



The McCleskey Middle Band

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www.mccleskeyband.org

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Dear 6th Grade Band Students and Parents:

We are so excited that we will be meeting our new class of band students in person on October 19. Even for the students who will continue virtually, we will be able to pace the class a bit more quickly.

Because the band room is so different than traditional academic classrooms, we have some different procedures. Some of these may seem strange to students, but every procedure is for the benefit of the students in the room. Please read through the following points and come to school prepared to work on the implementation of these from the first day.

1. No gum, candy, food, or drink EVER in the band room. This is for physical safety (choking hazard) and because the sugars and food particles simply ruin instruments. No exceptions are made for percussionists.
2. Students will be assigned individual lockers in the band room. These lockers come with combination locks. Students are not to change locks or leave lockers unlocked. Lockers are for the instrument, band book, and other band supplies—nothing else. These will be assigned during class during the first day or two back in the building.
3. Students are never to share, hold, or play an instrument that doesn't belong to them. If a student gets out of their seat for any reason, they should carry their instrument with them or put the instrument back in its case.
4. Students are expected to clean their instruments regularly. We encourage you to watch the videos we have posted at www.mccleskeyband.org.
5. Daily practice is expected. In the beginning, 5-10 minutes per day outside of class should be plenty. As the students' facial muscles adapt, the time should be increased to about 20 minutes per day. Class time is not the same as practice time.
6. Students are allowed (*expected*, actually) to take instruments home daily to practice. Some instruments may be too large to carry on the bus. In this case, we suggest families find a way to pick up the child and their instrument after school one or two days a week to make up practice time.
7. Students will come by the band room each morning after getting off the bus. They will place their instruments in their lockers and proceed to breakfast or homeroom.
8. We will probably put into place an opportunity for students to come in for extra help sessions between 8 AM and 9 AM. This will not start immediately, though.

STUDENTS SHOULD NOT BRING INSTRUMENTS ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 19. This will be a day we use to assign lockers and go over classroom procedures. Even when we do have instruments in school, students should keep their personal music stands at home. We have a set of music stands at school we will use.

Please complete these tasks before October 19.

1. Label your instrument case with a piece of masking tape. Write your name on the masking tape. You may also want to put an additional identifier on the case, such as a ribbon tied around the handle. The point is that the teachers and the student should know exactly who the case belongs to with no confusion. The luggage tag style ID tag is not sufficient, as these usually break after a couple of weeks. The cases look the same. No one will be happy when students get instruments or cases mixed up, so please label!
2. Write your name on the front of your band book in marker or Sharpie. Then, write your name on each page of the book in pen. Students' grades will come from band book performance assignments. We will

grade these in the books. Again, we want to always know that we are grading the student in the correct book.

3. Percussionists should label their drumsticks and mallets with their name. You can neatly write your name on the sticks with Sharpie or put a small piece of sturdy tape on the stick and write your name on the tape.

Quite a few safety questions have been posed. This pandemic has presented a situation that requires us to be flexible. Here are our current plans.

1. All chairs will face forward rather than be oriented in a typical arc.
2. Chairs will be spaced as far as we can. With the number of students who have indicated a face-to-face return, we anticipate a good ability to maintain space.
3. Students will have assigned chairs and an individual music stand. No sharing.
4. We will not be able to lend students mouthpieces, sticks, mallets, or instruments on a day they forget theirs or if theirs is in the shop.
5. We will only allow a maximum of four students in each locker row at one time. We will insist that students get their instrument quickly and get to their seat so other students can then access their lockers.
6. Students will keep masks on when not playing an instrument. No exceptions. Percussionists will keep masks on at all times.
7. Students will not be allowed in the percussion room, the directors' offices, upstairs in the sectional space, or any other confined area, without explicit requests by the directors.
8. All water fountains in the buildings are covered. Students will need to bring their own water bottles.
9. We will not schedule traditional concerts until we receive specific guidance from the district.
10. Students who will continue virtual learning are required to attend all classes through CTLs as scheduled; the schoolwide policy is that cameras must be on so that we can monitor progress in a valid and useful way. Because we will be monitoring both "rooms" of students at the same time, we expect virtual learners to signal through the chat if there is a question or need for clarification. We will check the chat frequently. At no time are virtual learners to sign off before the class is dismissed.

We've also been asked about special coverings and masks for musicians. The district has only specified masks/face coverings. We are not requiring additional or alternative protective measures. That being said, we certainly allow bell covers, face shields, musician-specific masks, instrument covers, or other protective equipment as long as it meets the Cobb County expectations of protection (face mask/covering) and as long as it doesn't hamper the ability to participate or cause some sort of instructional interruption. If these additional measures are of interest to you, a simple internet search will turn up some options. If the family chooses any of these extra measures, please note that none of them replace the requirement to wear a mask or face covering.

We know there is a lot to learn over the coming months, but sixth grade band is so fun! The first sounds may seem questionable to you—but we know the process! We've been amazed by what we have heard. The students have also been quite supportive of one another, just as they should be! Band is a place for everyone and we are glad this was their choice.

Everyone stay safe and we look forward to working with you throughout the middle school years!

All the best,

Jody Miller & Andrew Paller
Band Directors