

# Alcott Band Handbook

## Preface

This handbook has been written for the Alcott Middle School band members and their parents with the intent of providing information regarding the purpose, procedures, expectations and activities of the band program. **All band students and parents are expected to read the entire handbook carefully to avoid conflicts with the policies stated herein.** As a member of the Alcott Middle School Band you have the honor and responsibility of participating in an organization with high standards of excellence and pride. We are extremely fortunate to have parents, administrators, faculty, and school board members that are committed and dedicated to a quality band program. We look forward to having you a part of the band program!

## Contacting Me:

E-mail [ryanm@norman.k12.ok.us](mailto:ryanm@norman.k12.ok.us)

Website [www.nhsband.net](http://www.nhsband.net) (You will be able to find almost any info you need here)

Phone 366-5845

The Band Hall opens at 8:35 which is the first bell. Students are not allowed to enter the building earlier without permission. Students may enter the band room to put away their band materials in their cubby and then go on to their locker and first hour class. Students that are found in the building before 8:35 without permission will receive a consequence.

## Alcott Middle School Philosophy of Instrumental Music

A well-rounded education is enhanced by one of the most basic of all studies...the study of **music**. Music develops **self-confidence**. Music teaches **discipline**. Music gives each student a feeling of **pride** and **accomplishment**. Playing in band teaches students the importance of working with others and helps them develop the **social skills** necessary to be part of a performing organization. Instrumental music engages students in a group activity that allows them to use their free time constructively. Band instills **values**: responsibility, purpose & direction, devotion to duty, spirit of cooperation, and sensitivity to beauty. Not all band students become great musicians, but certainly all become more mature, cooperative, selfdisciplined, hard working members of society with an appreciation of the arts. Music is a subject that affects all sides of a student's personality. These include the intellectual, physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual and social aspects of a person.

**Pride and commitment to excellence** are important elements of a quality organization. External discipline creates internal discipline. This **self-discipline** demonstrates each student's own initiative. **Pride** is having a desire to succeed in what you do while **respecting** yourself and others around you. It is taking what you do **seriously** while **enjoying** what you do. Pride is a **state of mind**. A person's **quality of life** is in direct proportion to their **commitment to excellence** - whatever their field of endeavor.

## Classroom Policies

### 1. **Respect your fellow band members, band directors, and YOURSELF.**

We are a BAND FAMILY and should treat each other in that manner. As an elective class, participation and membership in the Wildcat Band is a privilege.

### 2. **No food, drink, gum, nor running in the band hall or practice rooms.**

This beautiful band hall facility is provided for you by the taxpayers of Norman Public Schools. Take pride in keeping it clean and free from damage. Band Students are the ONLY ones allowed in the band hall, non-band students must "check-in" with a band director immediately upon entering.

3. **Be prepared for each rehearsal.** Bring the proper equipment and supplies (including a pencil) to every rehearsal. Practice your part so that you are ready for the rehearsal both mentally and physically.

4. **Lockers:** Band Lockers are for musical instruments and music folders only. They are not for books, or

materials from other classes. **You must shut your locker every day, if you want to use a lock that is great!**

5. **Communicate effectively** and **promptly** regarding conflicts with the scheduled calendar of events.

**CONSEQUENCES:** The directors hold members of the Alcott Middle School Band program to **high standards of discipline**. The actions of each member of the band program affect the overall image of the band in both the school and the community. Students who choose band as their explo are among the **best students** in the school and discipline problems should be uncommon in the Alcott band program. However, if discipline actions are needed, the following consequences will occur.

1. **Verbal warning &/or Written Warning**
2. **Removal from rehearsal, student conference, & possible detention**
3. **Detention, loss of chair placement, parent contact**
4. **Parent conference**
5. **Office referral.**

### Chair Tests

Performance tests in band are used not only for grades, but also for chair placement. Chair tests are held frequently, typically on a bi-weekly basis. Therefore, there are many opportunities to compete for chairs. A student must be present the day of the test in order to compete for a chair. If a student is absent, he/she will be able to make up the grade for full credit but will not be able to compete for a chair. They will sit at the end of the section until the next chair test. Concert chairs will be the exception, students who have an excused absence on a try-out date will make up the try-out when they return to school and be placed in the appropriate chair according to their performance.

### Concert Dress

Our concerts should be a source of pride to our students, staff, and school. Therefore, we will expect that students performing in a band concert are appropriately dressed for the occasion. Students not following the dress code will not be allowed to perform until the problem is corrected. The dress code found in the Alcott Middle School Handbook will be enforced at all band functions! Please make arrangements now to acquire the appropriate concert attire, please notify Mr. McKinney ASAP if you will not be able to acquire the clothes from this list.

6th grade gentlemen: Collared shirt or sweater (not a T-shirt)  
Slacks  
Socks  
Dress Shoes

6th grade ladies: Dress or Slacks/Blouse  
Dress Shoes  
\*Note: Please be certain your choice of attire does not inhibit your ability to play your instrument in proper playing position.

7th and 8th grade: Black polo shirt (\$22) ordered through school  
Black pants or skirt (appropriate length) - ALL Black  
Black shoes and black socks or black panty hose that cover your entire leg while sitting.

### Grading Policy

Performance Grades (50%):

Students will play assigned material for a grade. Students will also complete assigned quizzes, attend sectionals, and other required rehearsals. The average of all these items will be used to determine the total performance grade. A student may replay a playing test for a better grade before the grade cutoff. However, this replay will not alter chair placement.

Participation Grades (20%):

Each student is expected to fully participate in Band class every day. If a student is unable to participate due to forgetting an instrument, reeds, sticks, music, or does not participate in a positive manner, he/she will lose 10 participation points for the day.

Concert/Contest Grades (20%):

Every band student is expected to perform at concerts and contests scheduled throughout the year. Please mark your calendars now! When a musical ensemble performs, everyone must participate to ensure a successful performance. Those who have excused absences will be assigned an alternate assignment to make-up the points. Those with an unexcused absence will receive a zero for the concert. Please contact Mr. McKinney immediately in case of a conflict. In the event that there is not a scheduled performance in a quarter, an assignment will be given in its place.

9 Weeks Test (10%):

The students will be assigned a 9 weeks test for each quarter. Students will be informed early in the quarter of the contents of the test and may start taking it early. If a student is not satisfied with their grade they may retake the test up until the last week of the quarter.

Extra Credit:

There are many opportunities for extra credit! These include attending concerts by classical, jazz, or teacher approved performing groups. Proof of attendance will be necessary to receive the extra credit. Extra credit is also awarded for participation in extra school ensembles (percussion ensemble, woodwind choir, jazz band, etc.)

### **Private Lessons:**

The Private lesson activity is a critical factor in the success of the music program. All Students are encouraged to take private lessons. Due to the large band classes with several different instruments, we highly recommend that each student take the opportunity to study privately. The special attention of a steady, private study plan gives the student a greater confidence and a more thorough understanding of the instrument. I will have a list compiled in the first few weeks of school of recommended teachers available on the website ([www.nhsband.net](http://www.nhsband.net)).

Practicing and Commitment

Playing in the band requires some outside practice time. For beginning students we recommend 15-20 minutes per day for the first month, increasing to 30 minutes after that. Practice is something more effectively done in several short segments rather than all at once since you need to build muscular strength and control gradually.

### **Practice Guidelines for Parents**

Your child's success in band will depend a great deal on what is achieved during daily home practice sessions. Learning takes place in school, but proficiency is gained at home. You can use the following guidelines to help your youngster at home.

### **TIME SCHEDULE**

A **half hour** a day is the minimum amount of practice time recommended for the average student. Practicing at the **same time** every day is good, but some **flexibility** should be built into this schedule. Don't bring the world to a halt at 6:30 pm every evening because it's practice time - kids need time for fun and relaxation just as adults do. If the situation merits, **reschedule** the practice session to an earlier or later time. Note: Beginners ONLY need to practice 15 minutes per day the first month of school and then start 30 min. per day after that. This is because their facial muscles have not matured enough the first month to handle 30 minutes of a practice routine without forming bad habits.

### **CLIMATE**

Practicing should be done in an area that is **free of distractions** away from the TV, radio, stereo, and family traffic. Good **lighting**, a straight-backed **chair**, **mirror**, **metronome**, and a **music stand** are definite assets. Reed players should have several reeds available during the practice session.

## ENCOURAGEMENT

Spend some time **listening** to your youngster practice. Offer **constructive**, criticisms. You do not need to be a former band member or musician to be able to hear improvement. Encourage them to play assignments and tests for you. Each time the student plays for a friend or relative, it helps them to feel more **comfortable** with a performance or competitive event.

## IS YOUR CHILD PROGRESSING?

For the **beginning band** student, the field of instrumental music is **new** for your child. He is learning to use his **facial and finger muscles** in a different way and his breathing apparatus for a different purpose. There is a new language of symbols (notes) that require the use of his mind and body to translate this into musical sounds. All this takes **time!** Even parents who have had former instrumental experience have probably forgotten the struggle of producing those first few notes and songs.

**Parents can evaluate practice sessions by asking:**

1. What is your **assignment** for today?
2. Am I hearing the same **daily drill** each day? It is important to play the **daily** drill before beginning the assigned material.
3. Am I hearing music that they can **already play**, or am I hearing attempts at **new** material?
4. Is the **tone quality** becoming more characteristic of the instrument, or is the tone harsh, unmusical, and unpleasant?
5. Does the familiar tune or exercise move along **steadily** with some sort of fluent **rhythm**, or is it halting and jerky with no steady rhythm?

**Learning how to practice is an important part of playing an instrument!**

## Practice Guidelines for Students

### IT'S HOW YOU PRACTICE THAT COUNTS

Incorrect **habits** are sometimes more easily developed than correct habits, and a habit is hard to change so **THINK** when you practice. Avoid simply going through the motions! Remember, the playing of your instrument comes through development of **coordination**, just like any athlete.

**Patience** is a virtue for the ambitious player.

1. **Warm up correctly.** Each instrument should have a separate warm up for home practice that differs from the band warm up. Use a mirror and concentrate on tone quality and embouchure during long tone warm ups.
2. Set a **goal** for the practice session. Don't try to do too much at one sitting.
3. **Isolate** a problem or a section in a piece of music. It may be a rhythm, a measure, or a line of music. **Repeat** it over and over many times - just like shooting baskets in the basketball goal. Practice it **slowly** at first, and then **gradually** build up the speed using a metronome. Before you finish the practice session, play the difficult measures with the rest of the line or exercise.
4. Correctly played **Repetition** of a problem area reinforces muscle and mental **memory**.
5. In difficult **technical passages**, change the **rhythms** and articulations in the practice session to develop even, accurate, and fluid technique.
6. Practice involves **learning and reinforcing** areas that are difficult for the student. **Practice**, therefore, is not always fun because you must play music that you have not yet mastered. Try to **end** each practice session with something that is fun to play and that has already been mastered!
7. **Structure** your practice session to get the most benefit out of your time!

### EXAMPLE OF A STRUCTURED PRACTICE SESSION

Material Practiced	Time (minutes)	Goal
Warm up and daily drill: (long tones, scales, lip slurs)	5 - 10	Fundamentals: tone, breath control, embouchure, technique, tonguing, etc.
New material and assignments	10 - 15	Develop new technique, increase range, expand

Previous and continuing material	10 - 15	capability of student Improvement of finger dexterity, tonguing, tone, musicality, etc.
Personal music choices	5 - 10	Enjoyment!

**The practice session will vary depending on assignments and time constraints. The more consistent you are with practice time, structure, and climate, the better your results will be. Efficient use of time is important in your busy schedule.**

### **Sheet Music Policy**

1. You are responsible for replacing your music if it is lost.
2. Some materials that will be passed out will be available to download from our website. (www.nhsband.net)
3. You will need to see me after school or make other arrangements to meet with me to get the music and go copy it in the library, outside of band class.

### **School-owned Instruments**

The school may provide the following instruments to students: oboe, bassoon, bass clarinet, tenor and baritone saxes, French horn, baritone/euphonium, tuba, 7<sup>th</sup> grade percussion spring semester, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade percussion all year. The upkeep for school owned instruments are \$40 per semester or \$80.00 per school year, and \$40.00 for summer. Once checked out, the student and parent/guardian will be liable for the instrument, including repair and loss. Please refer to your user agreement signed at the time of checkout.

### **Trips**

The band will take trips to rehearsals and contests. Students are to follow the rules set forth in the Alcott Student Handbook and the Alcott Band Handbook. Any student not following these rules will be subject to disciplinary action. Represent our school to the best of your ability!

### **Materials**

In addition to an instrument and appropriate accessories, each student is required to have a pencil, and a 1” black notebook. There is also a method book for each grade level, which each student must provide. These are listed below and are available at local music dealers.

Sixth grade: Essential Elements 2000, Book 1 & 5 minute theory by Mark Wessels

Seventh grade: Essential Elements 2000, Book 2

Eighth grade: Foundations for Superior Performance

### **Jazz Band**

The Alcott Jazz Band will hold auditions at the beginning of the year for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students that are interested in participating. The Jazz Band meets after school 1-2 days a week for rehearsals from 3:45-4:30.

## AMS Band Calendar 2007-2008

Mark your calendars now!

*Additional dates may be added later*

Grade	Month	Date	Event
7/8 interested	September	19	CODA entry due by 4:00
<b>8</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>NHS Football Night (evening)</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Demonstration concert 6:30 in Alcott cafeteria</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>8th football game at NHS</b>
7/8 interested	November	3	CODA auditions in Edmond
6/7/8	November	16	Fundraiser – Band lock-in 24 hours at Alcott
Jazz	November	20	Play for school during day
6	November	27	Combined rehearsal 8th hour
7	November	27	Combined rehearsal 6th hour
6	November	29	Rehearsal at the PAC - afternoon
7/8	November	29	rehearsal at the PAC - morning
<b>6/7/8</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>Winter Concert 6:30 at PAC (Explo Extravaganza)</b>
<b>Jazz</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Jazz Concert at Coach's 7:00</b>
8	December	20	Hanging of the Green (school day) 12:30
7/8	January	8	Sectionals begin after school
<b>7/8 interested</b>	<b>January</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>CODA clinic at OU (selected students) all day</b>
7/8	January	16	Solo / ensemble entries due by 4:00
<b>7 some</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>7th grade honor band at OU</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Mock contest at NHS (morning)</b>
<b>Percussion</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Robert Cason Memorial Percussion Concert at NHS</b>
<b>7/8</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>Pre-Contest Concert at 6:30 at PAC</b>
<b>7/8</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>Solo / ensemble contest at NHS</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>District contest in Mustang all day</b>
6/7/8	March	27	All City rehearsal at Norman North (evening)
6/7/8	March	31	All City rehearsal at Lloyd Noble (morning)
<b>6/7/8</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>All-City Concert at Lloyd Noble 7:30</b>
6	April	29	Combined rehearsal 8th hour
7	April	29	Combined rehearsal 6th hour
6	May	1	Combined rehearsal 7th hour
7/8	May	1	Combined rehearsal 4th hour
<b>6/7/8</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Spring concert 6:30 in AMS gym</b>

**Dates in bold are performance dates. Students need to be sure to be dressed in appropriate performance attire.**

# RETURN PAGE

Please return this sheet to Mr. McKinney by  
**Friday, August 24<sup>th</sup>**

## **Signature below indicates that I have received, read, and understand the Alcott Middle School Wildcat Band Handbook AND Calendar.**

I grant permission for my child's photograph and/or academic work to be used on the Alcott Middle School Band Web Site. I understand that the picture or work could be identified by my child's name, and that it will only be used on the band website, found at ([www.nhsband.net](http://www.nhsband.net)).

### **Alcott Middle School Wildcat Band Field Trip Permission Form and Emergency Medical Release**

I give my child permission to participate in all band events for the school year listed in the band handbook, as well as any dates that are added throughout the year.

In consideration of all activities approved of by Alcott Middle School and Norman Public Schools during the school year 2007-2008, I hereby release Alcott Middle School and its designated sponsor, Ryan McKinney from legal liability from claims arising from events beyond their control while traveling to and from any activity and while participation in the described activities.

I also understand that all rules and policies as outlined in the NPS student/parent policy guide as well as Alcott Middle School rules and procedures will be followed during all activities.

IN THE EVENT OF ANY ACCIDENT OR INJURY, I HEREBY GIVE RYAN MCKINNEY AND SPONSORS THE AUTHORITY TO SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION FOR MY STUDENT.

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

Medical conditions (i.e., diabetes, asthma, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent(s) Name PRINTED

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent(s) Name SIGNED DATE

HOME PHONE# \_\_\_\_\_ CELL PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_