

CLARENCE MUSIC DEPARTMENT ELEMENTARY BAND HANDBOOK

**INFORMATION FOR BEGINNING BAND
STUDENTS AND PARENTS**



BEGINNING BAND ORIENTATION

Monday, September 21, 2026

6:00 P.M.

Clarence High School Auditorium

ELEMENTARY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC FACULTY

Clarence Center Elementary

~ Mrs. Dana Bennett, Band Director	Phone: (716) 407-9150	<u>Lessons:</u> Mon., Wed.
	Email: DBennett@clarenceschools.org	<u>Rehearsals:</u> • Grade 4 Band: Mon., starting in January

Sheridan Hill Elementary

~ Mrs. Dana Bennett, Band Director	Phone: (716) 407-9250	<u>Lessons:</u> Tues., Thurs., Fri.
	Email: DBennett@clarenceschools.org	<u>Rehearsals:</u> • Grade 4 Band: Wed., starting in January
~ Ms. Chryste Mallory	Email: cmallory@clarenceschools.org	<u>Lessons:</u> Wed.

Harris Hill Elementary

~ Mr. Thomas Furminger, Band Director	Phone: (716) 407-9175	<u>Lessons:</u> Tues., Thurs.
	Email: tfurminger@clarenceschools.org	<u>Rehearsals:</u> • Grade 4 Band: Thurs., starting in January
~ Mr. Andrew Bodemer OR Ms. Chryste Mallory	Email: ABodemer@ClarenceSchools.org cmallory@clarenceschools.org	<u>Lessons:</u> Mon.

Ledgeview Elementary

~ Mr. Thomas Furminger, Band Director	Phone: (716) 407-9275	<u>Lessons:</u> Mon., Wed.
	Email: tfurminger@clarenceschools.org	<u>Rehearsals:</u> • Grade 4 Band: Tues., starting in January
~ Ms. Andrea Runfola	Email: arunfola@clarenceschools.org	<u>Lessons:</u> Tues.

INTRODUCTION

The Music Department of the Clarence Central Schools has enjoyed a reputation for excellence that has extended far back into the 1960's. Our quality band program begins in the fourth grade in all our elementary schools when over 80% of the students begin to study an instrument.

This **ELEMENTARY BAND INSTRUMENT HANDBOOK** has been designed to assist both parents and students in understanding the needs and expectations of the Elementary Instrumental Program. If you have additional questions, either now or throughout the school year, do not hesitate to contact your individual music teacher. When parents and teachers work together, the chances of musical success for the student are much greater.

It is well for all to remember: **PRACTICE** is more important than talent, especially at the elementary level. With practice, student's progress; without practice, they do not progress. It is also important to keep in mind that practicing is not always "fun". However, when good patterns of practice are developed with discipline, consistency, and parental encouragement at this young age, these practice habits will last throughout the student's musical life and have an impact on many other life situations also.

First there is the practice, then the skill development and musical growth, and then the joy of music through playing in the band.

SELECTIONS OF INSTRUMENTS

The Clarence Central School System provides rental instruments for first year players. There is no fee for borrowing a school instrument, but families are expected to pay for any damage beyond normal wear and tear. Students will be able to hear and see all the different band instruments at the demonstration held in each of the elementary schools at the beginning of the year. At that meeting, applications will be sent home to the parents. We encourage students to make choices that they feel most enthusiastic about. However, there are physical conditions to be aware of such as thick or thin lips, unusual dental structures, and a large bead or drop in the middle of the upper lip. If you have concerns about the selection of an instrument, please feel free to consult your music teacher.

INSTRUMENT CHANGES

Occasionally, situations arise in which individual students select instruments for which they are not physically suited. An example of this is the flute. A major objective of producing a good tone on the flute is to create the smallest possible lip opening for the air to pass through. A student with a pronounced drop in the shape of the upper lip will have an extremely hard time doing this. Playing any instrument is difficult enough without fighting an unnecessary physical battle. The flute is perhaps the most competitive instrument in the band and a high level of accomplishment will be needed for success.

This is only one example, but the point is that the instrumental music staff would like your child to have the highest degree of success with the least unnecessary frustration. If the teacher suggests an instrument change, it is with the best interest of the student in mind. We have an extremely experienced staff, and our professional opinions in this area are based on many years of observations.

LESSONS

In school elementary instrumental lessons are given once a week on a rotating basis. Each week the student will miss a different 30-minute segment of the day and students are grouped according to ability and like instruments. Private lessons are encouraged from the very beginning. (A list of private lesson teachers is included). Please do not hesitate to ask your teacher's help in finding a private teacher. Soon after lessons begin, your teacher will recommend a book. Students are responsible for obtaining their own books.

PRACTICE

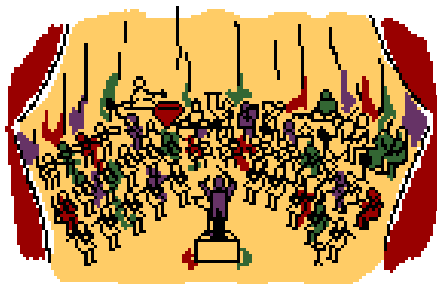
There are very few disciplines that require the coordination between mind and body as in instrumental music. Consistent daily practice will help students overcome many problems associated with mental and physical dexterity. It is best that a consistent day-to-day schedule be adopted rather than trying to make up for time lost on days with no practice. We recommend 30 minutes per day at the elementary level. A practice record will be attached to the student's book. Parents should sign this record each week.

BAND REHEARSALS

Select fourth grade band students at Sheridan Hill and Clarence Center will rehearse once per week beginning January 6 (SH) or January 11 (CC). Select 4th grade band students who attend Ledgeview and Harris Hill will rehearse beginning January 5 (LV) or January 7 (HH). Each lasts an hour.

Clarence Center	Monday	2:35 PM
Harris Hill	Thurs.	2:35 PM
Ledgeview	Tues.	2:35 PM
Sheridan Hill	Wednesday	2:35 PM

Students are expected to always attend rehearsals with their music and pencils. Attendance at band rehearsals is a key to success.



CONCERTS

A final June Concert will include selections by every band in the district. Additional performances of various types may be scheduled at the discretion of the individual band directors. Please check the [Music Calendar](#) for the performance dates for each school, as all band members are required to participate in all concerts for which they are scheduled. The Spring Concerts and the District Spectrum Concert dates are listed in this handbook.

Clarence Center and Sheridan Hill students will combine to perform together on the concert. Harris Hill and Ledgeview students will also be combined to perform together.

The band director reserves the right to exclude an inappropriately dressed student from a concert/recital.

Concert/Clinic Schedule

CC-SH "Lead the Way" Clinic	June 7th
LV-HH "Lead the Way" Clinic	TBA
District Spectrum Concert	June 8th

Concert/Recital/Clinic Dress Code

A concert/recital is a special event. Tasteful and appropriate dress makes the group look attractive. There is also a positive impact when dressed properly for the concert/recital and this also helps foster group identity.

The dress code for students in the band is:

Option 1:

White dress shirt
Dark PLAIN tie
Black or very dark pants
Black or very dark socks
Black or very dark shoes

Option 2:

White blouse
Black or very dark skirt
Stockings
Black or very dark shoes

CARE OF INSTRUMENTS

Musical instruments, being mechanical devices of varying degrees of complexity, will benefit from proper care and maintenance. The players will benefit when instruments operate properly. As with any mechanical device, a bit of "TLC" and preventive maintenance will provide long-term performance and minimal repair expenditures.

It is important to have clean reeds and mouthpieces. Students should always brush their teeth before playing their instrument when at home.

Students should **never** play on another student's instrument. This avoids the transfer of germs, etc. The student who is responsible for the instrument is the only one who should open the case – no friends, siblings or others should touch the instrument. Instrument cases should never be opened on the bus.

Students should refer any questions regarding proper maintenance or cleaning of their instruments to their music teacher.

BAND RESPONSIBILITY

A good **attitude** and strong sense of **responsibility** are vital to the success of our elementary band program. Once a student has attained the necessary skill and musical growth to participate in the band, he or she must diligently practice band music, in addition to lesson assignments.

The success of the band's performance is also very much dependent upon **every** student attending each rehearsal and every performance. We ask parents to please try to avoid scheduling doctor or dentist appointments on days of band rehearsals.

A good positive attitude towards rehearsals, coupled with consistent practice and personal responsibility, will ensure a great deal of success in the band program. You can be assured that **attitude**, **responsibility**, and **practice** will not only create a positive experience in the making of music but will carry over into numerous other areas of your child's development.

TRANSPORTATION OF INSTRUMENTS

Most musical instruments can be transported on the school bus without problems. Students will receive a sticker for their case that will indicate to the bus driver the instrument may be transported. Students should be aware of the need to hold the instruments on their lap.

Large, bulky instruments, such as some baritone horns, baritone saxophones, and tubas need to be transported by parents when the need arises to take the instrument to school. In most cases, with these large instruments, we can supply a duplicate instrument for home use.

If there is a problem with the transportation of instruments, please contact the band director in your child's school. The chances are good that the problem can be solved.



**Please visit the Music Department website for all
up-to-date information!**

www.clarenceschools.org

click

Music

click

Music Department Calendar

Music NEWS

Concert Programs

(Printed ones will be available in B&W, but you can save them from here for keepsakes in color! This will save space... and trees!)

CLARENCE BAND PROGRAM GRADES 4-12

Elementary

- 4th Grade Band with 1 concert and 1 lead the way event
- 5th Grade Band with three concerts
- 30-minute weekly lesson
- 1-2 band rehearsals after school each week
- Christmas caroling
- Flag Day performances
- Side by Side Concerts with Visiting CMS & CHS Ensembles
- ECMEA All-County Festival (optional- need to audition)

Middle School

- 6th Grade Band
- Concert Band, Symphonic Band (placement by audition)
- Period length weekly lesson
- Daily band rehearsals during school
- 4 concerts during the school year
- Marching Band
- Jazz Ensemble (extra-curricular)
- All-County Festival
- NYSBDA All-State Festival

High School

- Concert Band, Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble (placement by audition)
- Period length weekly lesson
- Daily band rehearsals during school
- 4-6 concerts during the school year including the annual concert at Kleinhans
- Marching Band (extra-curricular)
- Jazz Ensemble (extra-curricular)
- Musical Pit Band/Orchestra (extra-curricular)
- Chamber Music
- Performances with the Orchestras
- All-County Festival
- NYSBDA All-State Festival
- NYSSMA All-State Festival
- Tours to NYC and Florida

WHY DO STUDENTS ENROLL IN INSTRUMENT MUSIC?

Student Reasons:

1. Playing music is going to be fun.
2. They want a nice instrument.
3. They want to learn how the instrument works.
4. They want to be with their friends.
5. They want to be in the band.
6. They want to learn fun songs to play.
7. They want to play concerts and be on stage.

WHY SHOULD STUDENTS ENROLL IN INSTRUMENT MUSIC?

Parent Reasons:

1. It teaches the whole child and is part of a well-rounded, complete education.
2. It improves many cognitive processes, including memory, reading, and spatial processes.
3. It develops fine motor skills and sensitivity within a large group.
4. It provides challenging subject matter that is only limited by how hard the student is willing to work.
5. It is the only subject where your child will learn important concepts such as:
 - dynamics
 - phrasing
 - articulation
 - rhythm
 - tone quality
 - intonation
 - and many more
6. It is a great avenue for learning 21st century skills such as:
 - creativity
 - teamwork
 - problem solving
 - aesthetics
 - expression
 - public performance
 - and many more
7. Band is a unique and positive place to develop self-worth and social skills and to make friends.
8. Instrumental music is a wonderful, lifelong endeavor that leads to more enjoyment in life.

Clarence Central School District Music Department
Recommended Private Lesson Teachers

* Please ask the music teacher to help select one that is the best for your child.

INSTRUMENTAL

INSTRUMENT OR VOCAL PART	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL	NOTES
FLUTE	Leah Browne	(716) 406-2240		
	Brandon Burgess	(716) 799-7535	Brandontburgess@gmail.com	
	Natalie Scanio	(716) 626-3269	Debiken@yahoo.com	Also teaches Piccolo. (Piccolo player for BPO.)
	Melinda Easter	(716) 837-1027		
	Linda Fusani	(716) 633-2919	flutti-tutti@roadrunner.com	
	Kristen Hill	(716) 639-8135		
	Erin Keppner	(716) 713-3770	ekeppner11@gmail.com	https://www.erinkeppnerflute.com/
	Debbie Komosinski	(716) 542-9029		
	Eileen Yu	(716) 689-0106		
CLARINET (ALL)	Angela Antersol	(716) 689-7890		
	Brandon Burgess	(716) 799-7535	Brandontburgess@gmail.com	
	Kelly Decker	(716) 816-6433		
	Roseanna Deni	(716) 667-2826		
	Alicia Macon	(716) 689-5887		
	Marielle Zych	(716) 697-2057		
	Will Amsel	(617) 755-1131		Principal Clarinetist, BPO
OBOE	Craig Incontro	(716) 632-1917		
	Mary Kay Ortolano	(716) 941-8878		
	Sheryl Rohr	(716) 836-0504		
BASSOON	Cortney Chase	(716) 908-7548		
	Reno Fusani	(716) 633-2919		
	Mary Kay Ortolano	(716) 941-8878		
SAXOPHONE (ALL)	Roger Mroz	(716) 656-0553		
	Craig Poissant	(716) 380-7996		
TRUMPET	Riley Conley	(814) 823-6278	conleytrumpet@gmail.com	
	Jamie Francisco	(716) 574-6678	jcfrancisco3@yahoo.com	

Clarence Central School District Music Department
Recommended Private Lesson Teachers (continued)

FRENCH HORN	Denise Peters	(716) 939-0909	dpeters@buffaloschools.org	
	Liz Reed	(412) 983-6686	eareed2@gmail.com	
	Andrea Silvestrini	(716) 860-4609	andrea.marie.silvestrini@gmail.com	

TROMBONE/ EUPHONIUM/ TUBA	Andrew Bodemer	(716) 597-6653	abodemer@clarenceschools.org	CMS Band Teacher
	Lon Gormley	(716) 310-6654		
	Ivy Gulakiw		ivytrumbone@gmail.com	
	Pim Liebmann (trombone only)	(716) 568-1160		
	Seth Rawleigh (tuba only)	(717) 419-9917		
	Tim Smith (trombone only)	(773) 590-9035		

PERCUSSION	Bob Accurso	(716) 759-6713		
	Tom Furminger	(716) 866-5292	tfurminger@clarenceschools.org	LV-HH Band / CHS Percussion Teacher