

Thompson Middle School

# **NEW BAND MEMBER SURVIVAL GUIDE 2019-2020**



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**WELCOME** to the Thompson Middle School Band Program! The camaraderie, personal growth and self-fulfillment you experience as a member of our organization will remain with you long after you leave Thompson MS. As with all things worthwhile, membership in our band program demands time, energy, discipline, dedication, excellence, teamwork, commitment, and a degree of fundraising to provide financial support. As a new parent or band member, you may have unanswered questions as you enter the world of middle school band. It is hoped that this guide helps give you some insight as to what to expect and how to plan and schedule your time and resources for the upcoming year.

### **Band Classes:**

There are six separate band ensembles at Thompson, each with its own objectives and requirements. A syllabus for your student's course will be sent home the first week of school.

- **Beginning Band** – This course is designed for students with no music or band experience. It provides students with the basic skills necessary to develop musical independence. A rudimentary level of music is studied and performed. Basic instrumental technique and music-reading skills are taught through the rehearsal of music and the study of rhythms and fundamentals.
- **Cadet Band** – This course is designed for students with one year of band experience. Music from a basic and intermediate level of middle school repertoire is studied and performed. Sight-reading skills and basic theory are intermixed in the education of music styles.
- **Intermediate Band** – This course is designed for students with at least 2 years of band experience. Music from an intermediate and advanced level of middle school repertoire is studied and performed. Sight-reading skills and basic theory are intermixed in the education of music styles and history.
- **Symphonic Band** – This course is open to students by audition only. Music from an advanced middle school level and entry-level high school repertoire is studied and performed. Sight-reading skills and basic theory are intermixed in the education of music styles and history.
- **Drum Line** – This ensemble takes place outside of the school day. This course is open to students with concert percussion experience through audition only.

### **Instruments:**

There are a limited number of school-owned instruments that are available from the school. There is a one-time donation of \$75 for maintenance. Instruments are assigned starting with the advanced level bands first. Students not using school instruments can obtain them by other means. All school-owned instruments must be returned after the final concert. The cost of any damage, repair, or loss is incurred by the parents and will vary depending on the instrument and the degree of damage.

Percussionists must have a keyboard instrument, a practice pad, and drumsticks. Percussionists only need to bring their drumsticks to class, except for Beginning Band members who need to bring their sticks and their practice pads to class. Pianos and electronic keyboards with at least 30 keys are acceptable for practice at home.

Students are required to maintain instruments in their care, whether student-owned, student-rental, or school-owned. Periodic inspections are conducted to check to see that the instruments are in good, working order. Instrument cases must be clean, and contain cleaning equipment, valve oil, slide oil, key oil, cork grease, swab, cleaning cloth, and three playable reeds pertaining to the

instrument. Reeds should never be used longer than 2-3 weeks. Parents may want to order quantities of reeds. See the “Accessories for Band” list.

### **Method/Rehearsal Books:**

Each band level will use a method book in addition to the sheet music in class. These books are available for purchase through the local music stores. **Please check the course syllabus to see which book is needed for your student.** Students should work out of these method books daily at home in their practice time.

### **Practice Plans**

Practice Plans are used for all ensembles in the TMS band program. Practice plans are a way for the students to develop a good routine of practicing throughout the week. Like an athlete in training, the muscles used in performing a musical instrument need to be developed and maintained. This cannot be done alone by the short time during band class. The students have assignments they need to be working on each day just like their other subjects. Practice Plans are used as a guide to help students organize their time so that they be able to focus specifically on their band class assignments. Practice Plans will be passed out at the beginning of the year to ever student. The Practice Plan needs to be filled out, signed by the student and the parent, and then returned to Ms. Holmes. Ms. Holmes will review the plans and then return them back to the students for them to be kept in their band binder. If there is ever a big schedule change, or Ms. Holmes asks for another change in your practice plan, that student must complete another Practice Plan and proceed through the process again.

### **Classroom Rules**

Ms. Holmes asks that all students adhere to the following classroom rules:

- 1. Respect Ms. Holmes and any visiting staff members**
  - a. Students are expected to maintain the highest of respect towards myself and any guests that are visiting the class.
- 2. Respect your peers**
  - a. Students are expected to maintain the highest of respect towards myself and any guests that are visiting the class.
- 3. Respect your instrument**
  - a. It is a privilege to play an instrument! All instruments must have a name tag with contact information attached to it. Always maintain cleanliness with the instrument (swabbing the instrument, emptying water keys, etc.). If the instrument is broken, do not wait to get it fixed! A student cannot have complete performance benefits if the instrument is not well cared for. Do not play someone else’s instrument. And lastly, never leave an instrument unattended!
- 4. Respect your classroom**
  - a. DO NOT TOUCH PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS unless you are a percussionist! The Rehearsal Room contains very expensive equipment that requires the utmost care and protection. Take pride in your program and treat the rehearsal environment with respect.
- 5. Ask for or offer help when necessary**
  - a. Do not pretend to know something if you do not know it! Ask a question or provide help to your peers if they need it. Again, being in this program is a team effort and we need to support each other throughout the music making process.
- 6. No food, gum, or drinks allowed in the classroom**

- a. The only liquid acceptable in the classroom is water. If I see a student with gum, students will give the gum to me and I will hold it in my hand for the rest of the rehearsal. At the end of the rehearsal, the gum will be returned to the student.
- 7. No non-band students allowed in the classroom**
  - a. Being in the Thompson Middle School Band Program is a privilege! Please do not bring any non-instrumental music students into the classroom as there is a possibility of instruments or classroom materials being damaged.
- 8. No horseplay/foul language**
  - a. Horseplay and foul language of any kind will not be tolerated. The only kind of conduct that is acceptable is that of good taste, maturity, and pride in our program.
- 9. Do your best!**
  - a. Always strive to give your very best effort! This will allow for the best music making for your peers and yourself!

### **Absence Policy**

Much like in team sports, the band is powered through its group efforts. If the quarterback of the football team doesn't show up for the game or never learns the plays, the whole team suffers. The same thing happens in band when someone doesn't show up for a concert, doesn't learn their part, or has a negative attitude. Absences from performances are detrimental to the success of the band. It is recognized that extenuating circumstances sometimes arise, and must be treated with compassion and understanding. Each absence will be treated individually by Ms. Holmes, and will be evaluated using the following guidelines:

The only acceptable excused absences from a concert would be the following: a death in the family, a wedding, observation of a religious holiday and serious illness. Under exceptional circumstances, an **unexcused** may be **excused** when arrangements are made **at least 3 weeks in advance** of the performance and approved by Ms. Holmes. (Example: planned family vacation). All excuses must be made in writing to Ms. Holmes from the parents.

Missing a performance can be very detrimental on the student's grade and can potentially lower it by a full letter grade. However, if an absence is approved by Ms. Holmes, accommodations can be made on a case-by-case basis to make up for that performance.

### **Concert Wear:**

The band students have a specific concert uniform(s) that is worn at performances and other events that represent the band. **ALL BANDS** will be wearing the TMS band polo shirt, black dress slacks, black socks, and black dress shoes. A **\$15** donation is asked in order to receive a shirt. It is best to obtain the pants, socks, and shoes well before the concert date.

Jeans, tennis shoes, and white socks are not appropriate for the concert setting. Jewelry must be kept to a minimum. The concert is not a fashion show—it is a demonstration of the students' learning and it is about putting focus onto the music. Ms. Holmes reserves the right to pull students off the concert stage if students do not adhere to the concert wear rules.

### **Transportation:**

The students use district buses for away performances. Transportation is not funded by the district and must be paid for by the band's ASB account and/or the Thompson Middle School Band Booster Organization. **All band students are required to ride both to and from the away**

**performances via district-provided transportation. Parents are not allowed to sign out their student and take him/her home from the event.** Directions to venues are available before each event. Parent volunteers are also needed to help transport equipment to and from performance sites.

### **Communication**

Ms. Holmes **will not** be using Remind 101 this year and will be looking into Aeries Communications as the main source of general communication. Stay tuned!

### **Temecula Light Parade**

Each year the TMS band marches in the Temecula Light Parade which is hosted by the city of Temecula. The parade route is Front Street in Old Town Temecula and takes place the last week of November or the first week of December. All members of Cadet, Intermediate, Symphonic Bands, and drum line are required to perform in the parade. The students spend 2 weeks learning the basics of parade marching and memorizing the song. Students wear their band polos and decorate their instruments in the holiday spirit. It is a fun event to watch when over 200 TMS band members are all performing together in nice straight rows!

### **Lake Elsinore Storm Game Performance**

In April, the TMS band students are invited to join Warm Springs, Shivela, and McElhinney bands in a group performance at the Lake Elsinore Storm Stadium. The band performs pre-game with about 4-6 songs and then enjoys the rest of the evening watching the game and finishing the night with the spectacular fireworks display. Cost is around \$7 for student performers and \$9 for spectators. This is not a required event for the band members and will not affect the students grade in the class

### **Band Festival**

The Intermediate and Symphonic Bands compete in a band festival each year in March. The festival is a judged event where the students display their best concert etiquette and performance abilities in front of 2-3 adjudicators. The bands must perform 3 selections appropriate for their ability level. IB and SB will be performing locally at Vista Murrieta High School.

The Intermediate and Symphonic Bands will also be taking a trip to Knott's Berry Farm in the Spring. Ms. Holmes will keep all students and parents posted as more details come.

### **Information:**

- **STUDENTS** – Your most valuable source of information is your student. Communicate with your student on a daily basis. Check their school agendas.
- **WEB PAGE** - [www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/thompson](http://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/thompson) for band information. It has the band calendar, contact information, newsletters, and much more.
- **EMAIL** – This is the **BEST WAY** to contact Ms. Holmes!: [sholmes@murrieta.k12.ca.us](mailto:sholmes@murrieta.k12.ca.us)
- **TELEPHONE** – (951) 696-1410 x 4558. Ms. Holmes is usually at school from 8:00 am – 3:45 pm, but please understand that the phone is not often heard while there is music making going on in the classroom!