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Band Handbook

Lost Mountain Middle School Bands

Welcome to Lost Mountain Middle School!!

We hope that you and your family had a wonderful summer and are excited to be back at school here at Lost Mountain MS for the 2023-2024 school year! We are extremely excited that you have decided to participate in the Lost Mountain Band! Students will have the opportunity to experience the incredible joy of learning to play an instrument and becoming a musician while becoming close friends with peers within their class.

The band program here at LMMS involves more students than any other elective program on campus and offers six concert band classes as well as several extracurricular ensembles. All 7th and 8th grade ensembles are evaluated yearly at the GMEA Large-Group Performance Evaluation and have been recognized for excellence in music consistently over the program's history. The LMMS Symphonic Band was selected in 2008 to perform at The University of Georgia's Middle School Band Festival as one of the most outstanding ensembles in the Southeastern U.S. The following year, our program was awarded the "Exemplary Performance Award for Middle School Band" by the Georgia Music Educators Association for overall excellence to music education and performance! Our Symphonic Band was invited to perform in the Music For All's Southeastern Regional Concert Band Festival held at Georgia State University in 2024 and 2016. In addition to developing quality musicians and performances, band teaches self-discipline, responsibility, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. Moreover, students participating in band develop friendships that last a lifetime. We enjoy a tradition of strong ensembles in the Lost Mountain band program, and we look forward to continuing to raise the standard of excellence.

The Lost Mountain MS Band Program

The Lost Mountain Middle School Band program is a comprehensive instrumental music education for students in grade 6-8 and consists of approximately 400 students. Like all Cobb County Schools, LMMS students begin playing brass, woodwind, and percussion instruments in the fall of 6th grade in our "Beginning Band" and are divided into two "like instrument" classes for the entire 6th grade year (brass class and woodwind/percussion class). Students are then placed into either an on-grade level or advanced band class for the 7th and 8th grade school year based on playing assessments, effort, and attitude. All band classes at LMMS meet daily for 50 minutes as part of the traditional scheduling system.

The LMMS 7th and 8th Grade Bands consistently earn "Superior" ratings at GMEA Large Group Performance Evaluations and students consistently audition and earn chairs each year in the GMEA District 12 Honor Band, Clinic Band, and the Georgia All-State Bands.

In addition to earning membership in several of the student performing ensembles that exist throughout the Metro Atlanta area, many LMMS band members also choose to participate in the GMEA District 12 Solo & Ensemble Festival, ENCORE Summer Music Camp, Cobb County Summer Band Camp, the University of Georgia "Mid-Fest" Clinic, UGA Summer Band Camp, and many of the LMMS extra-curricular ensembles such as the Jazz Band, Pep Band, Woodwind/Brass Small Ensembles, and/or other music class clubs.

The LMMS Bands are proud to be a feeder program to both Harrison High School (Joshua H. Ray, & Jonathan Grogan, directors) and Hillgrove High School (Jeremy Lumpkin, & Stephen Mattson, directors) band programs. In addition, dozens of past LMMS band students are currently members of the band

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programs at McEachern, North Cobb, Campbell, South Cobb, Wheeler, Lassiter, and Kennesaw Mountain High School where they take part in the Cobb County School District Magnet School program.

Course Descriptions:

6th Grade Beginning Band Classes

These classes consist of students new to instrumental music. Students are divided into like-instrument classes where they receive instruction on the fundamental skills necessary to play their instruments. The classes focus on producing quality sounds and developing basic playing technique. These courses also teach music reading skills, rhythmic concepts, ear training, and some basic music theory. Consistent practice at home is essential to develop fundamental playing skills. *Private lessons are strongly encouraged for individual attention and to accelerate progress.*

7th Grade Band

These classes consist of students with at least one year of experience on a band instrument. In the seventh grade, students develop technique, extended ranges, knowledge of many keys, and sight-reading skills. Each class contains the full concert band instrumentation and plays music appropriate to the skill level of the students. The band classes are set up as an intermediate level concert band and an advanced level symphonic band. This leveled concept of instruction allows for each child in the band program to receive varied instruction at his or her own level and rate, enabling students to receive instruction they personally need to achieve the highest level of success on their instruments.

Both seventh-grade bands also focus on ensemble playing, ensemble dynamics, and performance. These students will have the opportunity to perform at the GMEA Performance Evaluation, to perform at Solo/Ensemble Festival, and to audition for the district and all-state bands.

8th Grade Band

The 8th-Grade Bands are the most advanced bands at LMMS and perform more demanding band literature. Advanced technique, mature tone quality, vastly extended range, advanced rhythmic and metric reading, expressive playing, and individual musicianship are emphasized in these classes. Development of ensemble playing skills is a daily focus in rehearsal, while individual responsibility for parts shifts to the student. The band classes are set up as an intermediate concert band and an advanced symphonic band. This leveled concept of instruction allows for each child in the band program to receive varied instruction at his or her own level and rate, enabling students to receive instruction they personally need and to achieve the highest level of success on their instruments.

Both eighth-grade bands also focus on ensemble playing, ensemble dynamics, and performance. These students will have the opportunity to perform at the GMEA Performance Evaluation, to perform at Solo/Ensemble Festival, and to audition for the district and all-state bands. Students are expected to practice often (almost daily) and are expected to be prepared with their parts prior to assessments and rehearsals.

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Additional Ensembles

Pep Band is an ensemble for 7th/8th graders and meets before school. Membership is reserved for band students only and Pep Band does community performances throughout the school year.

Jazz Band is for 7th/8th grade band students and orchestra/chorus students who are able to play piano, guitar, bass guitar, or upright bass at an advanced level. Rehearsal schedule for these ensembles is TBD but will be published once set. Students may join during the Fall and/or Spring Semesters.

GMEA SOLO/ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL

The Georgia Music Educators Association sponsors a Solo and Ensemble Festival at which students have the opportunity to perform as a soloist or as a member of a small ensemble (duet, trio, quartet, quintet, etc.). Students who are awarded the rating of Superior (I) or Excellent (II) will earn a GMEA medal. Those receiving ratings of Good (III), Fair (IV), or Poor (V) will not be eligible for a GMEA medal. Directors will provide more information.

GMEA DISTRICT HONOR BAND/ALL STATE BAND

All students have the opportunity to earn a spot in the GMEA District 12 Honor Band and also the GMEA All-State Band through an audition process. The audition consists of performing the required GMEA Scales from memory plus the chromatic scale for the full range of the student's instrument. In addition to the memorized scales, the student will prepare a designated etude from GMEA that does not have to be memorized. Each student will also sight-read two musical excerpts of contrasting styles in the audition. Audition dates for both ensembles are in the band calendar at the end of this handbook, and more information will be distributed in band class as the deadline for applications draws near. Students who study privately on their chosen instruments increase their chances of securing a spot in the GMEA District 12 Honor Band and/or the GMEA All-State Band.

Band Classroom Rules and Expectations

1. **Be Respectful** – We want to create a positive learning environment in the band room. Students are free to converse on their way in the room and while setting up their instruments, however when a director steps on the podium, all talking stops. No talking is allowed without a raised hand. Please respect teachers, instructors, band directors, fellow students, and the property of others. Occasionally we will have sectional coaches work with the students for focused instruction. They should be treated with the same amount of respect as the band directors, if not more. Handle only the instrument that belongs to you. Blurting out, excessive socializing, and back-talk are unacceptable.
2. **Be On Time** – Students are expected to be in the band room before the bell rings. Our instructional time is limited due to instrument assembly, so we ask you to be proactive when you enter the room. Please be in your seat with your instrument ready to play 2-3 minutes after the bell rings.
3. **Be Prepared** – Please bring instrument, music binder, and all other class materials every day in order to achieve maximum class participation points. We ask that students do their best to practice the assigned music or performance skills at home as often as possible.

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4. **NO FOOD** – There is absolutely no food, flavored drinks, gum, or candy in the band room. The ONLY exceptions are LMMS approved water bottles and times when the directors approve candy/snacks. Our room has an exterior door, and crumbs = bugs! Additionally, we play multi-thousand dollar instruments that can be damaged on the inside if sugar or food particles are blown into them. We will strictly enforce this rule for the benefit of everyone involved.
5. **Clean-up** – Your instrument case and other personal belongings should be stored in your lockers during and after class. Left-behind items will be placed in the band “Lost and Found Bin” for up to a week, and then will be moved to the school’s Lost and Found. Be sure to pick up all trash and personal belongings and lower your music stand before you leave your seat.
6. **NO Profanity** – How we speak to one another is a reflection of our character and crucial in building a family atmosphere. We are a band family and mean talk, bullying language and actions, profanity, etc. will NOT be tolerated. Students will serve consequences for this misbehavior.

Materials

Students are required to have the following materials in class daily: Instrument and ALL instrument necessities (valve oil, reeds – 2 or more in an appropriate reed case, cleaning equipment), black 1/2” band binder, 20 sheet protectors, LMMS Warm-Up Packet (7th & 8th Grade), Essential Elements for Band Book 1 (6th Grade), pencil, and school agenda.

Grading

Students’ grades will be divided as follows:

1. **Formative Assignments:** Every class at LMMS will have 2 formative assignments a week per quarter (a combination of graded and ungraded). In band, formatives will come in the form of play off check ins, theory practice, classroom quizzes, etc.
2. **Summative Assessments:** Every class at LMMS will have 2-3 Summative assessments each quarter (graded ONLY). Band summative assignments will come in the form of quarter play off requirements, playing tests, etc.

Discipline and Behavior

Violation of classroom rules will result in the following consequences.

1st Offense - Verbal Warning

2nd Offense - Sign “Eagle Card”

3rd Offense - Student is relocated in the classroom with an email or phone call to home.

4th Offense - Student is removed from the classroom and will receive office referral.

*Students who disrupt a rehearsal may be removed from the room for that class period and lose Eagle Card points. Also, the severity of a student’s action may result in immediate consequences, not following the above steps.

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Grading Policies

The Lost Mountain Band program follows the same grading policies and standards as are set around the building. Students will have weekly formative assignments and **at least** two summative assignments per quarter.

Re-Assessments

Students may have the opportunity to complete re-assessments on both written and performance based assignments in band. They may utilize before/after school time at Directors' discretion to complete the re-assessment. Students are able to retake an assessment as many times as they would like from the time the assessment was assigned until the end of the grading period. We want students to succeed, and growth in music is a huge part of that.

Attendance Policy

The daily classroom instruction in band is always geared toward a common goal – performance. We expect focus and hard work from the students so that they can take pride in excellent concert performances. For band students, the concert is the long-term goal of all of the practice hours and daily rehearsals. **Students must attend all mandatory events involving their class.** Students missing a concert will be required to complete an alternate assignment after their return to school. If a conflict should occur with a ride to or from a rehearsal or concert, please notify the band directors so that a ride with another family can possibly be arranged.

***Furthermore, students with unexcused absences from performances during the course of the year will not be allowed to participate in special performances and/or field trips. (ex. 7th Grade Music Celebration, 8th Grade Spring Trip, etc.) Students must maintain eligibility for their academics, behavior, and performance commitments in order to participate.**

Please review the calendar in this handbook for concert dates and commitments. It is set up in coordination with the LMMS administration to help avoid conflicts and assist in planning.

ABSENCES ARE EXCUSED FOR THESE REASONS ONLY:-

- Personal illness (please include doctor's note)
- Family emergency (guardian must contact band director)

Please notify band directors as soon as possible of any calendar conflicts.

Students involved in the performing arts find that they learn the importance of time management and maintaining prior commitments. We would like your child and your family to consider the events listed in the band calendar to be prior commitments to events that you find out about later. In the same vein, we will consider absences from band events excused if you have a prior commitment to receiving this calendar. Please keep us informed via email.

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Practicing

Practice is a necessary element for success on any musical instrument. While it is true that the sounds will certainly be amusing at first, the student must learn to “hang in there” and try to **address, solve, and master** specific problems during each practice session. Repetition will be necessary to train the fingers, learn the valve combinations, sticking rudiments, improve music reading, etc. **CONSISTENT DAILY PRACTICE** is the key to mastery and improvement.

Moreover, the way in which a student practices usually determines how successful he/she will be on that instrument. Those practice habits are formed early. As parents, please take an active role in your child’s music study. Your support, encouragement, and structure at home will be important in helping your child find success. Even parents with no musical background can be of great help to a child studying music by monitoring practice sessions. Here is a list of important considerations for home practice:

- Encourage practice as a priority, not something to do after all else is done.
- Schedule a consistent, daily time to practice.
- Be sure to practice using a music stand rather than placing music on a bed or desk. This allows for proper posture and playing position. Reinforce good habits!!! “We are what we consistently do”
- Provide a quiet place for practice. Avoid distractions like the TV, Stereo, etc.
- Remain nearby whenever possible and monitor the routine (see below).
- Praise your child’s efforts!

*Beginner Band students will NOT have to practice hour after hour in order to make progress. It is BEST if practice sessions are short at first, with a specific goal in mind. To that end, we will try to make the individual assignments as specific as possible. Students should begin practicing about ten minutes a day five to six days a week and gradually increase practice time until a daily routine of thirty minutes is established. The important factor, though, is that they practice FOUR to FIVE DAYS a week – on a consistent, daily basis.

Sample 30min Practice Routine

- **Warm-up (5 minutes):** mouthpiece playing, long tones
- **Technique (10 minutes):** scales or technique assignments from class
- **Band Music (10 minutes):** selections programmed for the concert - focusing on the difficult sections that need improvement and/or were marked in class to be worked on.
- **Fun (5 minutes):** any other music the student enjoys playing in addition to what has been isolated and worked on from band class

“When you practice, you get better! When you get better, you play with better players! When you play with better players, you play better music! When you play better music, you have more fun! When you have more fun, you want to practice! When you practice, you get better! Etc...”

Private Lessons

With roughly 400 band students and only 2 band directors, we do not have the opportunity to give students the benefit of individual instruction in school as often as we would like. Fortunately, there are many professional musicians in our area who offer private lessons on a weekly basis. Private lessons are by far the most efficient and effective way to see improvement on any specific instrument. They allow students to benefit from focused and consistent one-on-one instruction, precise immediate feedback, and

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assessment on an individual basis. Students who take private lessons become very motivated to practice and be successful. We have found that most students who are successful in auditioning for honor groups such as District Honor Band and All-State Band are students who see a private teacher each week. We encourage all of our students to take private lessons from a professional musician. Our local high schools offer great instruction in their Booster-led Music Conservatories and most local music stores also have a staff of private teachers which offers lessons. **Contact the directors for more information!**

Assignment / Assessment Guidelines

The Georgia Standards of Excellence for Band can be found online at <https://www.georgiastandards.org/Georgia-Standards/Documents/K-12-Music-Georgia-Standards.pdf> . The Standards for 6th grade beginning band are on pages 30-32. The standards for 7th & 8th grade bands are pages 33 – 38. While most of our assessments and assignments are performance-based, we will also include stands-based written assignments and assessments.

Lockers & Locks, Equipment, & Care of the Band Room

We are fortunate to have lockers in which to store student instruments, whether individually owned, school owned, or rented. Instrument storage lockers and a combination lock will be assigned to every student. Students should record their band locker combination in their agendas at the beginning of the school year.

It is highly recommended that you bring your own lock from home. If you decide to do this, the directors MUST have your locker combination. Keyhole locks are not permitted – it must be a combination lock!

IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO PROPERLY USE THE LOCK! If a lock is not being locked and is just hanging on the locker, materials in the locker could be tampered with by others.

PERCUSSION EQUIPMENT IS FOR THE USE OF OUR PERCUSSIONISTS ONLY! Just as nobody but yourself is to play on your instrument, the same is true for the percussion instruments. Due to limited space, most of this equipment is left in the rehearsal area at all times and it can be tempting to touch it. Treat percussion equipment as if it were someone else's property. In a matter of speaking it does belong to somebody else: LMMS.

Do not tamper with or play someone else's instrument at any time. On the same hand as percussion, this rule applies to all instruments. This rule must be followed and will be strictly enforced. Students may not enter another student's locker at anytime and will be immediately written up if observed doing so. Instruments and the materials are extremely valuable and the expectation is that students must respect others' belongings.

The use of the band room and the practice rooms for before/after school use is a privilege. Any student that is not a band member will not be permitted to enter the band room. Please make your friends aware of this important policy. Make arrangements to meet your friends someplace else after you pick up or return your instrument and music to the band room.

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NO FOOD OR FLAVORED DRINKS ALLOWED IN THE BAND ROOM

ABSOLUTELY NO GUM

To say again, the instruments we play literally cost thousands of dollars EACH. Think about it...sugar sitting in a dark, warm, and humid environment...you get the rest. It is absolutely necessary that we keep the instruments as clean as possible so they can last as long as possible. It goes without saying that we cannot afford to purchase new instruments every year. To fully stock a band room costs in the millions of dollars. PLEASE TREAT ALL INSTRUMENTS WITH RESPECT.

School Owned Instruments

Lost Mountain has a large inventory of school-owned equipment. A student using school-owned equipment must fill out an instrument loan contract with parent signature before an instrument can be issued. The board of education, as well as the LMMS music department, has invested thousands of dollars for school owned instruments. Students performing on a school-owned instrument will receive their instrument in proper working condition. Students are expected to treat and maintain the instrument with care throughout the year. Should the instrument need to be repaired at any point during the school year, it is the responsibility of the student to take the instrument to the repair shop for proper maintenance in a timely fashion. At the end of the school year, any remaining damage will be assessed, and the student will be charged.

***Students who do not take care of school owned instruments will lose the privilege of using one!**

Concert Attire

All band students will be required to purchase a \$15 band t-shirt from LMMS bands. This t-shirt will act as "casual" concert attire for all LMMS bands 6th-8th grade.

7th & 8th Grade Bands

We take pride in having a neat, professional appearance each time we have a formal performance. Please check to see that your child has the following items of clothing to wear for our concerts and GMEA events/audition.

Boys: Black dress pants, long black socks, black shoes, and white long-sleeve dress shirt. A tie and vest will be provided.

Girls: Black dress pants or floor-length skirt, black shoes, socks/hosiery, and a black, $\frac{3}{4}$ length sleeve top. **Please avoid leggings, short skirts, shorts, capri-style pants, & tennis shoes, as they appear too casual in performance.**

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We are thrilled you have chosen to participate in the band! Our dedication to excellence allows us to have a phenomenal program year after year. We cannot do what we do without the continued support of our community and amazing students. It is all thanks to YOU!!!

Welcome to the Lost Mountain Middle School Band Program!!!



Please see important calendar dates on the next page

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Lost Mountain Middle School Band 2023-2024 Calendars

events in bold are mandatory for ALL students of that grade level

6th GRADE BANDS

Aug 1 - 7	Recruitment/Band Sign Ups!	
Aug 9	1 st Day in Band Class	
Aug 22	Music Fundraiser Kick-off (Donation Drive)	
Sept 6	6 th Grade Music Fundraiser \$\$ due	
Nov 14	6th Grade Band Showcase Concert	LMMS 6:30pm
May 2 (Thurs)	6-8th Grade Band Spring "Concert on the Lawn"	Burnt Hickory Baptist 6:00pm

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7th GRADE BANDS

Aug 22	Music Fundraiser Kick-off (Donation Drive)	
Sept 6	7 th Grade Music Fundraiser \$\$ due	
October 5	7th & 8th Grade Band Fall Concert (blue band t-shirt & jeans)	LMMS 6:30pm
Nov 4	Solo & Ensemble Festival	Dickerson MS
Dec 2	Round 1 All-State Band / District 12 Honor Band Auditions	Dodgen MS
Dec 14	7th & 8th Grade Winter Band Concert	LMMS 6:30pm
Jan 6	All-State Band Audition (State Level, 2 nd Round)	Union Grove MS
Feb 9-10	District 12 Honor Band (for selected students)	Lassiter HS
Feb 13	Harrison HS — A Night of Jazz (Jazz Band Only)	Burnt Hickory Baptist 7:00pm
Feb 29-Mar 2	All-State Band Event (for selected students)	Athens, GA
Mar 5	7th & 8th Grade Pre-LGPE Concert	Harrison HS Performing Arts Center at 6:00pm
Mar 18-21	LMMS LGPE Performances (dates / times TBA)	South Cobb HS Performing Arts Center
May 2	6-8th Grade Band Spring "Concert on the Lawn"	Burnt Hickory Baptist 6:00pm
May 3	Harrison HS "Pops in the Park" (Pep Band)	Harrison HS 7:00pm
May 9	7 th Grade Music Celebration!	High School Visits & Stars & Strikes

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8th GRADE BANDS (1st semester)

Date TBA	8th Grade Band Night @ Hillgrove HS	Hillgrove HS
Aug 22	Music Fundraiser Kick-off (Donation Drive)	
Sept 6	Music Fundraiser \$\$ due	
Sept 15	8 th Grade Band Night @ Harrison HS	Harrison HS
October 5	7th & 8th Grade Band Fall Concert (blue band t-shirt & jeans)	LMMS 6:30pm
Nov 1	Poinsettia kick-off (8 th grade only, helps with Disney trip costs)	
November (TBD)	Field Trip to play with Harrison HS Marching Band during school day	Harrison HS
Nov 4	Solo & Ensemble Festival	Dickerson MS
Nov 15	Poinsettia Fundraising \$\$ due (8 th grade only)	
Dec 14	7th / 8th Grade Winter Band Concert	LMMS 6:30pm
Dec 2	Round 1 All-State Band / District Honor Band Auditions	Dodgen MS (time TBA)
Jan 6	All-State Band Audition (State Level, 2 nd Round)	Union Grove MS
Feb 9-10	District 12 Honor Band (for selected students)	Lassiter HS
Feb 13	Harrison HS — A Night of Jazz (Jazz Band Only)	Burnt Hickory Baptist 7:00pm
Feb 29-Mar 2	All-State Band Event (for selected students)	Athens, GA
Mar 5	7th & 8th Grade Pre-LGPE Concert	Harrison HS Performing Arts Center at 6:00pm
Mar 18-21	LMMS LGPE Performances (dates / times TBA)	South Cobb HS Performing Arts Center
May 2	6-8th Grade Band Spring "Concert on the Lawn"	Burnt Hickory Baptist 6:00pm
May 3	Harrison HS "Pops in the Park" (Pep Band)	Harrison HS 7:00pm
May 15-18 Orlando FL	LMMS Music Department Spring Trip	