Wednesday, 12/11

Check our website for all the important events throughout the year. I will also send flyers home with students to remind parents of upcoming events.

Instrument cleaning

In order to care for your child's instrument properly it will need to be cleaned from time to time. General fingerprints and smudges do not affect the sound quality and are only a cosmetic concern. They can be wiped off gently with a soft cloth, or polishing cloth (sometimes included with the instrument).

Brass instruments will need a "snake," mouthpiece brush and some dish soap and warm water. You can purchase a care kit for a few dollars.

Woodwind instruments are generally cleaned when they are being repaired or tuned up in the instrument repair shop. Chances are a key will get bent, a pad will need to be replaced, or some other general maintenance procedure will send your instrument to the repair shop; it will most likely be cleaned then also if needed. It is usually not necessary to do cleaning on your own. Students will learn how to "swab" their instruments, which means removing moisture from the inside with a special cloth. This is the most cleaning you will probably need to do. Also make sure that excess cork grease is wiped off with a paper towel. The *mouthpiece* can be cleaned out with a mouthpiece brush (available for a few dollars) and soap and water whenever you see "stuff" starting to build up. Mouthpieces can also be wiped down with rubbing alcohol to remove germs from time to time. **Do not immerse your woodwind instrument in water.** It is very important to take the reed off the mouthpiece before putting it in the case! This increases the life of the reed but also prevents mold and bacteria from growing on the reed and mouthpiece.

Instrument Repairs

In the event that your child's instrument needs a repair due to damage or normal maintenance, Jeff, from Music & Arts, comes to the school to repair any instruments that were rented through his store. Please email me with any questions.

Music & Arts

240 N, NJ-17, Paramus, NJ 07652
(201) 265-1860

The Music Shop

56 Fanny Road, Boonton, NJ 07005
(973) 334-8484

Changing instruments/Trying again

It takes most of the first year to begin to learn an instrument. As stated above, we encourage you and your child to "stick with it." However, sometimes student and instrument just don't "click." A student has practiced and tried but it appears that the instrument is just "not right" for him/her. That would be a time when we could consider a switch in instruments. If a child just wants to "try something new" that would not be considered a valid reason for change. If a student is successful, that musical knowledge can be used to learn a different instrument in addition to their primary instrument (doubling) at the end of 2nd year (5th grade).

Ultimately, a change in instrument is at the director's discretion, and the instrument choice must be made with balance in mind, benefiting the band as a whole. Most times, available choices will be Trumpet or Trombone. Changing to Percussion or Saxophone will rarely be considered. If a student did not start an instrument or was not successful in the first year, he/she is welcome to try again.

Instrument returns

There will be ups and downs; the "newness" and excitement of playing an instrument (doing something new) will wear off some, and your child may come to you and ask to "quit." For your child to be a successful musician, you will need to deny his/her impulse to give up, and encourage your child to stick with it.

Though there may be times when a lesson or band tune is "hard," there is great joy at coming out the other end, having worked through a difficult time, and being able to easily perform something that had given so much trouble. I strongly encourage you to actively help your child fight through the doldrums, and come to that wonderful discovery point. If your child is feeling frustrated, or if something is not working, please call me or email and give me a chance to help. I want your student to be successful! If you decide that you no longer want your child to participate in the band program, I ask that you call or email me before withdrawing them from the program. Then, I suggest returning your rental instrument by calling the company that you contracted with. If you would like to donate your lesson book or reeds to the school, let me know. We would greatly appreciate it!

“Step up” instruments

If your child has shown and maintained steady interest in his/her instrument, it is likely that he/she will eventually grow out of the beginner instrument (usually by 3rd or 4th year). You may consider purchasing an instrument for continued study. It is often a good time to purchase a “step up” or intermediate level instrument. Any rent credit you have accrued usually goes toward the purchase of a new intermediate instrument (or your current instrument) so it is not “wasted money.” Sometimes music stores have used instruments for sale, which can be an excellent deal (you can’t use your rent credit, but sometimes it is still cheaper). Ebay and amazon can also be good sources, but please let me evaluate the instrument before you buy! There are some clunkers out there and I want to make sure you get a quality instrument.

Private lessons

Individual private lessons are recommended for students who are looking to progress more rapidly and who have shown a high level of commitment to practicing. You can contact me and I would be happy to recommend someone. You can expect to pay from \$25-\$45 per half hour, depending on the teacher.

Music Store Resources

amazon.com = first choice for materials before searching below

Music & Arts

240 N, NJ-17, Paramus, NJ 07652
(201) 265-1860

G Music

7206 Park Ave, North Bergen, NJ 07047
(201) 472-8794

Musichood, LLC

239 Maple Ave. Fort Lee, NJ 07024
(201) 334-8411

The Music Shop

56 Fanny Road, Boonton, NJ 07005
(973) 334-8484

Elementary Band Required Materials

Every student must purchase a **lesson book** and, though not required, should have a **music stand** at home. You can get the book when you rent your instrument or purchase it separately.

LessonBook: Essential Elements Book 1 (approx.\$9 on Amazon)

Music Stand: (approx. \$12.00 on Amazon)

Flute:

Essential Elements, Book 1 for Flute

Silk Flute Swab OR Section of old t-shirt for swab.

Oboe:

Essential Elements, Book 1 for Oboe

2 reeds (order Fox Renard Oboe Reeds, Medium Soft)

Reed soaker (you can provide your own similar container like a film canister or tiny Tupperware)

Fox silk oboe swab

Clarinet:

Essential Elements, Book 1 for Clarinet

Box of 10 reeds (order Bb Clarinet Rico Royal # 2's on amazon)

Handkerchief clarinet swab

Saxophone (Alto and Tenor):

Essential Elements, Book 1 for Alto or Tenor Sax

Box of 10 reeds (order Rico Royal # 2's and specify instrument on Amazon)

Hodge silk Saxophone swab

Suggested: Neck Strap

Trumpet:

Essential Elements, Book 1 for Trumpet

French Horn:

Essential Elements, Book 1 for French Horn

Trombone:

Essential Elements, Book 1 for Trombone

Percussion:

Essential Elements, Book 1 for Percussion

All of these items can be purchased on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)!

Tips for Beginning Band Parents -What to Expect and How You Fit In

Your support is an essential part of your child's success in music study. Here are some things you can do to assure your student maintains consistent and steady growth.

GENERAL TIPS

What TO Do:

- Ask your child what she/he learned in band lessons and have them show you and perform for you
- Encourage your child to play for other family and friends
- Expose your child to a wide variety of music, including live concerts
- Make sure your child's instrument is always in good working order
- Allow your child to play many types of music
- Listen to your child practice and acknowledge improvement
- Encourage your child to make a minimum one-year commitment to an instrument

What NOT To Do:

- Don't use practice as a punishment
- Don't start your child on an instrument that's in poor condition
- Don't expect rapid progress and development in the beginning

Parent's Role in Student Practice

- Provide a quiet place in which to practice
- Remain nearby during practice times as often as possible
- Schedule consistent, daily time for practice. Daily short practice is better than one long practice
- Praise your child's efforts and improvements
- Encourage good posture and insist on the use of a music stand and chair (not the bed)
- Avoid damage by reminding your child to place the instrument in the case when it's not in his/her hands
- Encourage regular practice. In the beginning, 10 minutes a day is long enough to practice. After a few months, 20 minutes is appropriate. Beginning students need to develop in small, regular increments the muscles, endurance, and focus it takes to practice. Practicing too long can cause fatigue and is a waste of time. Practicing inconsistently negates the muscle memory that has been established in previous sessions. Even a 5-minute review of fingerings or a song is better than nothing. In the beginning, you may hear strange and silly sounds, but this is ok.
- If your child says something is "too hard" to accomplish, have them try some of these techniques:
 1. Slow it down
 2. Try playing the "hard part" one measure at a time, or one note at a time
 3. "Sing/count" the rhythms
 4. Finger through the music without playing

Instrument Care

You're making a substantial investment on an instrument. Here are some ways to protect that investment:

- If something doesn't seem to be working correctly, take it to the music teacher right away
 - Don't use household tools on musical instruments! Have the music teacher or repair person look at it
 - Remind your child to oil, grease, and swab the instrument regularly
- Have your child keep at least 3 good and working reeds in the case at all times
FOR YOUR FAMILY

Other Suggestions

A child's music study also offers opportunities for shared family experiences, including:

- Attending music events
- Family music making
- Performing for and with family and friends

If your child exhibits continued interest, you might consider the following:

- Purchasing his/her current instrument as a birthday or Christmas gift
- Starting lessons with a private lessons instructor
- Upgrading to a better mouthpiece (improves tone quality and overall flexibility)
- Purchasing accessories for the instrument (these make great stocking stuffers)

If Your Child Loses Interest

In the event that your child loses interest in music study, don't panic.

- A. Discuss the situation with your child to determine why their interest is declining.
- B. Explain that worthwhile activities sometimes require a little work and dedication. Not everything is easy
- C. The ability to play a musical instrument is something that many older students and adults wish they had. As they get older, many students regret "quitting."
- D. Talk to your child's music teacher to see what might be done to rekindle their enthusiasm.
- E. Offer increased enthusiasm and support

Thank you for supporting your child's interest in instrumental music, and if at any time you would like to talk more about how you can help your child be successful, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Rehearsal Etiquette

Rehearsals

1. **ATTENDANCE AT BAND REHEARSAL IS MANDATORY.** If you are in school you must be at rehearsal. To be excused you will need a parent note and advance notice to the band director (The day before or at least by the morning of rehearsal day) Sports, clubs, going home with a non-band friend are not valid excuses. More than 3 absences may disqualify you from performing in the concert.
2. Be in your seat at 2:40, prepared with your instrument in working order, music, and pencil. Be ready to warm up. If you are not ready at 2:40 you are late, and this could affect your grade. If you are late, get to your place ASAP and do not disrupt the class.
3. Have your band music learned. Band rehearsal is for putting the entire group together and making adjustments for performance, not for learning your individual part. That is done at home in your daily practice and in our lessons during school.
4. Stay in your section. If the director is working with an individual or group, study your music, listen to the direction because you may learn something that is important for you as well. Rehearsal time is not socializing time. If you need to the bathroom or get a drink, do so before band rehearsal starts.
5. Be alert. Start when the conductor starts, be ready to play 2 measures before your entrance, stop when the conductor stops, listen and do not talk. Band is a class and the director is teaching. Do not interrupt, talk or make unnecessary sounds. Focus and listen.
6. There is no eating, drinking (except water), or gum chewing in rehearsal. Food and sugar in your mouth goes directly into your instrument. It is unhealthy and bad for your instrument, and prevents you from playing your instrument correctly.
7. We all want band to be fun, but band can't be fun at the expense of others. Learning the music has to be our first goal. Taunting, teasing, or mocking other students is not acceptable. If we work together and accomplish our goals, we will have fun!

Concert Attire

Boys should wear: A white, collared dress shirt, a long, black tie, black slacks/dress pants, and black shoes (dark colored sneakers are acceptable)

Girls should wear: A white blouse (must cover shoulders and stomach), black pants or black skirt, and black shoes.

Please return this Band form by Friday, 9/13!

Student:

My signature indicates that I have read and understand the responsibilities required of me including but not limited to: rules, attendance, instrument care, practice policies, etc.

Print Student Name _____ **Grade** _____

Student Signature _____ **Date** _____

Parent:

My signature indicates that I have read and understand the responsibilities required of me including rules, attendance, instrument care, practice policies, etc.

Print Parent Name _____

Parent Signature _____ **Date** _____

Work Phone _____ **Home Phone** _____

Cell Phone _____

Email address _____

After rehearsal, my child will:

Walk _____ **Late Bus** _____ **Pick-up** _____

Comments/Questions: