

John W. Gunn Middle School Band Program

2019-2020 Handbook



- The Eastman Wind Ensemble

*John W. Gunn Middle School
351 Harold Ave. W.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2C 2C9*



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Welcome/Welcome Back!

I'm honored to have the opportunity to work with your young musician and look forward to an exciting year of music education at JWG!

One of the most important items in this handbook is the "[Calendar of Band Events](#)". These workshops and performances are an important part of the band curriculum and, as a result, your young musician is expected to attend all their respective events, particularly their performances – please see the section on [Band Performances & Concert Dress Code](#) for more information in this regard.

Another important item in this handbook is the "[Required Supplies](#)" section. Band supplies can be purchased at [Long & McQuade Music](#) and/or [St. John's Music](#) and/or [Quest Musique](#). Before visiting either of these stores, please consider calling ahead to ensure that they have the item(s) that you require in stock.

If you have questions, comments, or concerns with any of the information in this handbook, or with any other matter pertaining to your young musician's musical education at John W. Gunn Middle School, please don't hesitate to get in touch at any time using the contact information provided at the bottom of this page.

There are a few spelling and grammar errors scattered throughout this book, e-mail me if you find them and you might win a prize.

Best Regards,

Murray Wichert

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- Miles Davis

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Required Supplies (For All Students)

Parents/guardians are asked to please ensure that students have the following supplies for band:

- A quality instrument in perfect working condition; the case needs to be clearly labelled (a luggage tag is ideal) with their first name, last name, and homeroom.
 - Percussionists are to rent a “Bell Kit” from the music store for home practice.
- Music folder, Method Book, and sheet music – these will be provided by JWG; students need only take good care of them (see “[Sheet Music](#)”) and remember to bring them to every band rehearsal.
- The band method book series is “Standard of Excellence” (SOE). This method book is sold for a variety of instruments and levels will be provided by JWG. If lost, it will be up to the parent or guardian to replace it. The grade 6s will use the Red SOE, the Grade 7s will use the Blue SOE, and the grade 8s will use the Green SOE.
- A portable wire music stand for home practice.

Required Supplies (Woodwinds)

Flute

- Plastic or metal tuning rod
- Cotton handkerchief or silk swab

Oboe

- 2 custom-made reeds OR 2 Martin Lesher reeds (please ask Mr. Wichert which strength to purchase)
- A reed case (pegs or sponges) that will hold 2 or more reeds
- Silk pull-through swab

Clarinet & Bass Clarinet

- 10 Rico or Rico Royal reeds (beginners use strength 2.5, 2nd/3rd year players use strength 3)
- Cork grease
- Cloth or silk pull-through swab
- Reed guard (optional)

Saxophone

- 10 Rico or Rico Royal reeds (strength 3)
- Cork grease
- Pad saver (alto and tenor saxophone only)
- Reed guard (optional)

Required Supplies (Brass/Percussion)

Trumpet

- Valve oil & tuning slide grease
- Mouthpiece brush (optional)
- Cleaning snake (optional)

French Horn

- ***Rotary*** valve oil & tuning slide grease
- Mouthpiece
- Mouthpiece brush (optional)
- Cleaning snake (optional)

Trombone

- Slide cream & spray bottle
- Tuning slide grease
- Mouthpiece brush (optional)
- Cleaning snake (optional)

Euphonium/Tuba

- Valve oil & tuning slide grease
- Mouthpiece
- Mouthpiece brush (optional)
- Cleaning snake (optional)

Percussion

- Bell Kit (rented from a music store)
- Snare Sticks

RETSD Instrument Rental Agreement & Fee

Parents/guardians of students who play bass clarinet, baritone saxophone, French horn, euphonium, tuba, and percussion will likely be renting these instruments from the River East Transcona School Division (RETSD).

Students renting from RETSD will receive a copy of the RETSD Instrument Rental Agreement during their first band rehearsal of the year. Parents/guardians are asked to please read and fill-out this agreement, attach the appropriate rental fee, and have their young musician return it to Mr. Wichert at the beginning of the next band rehearsal.

Parents/guardians of students who will be renting RETSD instruments must note that one of the following documents and payments are required before instruments can be issued:

- a) A signed RETSD Instrument Rental Agreement and paid rental fee; or
- b) A signed Rental Agreement with a mutually agreed upon payment plan for the rental fee.

Instrument, Mouthpiece, & Music Folder Storage

Students are welcome to leave their instrument in the band room (in its designated place) during the school day, and in their lockers on evenings when they are unable to practice (hopefully, this is a rare occurrence). With very few exceptions, instruments should not be left in the band room overnight. Instruments must be properly labelled with the student's Full Name and Homeroom if it is going to be stored in the band room at any time.

Generally, the band room will be open before school at 8:30 AM, and after school until 3:30 PM for students to drop-off or pick-up their instruments. If, for any reason, the band room is locked, students are asked not to leave their instruments unattended in the hallway outside of the band room, or in their homerooms, as they could very easily be damaged or stolen.

Students who play RETSD instruments may leave their instruments in the band room but are asked to please store their mouthpieces, and neck straps in their locker.

All students will be responsible for storing their music folder in their own locker.

Responsibility for Damaged, Lost, or Stolen Instruments

Parents/guardians of students who play instruments that have not been rented from RETSD are asked to please be aware that both JWG and RETSD do not have insurance or any plan that will cover damage, loss, or theft of privately-owned equipment. As a result, JWG and RETSD are unable to accept responsibility for instruments that have been damaged, lost, or stolen.

With this in mind, parents/guardians of students who play instruments that have not been rented from RETSD are encouraged to investigate the possibility of adding their young musician's instrument to their personal insurance, such as their homeowner's policy, or purchasing rental insurance from the music store.

Parents/guardians of students who play instruments that have been rented from RETSD are encouraged to refer to the RETSD Rental Agreement for the policies and procedures concerning damage, loss, or theft of divisional instruments.

Sheet Music

Throughout the year, students will be rehearsing and performing a variety of pieces from the JWG sheet music library.

Whether students are provided with photocopies or original (non-photocopied) sheet music, that music is the property of JWG, must be treated with care, and must be returned upon request.

More specific to care, students must avoid bending or ripping the sheet music, and must ensure that any markings are made exclusively with pencil. Before handing-back the sheet music, pencil markings need to be erased, minor bends need to be straightened, and minor rips need to be repaired with clear scotch tape.

Although JWG will cover the cost of replacing sheet music due to normal wear and tear, parents/guardians will incur the replacement cost of sheet music that is abused or misplaced due to negligence on the part of the student.

Band-Related Payments

When making band-related payments, parents/guardians are asked to please put the payment, along with any corresponding form(s), into an envelope that is **clearly labelled** with their young musician's first name, last name, homeroom, and the purpose of the payment. Students should then hand-in their payments directly to the Red Toolbox in the band room before school, after school, or during their next band rehearsal. In the event of a financial discrepancy, cheques/money orders are far superior to cash and, thus, are the preferred method of payment.

Band Homework (Daily, Individual Home Practice)

Daily, individual home practice is every band student's homework, and is necessary for their continued musical development. It is also arguably the most important homework that they will do each evening, as it directly affects every other student in their ensemble. A minimum of fifteen minutes of daily, individual home practice should be a non-negotiable portion of every band student's day, including weekends.

Parents/guardians are asked to please be aware that students in middle school might not be intrinsically motivated to do this on their own. This is not a sign that they do not enjoy band, rather, it is a sign that they require support, encouragement, praise, and, possibly, some firm insistence to complete their homework.

One final comment to parents/guardians regarding band homework is to carefully select the location that is being provided for daily, individual home practice – more specifically, students learn and grow through making mistakes and, although these mistakes may not sound pleasing to the ear, they are a necessary part of their musical development. Insisting that daily, individual home practice take place in the garage, basement, or backyard might not be sending the message that “mistakes are a necessary part of learning”, and this could hinder their musical growth. If you need ideas about how to support your child's learning in band, please feel free to contact [Mr. Wichert](#).

Practice Tips for Beginners

- Practice on the days you eat.
- Find a quiet place where you can concentrate and, ideally, you can see yourself in a mirror.
- Use your portable wire music stand and, if your instrument will allow you to do so, stand-up.
- Figure-out what you want/need to work-on before you begin; if you have trouble with this, think back to your last band rehearsal – was there something that you felt you could have done better?
- If you forget how your instrument should sound, listen to some professional recordings on iTunes, Spotify, or on YouTube – this will help you to get the right sound into your mind.
- Move-on to the goal that you set for yourself before you began practicing – be patient with yourself, work in small chunks, slow to fast.
- Finish your practice session with something that’s fun for you to play.

Manitoba K-8 Music Curriculum & Assessment

The four essential learning areas of the Manitoba K-8 Music Curriculum and a variety of opportunities for assessment can be found below:

- Music Language & Performance Skills (50%)
 - Informal individual performances of short excerpts during rehearsals
 - 1-on-1 performances of longer excerpts
 - Brief online or paper assignments (note identification assignments, for example)
- Creative Expression in Music (20%)
 - Participation in concerts
 - Ability to play within the musical intent of the ensemble during rehearsals/performances
 - Basic improvisation activities (call and response)
 - Willingness to play individually and support of others as they do the same
 - Basic/brief composition assignments
- Understanding Music in Context (10%)
 - Basic/brief in-class written/electronic assignments
- Valuing Musical Experience (20%)
 - Practice journals
 - Engagement and active participation during rehearsals
 - Concert reflection assignments

More detailed curricular information can be found at the following address:

<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/arts/music/>

Late Assignments & Re-doing Assignments

Due-dates for assignments will be clearly communicated to students, and it is their responsibility to complete them on-time and to the very best of their ability. Students who wish to hand-in assignments after the due-date must ask for an extension from Mr. Wichert before the original due-date. Within reason, students are both welcome and encouraged to redo any assignment on which they feel that they have the ability to earn a higher grade.

Communication Concerning Academic Achievement & Learning Behaviors

Academic achievement and learning behavior updates regarding band will be provided for parents/guardians at student-lead conferences, and on report cards.

Parents/guardians who would like any additional academic achievement and learning behavior updates are encouraged to call or [email](#) at their convenience.

Extra Help (Private/Group Lessons)

Although learning an instrument is certainly a lot of fun, it can also be challenging. With this in mind, students are always welcome and encouraged to speak to Mr. Wichert to arrange a private or small-group lesson at a mutually agreeable time.

Band Performances & Concert Dress Code

The JWG Band Program will be presenting a handful of performances during the year (please refer to the "[Calendar of Band Events](#)" for more information). Band performances are a form of summative assessment and are analogous in terms of importance to exams; as a result, they represent a significant part of the band curriculum. Because of this, all students are expected to attend all performances from beginning to end and participate to the very best of their ability.

The Calendar of Band Events has been set well in advance, and there are very few reasons that are acceptable to miss a performance. Students who do miss a performance due to one of the three reasons below will have the opportunity to earn marks for that performance in a different fashion.

- Severe Illness. If a student is so sick that they cannot get out of bed or venture too far from the bathroom then yes, obviously, the most prudent course of action would be for them to stay home and rest. Having said this, headache, fatigue, or injury to a part of the body that is not required to play an instrument (broken ankle, for example), would not be considered a valid reason to miss a performance.
- Medical Emergency. An injury that occurs just prior to the performance to the student or an immediate family member that requires immediate medical attention.
- Pre-Arranged Conflicts. On occasion a significant family event (a vacation, for example), important

community event, important sporting event (as in a championship game, not a practice or a regular-season game), or some other significant (cannot be moved, and cannot occur at another time without conflict) event may require a student to miss a performance.

Although there are always exceptions, virtually any other reason is likely not a valid reason for missing a performance. Students who miss a performance for a reason that does not fall into one of the three categories above will, unfortunately, be considered to have not demonstrated their Creative Expression in Music outcome for this performance in question.

Some past examples of reasons that do not fall into one of the three categories above include:

- Working on homework or studying for upcoming tests
- Babysitting under non-emergency circumstances
- Going-out for supper
- Not having a ride
- Dentist appointment
- Doctor appointment
- Hairdresser appointment
- Piano/Guitar Lesson
- Dance
- Hockey/Soccer/Other Sport Game (Not Championship Game)

Unless otherwise mentioned, the concert dress code for all JWG Band Program performances is as follows:

Top: JWG Provided Performance Shirt (White for Grades 6/7, Black for Grade 8)

Bottom: Plain black pants/dress pants OR plain black dress skirt & leggings
Black shoes (no open toes, please), Black Socks

Parents/guardians are asked to please keep in mind that it may not be necessary to purchase a brand-new outfit to meet the requirements of the dress code. Mr. Wichert is pretty understanding if he sees an effort has been made.

In the past, purchasing second hand (Kijiji, Value Village, etc.), using “hand-me-downs”, and borrowing from friends and relatives have all proven to be viable options in terms of helping families meet the requirements of the dress code with little-to-no financial burden.

“Re-doing” Performances

Students who have missed a performance for an acceptable reason will have the opportunity to “redo” the performance as follows:

- Find some peers who play a variety of instruments (1 flute, 1 clarinet, 1 trumpet, 1 trombone, for example), and play two pieces from the concert for the class.

OR

- Individually perform one of the pieces from the concert for the class.

AND

- If there was a reflection assignment attached to the concert, that reflection assignment can instead be based upon a YouTube recording that is agreed-upon by both the student in question and Mr. Wichert. There will also be a large written portion to this option.

Participation in Band Field Trips

To be eligible to participate in in band field trips, students must:

- Demonstrate consistently acceptable behavior in all curricular and extra-curricular activities
- Have reached a level of proficiency that is consistent with the rest of their ensemble

Parents/guardians of students who are “at-risk” will be notified well in advance of any upcoming band field trips. For students who are having difficulty meeting one or both criteria, a plan can be put in place to assist them in demonstrating the requisite behavior and/or proficiency necessary to participate. Students who have been referred to the office for major disciplinary concerns (assault, theft, drug/alcohol use, frequent skipping of school, persistent/willful defiance, etc.), however, will likely not be permitted to attend.

The final decision as to participation/non-participation of students on band field trips will be made by the band director in consultation with the school administration.

Band Trip – Camp Arnes Band Workshops (Grade 6 & 7 Concert Bands)

Pending board office approval, the Grade 6 and 7 Concert Bands will be travelling to Camp Arnes in May for two days of band workshops and team-building activities; more detailed information will be provided as we move further into the school year. For budgeting purposes, parents/guardians should expect the trip to cost between \$125 and \$150, depending on the number of students that attend.

Fundraising

Typically, the JWG Band Program runs a handful of fundraisers (Booster Juice, for example) every year that are designed to help students raise money for band trips. These fundraisers are entirely optional, and all money raised by students will be added to their individual band account.

Band Accounts (Individual)

Each Band student will have an account set up with the Association to track the amount that individual has raised. Account balances will be provided periodically through the year and at the Spring Concert.

For more information about Band Accounts, please see the Band Parent Council Constitution which can be found on the [JWG website](#).

Band Parent Association

The JWG Band parent association meets monthly to promote and support the programs at John W. Gunn within the framework of all related activities. See the JWG website for specific dates.

- To advise the parents and residents of the school community of the benefits of the programs.
- To develop and implement new ideas and approaches for supporting the programs, activities, festival participation i.e. travel expenses, uniforms, etc.

Switching Instruments (Specialty Instrument Auditions)

Oboe (1 chair), Bass Clarinet (1 Chair), saxophone (4-6 chairs), French horn (2-4 chairs), and percussion (3-6 chairs) are all considered to be “specialty instruments” and are auditioned. They are called specialty instruments because their level of difficulty and their soloistic nature demand that they be paired with students who are musically able, hard-working, highly focused, and confident in their abilities. At some point during the year, all beginning band students will have the opportunity to put their names forward for consideration in terms of switching to one of the specialty instruments mentioned above.

The following factors will be considered to determine which students are selected to transition to these specialty instruments:

- Level of proficiency on current band instrument & level of comfort in terms of playing individually
- Level of focus during band rehearsals and level of interest and enthusiasm towards band

Students who are selected to transition to a specialty instrument must:

- Commit to stay in band until they leave JWG
- Commit to full participation in Jazz Catz (Saxophone).

Switching Instruments (All Other Instruments)

Depending on the circumstances, students may be able to switch to any of the instruments that were initially started in beginning band (flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, and tuba).

This is something that is typically done only with students who are experiencing physical discomfort as a result of playing their instrument, or with students who are working hard, yet experiencing very little success. All instrument changes need to be approved in advance by Mr. Wichert.

Enrichment (JWG Jazz Catz, Festival Band)

The JWG Jazz Catz provides an extra-curricular opportunity for all students, regardless of their age, ability, or instrument, to learn the basics of the jazz genre. Jazz Catz rehearsals will take place in the band room on odd days of the school cycle except Mondays.

The JWG Festival Band provides an extra-curricular opportunity for all students, regardless of their age, ability, or instrument to experience even more concert band repertoire. This band plays similar music to what they are learning in class. This band will be performing at different festivals and venues throughout the year. Festival Band rehearsals will take place in the band room on even days of the school cycle except Mondays.

Though the Jazz Catz and Festival Band are extra-curricular activities, consistent attendance is required with the one exception that they are otherwise involved in another school activity at the same time. These ensembles are scheduled based on the School Cycle while the school sports are scheduled based on the days of the week. This means that a student will generally only have to miss one rehearsal for every 4 and still be able to be a part of all their chosen activities.

Enrichment (Other Opportunities)

Aside from Jazz Catz and Festival Band, there are many other ways in which your young musician can challenge themselves outside of our daily band rehearsals.

They can:

- Take private lessons with a professional that plays their instrument
 - Please ask Mr. Wichert for a list of suitable private teachers
- Prepare an audition for the Manitoba Provincial Junior Honor Band
 - Mr. Wichert and/or your private teacher can help with this
- Work on solo sheet music (purchase, borrow from JWG, or download)
- Work on small ensemble music with some friends (borrow from JWG)
- Learn the music from an older band and join them in performance
- **Tutor a less experienced student**
- Form a band or a Choir (ask Mr. Wichert how!)

Band Room Rules

- Leave non-band equipment (hats, electronic devices, ear buds, fidget spinners, etc.) in your locker
- **Be on-time and fully prepared (see "[Required Supplies](#)")**
- Only bring water into the band room; no other food, non-water drinks, candy (gum), etc. are allowed
- Wait your turn to talk and/or play your instrument
- Play only your instrument, and nobody else's – this includes the percussion instruments
- Put things (instruments, folders, mouthpieces, garbage) where they belong at the end of rehearsals
- Learn your parts (practice); it's not fair to hold the group back

Calendar of Band Events *

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Participants</u>
Sept. 12 (Th)	3:00 PM	JWG	First Note Night	All Beginners
Nov. 7 (Th)	1:00 PM	JWG	Remembrance Day Service	G8 Band
Nov. 20 (W)	7:00 PM	JWG	Grade 6 Band Concert	G6
Nov. 27 (W)	Deadline for interested students to register for the MBA Solo and Ensemble Festival ****			
Dec. 15 (Su)	11:45 AM	Cent. Concert Hall	MBA Tuba Festival	Euph. & Tuba Players ****
Jan. 22. (W)	7:00 PM	JWG	Winter Concert	All Bands
Jan. 23 (Th)	TBD	Bethel Mennonite Church	MBA Solo and Ensemble Festival	All who registered ****
Jan. TBD	TBD	TCI	Divisional Grade 8 Band Day	G8 Band
Feb. 18 – 21 (Tu – F)	TBD	Winnipeg Convention Centre	MBA Concert Band Festival	Festival Band**, (TBD: G7**, G8**)
Mar. 2 (M)	Deadline for interested students to audition for the Manitoba Provincial Junior Honor Band ****			
Mar. 19 – 21 (Th – Sa)	TBA (One day trip)	Brandon University	Brandon Jazz Festival	Jazz Catz
Mar. 25-26 (W, Th)	4:30PM	JWG	Instrument Try-Out night	G5
Apr. 25 (Sa)	12:00	TBD	Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra Workshop	Jazz Catz
Apr. 27 – May 1 (M – F)	TBD	Canadian Mennonite University	Level One Band Festival	Festival Band ***, (TBD: G6***, G7***)
May 4 (M)	10:15 AM	TCI	Music Month Celebration	TBD: Festival Band or G8
May 2, 7 – 9 (Sa, Th – Sa)	Manitoba Provincial Junior Honor Band			All successful auditions****
May 11 – 13 (M-W)	One Night	Camp Arnes	Band Camp	G7 Monday Night, G8 Tuesday Night
May 27 (W)	7:00 PM	JWG	Spring Concert	All Bands

* Advanced notice will be given regarding any additional opportunities that present themselves. *

** We will receive our performance dates and times for the Concert Band Festival later-on in the year. **

*** We will receive our performance dates and times for the Level 1 Band Festival later-on in the year. ***

**** Optional/enrichment event – participation is 100% voluntary. ****

Band Parent Association Meetings: Once a month usually on the second or third Wednesday of that month. Check the [JWG Website](#) for specific dates.