

*“Success as we know it comes from excellence and  
excellence begins at day one”*



# **Herschel Jones Middle School Tiger Band Handbook**

**2019-2020**

Zach Griffin, Director of Bands

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Greetings HJMS Tiger Band Family,

To those that are starting band for the first time, welcome to the family. Band and music provide the amazing opportunity for young people to be part of something bigger than themselves and to hopefully begin life-long engagement in music making. It allows students to work hard, meet new friends, and gain incredible opportunities. We are so excited to have you join our band family!

To those that are returning, welcome back! I hope that this year is an enriching band experience for everyone. There are some cool opportunities available this year.

Please know that I am always available should you ever need anything -- whether it is band related or not. I am incredibly excited and motivated to be the new band director at Herschel Jones Middle School!

Sincerely,

Zach Griffin

Director of Bands, Herschel Jones Middle School

**PURPOSE** The middle school band program at Herschel Jones Middle School seeks to offer each student who is interested and eager to learn, an enjoyable learning experience centered on individualized musicianship and ensemble performance. A working understanding of basic tone production, rhythmic comprehension, fingerings, music vocabulary, dynamics, articulations, scales and key signatures, and rehearsal and performance of middle school literature reflects the Herschel Jones Band goals of achievement.

**EXPECTATIONS** Members of the Herschel Jones Middle School bands are expected to do more than simply play their instruments well. The following are expected of all members in order to be as successful as possible!

- Be on time for all classes, rehearsals, and performances!
- Follow all procedures
- Maintain ALL of your equipment. Make sure you have the necessary materials for rehearsals and performances.
- Instrument (all parts, including mouthpiece)
- Method Book
- Band Binder with current music (students must use a 3-ring binder with about 20 sheet protectors)
- Maintenance supplies (reeds, cork grease, valve oil, slide oil, cleaning materials)
- Pencil (required each day...NO PENS!)
- Respect the learning environment.

-If an adult is talking or on the podium, **ALL** noise stops. Always show respect for the podium and for whoever is instructing from it by being very quiet and attentive.

-Do not play or talk while other students are playing or while a listening exercise is going on.

- Respect all property.
- No food or drinks allowed in the band room (except water). This includes chewing gum
- Hands and comments to yourself. You may play only your own instrument, and nobody else's.

*\*These policies are in addition to HJMS and PCSD policies. In the band program we will follow these fully.\**

**CLASSROOM PROCEDURES** Classroom procedures are very important so that our band program can be as successful as possible.

- Enter the classroom quietly. Place all belongings under your chair and large instrument cases on the shelf during class time.
- Get started on any activity listed on the board.
- Three minute rule: When the tardy bell rings a 3 minute window begins. Once the three minutes are complete the director will step to the front of class to begin -- full participation is required. "The first note we play as a group should not be the first note you play that day."
- Students must obtain permission to leave their seat.
- Director's hands up = instruments in ready to play position.
- Dismissal procedure. Clean and tidy rows will leave first after packing up their belongings. The director will end instruction 2-3 minutes prior to the bell in order to allow enough time for students to get to their next class.
- Cell phones must be set to silent and must be in the student's backpack. This is an HJMS policy which we will be following.

\*Consequences

1. Warning
2. Parent Phone Call
3. Consequence/Discipline Board

4. Referral (serious offenses such as fighting/theft may require this step immediately)

## **CONCERT PROCEDURES**

- Attendance at concerts is mandatory per our Georgia State Music Standards. The director will work with students who have emergencies arise.
- Students will arrive 15-20 minutes prior to warm up time and wait quietly in their designated area with their materials.
- At call time we will begin to warm up and tune the ensemble. It is imperative to be as quiet as possible during warm up and tuning because of the slight differences in pitch that must be heard for proper adjustment. Failure to stay silent during tuning and warm up may result in dismissal from the entire performance.
- School and band rules and procedures apply to performances. Failure to follow these will result in a consequence which may end in dismissal from the concert.
- **All** performers must stay for the **entire** concert.
- Dismissal should be an event without running, pushing, or any other similar behavior. Students will exit the stage from the side and walk to the designated area to meet family members.

### \*Consequences

- Warning
- Temporary Removal from Performance
- Conference with Administrator
- Removal from Performance
- Severe Discipline Problems will be handled with a referral at school the next day.

**REWARDS** There are several positive rewards in the band program itself. From learning something new to the thrill of competition, there is something for almost everyone. Students can be chosen for the following activities as an additional reward for going above and beyond:

- Paulding County Honor Band, Festival Invitational Groups, Annual field trips and competitions, District and State Level Honor Bands, PBIS rewards, Star Achievements, etc.

**DROPPING BAND** While we hope that all students spend all three of their middle school years in band, we realize that situations will arise in which a student needs to remove band from their schedule. To minimize the impact to the ensemble, as well as give students time to make an informed decision, students will only be allowed to drop at end of the school year. Other circumstances will be handled at the band director and administrators' discretion.

Students will be allowed to rejoin band after dropping at the discretion of the band director and administration.

*Severe Discipline Clause:* In the event a student continuously, blatantly, or maliciously causes a serious classroom disruption, he or she will be referred to an administrator. This may result in recommendation for dismissal from the program.

## **GRADING PROCEDURES**

### Grading Breakdown

60% Tests (Playing Tests, Written Tests, Performances, Rehearsals). Band is a performance-based class. Each student is required to be at rehearsals and performances. Please see the explanation below:

Each student is expected to attend, be on time, and be prepared for all performances. Each student will receive a test grade for every concert that he/she is required to attend. If a student misses a concert with a written excuse, they will have until the end of the grading period the concert is in

to make up the grade. To make up a missed concert, the student will be required to perform their music in a 1-on-1 session with the director before or after school. A written assignment may be used in addition to or instead of playing. If the concert is not made up the student will receive a zero for that performance grade. Excuses will be approved or denied at the band director's discretion and must be emailed in prior to the performance. In the case of illness, a doctor's note may be asked for. Students who miss a concert for an unexcused absence will receive up to a 70 for a make up concert and students who miss a concert for an excused absence will receive up to a 100.

Pass Offs - In order to ensure the success of your child's future musicianship, we use pass-offs as a record and a method of grading your child's progress. Pass Off sheets will be given out every 2-3 weeks and students will complete all of the objectives of the pass off sheet to mastery for a 100.

40% (Daily Grade/Class Performance Grade/Assignments) For each day in class the student is prepared a daily performance grade of 20 will be given. Each day a child is prepared is a 20/100 for an overall 100 each week. Students may lose points for improper rehearsal etiquette or not being prepared for class.

**PRACTICE** All students are expected to practice outside of class time. This is necessary in order to maintain progress in total musicianship. A major factor in improving playing skills of each student is having a daily practice routine. This importance cannot be over-emphasized. This plays a major role in the improvement of your child on his/her instrument. Practicing should be thought of as daily homework for band. Students should strive to practice an average of 20 minutes per day. Although students are not required to document practice time, it will be reflected in performance, pass-off and daily grades. Students who do not practice will not be able to perform to the best of their ability and risk falling behind in class.

**PRIVATE LESSONS** We encourage ALL serious musicians to seek out private lessons on his/her instrument. This helps the musician with a more in - depth study of their instrument and helps them prepare for those important auditions. See the director for help in securing a private lessons teacher!

## **OUR BANDS**

### *Beginning Band*

In Beginning Band, students are taught the fundamentals of music and of playing their instruments. Proper hand position, breathing, note reading, and instrumental maintenance are some of the major concepts covered. The Beginning Band will perform at the beginning band concert, holiday, and spring concerts. Additional performances may be added with advanced notice.

### *Intermediate Band*

In Intermediate Band we will work on advancing knowledge of students' instruments as well as music in general. Great attention will be given to reinforcing good playing habits and a quality sound. The intermediate band will perform at the fall, winter, and spring concerts, as well as LGPE. Additional performances may be added with advanced notice.

### *Advanced Band*

By the time a student reaches 8th grade band, they have already had 2 years of instruction of their instrument, and they are ready to perform music at a more advanced level. The 8th grade will perform at fall, winter, and spring concerts and at LGPE. Additional performances may be added with advanced notice.

### *HJMS Symphonic Band*

This is an auditioned/selected group that meets after school. It is open to 7th and 8th grade band members. This is the top performing ensemble at HJMS. They will perform at the District 7 LGPE (Festival) and will go on the spring band trip. Additional performances may be added with advanced notice

\*Please be aware that there may be additional after school rehearsals to prepare for performances. These will be given at no less than two weeks' notice.



**PARENT PICKUP POLICY** for Rehearsals, Performances, and Events Outside of the School Day Band is a co-curricular activity. This means we will have events both during and outside of the school day. It is imperative that students not only arrive on time, but be picked up on time as well. Dates and times for events are placed on the band calendar as far ahead as possible so that plans may be made for rides in advance

- Students who are picked up late from an event outside of the school day will be temporarily suspended from the activity.
- Students who are picked up late more than once will be removed from the activity for the rest of the season or year.

**UNIFORMS** The Band performs as one, therefore our appearance as one is also important. The required Middle School band uniform will consist of the HJMS Black Polo, Black Pants, and Black Dress shoes. The HJMS Polo will be available for purchase through the school. A letter will be sent home with information after the start of the year. \*If purchasing a uniform is a financial hardship, please contact the director by email or phone.

**INSTRUMENTS/ACCESSORIES** It is the goal of the band program to help all students achieve success in music. The instruments chosen are chosen on the basis of reliability and are instruments that are designed to make it easier for the student to learn. There are many different brands of instruments. The ones recommended are not the only instruments that will work...However; these instruments tend to be more reliable. Remember, an instrument is like a finely tuned machine. It does not take much to cause it not to operate properly.

The HJMS band will provide certain instruments because of financial reasons. These are instruments that would cost the individual over \$2500.00. These instruments can be checked out from the school through written contract. Because these instruments are offered at little cost to the student, students and parents are responsible for care and maintenance of the instrument while it is in

their possession. INSTRUMENTS will not be distributed until a school instrument check-out form is returned to the band director! Please note that an individual may purchase or rent these instruments instead of having them school furnished.

The PCSD school instrument usage fee for 2022-2023 is \$25 per semester.

Store Supplies- The director will sell reeds to students who play clarinet, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, and tenor saxophone. Prices will be posted in the band room.

Please see the director for our recommendations for instrument brands, reeds, and other suggested materials. Please also see our director about instrument repairs through a certified technician.

\*If financial obligations are in issue in regard to procuring and instrument or supplies, please contact the director by phone or email.

**OTHER OPPORTUNITIES** There are many ways for the individual to succeed on his/her own. None of these activities are required, and the work will be done outside of regular band class.

District VII Honor Band- The top players in our region are named to the District Honor Band. The audition consists of a short musical selection, scales, and sight-reading. Players meeting certain criteria are eligible to audition for the All- State Band. Making the District band does not guarantee a spot or an audition with the All-State Band. Students interested in auditioning should inform their band director and pay the registration fee.

All-State Band- This is the top musical honor in the state for band. It is an extremely selective group. Each year thousands of middle school students from across the state try out for this group and only 80-100 are chosen. This Audition consists of more sight-reading and two prepared pieces.

Paulding County Honor Band-This band is like the District Honor band but is strictly for band students in Paulding County.

Jazz Band-Depending on the availability and interest level of students, be on the lookout for information about joining the HJMS Jazz Band. The Jazz Band will have a separate handbook.

District Solo/Ensemble-This is an opportunity for students to play for judges as a solo performer or as part of a small ensemble. Forms will be distributed when they become available in the spring.

\*PLEASE consult the band director BEFORE signing up for District Honor Band, All-State OR Solo/Ensemble! Students who wish to participate in these events should plan on working with the band director before or after school on audition material.

**PARENT INVOLVEMENT** Parents play a crucial role in our program. Without your help and support, we cannot accomplish all of our goals. Parents are needed as volunteers in many areas in the program. Chaperones, fundraiser helpers, and equipment helpers are needed throughout the year. You can help your student and the band program by

1. Showing an interest in your child's study.
2. Help keep the instrument in good repair with periodic servicing and see that your child has reeds, oil, and other supplies necessary to keep the instrument in good working order.
3. Ask your child to play for you occasionally and help them to establish a practicing schedule.
4. Keep a schedule of band activities in a prominent place to help avoid conflicts with other activities and appointments.
5. Volunteer time to the middle school band program. Parental involvement is always greatly appreciated.
6. Donate small needed items like paper, hand sanitizer, Ziploc bags, etc. The director will share needs as they arise. Feel free to email and ask.

\*If you are interested in helping out, please do not hesitate to contact the Director. As chaperones and volunteers are needed, communication will be sent home through students or by e-mail.

**BAND WEBSITE** It is now easier than ever to stay up to date with band information through the band website. Forms, dates, and other information will be shared this way. Please check the website frequently. The HJMS Band page can be accessed at: <http://www.hjmsband.weebly.com>

**SOCIAL MEDIA** Follow the band program on social media

Instagram- @hjmsbands

Facebook- [facebook.com/hjmsband](https://www.facebook.com/hjmsband)

**REMIND** We will also use Remind to send home information and updates from time to time. Please sign up for the Remind Account for the grade/ensemble that applies to your student. These will be posted on the website/social media pages before the end of the first month of school.