

Welcome to the ZEPHYR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BAND!!!

I am excited that you have decided to participate in the Zephyr Elementary School Band!

The major goal of beginning band is to provide a solid foundation of musical skills and techniques, while at the same time providing an opportunity for students to have fun making music with others. This is accomplished through weekly lessons, large group rehearsals, and school concerts.

We have two bands in our school: a Fourth Grade Band, which begins rehearsing as an ensemble in spring, and a Fifth Grade Band, which rehearses as a group year round. The Fourth Grade Band rehearses during the school day at times which will be announced, while the Fifth Grade Band rehearses regularly before school on Tuesday and/or Thursday mornings. In addition, all instrumental music students, regardless of their grade, receive one twenty-five minute group instruction lesson during each five-day cycle. These lessons are given on like instruments, and they follow a rotating schedule as to interfere with school work in the least possible way.

Students are expected to practice on a regular basis...after all, as the saying goes, practice makes perfect! Please encourage your child to practice on a regular basis – generally, 20 minutes daily is enough for a beginner to make adequate progress. Parents are expected to sign and initial practice charts weekly, as these charts will be checked at the student's music lesson.

Attendance at concerts is expected. At the present time, we have scheduled the following performances for Zephyr Elementary School:

December 10 – Winter Concert (snow date Dec 17)

June 3 – Spring Concert

Please reserve these dates on your calendars.

In addition, each year we hold a parent information assembly in order to better acquaint parents – especially fourth grade parents – with our program. This year’s instrument demonstration is scheduled for Wednesday night, September 16, at 7:00 pm in the Zephyr Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room. Parents of fourth grade instrumental students are expected to attend. We have representatives from the Nazareth Music Center who will be at this meeting to discuss the renting of instruments with parents, as well as the cost to do so. You do not want to miss this important meeting!

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at hilbornr@cliu.org, or at the Zephyr Elementary School at 610-871-3671.

I am looking forward to making music with your child!

Respectfully,

L. Rick Hilborn

Instrumental Music Teacher

General Philosophy

Zephyr Elementary School

Instrumental Music Program

OUR MISSION: To develop young musicians whose knowledge, competence, and aesthetic awareness will create a foundation for the lifelong enjoyment of instrumental music.

OUR VISION: We believe playing an instrument in the Whitehall-Coplay School District will result in a valuable and rewarding experience for our young musicians when...

I. Students have a vision of themselves as competent musicians in pursuit of a relationship with music. This can occur when:

- Music is valued and appreciated by classroom teachers, administrators, parents, and the community.
- Students experience success on a variety of levels – lessons, solos, ensembles, and large group performances (band).
- Students hear quality performances at all levels.
- Students are *appropriately* placed on their instruments.
- Students have the opportunity to play and sing at all levels.

II. Students are self-directed learners. This can occur when...

- **Students take responsibility for their own growth by practicing regularly.**
- **Students regularly attend lessons and rehearsals.**
- **Students learn to evaluate and reflect on their own and others' performances.**
- **Students work through performance challenges.**

III. Students value the team effort required to perform successfully in both small and large ensembles. This can occur when...

- **Students take responsibility for learning their own individual part.**
- **Students understand the role and relationship of their individual part to the whole.**
- **Students and teachers become emotionally involved with the rehearsal and performance.**
- **Students and teachers show respect for individual learning style and pace.**
- **Students follow the leadership of the conductor / music director.**

IV. Students learn in a safe and creative climate. This can occur when students and teachers...

- **Foster cooperation, respect, and a sense of belonging.**
- **Promote self-esteem, success, and risk taking.**
- **Encourage the appreciation and enjoyment of music.**

Instrumental Music Objectives

(Based on the National Music Standards)

I. Students perform on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire.

- **Technique – perform with good posture, correct hand position, correct embouchure, good breath support, good stick position/control, and proper instrument alignment with the body.**
- **Tone – perform with a tone characteristic of the instrument.**
- **Rhythm – Perform with a secure pulse and rhythmic accuracy on whole, half, quarter, eighth, and dotted note values, along with corresponding rests.**
- **Meter – Demonstrate the ability to read in both duple and triple meter.**

II. Perform expressively a varied repertoire of music representing diverse styles and genres.

- **Interpretation – demonstrate an understanding of dynamics and expression marks as printed in a musical score. Correctly use breathing, articulation, dynamics, balance/blend, and phrasing in order to perform expressively.**

III. Perform in groups.

- **Performance – play alone and with a group in unison and polyphony.**

- **Intonation – demonstrate the ability to compare pitches.**

IV. Improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniments.

- **Improvisation – improvise answers, accompaniments, variations, and embellishments on familiar melodies.**

V. Group Skills

- **Attendance – attend lessons and large group rehearsals on time and regularly.**
- **Behavior / Attitude – listen and follow instructions. Listen to other players alone or in a group. Encourage others. Take care of instrument properly.**
- **Practice – adequately prepare music at home.**

Fourth Grade Band – “Try-outs” and Recruitment

Fourth grade band recruitment takes place during the first several weeks of the school year. An instrument demonstration assembly is given to all fourth graders, at which time the instruments available for instrumental music lessons are discussed and demonstrated. Following the demonstration, forms are distributed to interested students, and once they are signed by the parent and returned to the school, a hands-on “try-out” is given to the student. It is asked that students come prepared to this try-out with their three top choices of musical instruments. Students try-out these instruments in order to determine their best physical adaptation. The result of the above try-out, as well as the student’s personal interest and need for a balanced instrumentation are used to guide the student towards an appropriate instrument choice.

We also sponsor an instrumental music demonstration night for parents. This year, that demonstration is scheduled for **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2009**, starting at 7:00 pm in the school’s multi-purpose room. Representatives from the Nazareth Music Center will be present in order to discuss the instrumental rental process with parents. This is an important meeting and it is *highly recommended* that at least one parent attend this event.

In fourth grade, lessons are offered on the flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, baritone, and percussion kit. Please note that the percussion kit includes both a practice pad (which simulates a snare drum) and a set of bells. The percussion kit available from the Nazareth Music Center meets our requirements.

Practice Tips for Students

1. Practice often and regularly.

- 20 minutes per day is suggested for beginner, while fifth graders may need to practice as much as 30 minutes daily.
- It is often helpful to find a regular time to practice, such as right after coming home from school, or just before supper. Find a time that is suitable for you and your family.

2. Find a suitable place to practice.

- Be sure you have adequate lighting.
- Look for a place to practice where you will not be distracted by the television or other family activities.
- It is helpful to practice in front of a mirror to check posture and embouchure (lips and mouth), mouthpiece position, and instrument hold.

3. Sit up straight and practice with a music stand.

- This will ensure proper posture, correct breathing, and correct instrument hold.

4. Strive for a pleasing sound.

- Never get discouraged by unusual sounds coming from your instrument. This is part of the learning process.

5. Stop and practice difficult parts.

- When the going gets tough, slow down!
- Count and clap the rhythm, and say the note names aloud while using the correct fingerings with which to play the notes.
- Play along with the CD from the book.

Materials List

In addition to securing an instrument, each student will need the following items in order to ensure that his/her musical experience will be positive:

1. **Essential Elements 2000 Instruction Book** – please be sure to purchase “Level 1” of this method book. You will need the book for the appropriate instrument that your child is learning to play.
2. **A Music Stand** – this is a must! Folding music stands are available from the Nazareth Music Center at a minimal cost.
3. **Instrument Accessories:** These accessories must be provided by the family. Accessories are available for your purchase at the music store. Depending on the instrument your child is playing, he/she will need accessories as follows:
 - a. **Flute** – a soft cloth to use to clean the instrument after each use.
 - b. **Clarinet and Saxophone** – reeds and a swab with which to clean the instrument. The life of the reed will depend upon how careful your child is with the reed itself.
 - c. **Trumpets, French Horns, Baritones, Tubas** – valve oil is a must!
 - d. **Trombones** – slide oil is necessary in order to be sure the trombone slide is properly maintained.

Tips for Parents

Please remember that your child is learning a new skill, like riding a bike. Remember all those times when your child attempted to ride the bike, only to fall, get up, try again, and eventually be successful? That's exactly what learning an instrument is like! Your child will need your encouragement in order to succeed.

1. **Be patient!** It takes years – not weeks or months - to truly develop a good sound on any instrument.

2. **Show interest in your child's instrumental music experience.**
 - **Be supportive through frustrating times (there will be many of these!), and enjoy progress together.**
 - **Give your child feedback**
 - **Be sure to sign the practice calendar every week**
 - **Praise your child's efforts.**

3. **Encourage good practice habits.**
 - **Assist your child in setting up a regular practice time and quiet place for practice.**
 - **Practice in front of a mirror if possible.**

4. **Assist in the care of the instrument.**
 - **Refer to pages 2 and 3 of the Essential Elements 2000 book and DVD for detailed instrument information.**

- **An instrument, just like a car, works well only when it is properly cared for and maintained.**
- **Instruments should always be returned to their cases when they are not in use.**
- **Only your child who should play the instrument is the child who is learning the instrument itself. Please do not allow younger siblings to attempt to play a brother or sister's instruments...I have seen this result in damage to the instrument far too many times.**
- **Should an instrument become damaged, please inform me at once...even if it means bringing the instrument to school on a day other than your lesson day. DO NOT attempt to repair the instrument yourself! If I cannot fix it, I will recommend a reputable instrument repairman for you.**

5. Instrumental Music is both an individual and group endeavor.

- **Reinforce skills needed to participate as part of the group, including individual responsibility, dependability, ownership, and attention.**
- **Stress the importance of being punctual for lessons and band rehearsals.**
- **Encourage faithful attendance at school music activities.**

6. Get acquainted with your child's music teacher.

- **Please call or email whenever you have a question or have a concern.**
- **Feel free to drop in on a music lesson sometime!**

General Schedule Information

Students are responsible for remembering their instrument and music on their lesson day. I have seen many creative ways that parents have reminded their children of music lessons in the past – post-it notes work great! Your child will have his/her lesson on the same day (Day 1, Day 2, etc...) of each five day cycle. Please note that sometimes it is necessary to change lesson days – when this happens, I will contact parents via email or through a note sent home with the students. Day 3 is reserved for make-up lessons only! Also, parents of Fifth Grade Band students should be aware that band rehearsals will be held to Tuesday and Thursday mornings before school, regardless of what “number” day it is in the cycle. This should make it much easier for parents to provide transportation to school for their student.

Music lessons are held on a rotating basis. This means that your child might have his lesson at 8:55 one week, 9:20 the next, 9:45 the next week, and so on. This is done so that students do not miss the same class period week after week.

The schedule for each five-day cycle will be emailed home to parents. It will also be available on the school district’s webpage – go to www.whitehallcoplay.org. Under “Quick links”, scroll down and click on “Music”. Then, on the left hand side of the page, click on “Zephyr Elementary”, followed by Mr. Hilborn’s site. You can then find and click on the schedule and information you need.

Please note – your child DOES NOT need to bring his/her music stand to school on the day on his/her lesson – we have plenty of music stands here at school for that purpose. (Remember, you child must have a music stand at home with which to practice, however.)

Progress Reports

Your child DOES NOT receive a grade for his/her participation in instrumental music. However, in order to regularly inform parents of their child's progress in instrumental music, progress reports will be sent home at the times report cards are distributed. Please read over the information on these progress reports carefully – they are designed to assist you, the parent, in helping your child succeed in instrumental music.

Please note that it is to the parent's and student's benefit to retain these progress reports throughout the entire year. That way, it is easy to see progress as it is made. For that very reason, it is highly recommended that students who start the year in band continue until the end of the school year. Remember, learning any new skill takes time. Please contact the director if your child appears to be struggling or discouraged.

The actual progress report appears later in this document.

Playing an instrument is MUCH more than music!

TEAMWORK – Playing an instrument in band teaches students to coordinate individual abilities into one central group effort. It gives them a feeling of group loyalty as well as a sense of belonging.

SELF-DISCIPLINE – Playing an instrument teaches responsibility. Emphasis is placed upon following instructions. Students develop a sense of their role in group achievement.

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT – Meeting and overcoming challenges is one of the single most rewarding experiences of playing a musical instrument. Band provides opportunities for students to grow musically and learn how to reach their goals.

RESPECT FOR THE ARTS – Participating in band encourages respect for great artistic achievement. It also teaches aesthetic values and an awareness of the beauty of music and the arts.

ENHANCING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT – Do you want your child to excel academically? Studies conducted by university researchers, school boards, and college entrance boards have proven that music participation enhances mental processing, actually enlarging the cortex area of the brain. Often, band members academically are typically the highest-achieving students in any school, at any grade level. Instrumental music students also tend to score considerably higher on the SAT's than those students who do not study an instrument.

MAKING FRIENDS – Band members are a very special group of people. Working together as a team often develops strong bonds that become lasting friendships.

SELF CONFIDENCE – The sense of personal worth that students achieve from creating music together often stays with that student for the rest of his/her life.

ENJOYMENT OF SCHOOL – For many students, playing in the band is often a highlight of their school day. They get pleasure from seeing their friends and having fun performing.

CREATIVITY – Music encourages creativity as an inventive thinking style. The study of music supports wonderment, imagination, appreciation, and sensitivity.

COMMUNICATION – Music is a language unto itself and allows the student an understanding of something that cannot be found in any other part of life.

CRITICAL ASSESSMENT – Music allows critical assessment by teaching the student to access factual as well as emotional sides of the mind in the same process.

COMMITMENT – Music teaches tenacity and persistence. The sense of commitment the student learns from this will follow him his entire life. Self esteem is built here!

MUSIC IS MATH – Correct musical performance demands that students make instantaneous mathematical calculations in order that notes are played at the correct time.

MUSIC IS SOCIAL STUDIES – A piece of music almost always reflects upon the society in which it was composed.

MUSIC IS SCIENCE – Musicians constantly adapt to the acoustical surroundings in the places in which they make music.

MUSIC IS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE – Music is a highly developed system of semantics. Many of the terms and playing directions are often written in foreign languages.

MUSIC IS PHYSICAL EDUCATION – The performance on band instruments requires highly-refined coordination of muscles.

General Tips for All Players

- 1. Posture is the single biggest factor which determines how a player sounds! Posture! Posture! Posture! Did I remember to mention posture???**
- 2. Clap and count rhythms.**
- 3. Make sure to get practice charts signed and keep track of your daily practice in terms of minutes practiced per day.**
- 4. Remember the three steps to successful practice:**
 - a. Count the rhythm.**
 - b. Say note names with fingerings/positions while tapping the foot to maintain a steady tempo.**
 - c. Play the exercise.**
- 5. Try using the CD accompaniments. They might be too fast at first, but they will give you a good idea of how the piece is played and how you should sound.**
- 6. Separate the notes... ta ta ...tonging! Flutes and brass instruments should say “tu”, placing the tongue behind the top teeth and release air, while all reed instruments should touch the tip of the tongue to the tip of the reed and release air.**
- 7. Remember, you have an important role in which the greatest accomplishment is the whole ensemble. What better preparation for your role in life?**

Specific Playing Tips for Beginners

FLUTE

1. For the idea of a correct embouchure (lip and mouth formation), pretend to cool off a bowl of hot soup by blowing on your hand.
2. Young flutists should pretend that they have a “drawstring” in their lips...pull the cord for high notes and release it for low notes.

CLARINET / SAXOPHONE

1. Many players bunch the lower lip, putting either too much in the mouth, not enough in the mouth, or not pulling the corners of the mouth back enough to adequately stretch the lip. To help get the correct embouchure, pretend as if you are putting chap stick on your lower lip.
2. For achieving a flat chin on the clarinet, think of drinking through a straw.
3. It is okay to squeak once in a while! If you never squeak, you may not be taking enough mouthpiece in your mouth or using enough air to make a good sound.

BRASS INSTRUMENTS

1. To form the lips correctly, say the letter “m” or the word “tip” without exploding the “p” sound at the end of the word. Hold this position with your lips and then buzz.
2. Brass players need to use fast air in the beginning of their musical study...this will also help you buzz better.
3. Instead of using the term “tighter lips” for high notes, think “hard lips” for high notes and “soft lips” for low notes.

PERCUSSION

- 1. Make “a piece of pie” shape on your drum or bells with your sticks or mallets to help with the correct stick position. Remember – the stick or mallet is an extension of your forearm. Use ONLY your wrists when playing.**
- 2. Percussionists are special people! They get to play MANY instruments! Remember – all percussion instruments are important!**

Zephyr Elementary School
Whitehall-Coplay School District
Instrumental Music Progress Report

Student Name _____ Date _____

Teacher _____ Instrument _____

LESSON ATTENDANCE:

- ___ Student regularly attends lessons / rehearsals and brings all needed materials.
- ___ Student occasionally misses lessons / rehearsals. Number of sessions missed: _____
- ___ Student sometimes forgets materials (book, instrument, music, etc...).

PRACTICE HABITS / ATTITUDE TOWARDS MUSIC:

- ___ Student is well-prepared for lessons; there is evidence of adequate at-home practice.
- ___ Student is eager to come to band / lessons / rehearsals.
- ___ Student is normally prepared for lessons; practice is evident.
- ___ Student is sometimes prepared for lessons; additional practice is suggested.
- ___ Student is generally not prepared for lessons; much additional practice is required.

INSTRUMENT CARE:

- ___ Student demonstrates exceptional care for his/her instrument.
- ___ Student demonstrates adequate care for his/her instrument.
- ___ Student sometimes inadequately cares for his instrument.

BEHAVIOR:

- ___ Student treats others and the property of others with respect.
- ___ Student is well-behaved during lessons/band rehearsals.
- ___ Student demonstrates acceptable behavior during band.
- ___ Student's behavior is sometimes unacceptable (details below):

