

Thomson Middle School

Band Handbook



2007 – 2008

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Dear Band Parents,

Welcome to the Thomson Middle School Band! We are thrilled to be back at school after a great summer break. We hope your student is as excited as we are about the whirlwind year ahead of making music and having fun! Mr. Henderson and I have big plans for the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade band students this year, including performances, trips, and much more.

This band handbook is designed to help each parent and student plan for and navigate through the busy school year. It is chock full of important dates, band policy, and answers to the most frequently asked questions. Please read the entire handbook carefully and save it for future reference! After reading it, please visit our website at:

<http://www.tmsband.org>

and complete the band registration form for the year 2007-2008. It's important that ALL students have the registration form completed – **even if you filled one out last year**. It takes just a few minutes to complete online – no paperwork necessary! Please fill out as accurately as possible – your best guess at sizes is appreciated! If you do not know serial numbers for instruments, leave it blank – we'll fill it in later.

If you do not have access to the internet, please complete the registration form at the back of this handbook and return it with the Handbook/Medical Release Form.

Here's a checklist to make sure your student is ready for a great year!

- Marked all band dates on the calendar?
 - Paid band fee by August 15th?
 - Completed and returned Medical Release Form?
 - Completed **ONLINE** Band Registration Form?
- OR
- Completed and Returned Band Registration Form from handbook?

If you ever have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either Mr. Henderson or Mr. Pirkle. The best way to reach us is by email: pirkleb@mcduffie.k12.ga.us or hendersont@mcduffie.k12.ga.us. The bandroom phone number is (706) 986-4460. If you leave a detailed message, we'll get back to you as soon as possible!

We look forward to a lot of fun and great music this year!

Sincerely,

Bradley Pirkle, TMS Band Director

PS - 6th grade band parents - August 13th is Instrument Rental Night at the TMS Bandroom from 3:30pm – 6:30pm. **Fast-Start Saturday** for 6th grade students is August 18th from 9 – Noon!

Band Fees

Each member of the Thomson Middle School band pays a small fee at the beginning of the year to cover the cost of necessary materials for band. You do get a lot for your money! The following is a list of the fee amounts and what that fee includes:

6th Grade Band - \$30 (Essential Elements Book 1, Concert black shirt, band tee)

7th Grade Band - \$30 (Band T-shirt, Tuxedo shirt w/ bowtie, Essential Elements Book 2)

8th Grade Band - \$30 (includes Band T-shirt, metronome, 3rd music book)

Prices for Individual Items (if you need to purchase single items only)

TMS Black Golf Shirt - \$15

Band T-shirt - \$15

Tuxedo shirt w/ bowtie - \$15

Essential Elements 2000 book - \$7

Cleaning Kit for instrument - \$15

Metronome - \$20

Leather Clarinet/Saxophone Ligature - \$15

Drum Sticks - \$5 a pair

Mallets - \$25 a pair

Music Lyre and Flip Folder - \$10 (for 7th and 8th grade pep band members)

**Valve Oil - \$2

**Clarinet Reeds - \$1.50 Sax Reeds - \$2 each Oboe/Bassoon reeds - \$8 each

**Please return your fee payment in a clearly labeled envelope ASAP
no later than August 15th**

** Valve oil and reeds must be paid for at the time of receipt. No items on "credit."

NOTE – Items can be bought individually or from anywhere you choose. We feel like we've found the best prices available, but if you choose to shop elsewhere, please make sure you get everything your student needs – book, uniform, supplies, etc.

SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS

French horns, baritones, tubas, bass clarinets, bassoons, and bari sax, all of which are owned by the school, will be available for student use. Instruments will be issued according to student ability and instrumentation needs only. **Any student who is assigned a school owned instrument will be responsible for purchasing his own mouthpiece for that instrument and must pay for any damages to the instrument.** Each student is expected to care for the instrument as if it were his own.

Baritone/Trombone/French Horn Mouthpiece - \$21.50

Tuba/Bass Clarinet/Bari Sax Mouthpiece - \$35.00

Cleaning Kit - \$15

BEGINNING BAND

Beginning band is made up of all 6th grade students who are enrolled in band this year. The beginning band class will meet everyday, with very few required after-school rehearsals. We will perform at least two concerts this year - a Christmas concert and a Spring concert. Students will be immediately integrated into the total band program and will participate in fundraising, solo and ensemble, and private lessons. Lessons are optional, but highly encouraged for individualized attention and musical development.

The TMS and THS band staffs understand the importance of instrument selection; therefore, each student will undergo a very thorough instrument selection process, whereby the band directors will recommend the instrument on which we believe the student will have the greatest opportunity for success. Once an instrument is chosen, the student is expected to remain on that instrument for as long as he remains in the Thomson band program. Occasionally, we may feel that a student has attained the skills necessary to play a more challenging instrument (i.e. bari-sax, bassoon, etc.) These recommendations will be made on a case by case basis according to the student's individual (and band's instrumentation) needs. **Our uniform for the beginning band is the the band t-shirt and band black golf shirt, khaki pants, and black shoes.**

CONCERT BAND

The Thomson Middle School Concert Band is comprised of all 7th grade band students. The Concert Band will perform at least three times this year - a Christmas concert, Festival, and a Spring concert. The musical demand on the ensemble is higher than that of the Beginning band; therefore, we expect all students in the Concert band to practice on a daily basis. Some after-school rehearsals are listed on the County-wide school calendar to allow ample time to plan accordingly. Extra rehearsals may be added in the weeks leading up to a performance. Plenty of time will be allowed to make arrangements to be there. Each student is expected to attend all after-school rehearsal and to have a ride home after practice. Please have your child picked up immediately after practice. ***A missed after-school rehearsal or performance will result in a zero.*** Individual practice is expected, and required, of all students as part of their daily participation grade. Lessons are optional, but highly recommended and would fulfill part of the "daily practice" requirement.

The concert attire for the ensemble consists of **black poly-wool slacks, a white tuxedo shirt, black bow tie, and black shoes.** This uniform will be used for two years, so please purchases sizes accordingly.

SYMPHONIC BAND

The Thomson Middle School Symphonic Band is made up of 8th grade band students. This is the most advanced music ensemble at TMS, so they will be involved in many activities throughout the year. The Symphonic Band meets daily and will have some after-school rehearsals scheduled. There will be several concerts during the year including a Fall performance with the THS Bulldog Brigade, Christmas concert, Christmas Parade, Festival, and a Spring concert. The level of music performed by this ensemble is such that individual practice is not only expected, but required as part of the daily participation grade. Lessons are optional, but also highly encouraged, and would fulfill part of the "daily practice" requirement.

The concert attire for the Symphonic band consists of **black poly-wool slacks, a white tuxedo shirt, black bow tie, and the TMS Symphonic Band vest, and black shoes.** This is also the attire for the performing ensembles at Thomson High School. A shirt and bow tie set will be available at Moore's Department Store at a 25% discount (for band students only). The vest remains the property of TMS and will be issued to the students at no cost. **The uniform needs to be purchased as soon as possible.**

ENSEMBLES

The Thomson Middle School Band Program offers students many unique performance opportunities. The Jazz Band, Brass Ensemble, Woodwind Ensemble, and Percussion Ensemble all meet at various times throughout the year. They provide our more outstanding and dedicated students opportunities to play more complex literature and perform in more of a chamber music setting. Each ensemble is considered an extra-curricular activity, thus, it is not associated with the student's grade. Membership into each ensemble is by audition and/or invitation. **Once a student has joined a group, he is expected to attend each rehearsal and performance.** Failure to do so, without an excused absence (as stated in Board Policy), will result in immediate dismissal from the group.

PEP BAND

The Thomson Middle School Pep Band is comprised of **all 8th grade band students** and select outstanding 7th graders. Exceptions include those band students on the football team, the cheerleading squad, and the TMS Majorettes. This group performs at TMS football games, pep rallies, one Thomson High School varsity football game, and possibly some special performances during the year.

The Pep Band will rehearse during class and occasionally after school. As in all performing ensembles, **rehearsal and performance attendance is required.** Students should assume that a missed after-school rehearsal or performance will negatively affect his daily participation grade and/or performance grade. **The uniform for our performances will be the band T-shirt and shorts, or TMS black golf shirt with blue jeans.**

JAZZ BAND

This year we'll be starting our new TMS Jazz Band. While the traditional instrumentation of a jazz band is normally saxophones, trombones, trumpets, and rhythm section – we'll be open-minded to a variety of instruments. Jazz band will meet **during band class** as well as a regular rehearsal before or after school (depending on the schedule of the director and students) once a week.

Membership into each ensemble is by audition and/or invitation. **Once a student has joined a group, he is expected to attend each rehearsal and performance.** If a student isn't going to be able to be at the performances and practices, then we want to allow a different student an opportunity to play in the Jazz band instead. If a student misses two or more rehearsals in a row, they will be dismissed from the group.

ALLSTATE & DISTRICT 10 HONOR BAND

Many of our 7th and 8th grade band students at TMS audition for the District 10 Honor Band and All-State band. The District 10 Honor Band is comprised of the best musicians from all of the middle schools in our District which includes schools from Richmond, Columbia, Washington, Emmanuel, and Jefferson counties. We believe that our band students are as talented and prepared as any students in the district, and every year we have several students that are selected to the Honor Band. The audition is based on performing *4 major scales, a chromatic scale, and a short sight-reading exercise*. No one is required to audition, but everyone in our band class learns the audition material anyway as part of our daily warm-ups.

Selection to the District 10 Honor Band or the All-State Band is one of the highest individual achievements for any band student. It also reflects very highly on our school and band program. Mr. Henderson and Mr. Pirkle will work diligently to prepare any student who is interested in pursuing these honors. The audition date is **December 1st**, but the **sign-up deadline is October 5th**. The cost to audition for the District 10 Honor Band is **\$5**.

Transportation is provided to and from Columbia Middle School where the audition is held. Of course, parents are welcome to drive their student to and from the audition as well. Our goal this year is to have at least 10 students selected to the District 10 Honor Band!

The All-State Band is made up of the best students from any middle school in Georgia. The audition is two-part: The first round is the *very same audition* as the District Honor Band, but includes one prepared solo. If the student scores high enough, they are recommended for the 2nd round in January: another prepared solo and sight-reading. It's an honor just to be recommended for the 2nd round! We will work extra hard to prepare any student that wants to try out for All-State Band as well. Private lessons are another **terrific** resource in preparing for the two rounds of the audition. The cost to audition for All-State is an additional \$15.

DAILY PRACTICE/PRIVATE LESSONS

Individual practice is the heart of our band program. A student can not expect to reach his full potential if an individual practice routine is not followed. Lack of practice can lead to much frustration when performing both on and off the stage. Each student in the McDuffie County band program is encouraged to practice at least thirty minutes each day. At the end of each week, a parent will need to sign and verify that the student's practice log is accurate. Each Monday, signed practice logs will be submitted to the director. Twenty percent (20%) of the final band grade for each grading period will be based on the student's having practiced at least one (1) hour per week. We ask parents to encourage their children to practice. The success of the individual student (and our band as a whole) is directly related to the individual practice routine.

Parents, we strongly encourage you to seek private lessons for your child. While our goal is to have highly efficient rehearsals both during and after school, the individualized attention that a student can receive in a private lesson is invaluable. **A private lesson is one-on-one instructional time between your child and a qualified and skilled individual accomplished on the instrument your child plays.** All attention is focused on your child's individual needs and development as a musician. Students who take private lessons attain greater levels of achievement and musicianship. The success of any band program depends on the determination and quality of its students. Top band programs across the state have a high participation rate in private lessons. Any extra work and effort outside of the classroom will help ensure the continual development, progression, and success of your young musician.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

I. Policies and Procedures

A. Rehearsal Procedure

1. Above all, when a director is on the podium, all attention is on him/her. Do not talk - LISTEN! Instructions will be given from the podium. Respect begins with this simple procedure.
2. Enter quietly, **spit out gum**, and get instrument (leave case in locker)
3. Sit down in your section and begin warming-up
4. Agenda books under chair at all times
5. Make sure you have everything you need for class before we begin!
6. Class will begin immediately - no wasted time.
7. Use the restroom before and after class only.
8. **Stay on task!**

- B. Food, drink, gum, sunflower seeds, or candy are NOT allowed in band room.
- C. Play ONLY the instrument assigned to you.
- D. All trash should be picked up and put in the garbage can.
- E. No instrument should be left on the floor in the bandroom or instrument storage room.
- F. Students are expected to have all class materials (instruments, music, books, and pencils) at school every day. Failure to possess the necessary materials will result in a strike.
- G. All policies and guidelines set forth in the TMS handbook and Student Code of Conduct are applicable.

II. Consequences

Depending on the severity of any infraction, the Band Director reserves the right to:

- Issue a verbal warning
- Reduce the Daily Participation Grade
- Issue a "strike" (please refer to the TMS Handbook concerning "strikes")
- Call the parents of the student
- Suspend the student from participation in concerts, trips, events, etc.
- Issue an Office Referral
- In extreme cases, have the student removed from band indefinitely.

The Merit System

Merits are issued to students based on student performance and participation. Single (1) merits are issued per pass-off from the method books or Festival/Concert music. Additional merits may be issued for displays of leadership, hard work, discipline, etc., at the Band Directors' discretion. A certain number of merits will be required in order to participate in the Spring Trip. **Merits earned are a direct result of music mastery.** As certain levels are achieved, certificates, medals and/or pins, plaques, and trophies will be awarded appropriately.

ABSENCES

Each student plays a very important part in the ensemble, and we need to make adjustments if they are going to absent. Each student is expected to attend all required events during the school year. In the event that the student must miss a performance, please let us know ahead of time. **Written documentation must be submitted the following school day for every absence;** an absence will be automatically unexcused otherwise. Please refer to the TMS Handbook as to what constitutes an excused absence.

Unexcused absences will result in a "zero" for that day's Participation Grade and, if applicable, the Performance grade. Unexcused absences might also result in suspension from participating in the next performance.

Tardies

We do mark tardies. Our door shuts at 5 minutes after class change. More than 10 minutes late for class will be considered "skipping." Please be on time, ready to play everyday!

GRADING POLICY

Each student's grade will be calculated in the following manner:

1. Daily Participation Grade 25%
 2. Playing Tests 10%
 3. Practice Log 20%
 4. **Performances** **35% *****
 5. Final Test 10%
- Final Grade: 100%

***** An unexcused absence from a performance could result in an "F" for the 9-weeks.** Please mark your calendar with all the important band dates. And, when possible, please schedule appointments on days not conflicting with band events.

FUND-RAISERS

Each year, students have the opportunity to participate in fund-raisers, which benefit the band program and are designed with student rewards in mind. Fund-raisers for the 2006-2007 school year include: Discount Cards, Christmas Poinsetta sale, a Spring brochure sale, and possibly a benefit dinner/concert. Each student who participates earns credit towards the cost of the spring trip. **Credit earned can not be used for any other purpose other than our trips.** For every 10 band cards sold, your child will be credit with \$20 toward the cost of the trip. Students are NOT required to participate in any fund-raiser. **After 8th grade, unused trip credit does not carry over to THS.**

BOOSTER MEETINGS

At the core of every successful band there is a strong and active Booster program. Without a dedicated group of parents backing the band, it will be impossible to realize our dreams and accomplish our goals. The main purpose of any Band Booster organization is to give the band the support it needs to accomplish these goals. This support can be given by raising money, chaperoning trips, supervising projects, and by doing other necessary things that will help us.

We do need the time, effort, and support of every parent that has a child in the band program. Band is going to be an important time in your child's life, so please volunteer your time and talents to make it even more worthwhile. Our first band booster meeting will be on **August 27, 2007 at 7:00pm in the TMS Bandroom.**

LOCKERS

Instrument lockers are available for the storage of each student's instrument. Each student will be assigned a locker or other designated space for instrument storage. Abusing the use of the locker at any point throughout the year will result in the loss of locker privileges. Students are responsible for the care of the locker and lock throughout the year and will be fined for any damages. **Each instrument not stored in a locker must be carried to and from all classes.** Failure to put instrument in case and/or to lock locker will result in a warning for 1st offense, and loss of locker privilege for 2nd offense. Students should not leave instruments in other teachers' classrooms.

AWARDS

To be eligible for any award you must meet the following criteria:

1. Be enrolled in a performance class at TMS.
2. No unexcused absences from a performance.
3. No grade lower than a "B" in band for the entire year.
4. Show a positive attitude towards music and the band program.
5. Meet all requirements set forth in this handbook.

**note: Not all eligible students will receive an award.*

This year, we'll begin our new **Three-Level Musicianship Awards!** Based on what individual goals are reached during the year, a student can receive the *Silver Level Medallion*, *Gold Level Medallion*, or the top-level *Master Musician Medallion*. The requirements for each award and the prizes you can receive will be given out soon, so stay tuned!

SPRING TRIP

Every year the band goes on a spring trip such as Universal Studios in Orlando, FL or Carowinds in Charlotte, NC. The trips are for eligible 7th and 8th grade students and their parents. These are safe, organized, and extremely fun trips! Credit earned from participating in fundraisers can be used toward the cost of the trips for both students and parents. To be eligible to go, a student:

- ✓ Must **NOT** have been suspended from school
- ✓ Must have participated in all band performances/concerts
- ✓ Must not be failing **any class**.
- ✓ Must have paid the remaining balance of the trip by the deadline.

Chaperones must be responsible adults at least 25 years of age. The school district's Tobacco Policy is effective on all school-related trips. No tobacco products will be allowed.

