



DISCOVERY MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND CLASSES



COURSE SYLLABUS 2015-16

Course Description

This ensemble/class is designed to develop and enhance the musical skill level of band students through chosen literature, fundamentals, and exposure to various performance ensembles. Classroom activities are structured to provide opportunities for aesthetic expression. This ensemble depends on the successful effort and achievement of each individual to do their part to flourish. We ask that every individual contribute his or her part, as we are a **team**.

Benefits of band may include, but are not limited to: Enhances higher brain functions, improves reading and math performance, raises IQ scores, increases SAT scores, and provides students with important experiences that can help them develop physical coordination, timing, memory, leadership, teamwork, and can develop visual, aural, and language skills.

Attendance

All rehearsals and performances are mandatory and attendance is part of the student's grade. With our limited rehearsal time, it is imperative that we make the most of each rehearsal. As a member of the DMS band program, you have an obligation to your fellow band members to be at all rehearsals on time, be prepared, and have all necessary equipment.

1. All band students must abide by PCCS attendance policies.
2. Absences and tardies will be excused in the following situations:
 - A. Medical emergency or personal injury
 - B. Death in the family
 - C. Religious Holiday (pre-approved through director/parent communication at least **two weeks** in advance)
 - D. Special circumstances pre-approved by Mr. Whitlock at least **two weeks** in advance

*Students must have their absence approved by Mr. Whitlock using the "Request for Excused Absence" form. **Please, no emails regarding absences.*** All absences and tardies are to be communicated by the parents to Mr. Whitlock via the "Request for Excused Absence Form". We need as much advanced notice as possible so that we can resolve scheduling issues where applicable. Forms are available from Mr. Whitlock and from our band website at www.discoverybands.org. These forms need to be submitted no less than **two weeks** in advance.

Communication

Mr. Whitlock's band office phone number is **734-416-7960**. It is important that you **call** if you are running late to a rehearsal or performance. Please do not send email regarding absences. *Also, please do not call the main office of the school for band-related questions*, as they are very busy with other duties and would have to halt those duties to call me anyway. Please call me directly with any questions or conflicts.

PLEASE make every attempt to communicate with me as I will work to communicate with you. ***Telephone calls are the preferred method of primary communication.*** In case of immediate illness or family emergency, a telephone call to the Mr. Whitlock is appropriate, prior to the rehearsal or performance.

Students absent from school for the entire day are not allowed to rehearse or perform after school with the band as per district policy. However, please call Mr. Whitlock directly if this should occur. Students are accountable for all homework, rehearsals, and performances. An absence from a rehearsal must be made up after consultation with Mr. Whitlock. Participation at all rehearsals is required and is part of the student's grade. An absence from a performance (which should only occur in dire, unpredictable circumstances communicated effectively and immediately) must be made up with a playing test and possibly a written assignment with Mr. Whitlock immediately upon returning to school.

For After School Rehearsals, two unexcused tardies equals one unexcused absences. One unexcused absence lowers the final grade at least one letter. Two or more unexcused absences will drastically lower the grade and the student will be reassessed at the discretion of Mr. Whitlock regarding further participation in the band program.

For Performances, one unexcused absence lowers the final grade two letters. An unexcused absence will be reassessed at the discretion of Mr. Whitlock regarding further participation in the band program.

Grading

(weighting is subject to change)

Rehearsals/Participation (20%)

Students are responsible for being on time to rehearsals with the proper equipment and materials ready to go when class/rehearsal begins. Students are also responsible for having their assigned parts prepared for class. This alleviates time spent away from improving the entire ensemble. Students will also be evaluated on their classroom participation (this includes: attitude, achievement, preparedness, and effort). Daily practice is expected, as well as the presence of ALL class materials. Class participation at the individual's highest level is a must.

Playing Tests, Written tests, and Practice Assignments (50%)

Musical evaluation helps the teacher as well as the student to see where the student is both academically and musically. These evaluations target areas of fundamentals for improvement as well as different areas of their assigned literature. Also to insure the success of the ensemble, each member tested on their individually assigned music must pass with 90% to be allowed to perform. Testing requirements and deadlines will be specific to each band and grades will be determined based upon successful completion of assignments. Assignments turned in late by one day = 50%, two days = 40%, etc. No assignments accepted past Friday of that week unless during excused absence from school. *Also, do not drop off homework in my mailbox as it may not be counted.*

Quarter Exams/Concert and PCCS Common Assessments (30%)

These exams will be administered at the end of the quarter. These tests will incorporate skills developed throughout the quarter. Students must attend all concerts for the duration of the concert. No one is to leave early. Reduction in grade will result with any infractions to this rule. Also, students are not allowed to have electronic devices of any kind at the concert or other band functions from the time of arrival until the students have been officially dismissed. Also, if there is any problem or absence whatsoever on the day of the concert, parents need to call Mr. Whitlock at 734-416-7960 to explain the details of this problem or absence.

Rehearsals outside of the school day

Sectionals insure that the music is attainable for the students. It also gives the instructor an opportunity to give more individualized attention to the students other than a rehearsal. Sectionals also help insure that each like instrument match tone and sound quality better which improves the overall sound and achievement of the group. Full band after/before school rehearsals are needed for combining classes in preparation before a major performance/event. All rehearsals are mandatory.

Performances and Concert Attire

Attendance to all performances is mandatory. A lowered grade will be assessed for the quarter without an excused absence. Students are responsible for having the proper concert attire and equipment. Concert attire is formal clothing and formal shoes. Examples of this type of clothing might be worn at weddings, church, special social events, etc. Dress classy, not sassy. No jeans, tennis shoes, etc., are permitted. Dress code for concert is formal and students not meeting this dress code will not be allowed to perform and may have a reduction in grade.

Notes of Importance:

- Lists of supplemental materials will be introduced at the beginning of the year and throughout the year as needed. Some materials may be required, while others will be recommended. There is too much info to display here, but class materials will be communicated to all families when needed throughout the year.
- Late work may possibly be accepted (at the discretion of Mr. Whitlock) on the next school day, but will be worth 50%. The second day late is 40%, etc. No work will be accepted past Friday of that week, unless approved school absences are in effect.
- Students may obtain extra help/tutoring to maximize abilities and/or to successfully complete the course. The student will simply need to make an appointment with Mr. Whitlock for a time slot outside of the formal class.
- It is important to be prepared and to not ask for help at the last minute. You may not know how to perform something the first time, or even after many times during practice. It is *fantastic* when you ask Mr. Whitlock for help in a timely manner, as this shows a true ownership of your education and performance skills, and this shows true care for your other teammates.
- Parents: Be involved in your child's education. "But I don't know anything about music! How can I help?" Please refer to the Parents Practice Guide/Article that is included in this Band Handbook.
- If you lose any materials passed out in class, you or your parents may always ask again for the information, as it is important that we are all on the same page. Please, do not make losing materials a habit, as this habit can cost money ☺ .

Attitude

Band affords students many experiences. Camaraderie, self-discipline, artistic expression, the development and enhancement of psychomotor skills and hand-eye coordination are all elements that derive from time spent contributing to the band. These are skills that stay with students for a lifetime. In the grand scope of things band will be an enjoyable and rewarding experience. And it is not only what we make of it, but it is also how we make it a great experience. Without each student contributing to their fullest potential, our experience as a group is always less than what it should be. So please, let's be prepared and MAKE EACH MOMENT COUNT.