

Instrumental Music Department Philosophy

Music is an art that everyone should have the joy and privilege of experiencing. Students should be provided with an education to help them create, perform and understand music. The goal of the band program is to offer opportunities that both satisfy and spark the interests of every student that joins.

Mrs. Palmer will spend 40 minutes every other day in large ensemble rehearsals and roughly forty minutes a week in group lessons. With limited time for one on one meetings, instrumental music students are required to learn independently. This takes both self-discipline and practice throughout their entire musical career. Students in performing ensembles develop self-esteem in front of others, commitment to a group and find their individual “voice.” Preparing for concerts and festivals teaches our students the importance of deadlines, responsibility, loyalty and time management.

All of these skills learned while involved with music can be taken wherever they may go in life and prepare them for the future.

It is the goal of the McGraw High School Band Program to:

- enable the student to make music alone and with others.
- develop the student’s skills through performing and listening.
- develop the student’s basic understanding of musical concepts.
- develop the student’s basic understanding of the musical timeline.
- encourage the student’s participation in different musical groups.
- enable students to see music outside the classroom through extracurricular activities, and field trips, when permitted.

Policies, Rules and Regulations:

I. Instrument Loan Policy

Every student is able to use an instrument owned by McGraw High School. At the beginning of each school year every student will need to determine if he or she will be renting from a nearby music store (Hickey’s, Harriger’s, etc.) for a monthly fee, purchasing his or her own instrument or loaning an instrument through McGraw High School, should we have your student’s instrument available. If the student wishes to loan an instrument from school, an Instrument Loan Agreement Form will be sent home and must be completed and returned by the deadline given on said form.

Property that belongs to the McGraw High School is to be treated as the student’s own. If a loaned instrument needs to be repaired due to any kind of damage, the student and his or her parents/guardians will be held responsible for the payment.

II. Band Lockers

On the first day of school each student will be able to choose a locker on the auditorium stage where he or she will be able to store their instrument and music for band rehearsals every other day. Students may use these lockers during the week, but instruments should go home before each weekend and before every break. All band lockers must be cleaned out before the end of the school year.

III. Ensemble Music

During the first week of rehearsals, each student will receive a McGraw Bands Warm-Up Packet and concert band music that he/she will need every day in rehearsals for the first half of the year. It is extremely important that students have these materials with them at every single rehearsal. Extra copies will be limited and possibly unavailable. If any original music is lost or damaged that student is responsible for the cost to replace it.

IV. Lesson Procedure

At McGraw High School we have what are called “pull out lessons.” This means that students will have a lesson once every five school days (typically once a week, other than weeks with days off) that is during a class or study hall. Because the lesson schedule rotates every week students should not miss the same class more than once a month for instrumental music lessons.

Students should be on time to every lesson with their instrument, lesson book/assignment and a pencil. Students should report to their scheduled class and inform their classroom teacher before coming to lessons. **Students should report to the band office (room 40) when it is time for their scheduled lesson.** Small group lessons will begin on Monday, September 18, 2023. Students should be sure to check the lesson schedule carefully as their lesson day may change from week to week. The lesson schedule will be posted in the stream of our Google Classroom, on the auditorium door and outside of my office.

In the event a lesson is missed due to an absence from school the student should check in the following day to see what was missed during the lesson and set up a time to make that lesson up. In the event your student has a test during their scheduled lesson and is unable to come to their lesson they should make provisions **before** the missed lesson to schedule another time to make it up. **Students will be expected to attend a minimum of 6 scheduled lessons each ten week marking period, but students will grow from these weekly lessons and are encouraged to attend all of them. Missed lessons will become a zero in the grade book until made-up.**

V. Department Hours

The normal school day is from 8:00am to 2:46pm. Mrs. Palmer will be available from 7:30 to 8:00am before the school day starts and after school from 2:46 to 3:15pm, by appointment for extra help or to make-up a missed lesson. Appointments must be made ahead of time to arrange for student transportation and to ensure Mrs. Palmer doesn't have a meeting or conflict. He or she is also welcome to come in for extra help or practice time during study halls and lunch periods, with a pre-signed pass.

VI. Google Classroom

Every student in the band program should be sure to join the corresponding Google Classroom. Here students will be able to find updated lesson schedules, recordings of their music and other helpful materials. The classroom codes are as follows:

Jr. High Band: 3ds4szq

Sr. High Band: 4oscbdu

VII. Rehearsal Expectations

Be on time. Everyone in the ensemble plays an important role. Just as the student does not want his or her time wasted, the director does not want to waste rehearsal time waiting for others.

Be prepared. It is the student's responsibility to have his or her instrument, music, McGraw Bands Warm-up Packet, instrument accessories (ex: reeds, valve oil, etc.) and pencil at every rehearsal.

Musical preparation. Students are expected to practice their music at home. Our success as a group depends on each student's ability to perform their music to a high level.

Listen and keep talking to a minimum. A rehearsal is more productive if the director has everyone's undivided attention. If the director has to talk over the band, not everyone is listening, therefore it will take more time to accomplish our goals. "*Listen more than you play.*"

Only water. Food, gum and beverages, except for water, are not permitted in rehearsals. Such items can and will cause damage to instruments over time.

VIII. Concert Attendance Policy

Participating in musical performances throughout the year is one of the most fulfilling aspects of being in a musical group. Students are made aware of the concert dates for the entire year within the first week of school to avoid conflicts. Grades will be severely impacted if concerts are missed.

In agreement with school policy, students must be in attendance prior to the bell for the school day to participate in concerts that evening. Illness, oversleeping and unexcused absences exclude a student from performing in a concert. Absences for things such as appointments and funerals are considered excused and students are able to perform in the concert that evening. In extenuating circumstances, a make-up assignment may be granted, but that is up to the discretion of the director.

Required performances/concerts that will count towards quarterly grades for students are as follows:

Jr. High Band Students:

- Quarter 1: Sweets & Songs: Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2023 at 6:30pm
- Quarter 2: Winter Concert: Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2023 at 6:30pm (Snow Date: Thurs, Dec. 14)
- Quarter 4: Spring Concert: Thursday, May 16, 2024 at 6:30pm

Sr. High Band Students:

- Quarter 1: Sweets & Songs: Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2023 at 6:30pm
- Quarter 2: Winter Concert: Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023 at 6:30pm (Snow Date: Thurs, Dec. 7)
- Quarter 4: Spring Concert: Wednesday, May 8, 2024 at 6:30pm

IX. Concert Dress

The goal of our concert attire is to present a formal and professional ensemble appearance. No individual in the ensemble should stick out. Please choose dress clothes that reflect this goal and meet our district dress code. **Students in Jazz Band and Sr. High Band will be required to wear black.**

Option 1: Blouse with sleeves, pants or full-length skirt, stockings or socks, dress shoes.

Option 2: Full-length dress, stockings or socks, dress shoes.

Option 3: Dress shirt, dress pants, tie, dark socks, dress shoes.

Grading Policy

Quarters 1, 2 & 4 (Quarters with Concerts/Mandatory Performances)

Rehearsal Preparedness and Etiquette	30%
Written/Listening Assignments	20%
Lessons	30%
Concert Attendance/Behavior	20%

Quarter 3 (Quarter without Concert/Mandatory Performance)

Rehearsal Preparedness and Etiquette	30%
Written/Listening Assignments	30%
Lessons	40%

I. Rehearsal Preparedness and Etiquette: *All Quarters = 30%*

It is imperative that we maximize our rehearsal time by being on task from the moment we start our warm-up to the moment students are dismissed. Points will be deducted for inattentiveness, disruption or misbehavior. Students are expected to remove any gum and leave any food/drink in their backpacks. Students will receive two points for rehearsal etiquette each day if these rules are followed. Students who fail to bring their instrument to rehearsal will receive a zero for that day.

II. Written/Listening Assignments: *Quarters 1, 2 & 4 = 20%, Quarter 3 = 30%*

Most written and listening assignments will be completed during rehearsal or lesson time. If a student is absent from class or a lesson in which one of these assignments are completed, students will need to get the missed assignment and complete it for homework to be turned in the following rehearsal. Written/Listening Assignments that are more than a week late will not be accepted.

III. Lessons: *Quarters 1, 2 & 4 = 30%, Quarter 3 = 40%*

Every lesson students will receive a Lesson Assignment/Grading Form. This form will have the student's assignment for that given week. Each lesson will be graded out of 50 points. Students will be graded on Pitch Accuracy, Rhythmic Accuracy, Technique, Articulation and Tone. They may be assigned Scales/Rudiments/Warm-ups, a lesson or solo and band music depending on the unit we are working on. Each week students will receive verbal and written feedback to help direct them for the upcoming week. As stated previously under Lesson Procedure, all band students are required to attend 6 lessons per marking period.

IV. Concert Attendance/Behavior: *Quarters 1, 2 & 4 = 20%, Quarter 3 = 0%*

All scheduled concerts are mandatory for band students and part of their quarterly grade, for quarters 1, 2 & 4. If a student is in the ensemble that is performing, that student is expected to be on time and ready to perform in that concert. Students will also need to be on their best behavior both before, during and after the concert to receive full credit for their performance.

V. Final Exam

The Band Final Exam will be a year-long cumulative grade. Information learned during both lessons and in large ensemble rehearsals will be included on this exam. It is McGraw's Policy that final exams make up 20% of a student's overall average.

NYSSMA Solo Festival

NYSSMA (New York State School Music Association) sponsors approximately 145 solo festivals in New York State each spring. At solo festivals, students are given a performance evaluation that involves playing a graded solo from the NYSSMA Manual, playing scales from memory and sight reading a short piece of music.

NYSSMA is an excellent way to receive feedback from a different music educator to help students improve on their instrument. NYSSMA scores, while solely for the student, can be used to get students into county and state ensembles, such as the Cortland County High School All-County Jazz Band, Area All State and Conference All State.

This year McGraw students will be attending the NYSSMA Festival at East Syracuse Minoa on Friday, April 12 or Saturday, April 13, 2024.

Extracurricular Activities

I. Jazz Band

Jazz Band is an extracurricular ensemble open to students in the McGraw Band Program in grades 6-12. The McGraw Jazz Band meets once a week after school (typically Thursdays) until 4:00pm or 4:30pm. During these rehearsals students learn different genres of music such as jazz, funk, pop, rock, swing, blues, etc. and the basic skills needed to improvise on a piece of music. The McGraw Jazz Band performs at the Sr. High Winter Concert, Sr. High Spring Concert and may be presented with other performance opportunities throughout the year.

II. Parade Band

Parade Band is an extracurricular group open to students in the McGraw Band Program in grades 6-12. The McGraw Parade Band typically starts after Spring Break and meets once or twice a week until 4:30pm. (Number of rehearsals each week is dependent on when Spring Break falls on the calendar). During these rehearsals students learn a piece of music, learn the skills they need to memorize a piece of music and learn the basic skills needed to march in a parade. The McGraw Parade Band performs in the McGraw Memorial Day Parade, in the Cortland County Dairy Parade and may be presented with other performance opportunities throughout the school year.

III. Grades & Attendance for Extracurricular Activities

Following school policy, students must be in good academic standing to be a part of any extracurricular activities. Students failing two or more classes (grade below 65) will not be able to participate in either Jazz Band or Parade Band.

Students that are absent from school or tardy to school will not be allowed to participate in any rehearsals that take place after the school day. This means students must be on time and present to homeroom before the 8:00am bell.

2023-2024

McGraw Music Department Calendar

September

Wed, Sept. 27 - Music Department Brochure
 Fri, Oct. 6 or Catalog Fundraiser

November

Wed, Nov. 1	Sweets & Songs	6:30pm	H.S. Cafeteria
Fri, Nov. 3 & Sat, Nov. 4	Junior High Area All-State Festival Grades 7-9	3pm-8pm; 9am-3pm	Homer H.S.
Mon, Nov. 13 & Tues, Nov. 14	High School Musical Auditions	3:30-6:00pm	H.S. Music Room & H.S. Auditorium
Wed, Nov. 15	High School Musical Audition Callbacks (if needed)	3:30-6:00pm	H.S. Auditorium

December

Wed, Dec. 6	Sr. High Holiday Concert (Snow Date: Thurs, 12/7)	6:30pm	H.S. Auditorium
Sat, Dec. 9	Community Performances	5:00pm	Lamont Library
Wed, Dec. 13	Jr. High Holiday Concert (Snow Date: Thurs, 12/14)	6:30pm	H.S. Auditorium
Wed, Dec. 20	Elementary Holiday Concert (Snow Date: Thurs, 12/21)	6:30pm	H.S. Auditorium

January

Tues, Jan. 2	Musical Rehearsals Begin	3:00-5:00pm	H.S. Auditorium
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Fri, Jan. 5	All-County: M.S. & H.S. Chorus Pre-Festival Rehearsals	9:30 - 11:30am	Cortland H.S.
Fri, Jan. 12	All-County: M.S. & H.S. Chorus Pre-Festival Rehearsals	9:30 - 1:30pm	Cortland H.S.
Sat, Jan. 13	All-County: M.S. & H.S. Chorus Rehearsals & Concert	9:00 - 2:00pm Concert: 2:00pm	Cortland H.S.
<u>February</u>			
Fri, Feb. 2 & Sat, Feb. 3	Senior High Area All State Festival Grades 10-12	3pm-8pm; 9am-3pm	Ithaca College
Sun, Feb. 25	Drama Club Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser	TBA	Cortland Applebees
<u>March</u>			
Mon, Mar. 4 OR Tues, Mar. 5	All County Band Clinics Jr. & Sr. High Bands	TBA	H.S. Auditorium
Mon, Mar. 11- Thurs, Mar. 14	Musical Dress Rehearsals	6:00pm	H.S. Auditorium
Thurs, Mar. 14	Musical Preview Assemblies	TBA	H.S. Auditorium
Fri, Mar. 15	Musical Production	7:00pm	H.S. Auditorium
Sat, Mar. 16	Musical Production	2:00pm	H.S. Auditorium
Sat, Mar. 16	Musical Production	7:00pm	H.S. Auditorium
Wed, Mar. 27	All-County: Elementary Chorus Festival	9:30 - 11:30am	McGraw H.S.

April

Fri, April 12 &
Sat, April 13 NYSSMA Festival, Levels 1-6
& All State TBA ESM H.S.

Thurs, April 18 All-County: Elementary Band,
H.S. Jazz Band & Jazz Choir All Day Homer H.S.

May

Wed, May 8 Sr. High/Jazz Spring Concert
& Art Show 6:30pm H.S. Auditorium

Tues, May 14 Elementary School Spring Concert
& Art Show, Grades 3-5 6:30pm H.S. Auditorium

Thurs, May 16 Jr. High Spring Concert & Art Show 6:30pm H.S. Auditorium

Mon, May 27 Memorial Day Parade & Ceremony
(Parade Band, Show Choir) 9:30am McGraw

Wed, May 29 Elementary School Spring Concert
& Art Show, Grades 1 & 2 6:30pm H.S. Auditorium

Thurs, May 30 Music Awards 6:30pm High School

June

Tues, June 4 Dairy Parade (Parade Band) 6:30pm Cortland

Fri, June 21 Commencement
(Senior Vocal Ensemble) 6:30pm High School