

# Riversprings Middle School 2021-2022 Band Handbook



Director of Bands: Matthew Spindler  
[matthew.spindler@wcsb.us](mailto:matthew.spindler@wcsb.us)

(850) 926-2300 ext. 6801

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Riversprings Middle School Band program is to offer students in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades an opportunity to learn about instrumental music in a positive, fun environment. It is our desire to give each and every student the experience of producing music and expressing creativity through music. We believe that every child has the right to develop a lifelong love of music. Our band program exists to help facilitate that development and to prepare them to meet the high school entrance level as stated through the Sunshine State Standards and the local high school.

## AVAILABLE ENSEMBLES

Beginning Band: All first year players will be placed in the beginning band class.

Concert Band: This class serves as the intermediate ensemble for the band program. It is designed primarily for 2<sup>nd</sup> year players and a few 3<sup>rd</sup> year players.

Symphonic Band: This is the top performing ensemble in the RMS Band Program designed primarily for 3<sup>rd</sup> year players, though some 2<sup>nd</sup> year players will be asked to promote early.

Jazz Band: This ensemble meets after school throughout the year on Tuesday afternoons. Students must be currently enrolled in either symphonic or concert band to be eligible for this ensemble.

**Note: The band director makes sure each student is placed in the ensemble that best fits their level of ability. Factors involved in ensemble placement include, but are not limited to; grades, instrumental tone quality, instrumental technical ability, school attendance, work ethic, attitude, ensemble balance, and willingness to receive instruction. The band director has the final say on all ensemble placements and chair placements throughout the band program.**

## BAND FUNCTIONS

Students in the band program are definitely busy! We perform at numerous functions throughout the year, some of which the dates are not known until after the start of school. Below is a list of approximate dates for known performances and which ensembles are expected to be present:

\*Football games: Games will be held in the months of September and October. Symphonic and Concert Band present.

\*Annual Concerts: The band holds two annual concerts, one in mid-November and one in early May. All band students must be present for these dates.

\*Parades: The band (or part of the band) marches in two parades each year. Both are held in Panacea, one on the first Saturday evening in December (usually just 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade percussion students), one on the first Saturday in May (open to all band students, required for Symphonic band).

\*Concert MPA: This is the annual assessment for the band program wherein we receive our rating for the year (e.g. superior, Excellent, etc.). The event occurs in early March each year, and Symphonic Band is required to attend. Depending on the size and sound of the ensemble each year, concert band may also be asked to perform.

**Please read the attendance and grading policies below in regards to performance attendance.**

**GRADING POLICY**

Nine week grades will be determined from the following:

- Daily Participation.....10%
- Practice Records.....30%
- All musical requirements including performance attendance.....60%

Daily Participation Grade (10%)

The daily participation grade consists of musical preparation, and bringing all required materials to class. Required materials are an instrument (including mouthpiece and reeds), folder of all assigned music, method book, pencil, and a positive attitude. If a student is late to class or missing materials (excluding instrument), one warning will be given per week. If the same infraction occurs within the same week after a warning has been given, an alternate assignment will be assigned/completed for a grade. Forgetting an instrument (that is, not being able to play for lack of equipment), is an automatic alternate assignment.

Practice Records (30%) Students will be required to turn in one practice record for each week. The minimum requirement for a grade of 100% A is four days of practice for 15 minutes each day (Symphonic Band), and four days of practice for 10 minutes each day (Concert Band and Beginning Band). All practice must occur on separate days. Grade will be based on number of complete practice days in each week.

- 4/4=100%
- 3/4=80%
- 2/4=70%
- 1/4=60%

A blank practice record turned in on time may be considered for up to half credit. Additionally, for each day that a practice record is late, 10 % of the total grade will be deducted. For example: a full practice record turned in two days late would be accepted for 80%. Extra credit will be offered for students who complete practice record over any extended holiday or break.

Musical Requirements and Performance Attendance (60%)

Students will be given frequent playing assignments (playing tests) which will need to be performed as part of the student's grade. Most of the time, these assignments will be played by

each student individually during class time. All students will be given many opportunities to make up any low scores before the end of the nine weeks. Additionally, students are required to attend every performance as a part of this grade. This includes concerts, parades, festivals, FBA, MPA and any other musical events in which the full band is performing. Please see the section below on absences for information on what constitutes an excused absence.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Calendars are provided at the beginning of the school year. Any changes to the calendar will be made as far in advance as possible. Unless otherwise stated, all performances are mandatory. The students put a lot of time and effort into preparing for performance and should not have to worry about their peers letting them down by not showing up. Please note: while band is a privilege, students will not be excused from rehearsal or performance for discipline. Not allowing a student to perform actually punishes all students involved, and this will not be excused.

Students who are involved with other extracurricular activities at RMS will be asked to work with the band director and other coaches/sponsors to set up a plan for how time will be shared with all activities. Students will not be penalized for participating in numerous activities, however we do ask for open communication with all activities so that the best possible schedule can be arranged for all involved.

The band director must be **notified 1 week in advance** should there be a scheduling conflict. **Students will NOT be excused** from any concert or FBA event...so please plan ahead for your child. In case of an emergency please leave a message for the band director at the school (926-2300 x6801) or email at [matthew.spindler@wcsb.us](mailto:matthew.spindler@wcsb.us) as soon as possible and follow up with a written note. Emergencies will be considered for excusal on an individual basis and must be presented in writing. **Unexcused absences from performances will negatively influence student's grade, may result in a student not being allowed to attend band field trips, and possibly the promotional status to the Symphonic Band.**

### **After School Rehearsal**

Attendance to ALL other school rehearsals is mandatory. Students who skip rehearsal are likely to be excluded from playing at assessments, concerts, and may be excluded from band field trips. Failing to perform at a concert or assessment will lower student grade (see section 2 and 3). Excused absences may be given on a case by case basis, but the band director must be notified at least one week in advance. Please note that "not having a ride" will not be excused as many students make necessary arrangements in this situation.

**Band is a year long course.** A student who enrolls in band will remain in band for the entire school year. If a student decides not to be in band the following school year, the student will be scheduled into the Unified Arts rotation wheel.

## CONDUCT

All students in the RMS band program are expected to follow the official Student Code of Conduct of Riversprings Middle School and the Wakulla County School Board at all times. Major or consistent infractions of this policy could be cause from removal from the program. In addition, the following conduct standards have been designed to create a positive learning environment. They are expected of all RMS band members:

- \* There will be no talking or disruptive noises while the director is on the podium.
- \* There will be no food, drink, candy, or gum allowed in the band room.
- \* Students may not touch instruments or equipment that does not belong to them without permission from the owner AND the band director...zero tolerance violation.
- \* Theft will not be tolerated and is a zero tolerance violation.
- \* Only percussionists may touch the percussion equipment.
- \* Students will strive to maintain positive words and attitudes while participating in band activities and classes.
- \* No use of profanity or otherwise inappropriate speech.
- \* No student may say anything negative, insulting, or demeaning to others.
- \* No spraying of perfumes, body sprays, hairspray... allowed in or around band room.

Non-adherence to these standards could result in one of the following disciplinary actions: lunch detention, written assignment, office referral, loss of privileges (including field trip attendance), and/or removal from the band program.

### Grades, Eligibility and Contribution

As part of any ensemble in the RMS Band Program, students will be expected to maintain high grades in all of their band classes. The minimum required band GPA to perform at MPA, or to travel to any field trip is a 2.0 (or a C average). Students will not be allowed to travel with the band in any capacity (including the graded MPA event in March) if they do not maintain this average across all calculated 9 weeks' grades. While band is not an "academic course", it is graded just as strictly and requires similar focus and long range attention to detail as any academic course at the school. Please do not ask the band director to grade multiple weeks' worth of work so that a student may gain last minute eligibility. Rather, check FOCUS frequently and ask any questions that you may have upon seeing a low grade. Students can make up grades for almost anything in their gradebook, but not all at one time! Planning is crucial for success in this class.

Additionally, it is expected that all students involved in the band program will be "contributing members" of the ensemble. This is defined as "consistently contributing through instrumental performance and through personal investment in the band program." Students who do not add to the experience of others both with their playing (e.g. playing their instrument each day in class) and their presence (i.e. students must not be rude or distracting so as to detract from another student's experience) may be asked to change ensembles or possibly be dismissed from the program. A parent conference/meeting will be scheduled before any such action is taken, and every opportunity will be given for students to improve once an issue has been detected. Please understand that the actions (or inactivity) of one student has an effect on all of the others present in their band.

## **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES / UNIFORMS**

During concerts / performances, all band members will be required to wear the assigned uniform. Students must wear black, closed toe shoes (dress shoes) and black socks or stockings/hose. All families will have adequate time to obtain the necessary items well prior to the day of the concert. **Students out of uniform will not be allowed to perform** and will be given an unexcused absence for the performance (See Attendance Policy).

All RMS band students are required to provide / purchase the following items:

- \*\$20.00 Activity Fee
- \*Band Uniform--price will not exceed \$20.00 depending on class placement.
- \*Instrument (discussed in next section) and required cleaning/maintenance supplies (e.g. valve oil, reeds, cork grease, etc.).
- \*Blue jeans
- \*Black dress pants
- \*Black dress shoes

### **To our Students and Families with Financial Difficulties:**

Every effort will be made by the director and the school to ensure that every student with a desire to learn can participate in the band program regardless of financial capabilities. This is only possible if we are made aware of any difficulties. Students must be up to date on all payments to participate in any field trip or special event.

## **INSTRUMENTS / EQUIPMENT**

Most students will be required to rent or purchase their own instruments by the start of the third week of school. You will be provided with this information and the opportunity to do so during the first few weeks of school. There are a limited number of school-owned instruments. Students who are issued a school instrument will sign an instrument rental contract and pay a rental fee of \$45 for the year to cover general maintenance of the instrument. Students will be responsible for any damages beyond normal wear and tear. If the instrument rental fee is to be paid in installments, the first \$20 will be due at the end of August and the second payment of \$25 will be due at the beginning of the second 9 week grading period.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Throughout the year, the band will need to have fundraisers for the purpose of purchasing new sheet music, books, instruments, equipment, and FBA (Florida Bandmasters Assoc.) participation events. Students in the band will be expected to participate in these fundraisers to the best of their ability. Students will not be penalized for non-participation in fundraising events but those who do participate will often be eligible for funds placed in their individual band

account to pay for any band related expenses. Students may also be able to earn credit through fundraisers that can be used to help pay for band field trips.

## **TRAVEL**

Occasionally it will be necessary for the band to travel to performance sites, festivals, field trips, etc. The Wakulla County School Board field trip policy requires students to travel to field trip locations on school provided transportation. **Students are permitted to travel home from an event with a custodial parent as long as -the band director has received a written notice signed by the principal/assistant principal stating that the transportation arrangements have been approved.** In the days leading up to a field trip, students may bring these notes to the band director and he will take them to the administration for approval or the student/parent may get the note signed on their own and then turn it in to the band director. These notes need to be received by Mr. McManus at least 48 hours prior to the start of travel.

When traveling with the band, students should remember that they are representing Riversprings Middle School and the entire RMS Band Program. All band rules and school rules and dress code will be in effect. Always behave in a manner which you would be proud for others to observe. Unacceptable behavior will be dealt with harshly.

In addition to the rules set forth by the school and the band handbook (see "CONDUCT") each trip will have specific rules and guidelines. These rules and a complete itinerary will be distributed by the director prior to travel.

## **AWARDS**

The following awards / certificates will be presented each year:

- \* Most outstanding Rookie: given to outstanding 6<sup>th</sup> grade student.
- \* Most improved: given to 7<sup>th</sup> grade student showing marked musical improvement.
- \* Leadership Award: given to 8<sup>th</sup> grader who demonstrated exceptional leadership in band.
- \*Musicianship Award: given to students who show highest quality of musical skill.
- \*Director's Choice Award: given to committed 8<sup>th</sup> grade students visible in all aspects of the band program.
- \*Medal of Honor: given to 8<sup>th</sup> grader as the student of the year in the band program
- \*Students who participate in Solo and Ensemble that score Superior from FBA
- \* Band students involved with FMEA All-State Band or Honor Band

Each award will be awarded upon the decision of the director. In some cases, more than one student may receive the same award. However, for honor awards (leadership, outstanding rookie, medal of honor) typically one student will receive the award.

**Volunteers: Due to COVID 19 we will be unable to have volunteers in our buildings. The safety of our students and community is our top priority.**



### RMS BAND CONTRACT

The following contract must be completed and returned to the band director no later than the end of August. This will count as part of your participation grade.

Note: Failure to return contract does not excuse students from the rules/regulations set forth in the handbook.

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_ HOME PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

BIRTHDAY: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT / GUARDIAN INFORMATION:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime phone #(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and relation to student

\_\_\_\_\_ (email address)

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime phone #(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and relation to student

\_\_\_\_\_ (email address)

**I have read the handbook and agree to abide by all policies and procedures found within. I understand that non-compliance with these policies and procedures could result in removal from the band program.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Wakulla County Schools

## COMMITTED TO SUCCESS

### NON DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The School Board of Wakulla County, Florida does not discriminate in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, marital status, disability, genetic information for applicants and employees, or any other reason prohibited by Federal and State law regarding non-discrimination. See 34 C.F.R. 100.6(d); 34 C.F.R. 106.9; 34 C.F.R. 110.25.

In addition, the School Board provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. This holds true for all students who are interested in participating in educational programs and/or extracurricular school activities. See 34 C.F.R. 108.9.

Disabled individuals needing reasonable accommodations to participate in and enjoy the benefits of services, programs, and activities of the School Board are required in advance to notify the administrator at the school/center at which the event or service is offered to request reasonable accommodation.

The lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to any opportunity or event associated with Wakulla County Schools.

The designated Equity Coordinator, Title IX and Section 504 Compliance Coordinator as required by 34 C.F.R. 100.6(d) is Angie Walker, Executive Director of Human Resources, 69 Arran Road, Crawfordville, Florida 32327; 850.926.0065; [angela.walker@wcsb.us](mailto:angela.walker@wcsb.us).