



VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS
PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Elementary Instrumental Music Handbook



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Welcome: Elementary Instrumental Directors

Dear Parents/Guardians,

It gives us great pleasure to share the information in this booklet regarding our outstanding elementary instrumental program in Plymouth. We are delighted to announce that the Plymouth Public Schools recently began offering the opportunity to play a musical instrument at no additional charge beyond the cost of instrument rental. Our goal for this booklet is to answer the many questions parents/guardians may have regarding the elementary band and orchestra program. Enclosed you will find information and advice that can ensure success.

We are very excited to welcome you to our elementary music program and the opportunity to be part of the excellence that will enhance your child's education long after school days have ended. If you have further questions pertaining to your student's participation in our program, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Tim Doyle
Emily Gillander
Rachel Kos
Andy Loretz

Plymouth Public Schools Elementary Instrumental Directors

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Overview: Elementary Instrumental Program

Lessons

Each student participating in band or orchestra will receive a 30-minute lesson each week. Students are responsible for knowing when their lesson is each week and reporting to their assigned room with their instrument, book, and pencil. Unlike in the past, families are no longer financially responsible for lessons, as they are now offered during the school day by district employees. Families are still responsible for the renting or purchasing of their child's instrument. If families are unable to afford the rental of an instrument they can apply for a loaner instrument through the VPA office. Please see the "Required Materials/School Rentals" chapter for more information.

Band/Orchestra

All wind and percussion students will participate in band, and all string students will participate in orchestra. This gives students a unique ensemble performance experience, and the chance to play a varied repertoire. Performing in ensembles provides a setting that will prepare students for middle school by working on unique skills such as listening, intonation, and balance. These ensembles will meet before school at 8am, once per week. Beginners in 4th or 5th grade will not join band/orchestra immediately, but will participate in a concert in the first half of the school year. Beginners will join the ensemble by January. Students are responsible for transportation to rehearsal and for remembering their instrument, music, and pencil. If school is closed for severe weather, band is also canceled, as well as any after-school musical activities.

Concerts

Each ensemble will perform two major concerts per year. Students may also be asked to perform at other school events, daytime concerts, or the All-Town concert. Concert attendance is required from all students. See the "Concert Information" chapter for more information.

Practicing

As in every other subject in school, music requires work to be done at home. Most of the time this will be in the form of individual practice, but occasional written or listening assignments may be given. Beginners are expected to play at least 15 minutes per night, at least 6 nights per week. Second year students should be practicing 20-30 minutes at home per night. *Quality* practice should be emphasized over *quantity* however. Students will be assessed on *what* they accomplish, not on *how much* they practice. See the "Recommendations to Parents" chapter for practice tips.

Behavior Expectations

Band/Orchestra Rehearsal

- Students must be in the rehearsal room and in their seats with instrument, music, and a pencil before the rehearsal begins. Remember, *early is on time; on time is late*. Students entering late will receive a reminder the first time, a call home the second time, and the third time students will lose points from their band participation assessment.
- The following should be taken care of before rehearsal begins: 1) Getting instrument ready (oiling valves, soaking reed, greasing cork, etc.) 2) Putting band music in order 3) Using the restroom.
- Rehearsal begins when the director is on the podium. Playing or talking should stop.
- There will be a period of time for ensemble tuning and warm-up. Please do not talk during this activity as it would defeat the purpose of this procedure.
- Keep talking to a minimum during rehearsal, and listen for directions each time the director stops.
- Rehearsal will end at 8:50am, giving students 15 minutes before the regular school day begins to clean up, pack up their instrument, and report to their classroom.

Medical Issues

If a student has a medical issue that prevents him/her from playing, the student must inform the director before the rehearsal/lesson with a note from the parent or doctor. They will be asked to sit in their section and follow along with their instrument, music, and a pencil.

Missing Materials

If a student is missing band music or their instrument please notify the director. It is possible that the student may use a school instrument or an additional copy of the music. If your instrument has been sent for repairs, please inform the director.

Grading/Assessment Policies

Students do not receive a numerical or letter grade in band/orchestra or lessons on their official report card. Instead, a written progress report will be sent home that accompanies the student's report card. Items that will be considered in the report will include:

- band attendance
- band materials
- lesson attendance
- lesson materials
- assignments
- effort
- tone quality (sound)
- **concert attendance***

***As per district policy, any student who does not attend a required concert will not be eligible for a written recommendation for the All-Town Concert.**

Note on Attendance

Band and lessons are not like other subjects in which work may be caught up when class is missed. Poor attendance is detrimental to a successful ensemble or lesson group. The director will keep a record of student attendance at lessons and ensemble.

Required Materials/School Rentals

Materials

Students are expected to have each of the following at band/orchestra rehearsals AND at lessons:

- instrument (and case)
- band/orchestra music
- lesson books/music
- pencil
- cleaning supplies specific to instrument
- any additional items specific to instrument (water container, sticks/mallets, mutes, mouthpieces, reeds, valve oil, slide grease, shoulder rest, bow, etc.)

At home students should also have a music stand. We recommend, but do not require, that students have: a metronome, a subscription to SmartMusic, and some staff paper.

Rentals

The following instruments are offered at the elementary level:

Flute	Alto Saxophone	Trombone	Percussion	Viola
Clarinet	Trumpet	Baritone (Euphonium)	Violin	Cello

Families are responsible for the cost of the instrument rental, unless financially unable to do so (see below). The district holds an *Instrumental Rental/Information Night* each year to aid with this process, in which families can rent instruments from *Goulet and Co.*

Instrument Rental Assistance Program

If financially unable to afford the rental of an instrument, the district can allow students to borrow school-owned instruments. We have a limited number of instruments and it is possible, depending on the number of applications we receive, that a waiting list may be started. To apply, please contact the main office of your school or the VPA office.

Instrument Care and Maintenance

Cleaning

Students are expected to keep instruments clean and in working order. Regular cleaning should be done at home. Only proper items should be used to clean instruments. Students will learn at their first lessons how to care for their instrument. If a student is not sure what to use to clean, PLEASE ASK. Steps that should be followed include:

- swabbing instruments after each use
- taking reeds off mouthpieces
- cleaning mouthpieces to avoid bacteria and mold (luke-warm water)
- wiping outside of instrument with soft, dry cloth (do not use chemicals)

Repairs

Accidents DO happen, but never try to fix an instrument yourself. Metal tools can severely damage instruments. Never use pliers or any tool to remove a stuck mouthpiece. Never give your instrument a bath, or use chemicals to make instruments “shiny.” Exposure to water can ruin woodwind and string instruments especially.

Even instruments that are properly handled and played may need some repairs periodically. These may include pads being replaced, screws adjusted, dents taken out, keys adjusted, etc. School owned instruments needing repair will in most cases be paid

for by the district unless deliberately damaged by student. Students who own/rent instruments are responsible for repairs and they should be done in a timely manner. Some minor issues may be able to be fixed in school, so always bring it to the student's teacher first. Proper handling and playing of instruments will prevent major issues. ALWAYS ASK IF YOU ARE NOT SURE HOW TO FIX/CLEAN SOMETHING *Goulet and Co.* is an excellent company to have repairs sent to. They visit our schools weekly to deliver/pick up instruments for repair. If renting through *Goulet*, repairs are included in the cost of the rental.

Concert Information

Concert Dates

All students will be notified at the beginning of the school year of concert dates, times, and locations. Each ensemble will perform one concert each semester.

Concert Attire

- Boys: black dress pants, white dress shirt, tie (optional), black dress shoes/socks
- Girls: black dress pants or knee length skirt, white top, black dress shoes/socks (or a black/white dress)

Concert Attendance Policy

Attendance at concerts is REQUIRED of all students. Failure to attend will result in automatic ineligibility to receive a recommendation for the All-Town Concert of the current or following school year. The only exception is extreme illness or extenuating circumstances, in which a written and signed note by a parent/guardian must be provided.

All-Town Concert

Students who demonstrate excellent progress throughout the year may be recommended for the district's All-Town Concert. The band and orchestra will include students from all eight elementary schools who have been invited by their teachers. This is an excellent performance opportunity for students, but is not required.

Concert Etiquette: A Note to Our Audience

The public performance is a natural extension of each student's experience in music. A primary function of music education in Plymouth is the development of responsiveness to the artistic qualities of music. In order for you, our audience, to better appreciate the musical growth of these students, we ask your help by setting an example in the following ways:

1. We ask your daughter/son to remain for the entire concert. Much can be learned from being part of an audience and listening to other music groups, in addition to performing in front of peers.
2. Please do not enter or exit the auditorium while the music is in progress, and remain in your seats while a musical number is performed. If it is necessary to leave the auditorium, we ask that you do so between selections.
3. Younger brothers and sisters of the students performing should sit with parents. It is distracting to the performers and audience to have people moving around the auditorium during a performance.
4. Talking, even in whispers, is distracting to the performers and those around you who are trying to listen. In an effort to eliminate as many distractions as possible, please refrain from talking while the music is being performed.
5. Please refrain from using cell phones.

Through the combined efforts of the Visual and Performing Arts Department, the students, and you, our audience, we hope to make each concert a pleasant experience for all.

Recommendations to Parents/Guardians

Encourage good practice habits at home

- Arrange a regular time for practice
- Find a quiet place to practice, without distractions or interruptions
- Insist on the use of a music stand when the child practices
- Insist on the child practicing nearly every day

Help protect your investment

- Provide a safe place to keep the instrument
- Always keep the instrument in its case when it is not being used
- Purchase music supplies and books promptly
- Never allow siblings or friends to “try” to play the instrument
- Never leave an instrument in a car, especially overnight or in the heat/cold
- Some instruments and other materials are extremely fragile, so be sure to understand how to care for each piece of the instrument

Show an interest in your child’s music and progress

- Feel free to sit with your child when he/she practices at home
- Ask your child about the lesson at school
- Ask to hear what he/she has been practicing
- Look often at the book to see how many weeks a particular lesson has been assigned
- Frequently check and sign your child’s practice record

Be patient

- There is no “instant” success when learning to play a musical instrument
- Only lots of practice and repetition will ensure success
- Never make fun of the sounds that might be heard in the beginning

Encourage responsibility

- Students who do well in instrumental music usually do well in school work
- Daily practice should fit in with the homework and activity schedule
- If your child is in school and is not taking a test, he/she is expected to attend the lesson
- If your child is in school the day of an after-school activity, rehearsal, or concert, he/she is expected to attend
- Every student is important to the overall sound they contribute to the ensemble

The learning of a musical instrument must be viewed as a partnership among the student, the parent/guardian, and the teacher. All three are crucial for success. With total support and commitment of the family, success is more likely.

Parent Support



The vision of the PSMA is to bring awareness of the music program to the community, to promote collaboration between parents, faculty and students, and to adapt and evolve to meet the changing needs of the students and the music programs.

Annual Dues are currently \$10.00 per person. Dues must be paid by October 31st of the current year. Membership is good for one year; July of current year to June of next year.

Eligibility for membership: Application for voting membership shall be open to any individual, at least 18 years of age, who wishes to support the music programs of the Plymouth Schools. Membership is granted after completion and receipt of a membership application and annual dues. All memberships shall be granted upon majority vote of the Board of Directors.

For more information please contact PSMA.inc@gmail.com

Please visit the PSMA website to get more information and fill out a membership form!
Thank you for your support!

PlymouthSchoolsMusic.org

NAfME National Standards for Music Education

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.



Elementary Instrumental Contract

We have read the handbook and understand the information contained within it.

Student Name (Print) _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Print) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Parent/Guardian Email Address _____

Parent/Guardian Phone _____

Date _____

Remember to label your instrument!