

Bellingham Memorial Middle School



# Band Handbook

2011 - 2012

Robert S. Glynn, Band Director

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[www.BellinghamMusic.org](http://www.BellinghamMusic.org)



# Bellingham Memorial Middle School

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2011-2012 School Year

Dear Students and Parents/Guardians,

First, be proud that you and your student are in band. Not everyone has the determination necessary to learn a musical instrument. However, those who do (like you) will be greatly benefited as you move on to the next steps of life.

My name is Robert Glynn and this is my first year teaching in Bellingham. I hold degrees from the University of Massachusetts in Music Education and Percussion Performance. Playing music has given me the opportunity to travel both coast-to-coast and around the world. While I enjoy performing, educating young people about music and life is where my real passion lies.

Let me take this time to welcome you to band at BMMS. It is my philosophy that learning to play an instrument is a part of finding your “voice” in the world. Everyone eventually will find theirs, some sooner than others. How lucky you are to begin that process at a young age!

This handbook serves as an information packet for all students in all bands and for their parents/guardians. In it you will find policies, procedures, concert dates, and a general outline of the instrumental music program. Please read through it carefully as it will answer most of your questions. If any other questions or concerns arise, please contact me at:

[rglynn@bellingham.k12.ma.us](mailto:rglynn@bellingham.k12.ma.us)  
508-883-2330  
[www.BellinghamMusic.org](http://www.BellinghamMusic.org)

Keeping the lines of communication open between teacher, student, and parent/guardian is crucial to the well-being of all involved and critical to the success of our students.

Thank you, and enjoy band!

Sincerely,

Robert S. Glynn  
Band Director

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## **BMMS MISSION**

Through the teamwork of students, staff, parents and the community the Bellingham Memorial Middle School, committed to academic excellence, will ensure a safe, supportive, and positive learning environment from which students will emerge as successful learners and respectful and responsible members of our diverse society.

## **BMMS VISION**

Bellingham Memorial Middle School seeks to establish itself as an exemplary middle school by developing programs that are developmentally responsive to the needs of our students. By instituting strong academic teams and a positive learning environment students will be provided the framework to develop as life-long learners. The highest expectations for academic success, technological expertise, social and moral responsibilities and the maintenance of health, wellness and personal safety will be demanded of all students. Parents, staff and the community will work together to promote these ideals and to insure that each student has the opportunity to reach his fullest potential as a responsible member of our diverse society.

## **MUSIC DEPARTMENT GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

In direct accordance with the national and state fine arts standards, the music department is committed to the following guiding principles to ensure a valuable, diverse, and challenging music education for all middle school students:

- All students have the opportunity to participate in various aspects of the middle school department and activities. Students shall not be denied the opportunity to participate based on prior experience, skills, or materials (or lack of the aforementioned).
- All music department classes and activities are based on the belief that all musicians should learn to create, perform, listen to, and analyze music of all genres and cultures. Therefore, all students will be taught and assessed according to the national and state fine arts standards.
- It is the mission of the middle school music department to prepare and encourage students for participation in present and future musical experiences, whether in future educational or vocational endeavors and/or community organizations.
- Performance based classes (such as band and chorus) will focus on developing musical skills to the highest degree while laying the groundwork for musicianship and music theory for future performance, study, and achievement. Because developing higher levels of musicianship requires practice time and some performances outside the school day, the music department will try to schedule all outside activities well in advance to avoid conflicts
- It is the belief of the music department that students should balance, with the help of parents, practice and preparation time for class assignments, quizzes, tests, and performances in the areas of instrumental band and chorus. Whenever possible, students will be offered extra help on an individual or small group basis by the music teacher.

# THE BEGINNING BAND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Bellingham Memorial Middle School Band Program offers students a hands-on experience that teaches the basic performance skills needed to play in school instrumental ensembles and complements the learning that takes place in the general music classroom. By participating in the band program, students will have a well-rounded school experience. It develops musicianship, fosters creative thinking, and provides students with a means of self-expression. This ultimately leads to a stronger sense of self, an increase in self-confidence, and an understanding of the business of being human.

Students at BMMS have the opportunity to begin studying a musical instrument in fifth grade. They are instructed through small group lessons and full band ensembles. Each grade level 5 - 8 has its own band, and students will stay within their grade's band. Band members can also participate in Jazz Band. This is voluntary and meets once per week after school. Chamber ensembles sometimes form for students of any instrument who wish to play a piece together in a group of 3 - 5 other students.

## INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLES

### Fifth Grade Band

Fifth Grade Band addresses the Massachusetts Music Frameworks with emphasis on standards 1, 2, 3, 5 and Fine Arts Connections Strands 6 – 8. Participation in fifth grade band provides the student with an introduction to basic instrumental music technique, note reading, rhythm reading, and basic ensemble skills. The curriculum in fifth grade band emphasizes fundamental music literacy including the student identifying and performing quarter notes, half notes, whole notes (and equivalent rests), in addition to basic sound production on the students' chosen instrument. Band members are expected to perform at two concerts, one in the middle of the year and one at the end of the year. Fifth grade band is open to any student with a desire to learn a musical instrument.

### Sixth Grade Band

Sixth Grade Band addresses the Massachusetts Music Frameworks with emphasis on standards 1 - 5 and Fine Arts Connections Strands 6 – 8. Students in sixth grade band continue to build on the material learned in fifth grade. Further reinforcement of basic concepts in music literacy is presented by reviewing rhythms from last year as well as expanding the performance range of each instrument. Additionally, more advanced ensemble concepts such as tone, intonation, balance, and blend are introduced. Band members are expected to perform at two concerts, one in the middle of the year and one at the end of the year. Sixth grade band is open to any student with a desire to learn a musical instrument.

### Seventh Grade Band

Seventh Grade Band addresses the Massachusetts Music Frameworks with emphasis on standards 1 - 5 and Fine Arts Connections Strands 6 – 8. By participating in seventh grade band students will be expected to continue development in ensemble skills and individual technique, to foster a sense of individual accountability and responsibility, and to further develop a love and appreciation for music making. The curriculum in seventh grade band builds on the material learned in fifth and sixth grade band working towards meeting the standards set by the Massachusetts Music Frameworks including the

performance of music with difficulty levels from 1-2.5 out of 6, introduction of cut and 6/8 time, scales and literature containing up to 3 flats and sharps, and intermediate ensemble concepts such as balance, blend, and style. Band members are expected to participate in all performances, including those outside the school day such as evening concerts, weekend parades, and other events throughout the school year. Seventh grade band is open to students with one or more years of experience on a band instrument or with the permission of the director.

### Eighth Grade Band

Eighth Grade Band addresses the Massachusetts Music Frameworks with emphasis on standards 1 - 5 and Fine Arts Connections Strands 6 – 10. By participating in eighth grade band students will be expected to continue development in ensemble skills and individual technique, to foster a sense of individual accountability and responsibility, and to further develop a love and appreciation for music making. The curriculum in eighth grade band is the culmination of instrumental instruction at the middle school level, working towards meeting the standards set by the Massachusetts Music Frameworks including the performance of music with difficulty levels from 2-3 out of 6, introduction of mixed-meter time signatures, scales and literature containing up to 5 flats and sharps, and intermediate ensemble concepts such as balance, blend, and style. Band members are expected to participate in all performances, including those outside the school day such as evening concerts, weekend parades, and other events throughout the school year. Eighth grade band is open to students with two or more years of experience on a band instrument or with the permission of the director.

### Jazz Band

In Jazz Band, students will learn the basic fundamentals of jazz, bebop, swing, shuffle, and Latin music while performing on their band instrument or rhythm section instrument (drum set, piano, bass, guitar). Jazz Band also provides a strong emphasis on improvisation and Massachusetts Music Framework Standard 4. Rehearsals take place one day per week after school. Students are expected to be at every rehearsal and performance. Jazz Band is open to students who are enrolled in sixth, seventh, or eighth grade band, or with permission from the director.

## **SCHEDULED PERFORMANCE DATES**

(please note grade levels, reporting times, and locations)

- Wednesday, Dec. 7, 6:30pm (report at 5:30) - BMMS Winter Concert (Gr. 7/8) - BHS Auditorium (snow date Dec. 14)
- Thursday, Jan. 25, 6:30pm (report at 5:30) - BMMS Winter Concert (Gr. 5/6) - BHS Auditorium (snow date Feb. 2)
- Wednesday, Feb. 1, 6:30pm (report at 5:30) - Student Artist Recital (Gr. 7/8) - BMMS Auditorium (snow date Feb. 8)
- Wednesday, Mar. 14, 7pm (report at 6:00) - All Town Band Concert (Gr. 5-8) - BHS Gym
- Friday/Saturday, Mar. 30/31, TBA - MICCA Festival (Gr. 7/8) - BHS Auditorium
- Sunday, May 20, 2pm (Report time TBA) - Memorial Day Parade (Gr. 7/8) - meet at BMMS
- Wednesday, June 6, 6:30pm (report at 5:30) - BMMS Spring Concert (Gr. 5/6) - BHS Auditorium
- Thursday, June 7, 6:30pm (report at 5:30) - BMMS Spring Concert (Gr. 7/8) - TBA

(the calendar is subject to change)

# ASSESSMENT

Much of the assessment in band takes place during the music-making. In other words, students are asked to demonstrate what they have learned by applying musical knowledge to their performance rather than indirectly applying musical knowledge through written examination. This form of grading is called authentic assessment. **Authentic assessment** provides a method for assessing complex learning.

## GRADE FIVE

Assessment in Grade Five is based on a student's preparation for his or her weekly lesson and performance in class. Students are assessed on their preparation for class using the 5 Point System. Students receive 1 point for each of the following items brought to their lesson:

1. Instrument
2. Homework / Practice record (signed by a parent/guardian)
3. Pencil
4. Book - Essential Elements 2000
5. Band Music

The 5 Point System emphasizes the need for students to attend lessons ready to learn. Individual performances of exercises from the method book are done in class to assist the band director in assessing student growth.

Being in band, just like being on a sports team or part of a club, teaches the student a great deal about being responsible and upholding their commitment to a group activity. If one student forgets their instrument, then it has an effect on all the other students of the class. It is essential that all students come to band prepared **every time**.

## GRADES SIX, SEVEN AND EIGHT

The final grade earned for participation in band will be a culmination of the following categories:

### Rehearsal and Lesson Grade

The lesson grade is an average of the scores received for the student's weekly practice record and the performance of musical excerpts from the lesson book Essential Elements 2000 (6th grade only), band music, and other music to be passed out. Assessments of rehearsal preparation, positive attitude, cooperative spirit, creativeness, and leadership are ongoing parts of the evaluation process. A student who tries with his or her best effort will not be penalized for a poor performance level.

### Test Average

Students will be asked to apply musical knowledge in playing exams. Playing exams reflect the student's understanding of material covered in sectionals and highlights skills developed during home practice. There will be several individual playing exams per quarter, and they will take place during band rehearsals. There will also be a brief written element to an exam further assessing the students' knowledge of current subject matter. "SmartMusic" (see below) grades may be factored into their test average as well.

### Concert Grade:

Performances are the culmination of the hard work accomplished in rehearsals and the skills developed during sectionals and home practice. Therefore, attendance and participation in performances is an integral part of the band experience.

The average of the categories defined above will determine the student's final grade.

#### **Quarter 1**

Lesson Grade - 75%  
Test Average - 25%

#### **Quarter 2**

Lesson Grade - 50%  
Concert Grade - 25%  
Test Average - 25%

#### **Quarter 3**

Lesson Grade - 75%  
Test Average - 25%

#### **Quarter 4**

Lesson Grade - 50%  
Concert Grade - 25%  
Test Average - 25%

### "SMART MUSIC"

Another form of in-class assessment used is **SmartMusic**. SmartMusic is a great computer program that gets students motivated to practice their instrument and provides them with useful tools to assist them in learning their music. The program does a number of things including:

- Provide entertaining back-up music to the songs they are working on for class.
- Allow students to record themselves playing a song and offers them feedback on their performance.
- Allows the student to email their recorded performances to family and friends.
- Allows the student to upload information to me regarding their practice sessions with SmartMusic and their progress on particular songs.

The use of this program at home is completely optional, but is HIGHLY RECOMENDED. There are computers in the band room available for student use to complete quizzes or for general practice. SmartMusic requires a \$36 per year subscription fee. See the SmartMusic website at [www.smartmusic.com](http://www.smartmusic.com) for more information.

## STUDENT INSTRUMENT RESPONSIBILITY

Your child's musical instrument is an expensive item often costing hundreds of dollars to replace if lost or stolen. Although Bellingham Memorial Middle School, including all the classrooms inside it, is a safe and secure environment, the instrument that your child is using to participate in band is **their responsibility**. The band room at the middle school is locked before and after school and an adult presence is maintained in each room throughout the school day. Even so, if your child decides to leave their instrument in a classroom, it is the **student's** responsibility to ensure that the instrument is where it was left; the school and its staff cannot be responsible for any lost or stolen instruments. An instrument should **never** be left in a classroom if a teacher is absent or the room is obviously unattended.

If an instrument **is** lost or stolen, we will do everything in our power to ensure the instrument is found and returned. However, some situations are out of our control, in which case a police report should be filed and it will be up to the police to investigate the situation.

# STUDENT GUIDE

Welcome to the Bellingham Memorial Middle School Band Program! The following guide has been written to inspire your playing, and provide you with the basic information needed for success in the band program.

## MUSICIANSHIP

Your musicianship can develop only through practice. No doubt you have heard the saying 'Practice Makes Perfect'. Although this saying holds a very important truth, it also contains a major loophole! Practice will only make perfect if the practice itself is perfect. In other words, how you practice is just as important as what you practice. Instead, think '**Practice Makes Permanent.**' Use this guide to help you.

### HOW TO PRACTICE

#### **1. Practice daily for progress and results.**

Set up a consistent practice space. Use a music stand, and metronome, and a recorder to listen to how you sound. Schedule a regular practice time if possible.

#### **2. Assemble the instrument carefully and lubricate regularly.**

#### **3. Warm-Up (both the instrument and yourself)**

Play in the middle register of your instrument, mezzo-forte, and gradually extend the register and dynamic levels as your lips, embouchure, and body begin to respond with agility and flexibility.

#### **4. Strengthen your embouchure by playing l-o-n-g t-o-n-e-s.**

Listen and play in tune with good tone quality, practice all dynamic levels.

#### **5. Limber the fingers by playing scales and exercises.**

Practice slowly at first, increasing the speed only after the patterns can be played evenly.

#### **6. Practice the assigned lesson or music parts.**

When unable to play a particular phrase or group of notes, STOP. Make an Exercise out of the difficult part. Practice it slowly at first, and then gradually build up to the proper speed.

#### **7. Practice for results-not just a length of time!**

Focused time spent on your instrument is very similar to focused attention on physical exercise. You can save yourself a million mindless repetitions if you work intelligently.

#### **8. Clean and disassemble your instrument.**

After a practice session is over, dry the inside of woodwinds and drain the moisture from brass instruments. Then wipe off the inside and outside of the instrument. Carefully return the instrument to its case. To avoid damage: do not keep stands, mutes, music, or other objects in the case unless a place is provided for them.

Remember, if you are not sure you are practicing effectively or need help fixing a particular problem, I will be more than happy to help you. Every effort you put forth to improve your musicianship should make you personally proud!

## REHEARSALS

The goal of all rehearsals is to develop musicianship and attain artistry as an ensemble. **Ensemble musicianship cannot be developed until each individual band member is comfortable with his/her part.** Band members should come to rehearsals with their part prepared, so that the balance, blend, intonation, and tone of the ensemble can be the focus of the rehearsal. Below, you will find basic rehearsal expectations for all school ensembles.

### REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS

- Each musician should be in their seat, ready to play prior to the downbeat. Allow for warm-up time.
- Arrange music in the rehearsal order indicated on the whiteboard. **Always have a pencil on your music stand.**
- The success of the ensemble rests upon your self-discipline. Please do not talk when the director is on the podium, or when the director or another musician is talking. Raise your hand when you have a question.
- Play only when asked to do so; otherwise listen attentively – chances are you'll hear something important being said or can learn from what others are playing.
- Sit on the front half of your chair with proper posture.
- Please keep the band room neat and clean. This means throw trash away, and recycle paper.
- Display respect for fellow musicians and the director.

### WHAT TO BRING TO LESSONS AND BAND:

- Pencil
- Instrument and associated accessories (reeds, valve oil, mallets, etc.)
- All Band Music
- Fifth Grade only: Essential Elements 2000 book, music folder (will be provided)
- Sixth Grade only: Essential Elements 2000 book, 1/2" or 1" binder
- Seventh and Eighth Grade only: 1/2" or 1" binder

## PERFORMANCES

There is nothing quite like the experience of an inspired performance. For most professional musicians, it was just such an experience at a young age which caused them to pursue a lifetime of music making in the first place. As your band director, it is my goal to guide you in the creation of your own inspired performances. I hope that our concerts will make memories that you will remember for the rest of your life, whether you go on to become a professional musician, doctor, teacher, athlete, etc.

In order for us to make the most of our performances, it is crucial for each member of the band to attend the concert. Each individual person's part contributes equally to the whole. Occasionally, you may experience a situation in which another activity conflicts with a band performance. If this situation occurs, it is important that you notify the director as soon as possible. The earlier the notification the more likely a solution may be found. Middle school students need to remember that concert participation is a large part of their final grade.

## CONCERT ATTIRE

In order to produce a professional appearance, you are asked to wear the following to all performances:

**Girls: White blouse, black pants/skirt (below the knees when sitting), black shoes**

**Boys: White dress shirt, black pants, black shoes and socks**

It is important to remember that concert attire should feel comfortable, as well as, look professional. It is impossible to concentrate 100% on your performance if your clothing prevents you from sitting or standing in the way needed to play your instrument. An audience attends a concert to hear the music, not to see the latest fashions.

## CONCERT ETIQUETTE GUIDELINES

Please respect the following guidelines when attending a concert:

1. Enter a concert hall before the performance or between entire works. Never enter or exit after the music has started.
2. Applaud at the end of a work - not between movements.
3. Applaud enthusiastically, but, please NO hooting or hollering.
4. Please withhold all conversation until after the music has stopped.
5. Refrain from taking pictures, texting, etc while the musicians are performing. Listen!

## CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF YOUR INSTRUMENT

Proper care and maintenance of your instrument will enhance your performance and will limit the number of trips your instrument will take to the repair shop. Following the guidelines below will help you to keep your instrument in good shape.

### CARE AND MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

1. Assemble/Disassemble your instrument following proper guidelines.
2. When possible, clean your hands and brush your teeth before playing.
3. Keep your mouthpiece clean!
4. Do not store books or music inside the instrument case unless you have a compartment for these items.
5. Keep the instrument in the case when you are not using it.
6. Repairs should be made by a qualified repair person.
7. Write you instrument's serial number in a safe place.
8. Clearly label your instrument case with your name, address, and telephone number.

## PRIVATE LESSONS

Middle school musicians are encouraged to take private lessons. Please ask your band director to provide you with a list of contacts. Information is also available on the Music Department Website ([www.bellinghammusic.org](http://www.bellinghammusic.org)).

# PARENT GUIDE

Welcome to the Bellingham Memorial Middle School Band Program. The following parent guide will provide you with information regarding ways in which you can help support our student musicians as well as basic information regarding the band program.

## HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?

### AT HOME

1. Help your child to learn the sectional and band rehearsal schedule. Post it in a convenient place.
2. Encourage your child to play for others when the opportunity arises, in the home, at school, and in the community.
3. Your interest and praise is what matters most.
4. Arrange a regular time for practice.
5. Find a quiet place for practice. Students need a music stand and metronome.
6. Become familiar with your child's music and lesson book. Take time to listen to your child's practicing.
7. Help your child keep a daily practice record.
8. Provide a safe place to store musical instruments.
9. Help to be very careful with school-owned instruments. The costs of repairs are very high.
10. Help keep the instrument in good repair with reeds, valve oil, etc. in the case.
11. Expose your child to all kinds of music. Encourage your child to borrow musical recordings from the library, and go to symphony concerts, musicals, open-air concerts, parades, ethnic music performances, and high school or middle school concerts. Ask the band director for more listening examples, and check the music department's website.

### AT SCHOOL

1. Post rehearsals and concerts on the family calendar.
2. Notify the teacher if your child is to be absent or tardy to a rehearsal that takes place outside of the school day.
3. Visit rehearsals and lessons occasionally.
4. Discuss with your music teacher anything that will help me to understand your child.
5. Attend parent/teacher conferences when possible.
6. Help chaperone music festivals.
7. Become an active member of Bellingham Friends of Music.

## TIPS FOR MOTIVATING YOUR STUDENT

1. Assist your student in his/her practicing. **Don't worry if you do not have a musical background.** What your child needs from you is not musical expertise, but patience, encouragement, and support.
2. Listen to him/her play!
3. Be very generous with your interest and praise. Credit each achievement with some form of recognition.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In order to produce a professional appearance, the students should wear the following to all concerts:  
**Girls: White blouse, black pants/skirt (below the knees when sitting), black shoes**  
**Boys: White dress shirt, black pants, black shoes and socks**

Concerts are the culmination of all the learning that takes place in sectionals and rehearsals. As a band director, I teach the students that each member of the band plays an equally important part in the performance of the ensemble. **Therefore, I ask that parents carefully review the concert schedule at the beginning of the year and mark the dates on their calendar to prevent conflicts in scheduling.** Required attendance is part of a middle school student's final grade.

Middle school musicians are encouraged to take private lessons. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's band director when considering private instruction. Information is also available on the Music Department Website ([www.BellinghamMusic.org](http://www.BellinghamMusic.org)).

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at any time. Keeping the lines of communication open is crucial to the success of your student.

[rglynn@bellingham.k12.ma.us](mailto:rglynn@bellingham.k12.ma.us)

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