

Guilford High School Music Department

605 New England Road Guilford, CT 06437

September 1, 2011

Dear Parents of Band and Wind Ensemble Students,

Welcome back to school! Hopefully you and your family had an enjoyable and relaxing summer vacation. 2010-11 promises to be an exciting year for the GHS music department, and I am looking forward to working with your young musicians in the upcoming months.

In an effort to save some paper, all of the basic information that students need to begin the year is now online on the GHS Band's web site, under the link "Band and Wind Ensemble Handbook." This page contains crucial information for a successful year (including concert dates, attendance policy, concert dress, required equipment, etc.). I will be covering some of this information in class, but I ask that you take a moment with your son or daughter and go through it again so that everyone is fully aware of the class expectations. Every Band and Wind Ensemble student must return the attached contract (which is also available for download on the web page) stating that you have all read and understand the policies and requirements of the ensemble.

In addition to the contract, you will also find a membership form for the Instrumental Music Boosters attached to this letter. We hope that many of you will consider joining the boosters and volunteering in some capacity during the course of the year. (Our first meeting is Monday September 19th, at 7:30 in the band room). New members are especially welcome! In financial times such as these, when the music department budget has been cut by approximately 75% over the past 4 years (and the middle school has lost one full time music teacher), this booster organization fulfills an even more vital role in our success as a program. Thank you as always for your support!

The last item you will find attached is a CD pre-order form. Legradice Audio will be professionally recording all major GHS concerts this year, and making CD's available for purchase. If you pre-order at least 3 CD's now, you can save \$3 per CD. To pre-order, simply fill out the form attached to this letter, and return it with payment (check made out to GHS Music Boosters) to me as soon as possible.

This year, we will again be using Smart Music software as part of classroom instruction. Most students are already familiar with this product, which I hope will be a useful tool for improving student performance. Students will be given regular graded assignments that they will need to complete using smart music software at home or at the school. Students wishing to complete assignments at home must purchase a yearly Smart Music subscription (see attached form). The GHS music boosters has generously decided to help defray the individual cost of subscriptions this year, and as a result, a 1 year subscription purchased through the school will only cost \$15, instead of the \$30 it would cost to purchase directly from Smart Music. There will be three Smart Music stations available for student use during the school day as well as after school, but all students are strongly encouraged to purchase a home subscription (and if necessary an external microphone.) As always, if purchasing these items (or any of the other required equipment listed in the handbook) presents a financial burden on your family, please do

not hesitate to contact me so that I can work out a way to get some of this equipment for you without breaking your budget.

Finally, plans for the music department trip to New Orleans are proceeding quite well, and I will be sending an update home to all families who have signed up to travel with us soon. In fact, we have almost reached our maximum capacity of 160 travellers. I estimate that we currently only have 10 seats remaining, but I am anticipating that there may be some students whose plans have changed over the summer. As a result, we will not be accepting new registrations for the trip until we have had time to confirm with everyone who signed up last year that they still plan on attending. Once we know exactly how many openings there are left, we will allow new students to register. Priority for the remaining spots will go to students, so unless we still have openings in October, no new adult guests or chaperones will be accepted.

I encourage you to visit my web site frequently throughout the year as I intend to rely much less on printed materials to communicate with parents. This handbook, as well as other handouts, the concert calendar, course information, and important announcements will all be posted on the web site as the year progresses. If you ever need to contact me, I can be reached at school (453-2741 x267) or via e-mail (gahmm@guilford.k12.ct.us) Hope to see you at all our performances!

Sincerely,

Mark Gahm

P.S. To get to the GHS Bands Web site, you can access it from the faculty contact list, or go directly to:

<http://www.guilford.k12.ct.us/~gahmm/>

To get to the Music Department Web site from the main GHS page, look for a link under “events” or go directly to:

http://www.guilford.k12.ct.us/~ghs/school_info/departments/music/index.php

2011-2012 Band/Wind Ensemble Performance Calendar

Please check the music department web site for a complete performance calendar. Changes/additions to the schedule may occur later in the year, so please check the web site frequently.

Band/Wind Ensemble Performance attendance policy

Students are expected to attend all performances for their ensemble(s). Students are also expected to remain at a concert if other performing groups are playing on the same concert. To request to be excused from a performance, students must bring in a note explaining the conflict written and signed by a parent or guardian at least one week prior to the performance (sooner is preferred). Excuses will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The following reasons for missing a performance will not be accepted: work, failure to find a ride, tickets to a show, sports practice. In the event that a student has a conflict with a school sport game, both the coach and Mr. Gahm should be notified as soon as possible so that a solution can be worked out. Students missing a performance will be asked to complete an alternate assignment. Failure to notify the director of a conflict in a timely manner will result in a lowered grade, or in the loss of a student's place in a select ensemble such as the Symphony Orchestra or Wind Ensemble.

Rehearsal Participation

Students can not "sit out" without permission of the director. A student needing to sit out for more than one rehearsal for medical or other reasons must bring in a note from a parent.

Cell Phone Use

There is a no tolerance policy for cell phone use in the class. Once class has begun, any student that uses a cell phone (for any purpose--checking time, texting, phone conversation, etc.) will have their phone given to one of the deans.

Care of Instruments

Students are expected to keep their instrument clean and in good working condition at all times. Students should immediately report any instrument malfunctions to the director and make an appointment to have the instrument repaired promptly. Instrument cases should be clearly labeled with a name. Students must be respectful of instruments that belong to others. Behavior that might lead to the damage of an instrument will not be tolerated. Damaging an instrument intentionally will be grounds for removal from this course. Percussion equipment is to be used by percussionists only. Music Dept. pianos and drum sets are not to be played without permission—even by students who study those instruments. Chewing gum while playing will damage an instrument. Students must discard all gum before class begins.

Instrument Storage.

Students may leave their instruments in the band room storage cabinets during the school day, and overnight. Every attempt will be made to keep the storage room a secure area, however this room is not always locked, nor is it always supervised by an adult. All students who use these school lockers will be required to provide a lock.

Concert Attire

Concert Band:

Boys: Black dress pants, black long sleeve button-down collared shirt, black shoes and black socks. Girls: All black top/bottom. **DRESSES OR SKIRTS MUST FALL BELOW THE KNEES** Dress pants are fine. Black shoes.

Wind Ensemble

Boys: Black Jacket and Black dress pants (or tuxedo), white shirt, black bow tie, black shoes, black socks. Girls: All black top/bottom. **DRESSES OR SKIRTS MUST FALL BELOW THE KNEES.** Dress pants are fine. Black shoes.

Marching Band Uniforms & Shoes.

As always, we will start school in high gear trying to prepare for the **Guilford Fair Day Parade, which is on September 17th. Please make every effort to keep that date free**—it is a big event in our town, and the Band plays a vital role. Before that date, a lot has to get done for a successful performance. In addition to learning the music and working on our marching skills, we need to get everyone into the proper uniform. The school will provide the shirt, pants, and cummerbund (all of which will be distributed in the first two weeks of school) but students must also wear black socks and must purchase black marching shoes from the school. These shoes are a specific brand and style, so that the entire band is wearing the exact same uniform. These shoes will go on sale at school in the first week. Used shoes (if available in the correct size) are \$25 (many are not even used, they are new shoes that are left over from last year's order). New shoes that I order this year will be \$35. The discounted shoes are available in almost every size, and will be sold on a first come first served basis. They go quickly, so the sooner you buy, the better chance you have of getting a discount. (checks payable to Guilford High School Band) If a student grows out of a pair of shoes at anytime during their time in band, they may exchange their shoes for ones that fit *free of charge*.

Books

We will be using the book “Foundations for Superior Performance” on a daily basis in Concert Band (not in Wind Ensemble) for warm-ups, and technical practice. This is one of the books that the students have been using at Adams for the past two years, and all students should bring in their copy of the book to class. Students who have lost their book, or who do not own a copy may purchase a copy from the school or may sign out a copy of the book which they will have to return at the end of the year. Students will also be using the book “Bach and Before for Band.” These books will be provided for students. Lost books will cost \$6 to replace. Students will also be given heavy duty music folders for their use. Lost or damaged folders will cost \$15 to replace.

Smart Music

This year we will again be using Smart Music software as part of classroom instruction. Students will be given regular graded assignments that they will need to complete using smart music software at home or at the school. Students wishing to complete assignments at home must

purchase a yearly Smart Music subscription (see attached form). Thanks to the generous support of the music boosters, a 1 year subscription purchased through the school will only cost \$15, instead of the \$30 it would cost to purchase directly from Smart Music. Smart Music will work on any home computer with an internet connection, but many computers will also require an external microphone for it to function properly. Microphones can be purchased through the school at a discounted price as well (\$17 for Windows, \$26 for Mac). There will be three Smart Music stations available for student use during the school day as well as after school, but all students are strongly encouraged to purchase a home subscription. Any student requiring financial assistance to purchase these items should speak to Mr. Gahm.

Private Lessons

Due to the number of students in both the Band and Wind Ensemble, individualized instruction is very difficult. Private lessons can be a great way to get more personal attention, especially for those students looking for a challenge. If you are interested in finding a private music teacher, please let Mr. Gahm know. The music department maintains a list of good private music teachers in the area. Limited scholarships are also available for those who may need financial assistance.

Leveling

Students may opt to take Band and Wind Ensemble for level zero or level one credit. Level zero (grade does not impact cumulative GPA) will be automatically assigned to students who do not specifically request a level. To receive level one credit, the student must complete three of the following requirements per semester. Students wishing to receive Level One credit in more than one ensemble must complete four. A student can have only a maximum of two Level One music courses per semester.

- * Serving as an officer in the music ensemble
- * Research paper. The paper must be approved by the music teacher and follow the format required by the English Department.
- * Audition for CMEA Region Music Festival on applied instrument.
- * Performance in Sports Band (good for one semester only)
- * Perform in Percussion Ensemble
- * Perform in an approved music ensemble outside of school on applied instrument (i.e. Greater New Haven Youth Symphony, Concert Band, or Wind Ensemble, Shoreline Jazz Collective, Neighborhood Music School Chamber Ensembles, etc.)
- * Weekly private lessons on applied instrument
- * Participation in school musical (cast, pit or major crew assignment)
- * Other director-approved project of students design (i.e. arranging a work to be performed, soloist in concerto, transcribing parts, etc.)
- * Sound engineer for a minimum of two concerts per semester.
- * Approved music department community service project (at least 8 hours)

Grading

Grades in Band and Wind Ensemble will be calculated based on the following:

10 % Homework: Written homework in these classes is rare, but can include written reactions to concerts, turning in important forms, etc.)

30% Class work: students will receive a class work grade every two weeks, based on their overall work in class (preparedness for class, active participation, posture, effort, etc.)

15% Concerts/Projects: Students will be given a grade for each performance. Full credit will be given for students that arrive on time for performances, are prepared with appropriate equipment/uniform, and participate fully. Students that are excused from a performance will

have to submit a substitute project to receive full credit. Students that are not excused from a concert will lose credit for a missed performance.

10% Equipment Check: (usually one per quarter) Students will be asked to show that they have all the necessary items to be able to play and maintain their instrument in good working condition (reeds, cleaning tools, etc)

35% Smart Music/ Playing Tests: students will be given bi-weekly Smart Music assignments, and once per quarter will be asked perform excerpts from their concert music.

Other required/recommended equipment.

Below is a list of required and recommended equipment for students participating in the GHS Band and Wind Ensemble. If an item is listed as required, it is something students will be using every day, or almost every day in class. If an item is listed as recommended, it is either something that will help protect an instrument from damage, or something (such as a new mouthpiece) that will upgrade the performance of an instrument to a suitable level for high school. If your son or daughter takes private lessons, you should consult your private teacher to get equipment recommendations before making a purchase. Please check the web site for suggested vendors.

Students should have all the necessary equipment as soon as possible but **no later than September 24th** (If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at school or via e-mail.

RECOMMENDED/REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

Flute

Required:

- Combination lock for storage of instrument (if instrument is kept in band room)
- cleaning and tuning rod

Clarinet

Required:

- Combination lock for storage of instrument (if instrument is kept in band room)
- 1 Box of Reeds (It is less expensive to buy reeds by the box, and it provides a back up if reeds get broken.

Recommended brand: Vandoren, strength: 3

- cork grease

Highly recommended:

- Good quality mouthpiece and ligature. (Most mouthpieces/ligatures that come with student clarinets are of very poor quality) A high quality mouthpiece and ligature can make a student instrument sound like a newer, more professional model. If the student is playing on the same mouthpiece they had when they first bought the instrument, it is time for an upgrade.

Recommended brands:

Vandoren B45 Bb clarinet mouthpiece (top quality)

David Hite, Premier clarinet mouthpiece (excellent quality & value)

Rovner Dark Ligature

- La Voz reed case
- Pull through clarinet swab
- Thum-eez pad

Saxophones

Required:

- Combination lock for storage of instrument. (if instrument is kept in band room)
- 1 Box of Reeds (It is less expensive to buy reeds by the box, and it provides a back up if reeds get broken.

Recommended: Vandoren, strength: 3

- Neck Strap

Highly recommended:

- Good quality mouthpiece and ligature. (Most mouthpieces/ligatures that come with student saxophones are of very poor quality, and are not appropriate for high school level musicians. A high quality mouthpiece and ligature can make a student instrument sound like a newer, more professional model. If the student is playing on the same mouthpiece they had when they first bought the instrument, it is time for an upgrade.

Recommended brands:

Selmer C-star (Top Quality)

David Hite, Premier (excellent quality and value)

- Rovner Dark Ligature
- La Voz Reed case
- Thum-eez pad

Double Reeds: Consult your private teacher

French Horn

Required:

- Combination lock for storage of instrument (if instrument is kept in band room)
- Rotor oil and slide grease

Highly recommended:

- Schilke #29 mouthpiece or Holton MDC 29 mouthpiece
- mouthpiece brush
- Non-transposing Straight mute

Recommended brands:

Jo-Ral metal straight mute (top quality)

Humes and Berg stone-lined mutes (good value)

Trumpet

Required:

- Combination lock for instrument cabinet
- Straight mute

Recommended brands:

Jo-Ral metal straight mute (top quality)

Humes and Berg stone-lined mutes (good value)

- Valve Oil
- **Highly recommended:**
- Bach 3C mouthpiece
- slide grease
- mouthpiece brush (\$3.50) and cleaning snake

Trombone

Required:

- Combination lock for storage of instrument (if instrument is kept in band room)
- slide cream and spray water bottle
- straight mute

Recommended brands:

Jo-Ral metal straight mute (top quality)

Humes and Berg stone-lined mutes (good value)

Highly recommended:

- Bach 6 1/2 AL mouthpiece
- tuning slide grease
- mouthpiece brush and cleaning snake

Euphonium

Required:

- Combination lock for storage of instrument (if instrument is kept in band room)
- valve oil

Highly recommended:

- Bach 6 1/2 AL mouthpiece
- slide grease
- mouthpiece brush

Tuba

Highly recommended:

- slide grease
- mouthpiece brush

Percussionists

Required:

- 1 stick bag (to protect and carry sticks)
- 1 pair general concert snare sticks (these are different than the sticks used for drum set playing) recommended: Vic Firth, American Custom SD1
- 1 pair Rubber Xylophone mallets. Recommended: Mike Balter, #6BB, grey rubber, birch
- 1 pair General Yarn Mallets. Recommended: Mike Balter, #14BB, Red Yarn, Birch
- 1 pair general timpani mallets (recommended Vic Firth T3, staccato)

If you do not own any of these items, or if you only own the drum sticks, the easiest thing to do would be to order a complete set. A complete set of these sticks, with stick bag costs much less than purchasing the sticks separately.

The two sets I would recommend are:

*Innovative Percussion FP2 Intermediate Mallet Pack (top quality)

*Liberty 1 Basic Stick Pack (good value)

Both are available at steveweissmusic.com. (I have a link to these two products on the student resources page of my web site.)

All Band Members:

Highly recommended

polishing cloths, handkerchief

metronome & tuner

music stand

pencils

instrument case: in good condition, clean, labeled

note your serial number for insurance records

service instrument annually