

# **Autrey Mill Middle School Band Handbook 2024-2025**



**Autumn Smith, Director of Bands**

Email: [smitha7@fultonschools.org](mailto:smitha7@fultonschools.org)

Website: [www.ammsband.org](http://www.ammsband.org)

**Band App:**



**Trey Martin, Principal**

**Ashley Perry, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Assistant Principal**

**Melanie McCollum, 7th Grade Assistant Principal**

**Matthew McNamara, 8th Grade Assistant Principal**

**Jerrett Duncan, Assistant Administrator**

**Dear Parents, Guardians and Students,**

Welcome to the 2024-2025 Autrey Mill Middle School Band! I am so excited to welcome you to the band family. You are now a part of a proud tradition of musical excellence. This program boasts some of the finest musicians in Fulton County, with numerous students selected for UGA Midfest, GMEA District V Solo & Ensemble, GMEA District V Honor Band, and GMEA All-State each year. The 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Concert Band and the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Symphonic Band received Superior ratings at the Large Group Performance Evaluation last year, a first in many years for the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Concert Band! The Orlandofest Band, comprised of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, received Superior ratings at the Orlandofest Concert Festival in Orlando, Florida on our first trip since before the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to returning this year with 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Throughout history, music has been considered the basis of all learning. The skills and attitudes a student acquires in band class can help him/her to achieve success in life. It is truly an honor and a privilege to be a part of the Autrey Mill Middle School Band. I am excited about working with each of you and look forward to a year filled with many musical adventures!

This handbook is designed to serve as a resource for parents and students. Within this handbook, you will find information regarding grading policies, attendance policies, supply lists, performances, and more. All members and parents are required to read the handbook carefully to understand the structure and procedures of our ensemble. **Upon reading the handbook in its entirety, please sign and return the last page to acknowledge that you have read and understood the contents of the handbook.**

In conjunction with this handbook, there are various documents you will find posted on our band webpage ([ammsband.org](http://ammsband.org)). Those forms/documents/links include a student information sheet, volunteer opportunities, course syllabus, operations fees, uniform orders, assignments for your students, and much more. Please take time to read these items carefully and review the handbook in its entirety so that you may be fully informed about our program. Please see our AMMS Band website for information, resources, and forms. [www.ammsband.org](http://www.ammsband.org)

**Musically yours,**



**Autumn Smith  
Director of Bands  
Autrey Mill Middle School**

### MISSION STATEMENT:

The Autrey Mill Middle School band program will provide students with a comprehensive music education that fosters creativity, discipline, teamwork, and personal growth. Through engaging instruction, ensemble performance opportunities, and individualized support, the band program aims to cultivate a lifelong appreciation for music while nurturing the development of essential life skills. By instilling a sense of pride, dedication, and collaboration, we strive to empower students to become confident, expressive musicians who contribute positively to Autrey Mill Middle School community and beyond.

### INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

#### The student will:

- Develop an interest in and appreciation of instrumental music.
- Develop skills in reading notation and using musical vocabulary, leading to the development of a comprehensive understanding of the elements of music and their relationship.
- Develop correct habits in posture, wind or percussion techniques, and care and maintenance of a musical instrument.
- Develop discriminating listening and performing skills in tone, intonation, and ensemble blend and balance.
- Function as a musician through composing, performing, listening to, and evaluating musical works.
- Participate in performance of instrumental music utilizing a wide repertoire of music literature.
- Develop a positive director-student relationship and team-building relationships with peers.
- Become a lifetime musician and advocate of the arts.

#### The music program will enable students to:

- Develop their musical sensitivities and skills to their fullest potential.
- Use music as an outlet for creativity and self-expression.
- Participate enthusiastically in musical experiences within a group to achieve common goals.
- Be literate in the use of musical vocabulary and notation.
- Become aware of their musical heritage through the study of a variety of musical styles and genres.
- Be acquainted with the various career opportunities within the field of music.
- Develop skills of self-discipline, cooperation, organization, and responsibility needed for a lifetime of success.
- Develop self-esteem through individual, small group and whole band achievements and performances.
- Show PRIDE in accomplishment through band activities and individual awards.
- Work and study at 100% of their potential, both in band and in academic areas.

### COMMUNICATION

**Teacher-parent-student communication is essential to the success of the band program.** All communication will take place via email, Canvas (students), or the Band App. The teacher is responsible for communicating information in a timely manner to the students and parents. The students and parents are responsible for accessing their email, Canvas, or Band app accounts to ensure they are properly informed of assignments, events, discipline, or other items of importance.

The band director will respond to emails during school hours in the order that they are received. Please allow the band director 1-2 days for a response during the busy season (before/after concerts). Thank you for your understanding!

**Email:** [Smitha7@fultonschools.org](mailto:Smitha7@fultonschools.org)

**Band App:**



## GRADING POLICY

Grade reports are sent home at the end of each 4 ½ weeks and report cards are sent home at the end of each nine weeks. The majority of the overall grade will be determined by playing exams and performances although other factors will also be included in the grade such as homework, writing or listening assignments, and theory exercises.

Grades will be weighted as follows: (Examples of each category are provided but not limited to those listed.)

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>MAJOR</b> (<i>minimum of 2</i>)<br/>                 Performance Assessments<br/>                     Concerts, Performances, and Rehearsals (See calendar for details)<br/>                 Mastery of Learning Objectives, Competencies<br/>                 PASS-OFFS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technique Book Exercises</li> <li>• Music played in class</li> <li>• Scales, Rhythms, etc.</li> <li>• Live/Written/Audio/Video</li> </ul> | <p><b>50% (6<sup>th</sup> &amp; 7<sup>th</sup> Grades) / 55% (8<sup>th</sup> Grade HS Course)</b></p> |
| <p><b>MINOR</b> (<i>minimum of 2</i>)<br/>                 Participation / Class Activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quizzes (Written and Performing)</li> <li>2. Instrument Care &amp; Performance Preparation Class Discussions</li> <li>3. Participation, Preparation, and Progress</li> <li>4. Classwork</li> </ol>   | <p><b>40% (6<sup>th</sup> &amp; 7<sup>th</sup> Grades) / 35% (8<sup>th</sup> Grade HS Course)</b></p> |
| <p><b>PRACTICE</b> (<i>minimum of 2</i>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Homeroom practice</li> <li>2. Help session</li> <li>3. Fine Arts Activity Log</li> <li>4. Written Assignments</li> </ol>  | <p><b>10% (6<sup>th</sup> &amp; 7<sup>th</sup> Grades) / 10% (8<sup>th</sup> Grade HS Course)</b></p> |
| <p><b>Total</b></p>  | <p><b>100%</b></p>  |

**LATE WORK**

Students are expected to turn in all work on time. Assignments not turned in will be entered as a zero and "Missing" until the assignment is completed and turned in.

Assignments turned in late are subject to point deductions up to 25 points.

**1 day late: -10 pts.  
 2 days late: -20 pts.  
 3+ days late: -25 pts.**

Students who are absent will have an equal number of days as they were out to turn in late assignments.

The grading scale is the same for Band as for all other classes. The scale is as follows:

|                                     |                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| A (Mastered Skill).....             | 90-100            |
| B (Competent Skill).....            | 80-89             |
| C (Progressing Skill).....          | 70-79             |
| F (Inability to Perform Skill)..... | 0-69              |
| NHI.....                            | Not Handed In = 0 |

**TESTING/RECOVERY RULE:** If a student scores below a 75 on a MAJOR (written or playing), he/she may retake the test/quiz one time after recovery is completed to achieve a higher grade. The highest grade on a retake test is a 75. It is important that students learn how to play his/her part and the information presented in class.

## PARTICIPATION POLICY

Band is a **performance-based class**. All students are expected to play each day in band class. Students who do not play or who fail to bring required materials to class will quickly notice a decline in their grades.

**These are the top four excuses that I hear most often as reasons for not playing and my policy on each:**

1. **“My braces hurt.”** I completely understand that orthodontic appliances can sometimes be very painful. I will work with students on this if I do not feel that they are taking advantage of the situation. Students are to follow doctors’ instructions for easing the pain. One to two days is typically all that is needed for brace pain.
2. **“I forgot my instrument.”** Instruments are a VERY vital part of being in the band. In short, if you forget your instrument, you cannot play in class/rehearsal. If you do not play, you are not fully participating, and you are missing out on the day’s lesson and will receive a zero for class participation on that day. **A student who does not have his/her instrument on the day of a playing test will receive a zero on the test.**
3. **“I don’t feel well.”** In general, if you are well enough to be at school, you are well enough to participate in class. I realize this is not always the case. Students who are not well enough to play will be sent to the clinic. Incidents of this nature will be handled on an individual basis.
4. **“My instrument is in the shop.”** If a student’s instrument is in the shop, he/she must fill out the Classroom Preparation notebook stating the following information:
  - The name of the shop performing the repair.
  - The date the instrument was taken to the shop.
  - Estimated time in the shop.

## AT-HOME PRACTICE POLICY

Home practice is probably the most important ingredient for a music student's success! Much like an athlete needs to work out regularly to maintain their muscle mass, musicians are expected to practice at home **daily** to reinforce and further their learning. Practicing at home will be EVERY DAY's homework assignment. Daily practice will improve the music student's stamina, sound quality, and overall experience in the band. Daily practice by ALL musicians allows our band to learn challenging music faster. Students will always have something to practice, even if it is not their favorite assignment or piece of music. Students will be responsible for mastery of the objectives covered in class and should be included in the daily practice time.

**Attending daily class or before-school rehearsals is not a substitute for individual practice sessions.** Band members will receive credit for the important activity of home practice through video pass-offs, guided practice sessions, or rehearsal-check ins that reflect practice completed at home.

## REHEARSAL & CONCERT ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is **extremely** important for students to be in class, rehearsals, and performances. Our success depends upon the attendance and hard work of each band member. Each student is important, and we cannot have a successful program without him/her! As band director, I have taken extra care to ensure you have the band calendar well in advance so that you may plan to have your child in attendance at all rehearsals, concerts, and performances. **These are graded activities and take priority over other events, clubs, and after school activities.**

Absences must be pre-approved by the director AND the administration to avoid penalties:

### **Morning/Afternoon Rehearsals:**

- A note or email must be presented at least ONE DAY prior to a rehearsal.
- Notes received the day of the rehearsal or later may result in an unexcused absence.
- Students receiving two unexcused absences from rehearsals prior to a concert may not be allowed to participate in the performance.
- In addition, students that miss a dress rehearsal may not be allowed to perform.
- **Students who receive excessive unexcused absences will be referred to the administration for dismissal from the Autrey Mill band program.**

### **Performances:**

- Absences from a performance will be excused at the director's discretion.
- A note or email must be presented at least TWO WEEKS prior to a performance.
- Please refer to the AMMS Student handbook for the official policy on school attendance and what is considered an excused, an unexcused, and an approved absence.

Band is a co-curricular class, and attendance at ALL performances is expected. It is assumed that ALL students are in this class to **perform** and will be in attendance for ALL concerts. The purpose of concerts is to publicly demonstrate musical achievement of in-class preparation. ALL students must demonstrate the process and product for evaluation. Therefore, a grade will be given for concert participation. In the event a situation arises causing a student to miss a performance, the student will be expected to demonstrate his/her performance ability and knowledge of the literature as well as the other band members in that ensemble. A project assigned by the director may be completed for compensation of a missed performance for excused absences only.

## PERFORMANCE DRESS CODE:

As well as entertaining our audience and playing to the best of our ability, we also want to look great. To maintain a professional and cohesive look, students must wear the AMMS Band Uniform at all performances. Depending on the formality of the event, this uniform may vary.

**Formal Uniform:** White AMMS Band Polo (provided by AMMS), Black Dress Pants, Black Dress Shoes, Black Socks

**In a formal concert setting, the following items are unacceptable: Denim of any color, excessively high heels, distracting accessories, ill-fitting clothing, and tennis shoes.**

**Casual Uniform:** Blue “Peace, Love, Music” Shirt (provided by AMMS), Blue Jeans, Sneakers/tennis shoes

*Alternative clothing/accessories for religious or cultural reasons is always considered and available for students.*

## **AMMS BAND BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

### **Behavior:**

- Students should enter the class quietly and remain calm, attentive, and on task in and during band class.
- Students should only talk, play instruments, or get out of seats when given permission.
- Conduct yourself in a positive manner with a positive attitude about all aspects of the band.
- Listen attentively and refrain from speaking when others are speaking.
- Follow all directions perfectly **THE FIRST TIME!**
- Rehearsals, performances, and class time should be free of excessive noise, talking and miscellaneous sounds to create an atmosphere conducive to learning for all students.
- Restroom breaks should be taken between class periods during transitions. If it is an **emergency**, students should raise his/her hand with fingers crossed to indicate a request to go.
- Students should always demonstrate appropriate Respectful and Responsible behavior in the Band Room and in all areas of the AMMS campus.
- Use school appropriate language and gestures.
- General disrespect to a teacher, chaperone, or substitute teacher will not be tolerated.
- Food, drinks, gum, candy, etc. will not be permitted in the band room at any time. **NO GUM** is allowed at any band function.

### **Rehearsals/Supplies:**

- Be early for class, rehearsals, and performances. Five minutes early is on time. On time is late.
- All students should be in their seats ready to play within three minutes after the bell rings.
- All talking should cease and students should stand when the band director takes his/her place on the podium.
- You are responsible for your instrument, music, and any other necessary equipment or supplies. These should accompany you to all rehearsals and performances. Each student should have them every day. See supply list in handbook.

### **Instruments/Storage Areas:**

- Both individually owned and school owned instruments should be cleaned on a regular basis by the student who plays them. Each student must also assume responsibility for repairs for the instrument assigned to them. Information and directions on proper care for individual instruments may be obtained from the band director.
- Students are allowed to play **ONLY** their own instrument. This is due to the high replacement/repair cost of these instruments. School owned instruments are not to be tampered with. Always keep your equipment in good order. School owned instruments that are checked out to students are their responsibility. Damage or needed repairs are your responsibility. Be respectful of other peoples’ property. **If it is not yours, don’t touch it.**
- Store instruments properly in the proper areas. All instruments must be labeled with the student’s name, grade, homeroom, and cubby number.
- Theft, vandalism, or other criminal behavior in the storage room is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Any student who is caught engaging in theft or vandalism will face severe consequences.
- **Absolutely no food or lunch boxes should be kept in the storage room.**
- Storage areas are not social areas, get what you need and get to your seat.

### **Morning Practice Time:**

- Only students that are members of the Band will be allowed in the band room.
- Any band member wishing to come to the band room in the mornings or afternoons must have permission.
- Band members must get a Band Rehearsal Pass signed by their homeroom teacher before reporting to the band room.

- Band members must be actively practicing the entire time.
- Band members must clean up any chairs or stands they may have moved during the homeroom practice session.
- Band members must be mindful of younger/older students in the homeroom practice session and treat them with kindness and respect.
- Any band member who abuses this privilege will lose homeroom practice privileges for the rest of the quarter in addition to any consequences the director deems appropriate.

#### **Set-up/Clean-up:**

- At the beginning and end of each class, students should line up their chairs and stands so that it looks orderly.
- The band room & storage rooms are to be cleaned and straightened after each rehearsal and performance.
- All band students are responsible for helping set up and tear down equipment before and after all performances. Please plan to help stack chairs and stands for concerts.

#### **Parent Help:**

- Parents are asked to cooperate by picking up their student immediately after a rehearsal or performance. Know what time an activity ends and be there at that time. Please don't wait for a phone call to "come and get me."
- Parents will be called upon throughout the year to help with various tasks and events. Any assistance you can offer is greatly appreciated! 😊

#### **Authorized Areas:**

- When the director is not present, the band room office is OFF LIMITS.
- Only percussion students may enter the percussion section.
- The side room is off-limits to any student who does not have explicit permission to enter.
- The podium, keyboard, and sound equipment are off-limits to any student.
- In the morning, only band students dropping off their instruments may enter the band room. Please drop off your instrument and report to your homeroom class. Non-band students may not enter the band room at any time.
- At dismissal, only 7<sup>th</sup> period band students are permitted to linger in the band room. Other band students should grab their instrument and report to their dismissal location. Non-band students may not enter the band room at any time.

### **REMOVAL FROM THE BAND PROGRAM**

Band meets daily for the entire year. When a student joins band it is with the understanding that he/she is joining for the entire school year. Removal from the group can be done by one of the following methods:

- The student is not following through in his/her commitment to the group through daily participation, assignments, and performance attendance and it is reflected in his/her grade for 2 consecutive 9-week grading periods. The teacher may remove the student after a parent conference.
- The parent wishes the child to be removed from the group and state the desire in writing to the teacher. This can only occur at the **end of the year**. This request should be submitted to the director no later than **two full weeks before the conclusion of the year**.
- A student becomes a discipline problem and is so disruptive to the daily class routine that parental contact is necessary. Classroom discipline procedures will be followed as outlined in the student's agenda and Fulton County policies.

#### **Removal Procedure:**

1. Student informs the director of their desire to leave the band program.
2. Parent/Guardian sends the director a written notice of the support of their child's desire to leave the band program.
3. The director, parent/guardian, and student schedule a conference to discuss the schedule change.
4. After the conference, if the decision was made to remove the student from the program, the director will inform administration and the data clerk to ensure the schedule change takes effect when possible.

DETACH, SIGN, AND RETURN NO LATER THAN AUGUST 16<sup>TH</sup>

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I want to welcome you again to the AMMS Band family! Please sign and return this paper to acknowledge that you have read and understood the contents of the handbook. If you have any questions after having read the entirety of the handbook, please email me at [smitha7@fultonschools.org](mailto:smitha7@fultonschools.org). Thank you!

**Parent Agreement:**

I fully support my child’s excitement about music. I have read the handbook in its entirety and understand its contents. I have noted the attendance policy for performances and understand that my child has a responsibility to the band to attend and perform. I will do my best to assist my child in obtaining any materials that would be helpful to his/her musical experience. I understand that if I have any questions, I may contact Ms. Smith by email ([smitha7@fultonschools.org](mailto:smitha7@fultonschools.org)) or via the Band App (see page 2).

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Agreement:**

I have read the handbook in its entirety and understand its contents. By signing this document, I understand that I commit to the Autrey Mill Middle School Band for the 2024-2025 school year, and that it is my responsibility to attend all the performances that my ensemble is performing in, except in case of illness or family emergency, where I will have my adult notify the band director. It is my responsibility to attend all rehearsals, concerts, and lessons throughout the year. I will do my best to make music of the highest quality, demonstrate a positive attitude, and treat others with respect as a representative of the Autrey Mill Middle School Band.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

DETACH, SIGN, AND RETURN NO LATER THAN AUGUST 16<sup>TH</sup>