



## **Welcome to 5<sup>th</sup> grade band at MacDonald Elementary!**

My name is Ms. Dee and I will be the band director. A little about myself: I am an Anchor Bay graduate and a product of the band program here in the district. I attended Michigan State University and graduated with a degree in Instrumental Music Education. I also hold a masters degree in conducting earned at Southern Oregon University. I have taught beginning band around the state for many years and give private trumpet lessons to students of all levels. I am very excited that this school year is off to such a great start!

Attached are a few documents pertaining to band class. **Calendars:** Band students will be given a calendar every few months outlining the band schedule. Please follow the calendars provided. In the rare event band must be canceled, you will be notified with at least 24 hours notice via a note sent home from school. Also attached are the **band guidelines**. Please sign and return this document to me by the first day of band (September 28th).

**My contact information:** Phone – 586.648.2500 ex. 2358/E-mail – mdee@abs.misd.net

**Band will meet every Monday and Wednesday from 8:15-9:00am.** This is before school and begins **September 28<sup>th</sup>!** The first weeks of band we meet once a week (brass and woodwinds/percussion separately). See the attached schedule for which days you attend until we meet every Monday and Wednesday together starting October 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Band is also a full year course.** Attendance with instrument and band book is required at all band classes in order to succeed. If there is ever a problem, please contact me by e-mail or phone.

**Practicing will also be necessary for success.** Expectations are 15-20 minutes most days of the week. Best results come from establishing a regular practice schedule. Having a place away from distractions with a good chair, lighting and a music stand also fosters a good practicing environment. Parents, please remember you are part of your child's success in music through your encouragement and monitoring of their practice time.

**Supplies:** Clarinets and saxophones should have at least 3 good reeds at all times. Start with a 2 or a 2 ½ strength reed. All **woodwinds** also need to have a swab for cleaning their instrument. Saxophones need a neck strap. **Brass** players should have valve oil, slide oil or slide cream as needed for their instrument. **Percussionists** need two matching drum sticks and/or bell mallets. **All students** also need their *Essential Elements 2000* (book 1) and a folding music stand in class. For concerts, dark dress pants, shoes and socks are required. Our first performance will be in the winter months. If there are any problems obtaining the uniform items, please contact me as soon as possible. MacDonald Elementary also has a unique band shirt that will be available for purchase. More information to follow.

## A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO PRACTICING

*Music is similar to a sport. The more you practice at something, the better you get.*

When you practice, get away from the TV, radio, your little brother or sister, and just focus on the sound coming out of your instrument.

**First set a goal:** before you practice, make one goal. For example: I want to learn this certain song by the end of today. Or I want to be able to play this measure correctly before I am done today. Or I would like to learn one new note today.

**Then practice with this routine:**

- ✓ Warm-up on easy long tones (explained in class)
- ✓ Something old (what we did in class last week)
- ✓ Your goal
- ✓ Something new (go to the next number or page in the book)



*Always practice slowly. Never rush through something just to get it done.*

**If you make a mistake break it down:**

- ✓ Measure by measure
- ✓ Note by note
- ✓ Just push the fingers down saying the note names
- ✓ Count the rhythm out loud or write the rhythm in



**Last minute questions to ask your self as you practice:**

- Pulse: Could you clap a steady beat to what you just played? Could you dance to it?
- Mistakes: Did you stop to correct anything or did you just play straight through?
- Time: Did you practice long enough? If not, practice something else.
- Goals: Did your practice accomplish anything? Did you get better?

**Private lessons** give a unique experience to learning an instrument. They will give more individualized attention to the specific needs of the student. Please consider private lessons during the first year of band. They do come with a small cost but the payoff in the long run is priceless.

The year is off to a great start! Thank you!!

Ms. Dee  
586-648-2500 ex. 2358  
mdee@abs@misd.net

## MacDonald 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Band Guidelines 2009-2010

- 1) I will stay in band doing my best for the **entire school year**.
- 2) I agree to follow instruction during band class.
- 3) I agree not to play out of turn which makes it difficult for others to listen and concentrate.
- 4) I will take time at home to practice and try my best to learn music and my instrument.
- 5) I will refrain from talking out of turn during class.
- 6) I agree to have all my materials (pencil, instrument, music, reeds, valve oil, a positive attitude, etc) at every band class.
- 7) I will make band fun and a positive experience for me and for my classmates.
- 8) I understand that band is a graded subject and attendance is required.

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Please return this bottom portion to your band teacher. 

We understand that by signing the contract we agree to the above items. In addition, if our student becomes disinterested or frustrated with their instrumental music class, I will contact their director to discuss strategies to correct this.

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Parent Signature

Date

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Student Signature

Date