

Mohave middle school

Band and Guitar Handbook





2018-2019

Mr. Estrella

Dear Parents and students,

Welcome to the band and guitar program at Mohave Middle School. Please take the time to read through the hand book, as it will provide information regarding the musical opportunities at Mohave Middle School. After the material has been read, sign the consent documents found at the end of the handbook and return them within the first week of school. **The forms are due no later than Monday, August 13th, 2018.**

**How to Practice**

Practice regularly with a metronome in order to establish consistency of motor skills while practicing various musical passages. Practice slowly and with patience. Only play something as fast as you can play it perfectly every time, even if that means practicing at one-fourth the tempo. Then, after satisfying yourself that you can play accurately, move the metronome up until you reach a particular tempo. Most importantly, **BE PATIENT**! Practice over the entire range of your instrument using scales, interval studies, and chromatic exercises in ALL KEYS!

Budget your practice time and practice regularly. Include the following: Record your practice sessions occasionally. This will help you notice your progress as well as allow you to be objective about the things that still need improvement. When applicable, go online and listen to repertoire that is programmed for the school year at our website. Listen for musical qualities such as: style, interpretation, characteristic tone, balance, blend, and the like. You can also go online and find great literature on the worldwide web.

Always know that one-on-one assistance is available by contacting Mr. Estrella. Please refer to the tutoring section on the grading policy page for details.

**Private Lessons**
It is highly recommended that students consider taking private lessons with a qualified music teacher who is capable of providing expert attention and guidance. If you would like information for private teachers please speak individually with Mr. Estrella.

**Fundraising and Fees**.

Throughout the year there will be fundraising opportunities for students. Proceeds from fundraising will go directly to helping students pay for any trips we may take, for scholarships to the Curry Summer Music Camp, as well as for supplies for the music department that may be needed throughout the year. Participation in fundraising is mandatory.

There is no class fee to participate in the music programs at Mohave Middle School. However, if a student where to damage school owned property whether at school or off of school grounds, it will be the student’s financial responsibility to pay any fines that the school and/or the school district may impose. This includes but is not limited to damaging an instrument or losing it. There is a $50 fee for the use of district owned instruments.

It is the student’s responsibility to maintain their instrument throughout the schoolyear. If a student’s own instrument breaks, it is their responsibility to take it to an instrument repair shop in a timely fashion.

**Grading Policy**

Grades can be viewed on line through the Synergy Portal. A description on how to use Synergy can be found by visiting the Mohave front office.

Grades can be viewed by parents and students through the Synergy Portal and are private to only them. A parent or student may not see another student’s grade. Grades are updated weekly and have a description of what that assignment is. If there is a discrepancy with a grade you may contact the director through email to ensure private communication.

A student will not start from a clean slate until the beginning of a new semester. Missed assignments/tests are the sole responsibility of the student and can be made up until the final week of the quarter. The one exception is for playing tests directly related to music being performed at the concert; those playing tests must be made up by the end of the week when they are assigned.

After that point, made up assignments/tests must be done within 24 hours upon the student’s return to class. Assignments that are not completed will receive zero credit and be averaged into the student’s overall grade. Grades will be earned based on the following criteria:

* Assigned homework and projects
* Attendance & promptness
* Class preparation and behavior in class
* Exams using audio/visual recordings
* Playing & written proficiency exams
* Performances
* Student self-critiques
* Student peer critiques

**Extra Help/Tutoring Information**

Students can receive extra help in the following ways:

* Families are encouraged to seek specialized support by referring the listing of private lesson instructors.
* Request one-on-one assistance from a faculty member.
* Request one-on-one assistance from a student leader.
* Request a pass to practice during free time in other classes.

**Chair Placement**

There is a mandatory seating chart in the music classroom. Chair placement is made at the discretion of the director for musical and educational reasons and not necessarily organized in a ranked, top-to-bottom, order. Grades assigned to students will not be determined by comparing their playing with that of other band, orchestra or guitar members. Rather, it will be based on his/her own effort and progress as he/she compares with his/her musical potential and aptitude.

**Attendance to Class and Performance Events**

It is important to recognize the direct relationship that exists between attendance and academic achievement. Attendance is ultimately the responsibility of the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s). If a student demonstrates a pattern of unexcused absences or “inconsistent” absences, he/she may lose the privilege of performance for an upcoming event, as deemed appropriate by the faculty. Cases that involve prolonged illness or the band directors and school administration will review unusual circumstances.

**IMPORTANT Attendance is required to all performances**. Appeals for unique and rare circumstances need to be submitted in writing to Mr. Estrella at least two weeks prior to the date of the performance in order to be considered as an excused absence. This form will be found on the music website of MohaveMusic.com Emergency absences must be discussed with Mr. Estrella within one school day of a missed performance. A student must have verifiable evidence to support his/her emergency situation or an excused absence may not be granted.

**Class participation and preparedness:**

3 points will be given per class period for participation. If a student arrives on time with an instrument and music, participates in class without issue, and has trimmed fingernails (guitar), then he/she will receive full credit in this category. **Please note that having excessively long fake fingernails will result in the complete loss of points for a class period. This is due to the fact that it is impossible to play a string instrument with proper technique if left hand fingernails are not properly trimmed. This applies to guitar students.**

**Equipment and Maintenance**

All band members are expected to have a pencil at all rehearsals. Students MUST keep track of their own music folders. We are very limited on the amount of copies that we can make for students. In addition, certain types of instruments require special accessories:

**Woodwinds:**

* (Flutes only) cleaning/tuning rod in the case and a handkerchief/small cloth to swab out the flute and wipe off keys
* The correct swab for your instrument
* A minimum of three playable reeds on hand at all times; Vandoren brand strongly recommended
* A good quality neck strap for saxophones; also available for clarinet

**Brass:**

* A bottle of good quality valve oil or a container of good quality trombone slide cream
* A container of tuning slide lubricant; Vaseline is not acceptable
* A flexible cleaning swab for your instrument

**Percussion:**

* Drummers must supply their own drumsticks. Concert sticks for band students (Vic Firth SD1)

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**Classroom Website/Laptops/Electronics**

Mr. Estrella hosts a class website at [www.MohaveMusic.com](http://www.MohaveMusic.com) This website is used for band and guitar classes. Students will find a calendar of events, a form to fill out if they need to be absent from an event, and relevant classroom information. They are also able to listen to the music that we are performing. The website will also contain helpful videos and activities that will help students progress on their instruments. It is expected that students visit the website frequently.

**NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES MAY BE USED DURING REHEARSALS. THIS INCLUDES LAPTOPS AND CELLPHONES.**

**Classroom Procedures**

At Mohave we take great pride in our commitment to excellence. **In our classrooms to be on time is to be late. To be early is to be on time.** The music classroom takes a longer time to set up than the typical classroom. This is why students are expected to be early. When the bell rings for class you are expected to have your instrument out and be in your seat completely ready to rehearse. When Mr. Estrella steps in front of the group, everyone should be ready to go and be attentive for class to start. Attendance, as mentioned before, is factored into our grading system. It is imperative for you to be prepared and ready to on time. The typical ensemble classroom schedule is as follows.

1. Be in seat ready to go when the bell rings
2. Warm up on a selected material as announced by the director
3. Play the selected pieces by the director
4. Listen to music and be ready to discuss it
5. Discuss different musical topics
6. Warm down on our instrument and talk about how to move forward

When there is a substitute teacher in the room the expectation is that students will be on their best behavior. If the substitute teacher is unable to lead rehearsal it is expected that the section leaders will be running sectionals. Always be sure to give the music program at Mohave a fantastic reputation by practicing P.A.W.S.

**Locks, Lockers and Storage Racks**

Lockers and racks are for the purpose of storing instruments and music accessories. The use of lockers in the band roon is a privilege, not a right. They should not be used to store food, books and personal belongings. Also, the hanging of posters/pictures or stickers in or on the lockers is strictly prohibited.

Each student will have a locker for his/her instrument and is required keep the locker secure at all times. **The school assumes NO responsibility or liability for anything kept in the lockers**.

Students may store their instruments in lockers throughout the week; however, it is the expectation that **every student takes their instrument home on the weekend so that they may practice.**

Students may only use the lockers during their respective music class time. He/she may lose the privilege of locker use as a result of interrupting classroom instruction for which they are not enrolled, or for inappropriate usage.

**Behavior Expectations**

The primary responsibility in my classroom is to learn about music. Any behavior that distracts from or interferes with the learning process is unacceptable. As such, corrective measures in accordance with Mohave policy will be taken to achieve appropriate behavior. Corrective measures will first take the form of a verbal warning to the student. The second offense will result in parent contact If unacceptable behavior persists, the administration at Mohave will get involved. If the problem continues, the student will be escorted out of the class for the day and a conference will be required. Ultimately, a student may be transferred to another class where appropriate behavior can be more easily achieved. In addition to the expectations outlined in the band handbook, all Mohave Middle School rules and Scottsdale District guidelines also apply.

**The following are Rehearsal Expectations:**

* Be early to rehearsals. To be early is to be on time; to be on time is to be late. Late is unacceptable.
* Be prepared with all equipment: instrument, music, and pencil, all accessories needed for the day.
* The most preferred form of communication is listening. The least effective form of communication is talking.
* Be respectful and helpful to each other.
* Engage in a positive attitude during rehearsals and you normally get positive results.
* When you focus on the task at hand, behavior issues become minimal.

**Behavior in the Band and Orchestra Room**

* No food, drinks, and gum in the hallways, locker rooms and general rehearsal room areas.
* Be respectful of all school and personal property.
* Use appropriate language on school property.
* Students are only permitted to play on their personal or school issued instruments.
* Appropriate behavior is to be used while in the room; no running or horseplay.

**Behavior at Concerts**

* Students are required to attend the entire concert. Most concert performances will not be more than one hour.
* Students are instructed to observe all portions of the concert.
* When they are not featured on stage, they are seated in a reserved section in the auditorium house.
* Students will be well mannered, completely silent during performances, are not permitted to use cell phones, and will follow appropriate concert etiquette.
* Students will be in complete and proper uniform attire one hour before the concert begins and will not add to or take away from the uniform at any time before, during, or after the concert until he/she is at home.
* Students will keep concert attire, including shoes, clean and presentable. Uniforms, including shirts, will be cleaned and pressed and shoes will be polished.
* Students will demonstrate class and professionalism while hosting performance events.
* Students will take instruments into the auditorium house and store in the south lobby. Students will not return to the band room until after the concert has ended.

**Behavior While Traveling**

Proper behavior is simply a matter of adhering to the Mohave Middle School and Scottsdale District Codes of Conduct. Failure to behave in the proper manner is possible grounds for sending a student home at his/her own expense.

* Be responsible for yourself and for everyone else around you.
* Always know what the expectations are.
* Treat all chaperones and adults with the utmost respect. Every request made by a chaperone should be adhered to in a timely and courteous manner.
* Go nowhere alone or anywhere you shouldn’t be.
* All students are expected to ride district transportation to and from events. Any exceptions need to be cleared in writing PRIOR to the event and will only be permitted for rare situations deemed necessary.
* Whining/complaining is usually not good form. Be flexible and smile as much as possible.

**Behavior on Buses / Motor Coaches**

* Be respectful of others and use quite voices while traveling.
* Treat your drivers with respect. Simple words such as “please” or “thank you” are appreciated.
* Remain seated while the bus is in motion.
* For safety and attendance purposes, stay on the same bus while traveling.
* Food and drink will only be allowed on the buses at the discretion of the bus drivers. However, keep in mind that food and drink is almost always not permitted while in uniform.
* Keep a clean environment and pick up after yourself. Make sure that all drinks are confined or have a lid.
* Finally, when in doubt regarding appropriate behavior, make decisions that will reflect the highest level of character and integrity.

**Behavior At Restaurants or Fast Food Stops**

* Always be considerate of other cash-paying patrons and use quiet voices during conversation.
* Playing with your food or with utensils/condiments is inappropriate.
* Treating your waiter/waitress with respect is always appreciated.
* Finally, when in doubt regarding appropriate behavior, make decisions that will reflect the highest level of character and integrity.

**If behavior is an issue for any student, the appropriate consequences will be taken. This includes but is not limited to being unable to participate in concerts or class trips. Conferences with parents and school administration may be necessary.**

**Guidelines for Concert Attire**

Concert attire for all performing ensembles at Mohave Middle School is formal and professional. It is expected/required that all musicians wear the same attire enabling the focus to be on the music rather than personal clothing. To dress for performances, adhere to the following:.

* The ladies will purchase black slacks and a black dress shirt. The material must be of a high quality. Ladies may also substitute a solid black dress of appropriate length.
* The gentlemen must purchases black dress slacks. The torso will be a black dress shirt. The slacks and shirt must be of a high quality material and be the same shade of black. Students may use their music department polo for the torso.
* For the gentlemen, black socks must be purchased. Socks should be long enough so as to not see your leg while sitting. Socks in any other color are unacceptable.
* All performers will purchase solid black shoes for their performances.
* Attire checks are made prior to EVERY performance and are a factor in the performers’ grade.
* Ball caps are not a part of the uniform and should not be worn whenever any part of the uniform is being worn. Similarly, sunglasses are not to be used indoors. Running while in uniform is unacceptable.

**PRINT THIS PAGE AND TURN IN**

Dear Students and Parents,

After reviewing the Mohave Middle School handbook, please acknowledge that the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and student accept the expectations as stated in the handbook. Also, sign a second time below if you grant permission for the son/daughter to be photographed or video recorded during the course of the school year.

Student Name (clearly printed):

**HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT...**

By signing below, the student and parent acknowledges that all parties have read the handbook and understand the policies and expectations of the contents included.

Parent signature: Student signature:

**SLIDE SHOW/WEB SITE/PHOTOGRAPH CONSENT...**

By signing below, the student gives permission to have photographs/video of themselves included on Mohave Middle School promotional videos/slide shows, or public relations/media material. The material may be in both print and/or the world wide web.

Parent signature: Student signature: