

Bolivar Middle School

Eighth Grade Symphonic Band Syllabus

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We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit. -Aristotle
"The more you open yourself up to opportunity, the more it becomes available to you."

Unknown

Course Description and Objectives

8th grade band is designed to teach students the continued fundamentals of playing a musical instrument. The class meets every day for 45 minutes. Some of the general objectives of this class include:

- to develop advanced playing skills
- to develop an advanced understanding of music theory
- to develop an understanding of many new musical terms
- to fully understand how to play scales and read key signatures
- to play a large amount of appropriate literature

Materials

In addition to their instrument and provided music, all students are asked to provide:

- a positive attitude
- a pencil with an eraser

Class Rules

Show mutual respect. This is the only rule. Everything else is a responsibility.

Band Discipline Procedures

Step 1

Step 1 is your goal—mutual respect between yourself and everyone in the room. If you show mutual respect, then you will receive no discipline referrals or punishment. You will simply be asked to correct problems when necessary. All students who show mutual respect will receive this benefit, but only for normal classroom responsibilities such as those listed on the next page. **Problems such as attendance issues, bullying, fighting or other harsh infractions will be considered willful misbehavior and will be referred directly to the parents and principals according to school policy.**

Step 2

When it becomes obvious that you are willing to show a pattern of misbehavior in our classroom, your parents will be called or e-mailed. When it becomes obvious that you choose to behave well and return to a pattern of mutual respect, then you may return to **Step 1** and receive the benefits of mutual respect. The directors will inform and complement you when this happens. Keep in mind that the directors will always show you respect.

Step 3

If you show a continual pattern of disrespect, you will visit with the principal and participate in a parent/teacher conference. You will return to **Step 2** when these requirements are met. Until these requirements are met, you will not have rehearsal or performance privileges and will complete written assignments for your grade. Punishments will be given at this stage.

Step 4

This step will be reached if you make it to step 3 more than once in a school year. You will lose rehearsal and performance privileges until the end of quarter. Written assignments will be assigned for your grade until your class can be changed.

Students should always keep in mind that the directors appreciate all students and only want what is best for the development of their positive character. Choosing a pattern of mutual respect will ultimately be the best choice for everyone involved. Please make wise choices.

General Classroom Responsibilities

1. Respect others and you will receive respect.
2. Never jeopardize the safety of others.
3. Students will enter the room quietly, ready to give 100% effort.
4. When the tardy bell rings, students should be in their seats, with instruments, ready to play 2 minutes after the bell.
5. Students will avoid being a distraction to others. Students should work hard to eliminate all unnecessary noises from the room before, during and after rehearsal.
6. Students will use a low volume, indoor speaking voice at all times. Yelling will not be tolerated in the band room.
7. When playing, proper horn carriage and upper body carriage will be observed. Students will sit on the edge of their chairs when playing.
8. Students will avoid touching percussion equipment unless invited to do so.
9. No gum, food, drinks will be allowed in the band room. Bottled water with a lid is acceptable.
10. Everything has a place and needs to be returned to that place when rehearsal is over.

Grading Policy

Students will be graded on the following criteria:

Attitude and Effort

Students will be given a daily grade of 10 points each day they come to class and give 100% effort. Points are deducted if a student forgets their instrument, music, or any other required materials. Students also lose points for being tardy, talking out of turn, or disrupting class in any other way. Students may gain points if they are observed acting in a manner that contributes to the success of the band. Students should come to class with a positive attitude and be ready to try their best. The weekly grade will be worth one-third (33%) of each student's grade. Showing mutual respect will guarantee an A for effort.

In Class Assignments

We will have regular playing tests. The playing test will consist of either a scale or an excerpt of music determined by the director. These tests will occur on alternating Fridays throughout the year. Playing tests will be worth 33% of the grade.

Performance Attendance

This category gives each student points for attending performances. All performances will be announced well in advance. Students will be allowed to perform based on their attitude and effort in class. If a student has displayed poor effort or attitude, they may be asked not to perform at the discretion of the director. The first unexcused absence from a performance will result in the final grade being lowered two full letter grades. In addition, the student will not be allowed any special privileges, such as any end of the year trip. A second unexcused absence will result in removal from the ensemble. An absence from any performance may only be excused two weeks in advance by the director. Absences must follow the attendance policy as set in the high school band syllabus located on the web page at www.bolivarmusic.org. Absence forms are available on the music website.

Promotion

Students will be promoted to the next semester of band based on their grade. If a student receives a grade of "C" or below for the semester, that student will not be allowed to continue in band.

Schedule

The band schedule can be found at www.bolivarmusic.org. Please check this website regularly so that you will know if there are any changes to this schedule. All events are posted on the website as far in advance as possible. Most of the dates for this year are already on the schedule. Look for listings on the schedule that specify BMS 8th Grade.

What Makes a Good Band Member?

The following is a list of virtues that help you show mutual respect:

- 1) **Honesty**- Thomas Jefferson says, “Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom.”
- 2) **Discipline**- comprehending instruction in arts, sciences, correct sentiments, morals and manners, and due subordination to authorities. (Webster’s Dictionary)
- 3) **Respect**- to consider worthy of esteem; to regard with honor.
- 4) **Responsibility**- able to answer for one's conduct and obligations; able to choose for oneself between right and wrong (Webster’s Dictionary)
- 5) **Esteem**- build one another up with exhorting speech (not gossip).
- 6) **Pride**- a reasonable or justifiable self-respect (Webster’s Dictionary)
- 7) **Perseverance**- to persist in a state, enterprise, or undertaking in spite of counterinfluences, opposition, or discouragement (Webster’s Dictionary)

This syllabus is just a brief outline of the expectations of 8th Grade Band. What we have not covered are the great experiences, fun times, and lifelong achievements inherent in band membership. Your student will also enjoy a great sense of accomplishment when performing as an ensemble. The greatest lesson to learn from band, that students can take with them into all of their life experiences, is that one will get out of band what one puts into band. We challenge each band member to push beyond what they think is possible, so they can each enjoy the true satisfaction of a job well done.

We look forward to this year with great anticipation. You are in for an exciting year and some of the best times of your life. Enjoy it all! Together, we are capable of doing great things!