

Lightfoot Elementary School Band

2008/2009

989-6120

Grades

Responsibilities

Practice

August 25, 2008

Dear Parents & Guardians:

We are very pleased that your child has expressed an interest in joining our fine instrumental music program. The overall purpose of the program is to begin the study of a musical instrument and experience the pleasure of music through playing that instrument. Benefits from this kind of study go beyond the learning of music. Students also develop self-confidence, a good self-image, responsibility, self-discipline and they learn teamwork through playing with the band.

The following contains information about requirements to participate in the band program, and some helpful suggestions to help students succeed. Please read all of this information carefully with your child.

As in all studies, students will receive a grade for band. This grade will be included on the regular report card. Parents and students need to be aware that band students are pulled from class once or twice a week, and are responsible for maintaining their regular studies. **If students fail to maintain their regular school studies, they may be dropped from the band program. If students do not complete their classroom assignments, they will not be allowed to attend band class for that day.** This can affect the band grades, as these are considered unexcused absences. If there are ever any concerns regarding a student's band grade, please contact Mrs. Marlen or Mr. Bonner immediately.

Students in the band are required to attend each scheduled rehearsal for their instrument. If a student is absent from school for an excused reason, their absence from band is also excused. Most other absences from band class will be unexcused. **Three unexcused absences will cause the student to be dropped from the band program.** Occasionally, students will forget their music book, other needed items, or even their instrument. Students are allowed one lesson absence for "forgetting" something for class. After this absence, students will be returned to class, and will be marked with an unexcused absence. Everyone, of course, makes an occasional mistake. Concert participation is required. On occasion, this will be outside school hours. The most significant of these is the Spring Concert. The date for this will be on the website and sent home within a few days. **This performance is absolutely mandatory. Absence from performances WILL affect a student's grade. Please mark this on your calendar right away.**

Practice is the key to success in music. The vast majority of students who fail to be successful in band, fail because of one reason: ***They just didn't practice enough.*** Almost every band grade sent home that is less than an "A" is due directly to either not practicing enough, or practicing incorrectly. Each instrument requires a unique set of skills that are not natural. They are learned. They must be practiced **daily**. Students will be expected to practice 15 minutes a day, every day of the week. While students may occasionally miss a day for family activities, etc., these days need to be rare. ***Practice is the key to success in music.*** There are no shortcuts. If there were, they would be taught first, but unfortunately, there aren't. Success is worth the effort.

Dropping from the Band Program

Mrs. Marlen and Mr. Bonner would like every student who begins band to finish the year. There will, however, be some students who will drop. No students should ever drop before the first 8 weeks. This is usually the minimum required time to rent an instrument anyway, and this is a good interval for students to really investigate what band is like. Again, if there is a problem that you would like to discuss, please contact Mrs. Marlen or Mr. Bonner. Also remember, if you have a question about instruction in band class, contacting Mr. Bonner directly will get you the quickest response to any concerns you may have. You may contact him at Day Creek Intermediate School if you like (909/803-3300), or you may reach him by email at scott_bonner@etiwanda.k12.ca.us. If a student puts in a good effort and decides that band is not of interest to them, they may drop.

Continuing at the Middle School

Students who wish to continue in the band program in the middle school, and satisfactorily complete the band program at Lightfoot will be placed in the Concert Band at the middle school. Notices will be sent home to parents near the end of the year regarding band next year. There is no beginning band class at the middle school. Students should begin their instrumental music studies at the elementary school.

Selecting and Obtaining an Instrument

Students need to select an instrument that they really want to play. If a student attempts to learn an instrument because an older sibling played it, or because there's one around the house, but the student isn't interested in that instrument, the chances of success are lowered. Also, students who choose a certain instrument because it's easy to carry often aren't really interested and aren't successful. There have been many successful students who learned on an instrument that seemed bigger than they were at the time. They succeeded because they were interested in a specific instrument.

There are some restrictions on the number of certain instruments. Flute and percussion are always limited due to the needs of the band as a whole. Students who wish to play one of these should think about an alternative. Percussion students are selected after consultation with the principal and teachers. Flute players are selected by the return of their completed registration form. After the selected number of forms has been received, no additional flute players can be accepted. Those students will need to choose an alternate.

Instruments can be obtained from any reputable music store. **You should not buy an instrument right away.** These stores rent instruments, and most offer a program in which the rent applies to purchase. Basic rental fees vary. You should contact the stores to check their rental rates.

You may have relatives or friends who have a reasonable quality instrument. You certainly should avail yourself of these if possible. **Do not buy or rent the cheapest available instrument.** This often delays or even prevents a student's success. A good instrument is like a good tool; it makes all the work easier, more enjoyable, less frustrating, and more conducive to success. Currently, several large retail stores, not known for musical instruments, are selling very inexpensive instruments that look very nice. Use great caution, as these instruments are often prone to needing frequent repairs. **Mr. Bonner does not suggest buying an instrument in the same store where you can buy toilet paper, sausage and a refrigerator.**

On the following pages, you will find a list of the supplies that a student will need for each individual instrument. Please take this with you when you rent your instrument. Do not let a salesperson sell you something other than what is listed "because it's better." Usually they really mean it's what they want to sell you.

You may rent an instrument at any music store. There are several that are fairly close. Some parents may choose to rent at a store near their work. Any of these are fine, but please follow the advice above.

Deadlines

Music classes will begin the week of September 15. **Students must have their instruments by this date. No students will be accepted into the program after this date.** Please contact us to this date if there is a problem.

Instruments taught at Lightfoot include: flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, trumpet, trombone, and percussion. Percussion class will be limited to three students on a trial basis. Flute enrollment will be limited to nine. Saxophones are by far the most expensive instrument to rent. The rest are about the same. These restrictions are due to the instrumentation needs of the band. Much like everyone can't play goalie on a soccer team (the games would be very boring that way), the band has instrumentation requirements in order to produce a good sound for everyone.

If you would like more information about our program, or anything related to it, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Marlen at Lightfoot (989-6120) or contact Mr. Bonner (803-3300). We look forward to having your child in band, and to a great year at Lightfoot.

Please fill out and sign the enclosed band enrollment form, and return it no later than September 10. **Registration forms will not be accepted after that date**, so please return the form as soon as possible if your child is interested in playing.

Progress Testing

In order to both guide and check student's progress., there will be a test given the week of November 24, 2008, in which students must show reasonable progress in order to continue. This will not be a difficult test for students who practice on a regular basis. Since band is a pull-out program, students need to show reasonable progress in order to justify being pulled from class. While band is usually very enjoyable for the students, it is a class. Again, with regular practice, the test will be EASY. Students will know well in advance what will be expected on the test. Last year, very few students were adversely affected by the testing. It also proved a valuable benchmark to gauge student progress.

I am excited about another great year of music at Lightfoot Elementary and hope that your child finds this opportunity exciting as well.

Please keep this letter for future reference.



Mr. Scott Bonner
Band Director

Note:

This letter can be found, downloaded and printed from <http://daycreekband.org>. Click on the Lightfoot button.

In addition to your instrument, please look and see what accessories you will need.

Take this letter with you to the music store.

It can eliminate a great deal of confusion.

No method book is required. *It will be provided for students during band class.*

Flute

Plain, soft cloth for cleaning instrument
Sharp #2 Pencil with an eraser
1" three-ring binder (prefer black)

Clarinet

Cork grease
Mouthpiece brush
3 - #1 1/2 reeds and 3 - #2 reeds
Reed Guard
Swab cleaner or pad saver
Sharp #2 Pencil with an eraser
1" three-ring binder (prefer black)

Saxophone

Mouthpiece brush
Neck Strap (not a case strap)
Cork grease
3 #1 1/2 reeds and 3 #2 reeds
Reed Guard
Swab cleaner or pad saver
Sharp #2 Pencil with an eraser
1" three-ring binder (prefer black)

Make sure you get a saxophone strap (NOT A CASE STRAP). Do NOT rent the instrument without the proper strap. Leave the store and go elsewhere if they try to send you out without the proper strap.

Trumpet

Valve Oil
Tuning slide grease
Mouthpiece brush
Plain, soft cloth
Sharp #2 Pencil with an eraser
1" three-ring binder (prefer black)

Trombone

Slide Oil
Tuning slide grease
Mouthpiece brush
Plain, soft cloth
Sharp #2 Pencil with an eraser
1" three-ring binder (prefer black)

Percussion

Practice Pad and sticks (5B or 2B)
Sharp #2 Pencil with an eraser
1" three-ring binder (prefer black)

For all instruments, a wire, foldable music stand for home practice is highly recommended!!

Many music stores teach private lessons. Lessons are always a good idea, and can greatly improve the student's level of success.

Jumpstart Lessons

We encourage students to get their instruments as soon as possible after confirming what they will be playing. But sometimes waiting to get started can be very frustrating, so this year we are offering some early lessons called **Jumpstart Lessons**.

These lessons teach students how to properly assemble their instrument (which students often think they can do, but prove to themselves otherwise), and to play their first notes. **These lessons are voluntary but are highly encouraged.** This can greatly improve a student's confidence in beginning their new instrument, and can help them be more successful in those crucial first weeks.

The Jumpstart lessons are being team-taught by Mr. Bonner at Day Creek Intermediate School, Mr. Peske at Summit Intermediate School and Mrs. Aquila at Heritage Intermediate School. All of the same techniques are taught by all teachers, so you needn't worry if your **Jumpstart Lesson** isn't taught by "your" band teacher. If there is more than one time offered for a lesson, just take the one more convenient for you. You do not need to attend more than one.

In addition to JumpStart lessons, there will also be instructional video on daycreekband.org to assist students. Both the jumpstart lessons, and the videos are a good idea. To view the videos, go to <http://daycreekband.org>, then select the button for your elementary school. Click on the link to view videos.

The **Jumpstart Lessons** will be held in the Day Creek Intermediate Band Room (E3), Summit Intermediate School (SIS) Band Rooms (S1) or at the Heritage Intermediate School (HIS) Band Room (B2).

Please be on time. There is only time to teach the lesson once during this hour.

Flutes

~~Wednesday, September 12, from 6-7 p.m. at Summit~~

~~Thursday, September 13, from 6-7 pm. at Heritage~~

Clarinets

~~Wednesday, September 12, from 6-7 p.m. at Heritage~~

~~Thursday, September 13, from 5-6 pm. at Summit~~

Saxophones

Monday, September 8, from 4-5 pm. at Day Creek

Trumpets

Monday, September 8, from 5-6 pm. at Day Creek

Trombones

Monday, September 8, from 6-7 pm. at Day Creek

Percussion will not require a Jumpstart Lesson

Lightfoot Elementary School

Band Enrollment Form

2008/2009

Student Name	
Instrument <i>(flute and percussion only include 2nd choice)</i>	Classroom Teacher
Home Phone	Parent email address (If you would like email correspondence)
Parent/Guardian Names	

As a member of the Elementary Band Program, I agree to:

1. **Have this form returned by Monday, September 8.** I realize that if this deadline is not met, I may not be able to participate.
2. **Have my instrument by Monday, September 15.** I realize that if this deadline is not met, I will not be able to participate.
3. Be on time to class with my instrument and other necessary materials.
4. Practice at home on a daily basis. The amount of time spent practicing will be designated by the teacher, but will be at least 10 minutes per day. This amount fits within the district guidelines for homework.
5. Keep up with all school and band assignments, and make up any missed work. Information is available at <http://daycreekband.org>
6. Attend necessary performances during and after school. Failure to participate in performances WILL negatively affect band grade.
7. Provide my own instrument and materials as noted.
8. Remain in band class for at least eight weeks.
9. If still in the band program, I will attend the Spring Concert.
10. If I feel I would like to drop from the band program, I will provide a written note from my parents.
11. I am aware of the Jumpstart lessons.

Student Signature

Parent Signature