



Holicong Middle School Band

A Musician's Guide to Band:

How to be successful as a part of the Holicong Band

Introduction:

Welcome to the Holicong Band Program! I would first like to thank you for continuing your instrumental music education at the middle school level. By continuing to play, you are helping to develop life-skills such as perseverance, dedication, problem-solving, critical/higher-level thinking and cooperation. I would ask that you **think of participation in band as a three-year journey that gets more unique and challenging as you progress.** Only by playing through 9th grade (and even beyond) will you truly experience all that the program has to offer. This is a decision that I am sure you will not regret.

Band is unique. We are, in reality, a team, but one in which **everyone is a starter and everyone is crucial to the success of the ensemble.** There are no “bench players.” There are no “back-ups.” The ensemble will succeed or struggle based on the commitment and dedication of every person involved (myself included). Everyone who plays an instrument is welcome, everyone is important, and everyone will have the opportunity to make incredible and long-lasting memories.

As the pilot of this musical journey, my goal is to do whatever I can to help each student reach their full musical potential and have fun in the process. However, it is not a one-way street. There are expectations, commitments and demands; practicing is both expected and required. All students, regardless of “natural ability,” have the potential to truly achieve musical excellence. It is no coincidence that the ones that do are the ones who have put in the time and effort along the way.

This guide will give you all the information you need to musically succeed here at Holicong. Please read over the following pages carefully as I truly believe you will find them helpful. The last page is a contract/detach and return form that must be signed by both you and a parent/guardian. This will be your first “graded assignment” so be sure to return it by the due date.

Thanks, in advance, for taking the time to read the following information. I am looking forward to a great year of music and I hope that you are as well.

Mr. C

jchodoroff@cbsd.org

How does band work at Holicong?

Middle school band in Central Bucks operates a bit differently than what you have become used to at the elementary school level. The primary difference is that band is now a class, and not a “pull out” program. Your child will see “band” in their schedule and attend it just like they would English or Social Studies class. The second big difference is that each class consists of a mixed instrumentation. No longer is it a class of just flutes or trumpets – it will essentially be a mini-band rehearsal each time.

Holicong is the proud home of 6 bands, and that number grows to 7 if you include the district-wide Middle School Honors Band. Below you will find an explanation of each group, as well as any pertinent, preliminary information.

- 7th, 8th and 9th Grade Bands: These are the “curricular” bands of Holicong, meaning that they meet as a class during the school day. No auditions are required for these groups – your child must simply sign up for band in order to be included.
 - Band class meets every other day for 50 minutes. It is a full-year class, and not semester based like the rest of the non-music specials.
 - Each band member will be required to attend 3 after-school rehearsals for the winter concert and 3 after-school rehearsals for the spring concert.
- Jazz Ensemble: An audition-based group that focuses on big band jazz and improvisation, the ensemble will generally rehearse on Thursday mornings from 6:30 AM – 7:20 AM.
 - Auditions will be at the end of September/beginning of October. All materials will be made available as part of the audition packet. These will be posted online and can be accessed via my teacher site.
 - The group is open to all grades and most instruments (no clarinets, oboes or French horns); drummers must play drum set.
 - Jazz Ensemble will attend several jazz festivals in the area throughout the year. These are primarily in the late winter/early spring.
- Wind Ensemble: The second audition-based band at Holicong, the Wind Ensemble is a more advanced concert band that plays more challenging repertoire. Auditions will also be at the end of September/beginning of October, and once it starts, the ensemble rehearses on Tuesday mornings from 6:30 AM – 7:20 AM.
 - The group is open to all grades and all instruments; drummers will be playing concert percussion and not drum set.
 - Wind Ensemble will do several performances and adjudications in and around the area. There is usually 1 in the winter and 2 in the spring.
- Marching Band: This group is made up of **8th and 9th grade students only** and participates in the Doylestown Memorial Day Parade. It is a non-audition group that all eligible students are expected to participate in.
- Middle School Honors Band: This is yet another audition-based group that is made up of the top musicians from each of the 5 middle schools in CB.
 - The group rehearses and performs in a “festival format,” meaning that there will be two long rehearsals followed by a Saturday dress rehearsal, banquet, and concert.
 - The festival dates are Wednesday, February 5th, Thursday, February 6th, and Saturday, February 8th.

General Band Supplies: What does every child need for band?

- All students need to have a musical instrument in PROPER WORKING CONDITION. If you own your own instrument, please take a moment and be sure it is in good shape. If you need to rent one, please contact the company you used in the past to begin the process.
- All students must purchase the “official” Holicong Band Folder. This is a high-quality black folder complete with the Holicong logo. **The cost is \$8, and orders can be placed through *My Payments Plus*.**
 - The folder design does not change. Once a folder is purchased, your child will not need to buy another one providing they don't lose or damage it.
 - For those doubling in orchestra, they use the exact same folder so there is no need to buy two. For those doubling in choir, Mr. Glaser will provide cardboard folders for you.
- All 7th and 8th grade students must purchase the in-class warm-up book(s). You will need *Standard of Excellence, Book 1 and Book 2*.
 - The books can be ordered from/delivered to school by Russo's or Zeswitz, purchased at Music and Arts Center, or ordered from an online site such as Amazon.com.
 - The cost varies depending on where you buy from, but they are under \$9 each at both music stores.
- ***All students should have a minimum of two pencils for each class. One should be kept in the folder and another in the case.***

Supplies by instrument: What does each instrument require at the middle school level?

- Flute: Cleaning rod/rag
- Oboe: Cleaning swab; at least 2 medium hard reeds
- Clarinet: Cleaning swab; cork grease; at least 1 box of 2½ strength reeds (or stronger) with multiple reeds available in your case in case one breaks or chips
- Saxophones: Cork grease; at least 1 box of 2½ strength reeds (or stronger) with multiple reeds available in your case in case one breaks or chips
- Brass Instruments: Valve oil (except for trombones); slide cream/slide grease
- Percussionists: At least 2 pairs of **matching** sticks. 1 pair should be left in the student's locker at school (WITH THEIR NAME ON BOTH STICKS) and the others should remain at home for practicing.
 - *Percussionists are not required to rent the snare drum kit providing they have something to practice on at home. This could be a drum set, snare drum or practice pad.*
 - *If a student does not have something to work with at home, a snare kit must be rented from Zeswitz.*

Communication

There are three primary ways that I will be communicating with everyone throughout the year. I strongly believe that good communication is a key to success, and will do my best to get you dates, times and other various sorts of information well in advance so that you can plan accordingly. I would simply ask that you review information that is sent out in a timely fashion and mark your calendars. With that said, here are my main methods of communication:

- **Remind:** This is a free program that makes use of text messages or the Remind app. Each student will be joining Remind, and I ask that at least one parent or guardian does so as well. I promise to send out only information that is important and/or crucial and will not fill up your inboxes with needless messages. The beauty of the program is that text messages can be exchanged **without ever knowing anyone's personal cell phone number**. Also, you as a student do not have the ability to text anyone else except me. There is no opportunity for student-to-student messaging using Remind. This service is for the exchange of relevant band information only and it is not a cyber-playground. To join:
 - Open a new text message and enter 81010 in the "To:" field.
 - Type one of the following groups into the "body" of the message and then follow the directions.
Please use your first and last name and remember that you must use the @ symbol!!
 - @holband71a (7th Grade Band – Period 1A)
 - @holband72a (7th Grade Band – Period 2A)
 - @holband72b (7th Grade Band – Period 2B)
 - @holband24 (8th Grade Band)
 - @holband23 (9th Grade Band)
 - @holjazz (**only if you/your child makes the group**)
 - @holwind (**only if you/your child makes the group**)
 - When the message comes back to you from the random phone number, please save that number in your contacts as "Holicong Band."
- **Band Calendar:** The Band Google Calendar can be found on my teacher website and contains all the dates, times, and locations for the entire year. As soon as a date is confirmed it is added to the calendar. I strongly suggest bookmarking that page for easy access.
 - My site can be accessed by using the following address, or by searching for my name on the district or Holicong websites. There is a page dedicated to the calendar.
 - <http://www.cbsd.org/Domain/1528>
- **Hard Copies:** For those a bit more "old school," I also send home hard copies of just about everything I send out electronically. These will be given out in class and (hypothetically) brought home.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

1. Respect *all* people in the class *all* the time.
2. Always listen - to musical ideas and teacher directions.
3. When you enter the room: get your instrument together quickly, have a seat, and check “The Magic Board” to see what exercise or piece we will be starting with that day.
4. Once everyone is seated, rehearsal has started.
5. No gum, food, or drink is allowed. The only exception is a water bottle.
6. Only percussionists touch the percussion instruments.
7. Always be prepared: instrument, music, and pencil (no pens).
8. Please mark your music in PENCIL ONLY – I recommend 2 pencils (one for your folder and one for your case).
9. Please have a nametag clearly displayed on your instrument case (include name and homeroom number).
10. Lockers are available in the band room for instrument storage. Flutes and clarinets have the option to use school lockers, but any larger instruments will need to use the storage area. **Each student is responsible for providing a combination lock for their band locker. The locker number and combo must be given to Mr. C as well.**

Holicong Music Department – Concert Dress Code

This year the Music Department has decided to standardize the concert dress code for all ensembles. This will make things easier for all involved, but especially for students who “double” in more than one music group and parents who may have students in different ensembles. As you read the requirements below, please keep in mind that a concert is a special occasion that represents the culmination of months of hard work. Please take as much pride in your appearance as you do in your performance.

Please know that while ripped jeans/pants are popular, they are not appropriate concert attire and may not be worn on stage. Any student who arrives wearing ripped pants, or any other article of clothing that does not adhere to the Holicong dress code, will not be permitted to perform that evening and will receive a “0” for the concert.

CONCERT ATTIRE FOR BOYS:

- ★ Black shirt: Polo shirt or dress shirt (short sleeve is fine)
 - ◆ **All shirts must be tucked in**
- ★ Black pants: Dress pants, black khakis/slacks, or black jeans
 - ◆ **Pants with rips/holes are not appropriate attire and should not be worn on stage**
 - ◆ **Jogging pants or warm-up pants are not appropriate attire and should not be worn on stage**
- ★ Black shoes or nice black sneakers
 - ◆ **Flip-flops and slides are not appropriate attire and should not be worn on stage**
- ★ Black socks
- ★ Ties are *optional* unless specified by your director

CONCERT ATTIRE FOR GIRLS:

- ★ Black top: Shirt, blouse, or other appropriate style that adheres to the school dress code
- ★ Black pants: Dress pants, black khakis/slacks, black jeans, leggings, capris, and yoga pants are all acceptable
 - ◆ **Pants with rips/holes are not appropriate attire and should not be worn on stage**
 - ◆ **Jogging pants or warm-up pants are not appropriate attire and should not be worn on stage**
- ★ Black shoes or nice black sneakers
 - ◆ **“Dress sandals” may be worn but flip-flops or slides are not appropriate**
- ★ Black socks (if necessary)

Rehearsal and Concert Schedule

Below you will find the Concert Band dress rehearsal and concert dates for the entire year. I am asking that you go over them at home and place the dates on your calendar ASAP. All rehearsals will be in the auditorium unless otherwise noted. Please be aware that there will be four additional rehearsals for each grade level throughout the year – two in the winter and two in the spring. These dates will be sent home as soon as the music calendar is finalized.

❖ Winter Concert

- **7th Grade Band:**
 - Wednesday, December 11th (Dress Rehearsal; 2:45 – 3:30)
 - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12TH (CONCERT; 6:15 PM report, 7:00 PM start)
- **8th Grade Band:**
 - Wednesday, December 11th (Dress Rehearsal; 3:30 – 4:15)
 - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12TH (CONCERT; 6:15 PM report, 7:00 PM start)
- **9th Grade Band:**
 - Wednesday, December 4th (Dress Rehearsal; 2:45 – 4:30 w/Choir and Orchestra)
 - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5th (CONCERT; 6:15 PM report, 7:00 PM start)

❖ Spring Concert

- **7th Grade Band:**
 - Wednesday, May 13th (Dress Rehearsal; 2:45 – 3:30)
 - THURSDAY, MAY 14TH (CONCERT; 6:15 report, 7:00 start)
- **8th Grade Band:**
 - Wednesday, May 13th (Dress Rehearsal; 3:30 – 4:15)
 - THURSDAY, MAY 14TH (CONCERT; 6:15 report, 7:00 start)
- **9th Grade Band:**
 - Tuesday, May 5th (2:45 – 4)
 - WEDNESDAY, MAY 6TH (CONCERT AND MUSIC AWARDS, 6:15 PM report, 7:00 PM start)

Rehearsal and Concert Absences:

- There are both excused and unexcused absences for rehearsals and concerts
 - Excused:
 - Sick, appointment, family emergency, Holicong sports conflict
 - Please use *Remind* to communicate ASAP
 - Unexcused:
 - Forgot, chose not to come, could not get a ride
- There is a new department policy in place for missed rehearsals. All students who miss a rehearsal (either “excused” or “unexcused”) **must complete a make-up assignment and turn it in no later than 1 week after the absence.**
 - Until the assignment is turned in, a grade of “0” will go in the gradebook. **THIS IS JUST A PLACEHOLDER THAT WILL REMIND YOU TO TURN IN THE ASSIGNMENT – IT IS NOT PERMANENT.** Once you complete/turn in the assignment you will receive full credit for that rehearsal.
 - If the assignment is not turned in, the “0” will remain in the gradebook.

Holicong Music Department – Missed Rehearsal Make-Up Assignment

Class Period (example: 1A)	Date of Missed Rehearsal	Due Date of Assignment

1. Please explain your reason for missing the rehearsal.

2. Does your absence count as excused or unexcused? _____

Excused Absences (FULL CREDIT after completing make up assignment)	Unexcused Absences (PARTIAL CREDIT after completing make up assignment)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent from school on day of rehearsal • Holicong sports game/match/meet • Paid tutoring, appointment, class (or other excused conflict) that you <u>TOLD YOUR DIRECTOR ABOUT PRIOR TO THE MISSED REHEARSAL.</u> • Last-second family emergency • Please communicate all absences via Remind or Email. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forgot • Lack of transportation because you did not communicate with a parent or guardian • Sports practice (remember that time should be “split” per Holicong policy) • Paid tutoring, appointment, class or other conflict that you <u>DID NOT TELL YOUR DIRECTOR ABOUT PRIOR TO THE MISSED REHEARSAL</u>

Parent Signature: _____

When a rehearsal is missed, a grade of “0” will be entered into the gradebook. THIS IS JUST A PLACEHOLDER!! To earn points for the rehearsal you must complete and turn in this assignment (on the back) NO LATER THAN 1 WEEK AFTER YOUR MISSED REHEARSAL. You will then be given credit based on the guidelines listed above. Should you not complete the assignment the “0” will remain.

Our after-school rehearsals are an important step towards successful growth as musicians. They provide a limited number of opportunities for our full ensemble to rehearse together on stage before our concerts so that we are comfortable for the big night. Important information (both logistical and musical) will be covered, and it is important that everyone is on the same page. Please complete the assignment below to ensure that you have received all the necessary information that was covered at the rehearsal you missed.

Assignment: Meet with a member or members of the band that attended the after-school rehearsal that you missed. For each piece we rehearsed, find out key elements that were focused on in our rehearsal (trouble spots, musical directions, specific reminders that were given by your director, etc....). Also, find out any and all logistical procedures that your director went over (report time, concert attire, reminders, etc....). Bullet points are acceptable.

Holicong Band Grading Policy

Many educators believe that students should do work to the best of their ability in order to earn a grade. I view things a bit differently for band. I believe that if you strive to do the work to the best of your ability the grade will take care of itself. In other words, if you are always trying to do your best there is nothing to worry about. With that in mind, here are my grading basics:

1. Be where you need to be when you need to be there.
2. Be prepared and be doing what you need to be doing.
3. Be responsible for, and aware of, due dates, rehearsal dates, and concert dates.
4. Always give your best effort and do everything to the best of your ability.
5. Treat everyone and everything with respect.

All grades will be based on a 10-point scale with multipliers being used to stress the importance of an assignment. Below is a quick reference guide that will give you an idea of the weighting:

- **Daily Preparation: 10 points/rotation (x1)**
 - Are you coming prepared with your instrument, folder/book, and pencil each class?
 - *Formative Assessment*
- **Daily Class and Rehearsal Etiquette: 10 points/rotation (x1)**
 - Are you focused and engaged during class?
 - Are you demonstrating correct posture?
 - Are you always giving your best effort?
 - *Formative Assessment*
- **Weekly Practice Assessments: 10 points/week (x1)**
 - Any Practice Assessment turned in late will be docked one full letter grade
 - This will be explained on the next page
 - *Summative Assessment*
- **Performance Assessments: 10 points/assignment (x3) → 30 points total**
 - Any Performance Assessment turned in late will be docked one full letter grade
 - *Summative Assessment*
- **Grade-Level Rehearsals: 10 points/rehearsal (x1)**
 - *Summative Assessment*
- **Dress Rehearsal: 10 points (x2) → 20 points total**
 - *Summative Assessment*
- **Concert: 10 points (x3) → 30 points total**
 - *Summative Assessment*

Weekly Practice Assessments

There is no shortcut around practicing. The simple truth is that if you want to improve as a musician you need to practice. The most important goal of these assessments is to get you playing your instrument at home. There is no minimum length, but in order to receive full credit you do need to submit something that demonstrates what you are working on. If it is a shorter example, maybe play it twice on the recording so that I can listen for improvement and adjustments. If it is a longer example, once works just fine.

Student Responsibilities:

- ✓ One (1) practice assessment will be submitted each week unless I tell you otherwise.
- ✓ Each assessment can be submitted at any time but must be turned in by 11:59 PM on Sunday night.
- ✓ Whatever you want to play for your submission is fine! This includes:
 - Parts of the pieces we are working on (for Jazz and Wind as well)
 - A Standard of Excellence exercise (one that is being used for an upcoming Performance Assessment or just one that you like)
 - Audition music
 - Music you are working on for your private lessons
 - Pop music/Movie music that you have purchased, downloaded, or found online
 - Holiday songs
 - An original piece that you are composing
- ✓ The style does not matter to me – I just want to hear you play to the best of your ability.
- ✓ Drummers – you may submit a recording of you playing drum set!
- ✓ Mallet players – you should have a bell kit at home, but if not, submit a recording of you playing the piano.
- ✓ Your submissions should demonstrate good playing technique.
 - Good posture is a must
 - Please be seated in a chair with the music appropriately propped up or standing with the music at the correct level
 - Drums or drum pads not on a stand should be on a surface that promotes good posture, good grip, and good playing habits

Parent Tips:

- ✓ Please be sure your child is bringing their instrument home each day. Even though they are not required to practice every day the instrument should not be “living” at Holicong.
- ✓ Please help your child find a quiet place to practice. The area should be well-lit and have room for a chair and a music stand.
- ✓ Speaking of music stands, please consider buying one if you do not already own one. It is incredibly helpful and truly promotes good playing posture.
- ✓ Encourage your child to play/practice 3-4 times each week. While they only have one practice assessment due each week, the more they play = the better they get = the more fun they have! I am aware that this may not be possible every week. However, it is a good goal.
- ✓ Asking your child to play something for you is a great way to get them playing at home. Do not feel that you need to correct “right and wrong” – just listening to them is a bigger confidence booster than you would imagine.

STUDENT AND PARENT CONTRACT – TEACHER COPY

Student Name (please print): _____

Grade Level: _____

Instrument in Band: _____

Class Period: _____

- ✓ I am aware of the concert dates and realize that my/my child's attendance is both mandatory and graded.

Student Initials: _____ *Parent Initials:* _____
- ✓ I am aware that my child will need to purchase/have Standard of Excellence Book 1 (RED) and Book 2 (BLUE). Having these books will count towards the Daily Preparation Grade and points will be lost if they are not brought to class.

Student Initials: _____ *Parent Initials:* _____
- ✓ I am aware that my child will need to purchase/have the Holicong Folder and that this is a requirement. I am also aware that they will need a minimum of 2 pencils for class (one to be kept in the folder and one to be kept in the case).

Student Initials: _____ *Parent Initials:* _____
- ✓ I am aware that my child needs all-black attire for the concerts.
 - **FOR BOYS:** Black polo shirt or Black dress shirt; Black dress pants, Black khakis, or Black jeans; Black socks; Black shoes or nice Black sneakers. Warm-up pants, jogging pants, shorts, flip-flops, and slides are not appropriate. If an item of clothing does not adhere to the school dress code it is also not permissible concert attire.

Student Initials: _____ *Parent Initials:* _____
 - **FOR GIRLS:** Appropriately styled Black shirt; Black dress pants, Black jeans, Black leggings, Black yoga pants, or Black capris; Appropriate footwear. Skirts/dresses, warm-up pants, jogging pants, shorts, flip-flops, and slides are not appropriate. If an item of clothing does not adhere to the school dress code it is also not permissible concert attire.

Student Initials: _____ *Parent Initials:* _____
- ✓ I am aware that my child's pants may not be ripped or have holes in them for the concert. Students who arrive wearing ripped pants will not be permitted to perform and will receive a "0" for their concert grade.

Student Initials: _____ *Parent Initials:* _____
- ✓ I am aware that my child must bring their instrument home each day and may not leave it in the band room. I am also aware that there will be weekly practice assessments that must be completed and submitted.

Student Initials: _____ *Parent Initials:* _____
- ✓ My child and at least one parent/guardian have signed up for the appropriate Remind group (found earlier in the handbook). This is mandatory and is the main form of communication.

Student Initials: _____ *Parent Initials:* _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

PARENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

****Please return the completed contract no later than Friday, September 13th.****

STUDENT AND PARENT CONTRACT – HOME COPY

Student Name (please print): _____

Grade Level: _____

Instrument in Band: _____

Class Period: _____

- ✓ I am aware of the concert dates and realize that my/my child's attendance is both mandatory and graded.

Student Initials: _____ Parent Initials: _____
- ✓ I am aware that my child will need to purchase/have Standard of Excellence Book 1 (RED) and Book 2 (BLUE). Having these books will count towards the Daily Preparation Grade and points will be lost if they are not brought to class.

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****Please return the completed contract no later than Friday, September 13th.****