**VPMS Band Handbook 2019-2020**

Dear Valley Park Band Family,

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year! I am very happy that you and your family are members of our band program. Whether you are new to music, or have already been in band, I am delighted and proud to be able to work with you at this stage of your musical journey! I know many of you know who I am, but for some who are not familiar with me, I look forward to working with you and your student within the district as Band Director.

To give everyone a little insight to my move over to the band room, I want you to know that band has been my passion for a very long time. My family was very musical and I started taking piano lessons at a young age. When I could join band in 5th grade, I started off on trumpet and played for a little over a year on that instrument. Through my time in beginning band, the percussionist’s in the back of the room always looked to have a little bit more fun than the brass section, so in 7th grade I made the switch to percussion and loved it so much I made it a point to continue with music and percussion all the way through college. I attended Murray State University where I received my bachelors of music education, being certified to teach K-12band and/or choir. I was very fortunate to find Valley Park as I was moving back to the St. Louis area right after college and I’m extremely happy to be able to continue with such amazing students in this district and to be able to see many of them continue to grow as young men and women. Since being back in St. Louis, I have worked with Oakville High Schools marching band every summer/fall for their marching season, I joined a women’s chorus to be able to continue to perform in the community and I am the President of the St. Louis chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota, a women’s music fraternity.

The district is taking on some new changes and just like the district, the band program will continue to change and evolve over the next year and I’m truly looking forward to growing our program. The students and families are what make Valley Park such an incredible place to work and I love being able to spend so much time with you all. If you ever have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to bring them to my attention.

Make no mistake; learning to play a musical instrument is not easy. If it were, everyone would be a great musician! There will be some challenges along the way, but there will be far more successes. We will improve, together, as a team. I will ask nothing of you that I would not be willing to do (or have already done) nor will I expect anything that you are not capable of! You will do great things!

This Band Handbook covers a wide array of topics that are important to us having a successful year. Please read it.

Again, welcome to the band program and here’s to a fantastic year!

Laura Porter

Director of Bands

**Contact Info:**

I will be using the Remind App this year to communicate urgent or time-sensitive information and reminders. This is also the only way to contact me in a hurry, as it comes directly to my cell phone. I will not flood your phone with scores of alerts. Both students and parents are encouraged to join; all conversations are archived. **For 6th grade band**- To join on a cell phone, text the message @9gd628 to number 81010 or on a computer open a web browser and type in rmd.at/9gd628 . **For 7th grade band**- To join on a cell phone, text the message @84beb7 to number 81010 or on a computer open a web browser and type in rmd.at/84beb7 .

My web page is https://vpbands.weebly.com/

My school email is lporter@vp.k12.mo.us and phone number 636-923-3516

Please Like our Facebook page as well to see pictures or videos of the amazing things our students do and to stay current on what’s happening in the band. https://www.facebook.com/valleyparkbands/

**The VPMS Band Program**

The 6th grade and 7th grade VPMS bands are primarily focused on the development of musicianship in a concert band setting. The ensembles will perform at 2 evening concerts (Winter and Spring) as well as school assemblies. 7th grade band will have the opportunity to compete in concert band contests occasionally. These contests will take place during the school day. Participation in the solo and small ensemble district and state contest is also encouraged.

**Grading Policy**

Performances are required and are graded. MISSING A SCHEDULED PERFORMANCE WILL RESULT IN A “0” GRADE FOR THAT PERFORMANCE, except in the case of sickness or family emergency. Band members are expected to attend all performances and rehearsals. Conflicts with Athletic and Other Events do arise and Valley Park High School strongly encourages students to be involved in a variety of activities. Good communication with directors, coaches, and sponsors will alleviate concerns and questions of the intent and commitment to the group when a conflict arises. In all cases, a performance or game takes precedent over a practice (i.e. a band performance takes precedence over a sports practice and an athletic match/game takes precedence over a band practice). It is the responsibility of the student to identify any such conflict and to bring it to the attention of the coaches and directors at least 2 weeks (14 days) in advance.

Google Classroom and/or Smart Music will be used for assessments throughout the school year. Students will submit videos of assignments either with a phone, laptop, or the school IPad.

**Equipment**

Students should supply their own instrument and are responsible for maintaining their instrument in good working order. Should a situation arise in which a student is unable to supply their own instrument contact Ms. Porter at [lporter@vp.k12.mo.us](mailto:lporter@vp.k12.mo.us) If a student damages any equipment in the band room they are responsible for the cost of the repair.

Students are responsible for purchasing supplies for marching band and a book for concert band.

If students are not able to provide their own instrument for band, a very limited supply of school owned instruments are available. Although it is not fully recommended because most of the school owned instruments are not of the best playing ability, students may rent instruments from the band program for a rental fee of $40 per semester, or $80 for the whole year. Students must maintain their instrument in the same condition that it was presented to them. Certain instruments may also be checked out to multiple students throughout the program at the same time, it would be expected that each student provide their own mouthpiece for said instrument.

Reeds- Clarinet and Saxophone students are encouraged to provide their own reed. If a student needs one throughout the class period, a $2 fee will be charged to the student account.

**Acceptable Instruments-** These are instrument brands which are trusted by many band directors.

* **Flute** – Jupiter, Yamaha, Armstrong, Artley, Bundy, Gemeinhardt
* **Clarinet –** Jupiter,Yamaha, Bundy, Noblet, Normandy, Selmer, Buffet, Vito, Leblanc
* **Saxophone** – Jupiter, Yamaha, Bundy, Selmer, King, Conn
* **Trumpet** – Jupiter, Yamaha, Bach, Getzen, Conn, King, Eastman
* **Trombone** – Jupiter, Yamaha, Bach, Getzen, King, Eastman
* **Percussion Kits** – Jupiter, Yamaha, Pearl, Selmer, Mapex, Ludwig
  + Percussion kits must include a bell kit/mallet instrument and practice pad or snare drum

**Food, drink, and clean mouth policy**

There is no water fountain in the building with the band room anymore; students need to bring a water bottle to fill up in the bathroom sink or other water fountains in the main high school building. Do not eat anything right before band, including gum. If you do, at least thoroughly rinse your mouth with water before class -small food particles left over in the mouth can get into your instrument and cause all kinds of gross, sticky, and expensive repair problems in the future. Please no soda or juice in the band room as well.

**Care of Instruments**

* Handle with care!  Your instrument is made of breakable parts, so be careful handling it.  Do not let siblings or friends handle your instrument.
* Always store your instrument safely in the case when you are not playing it.
* Before you pick up your case, make sure the latches are closed.
* Do not let the instrument get too hot or too cold.  For example, avoid leaving it in the car for an extended period of time on an extremely hot or cold day.
* Do not drink (except water) or eat right before playing your instrument.  If you do eat or drink something other than water, rinse your mouth before playing.
* Flutes and reed instruments:
  + Swab your instrument out after each time you play it.
  + Clarinets and saxophones should remove their reed after each playing time and place it back in the reed case.
* Brass:
  + Check valves and slides each day for proper oiling and greasing (Oil valves once a week).
  + Using a mouthpiece brush, clean the mouthpiece out weekly.
* Percussion
  + Make sure the area with percussion equipment is always clear and clean.

**Behavior Expectations**

Interruption free rehearsal time is precious to the development of individual and ensemble growth. Students are expected to prepare their individual part outside of class and attend class with a positive attitude focused on the development of the band. Students should always have their instrument, music, a pencil, and any other equipment needed for the particular season.

**Uniforms**

**Concert band** – students will be asked to dress professionally for concert band performances. This means no tennis shoes, flip flops, t-shirts, jeans, short skirts/dresses, etc.

**Pep band** – In the event that VPMS students are invited to perform with the high school band they will need a blue band shirt (if they do not already own one).  These events will be optional.

**Fundraising**

Students will be asked to participate in fundraisers throughout the year. We rely on the proceeds to purchase equipment, repair equipment, music, and other necessary items that are not funded elsewhere. I also have a goal to purchase new uniforms for the marching band in the next couple of years. All of these things are extremely pricy and we really need the support of everyone to grow our program to new heights. Parents can help as well by trying to sell at work or other groups outside of the school setting. If you cannot or do not wish to participate in a particular fundraiser, I understand. However, it is possible to simply send cash or a check, and it will be counted as a donation. This has been a popular option for other programs and the benefit is that our band keeps 100% of the money.

**Practice:**

There is NO way possible for a musician to succeed without practicing. We all expect athletes to practice; ***how can a musician succeed without it***?!

**Practice Smart!**

* Try to schedule a time every day to practice
* Never practice without clear goals. Identify exactly what will you be able to do when you are done.
* Set short-term AND long-term goals. Short-term would be a particular measure or phrase. Long-term would be technique, such as cleaner articulations, hand/grip discipline in percussion, better air support, etc.
* Use a metronome, especially if you think that you don’t need one!
* Practice someplace quiet and free of distraction. NO other music or noise should be in earshot.
* Use a mirror, at times, to check your embouchure for problems.
* Set your goals and work on those, plus scales, range, rudiments, tone, etc.,
* Use correct posture and hand position at all times
* Practice in small segments – 15 minutes here – 15 minutes there. Long, marathon-like sessions will do more harm than good. It’s physical exercise, plus, there is brain research that shows us how we most effectively retain skills. Spread the work out in short bursts!
* Isolate difficult passages and practice them slowly. It is better to play slow and accurate than fast and sloppy.
* STAY POSITIVE! Not everything will be easy. If you are getting frustrated take a break and come back to it another time.
* Always strive for your best sound! SOUND IS EVERYTHING!
* Play for others as often as possible. Play for your family, church, dog or anyone that will listen!
* “Practice, practice, practice! And when you’re done? PRACTICE SOME MORE!”

**How can parents help?**

* Help select a regular practice time and place for your child.
* Encourage your child through positive support.  Listen to practice sessions on occasion.
* Everyone will probably require a ton of patience while the beginning musician squeaks, squawks, and moans and groans his/her way through the first several weeks.  It will get better! With regular practice those noises will be replaced in no time with the wonderful sounds of music! The rewards are well worth the wait.
* Set aside our concert dates to be sure **you and your child** can attend.
* Help students care for their instruments (maintenance, keep others from handling/playing, etc.)

**Private Lessons:**

Band directors can do only so much…Private lessons are STRONGLY encouraged out of every student in any band. If we could make them a requirement, we would—they are that important! The improvement in your child will be impressive, and it is money well invested in their future.

Most teachers will teach hour-long lessons or 30 minute lessons once per week. If you would like assistance in finding a teacher or want to check the qualifications or reputation of a possible instructor, you can contact me or a good music store.

**VPMS Band Schedule 2019-2020**

(Afterschool and weekend events only)

December, 17, 2019 –Winter band Concert

April 23, 2020 – Spring Band Concert

Calendar subject to change

**Valley Park School-Owned Instrument Use Policy**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Parent Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School year used: \_\_\_2019-2020\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Instrument: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Manufacturer: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Serial Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Accessories included: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
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Condition of Instrument at date of issue: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Condition of Case at date of issue: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Director Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent and Student Agreement:

**We agree, upon the designated user fee of $40 per semester, or $80 per year to accept the above-described instrument as indicated and to return it in the same condition as when received, including all accessories.**

**We also agree to pay for repair or damages in excess of the user fee amount caused by misuse, negligence, or lack of proper care to the instrument described.**

**It is agreed that the instrument will be returned to Valley Park School District at the requested time.**

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Please return to Ms. Porter by September 4th.**

Payment type, please indicate: Cash or Check number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Total: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to set up a payment plan, please contact Ms. Porter.

**Valley Park School-Owned Percussion Use Policy**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Parent Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School year used: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent and Student Agreement:

**We agree, upon the designated user fee of $40 per year, to use all percussion equipment, instruments, mallets, sticks, supplies/materials, and to maintain all materials in the same condition as when instruction began.**

**We also agree to pay for repair or damages in excess of the user fee amount caused by misuse, negligence, or lack of proper care to the instrument described.**

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Please return to Ms. Porter by September 4th.**

Payment type, please indicate: Cash or Check number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Term:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Total: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to set up a payment plan, please contact Ms. Porter.

**Valley Park Band Pledge**

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ have received my *Band Handbook* for the 2019-2020 school year in the Valley Park Band and have added the needed dates to my personal calendar/family calendar based off of the band calendar in this handbook.

I fully realize that I am important to **everyone** in the band and everyone is important to me. I also recognize each rehearsal and performance is very important and I will do my best to be at each one on time, prepared mentally and physically, ready to think positively and to work toward the mutual goals of **our** program.

I realize that all people are equal in **our** band program and I will pass off all musical assignments on time, with the best quality I am capable of.

Most of all, I recognize that honesty and integrity among my fellow band members and director are my most important contributions to myself, and our band program. Without them, I believe we all lose.

I understand that the director's role is to instruct and I will accept those instructions openly in order to make our band program better.

I will also work toward keeping up with all of my materials, supplies, and instrument. I will also do my best to help other people with this.

I will do my best to think positively, create a positive atmosphere with my actions, and do my part to make this an enjoyable and successful class.

(It is important to note that this pledge was written by a high-school student from Mississippi almost 30 years ago. Their devotion, care, and concern for the well-being of their band program is obvious, and it is our hope that each of our students will also develop a similar commitment to music and our program.)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student signature

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent signature

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent phone and email

**Please detach and return to Ms. Porter by September 4th.**