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*Festus Middle School*

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**2021-22**

# **Band Handbook**



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**Mr. Evans, Director**

**Mr. Lorenz, Assistant Director**

**Mrs. Sekelsky, HS Director of Bands**

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Festus Middle School  
1717 West Main  
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636.937.5417

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<http://www.festusbands.org/>

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Dear Band Students and Parents:

Thank you for your continued interest in and support of the Festus Band Program. We are particularly glad you have chosen to be a part of the fine tradition of excellence in Festus bands. As students, you have made a commitment of time and dedication. As teachers, we are committed to providing your student with the knowledge and skill to succeed continuing through high school and beyond. With a positive attitude and regular practice, I know you will find that your efforts in band will be rewarding.

As parents, you have also made a commitment to your child's participation in the band program. With support and encouragement, you can be a vital part of your child's success in band. Here are some suggestions of how you can better help your child in the band program.

1. Show an interest in the music study of your child.
2. Arrange a regular time for your child to practice, and find a quiet place for practicing to occur without interruptions.
3. Help your child practice as much as possible by counting, studying music texts, etc.
4. Help your child keep a daily record of practicing.
5. Help your child maintain his/her instrument properly by providing a safe place for keeping at home, keeping the instrument in good repair, and keeping current on needed instrument supplies.
6. Teach your child to be prepared and on time for rehearsals and performances.
7. Even though private study is not required, it is strongly recommended as an extension of the classroom.
8. Make faithful attendance at all activities important.
9. Encourage your child to play for others when the opportunity arises, in the home, at school, church, and in the community.
10. Discuss with the music teachers anything that will help them understand your child.
11. Visit rehearsals and lessons occasionally.
12. See that your child keeps current on all requirements for band class and help them remember to take their instrument to and from school each day.

If you have any questions concerning your child's progress and participation in band, do not hesitate to notify me. You may leave a message at the Intermediate, Middle or High School at the following numbers:

Intermediate School	937-4750
Middle School:	937-5417
High School:	937-5410

Thanks again for your support of the Festus Band Program!

Sincerely,

Scott Evans	Devin Lorenz
Director	Assistant Director
<a href="mailto:EvansScott@FestusEdu.com">EvansScott@FestusEdu.com</a>	<a href="mailto:LorenzDevin@FestusEdu.com">LorenzDevin@FestusEdu.com</a>

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## LAYING THE FOUNDATION

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For us to be successful, to establish and sustain a long tradition of excellence, we must strive to embed these values in the foundations of our programs:

1. The primary purpose of the Festus Band Program is to serve the educational and developmental needs of its members. All decisions concerning performances, contests, and trips must be made with this purpose at the forefront of our thinking. The total development of our band students must be of highest priority.
2. To be in band you must be enrolled in band. Your directors and school administration will be doing all in our power to make it possible for those truly interested in developing themselves through instrumental music to do so. Only students who have progressed through the instrumental music program or who can pass a special audition to prove their musical skills may enroll. We always welcome students from other schools to join us when they move to Festus.
3. Occasionally students wish to change to another instrument. Changes can only be made to help meet the instrumentation needs of our bands. An instrument change to help the band is a very positive way to contribute. Any change must first be approved by the directors.
4. Because we are dependent on each other in performance situations, and because great rehearsals make great bands, students and parents must place rehearsals and performances as a top priority on their personal calendars. Missing practices and performances is horrible on band morale, not to mention the devastating results on the level of performance we will achieve. The closer to perfect our attendance and punctuality is the better our band will be. Be responsible, communicate with your parents months in advance.
5. Your time is valuable. Our rehearsals will be designed to be efficient and fast-paced so we will not waste your valuable time. To help maximize the benefits of our rehearsal time, practice at home as often as possible.
6. Band is a performance oriented organization. Band is not where you go to find rest and relaxation. If you are looking for praise without production, visit a relative. If you are looking for a serious, high energy, intense experience – TAKE BAND.
7. If you cannot RESPECT YOURSELF, your fellow band members, your instructors, the school property and equipment, you are dangerous to yourself and to us. We will do our best to help you find help, but we cannot keep you in band.
8. FUN is what provides amusement, playful boisterous activity. Fun has an important place in all our lives. I have never known a healthy teenager who couldn't find plenty of fun! ENJOYMENT AND HAPPINESS is what we will be searching for in rehearsals and performances. ENJOYMENT AND HAPPINESS come through an investment of oneself in an enriching activity. Music, when done with the knowledge we have done our very best, will bring JOY! The thrill of working together as a group united toward a common goal can bring HAPPINESS! Take band for something deep, something lasting, something meaningful.

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## REQUIRED 2021-22 PERFORMANCE EVENTS

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<b>Thu.</b>	<b>Nov. 18</b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> &amp; 8<sup>th</sup> Band Concert</b>	<b>Festus R6 Campus</b>
Sat.	April	TBA	Junior High Festival	TBA
Fri	April	all day	Probable 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Trip	Six Flags
<b>Thu</b>	<b>April 21</b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Spring Band Concert</b>	<b>Festus R6 Campus</b>

If additional performances are scheduled during the school year, information will be sent out in advance to notify parents of these performances.

It is important that students and parents make arrangements to participate in these performances. Performing for parents is the best way to show off what the students learn in band! Appearance is an important part of performing. Please plan ahead so that students are able to wear nice, all black, clothes for the performance (in other words, *no jeans or tennis shoes*).

Please notify the band directors well in advance of a schedule conflict.

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## PRACTICE TIME

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Regular practice is essential for success in music. It is important to establish a practice routine, and that it take place in a quiet area free from distractions. Practice cards are helpful tools for evaluation of band progress. The following are policies that will promote acceptable levels of achievement:

1. Enter practice time in minutes each day on Charms (in browser or on app).
2. Practice time will be graded weekly and figured as part of the band grade each quarter.
3. If a child takes a 30 minute private lesson on the band instrument, 60 minutes practice time may be recorded for that day.
4. The student may count up to 60 minutes per week of piano practice if the child is taking piano lessons in addition to band.
5. Late entries – the maximum accepted will be 2 weeks back. They are due every Sunday in the app.
6. Students have the opportunity to earn exemption from weekly practice logs through successful completion of playing test check-offs: 30 tests for 7th Gr Band, 20 tests for 8th Gr.

The following grading scale will be used in determining weekly practice grades:

100 minutes +	A (full credit, extra credit in 30 minute increments)
90-99 minutes	A-
80-89 minutes	B
70-79 minutes	C
60-69 minutes	D
00-59 minutes	F

Do not hesitate to contact a director if you have any questions concerning your child's progress in band.

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## **REHEARSAL & CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS**

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Specific musical expectations are listed later in the handbook.

1. Each student must strive to demonstrate a sense of responsibility in the following areas:
  - A. Bringing all necessary items essential for performance to the performance site (instruments, music, accessories, mallets, sticks, etc.).
  - B. By keeping the music room, and storage areas in a clean state.
  - C. Showing respect for every musical instrument in the room.
  - D. Keeping your instrument in excellent playing condition at all times.
  - E. Representing your school, community, and band with only the best behavior and conduct on all band trips and performances inside and outside the community.
2. Because of the tens of thousands of dollars in musical instruments kept in the music room, we must provide for a common defense. Each of us must look out for the other by reporting any and all activity that might arouse suspicion in any student or adult.
3. Use only the best manners in the music room. Off-color remarks, foul language and the like are unacceptable.
4. Everyone must have a tag or label on their instrument case, labeled clearly with your name and school:
5. Do not bring food or drink into the instrumental music room.
6. The chalk board is for informational and instructional purposes. Please do not write on anything in the room except appropriate paper.
7. When you are running on “Festus Band Time” you arrive early to prepare for rehearsals. Minimum expectation is to be seated with your music, instrument and any other necessary equipment before rehearsal begins.
8. To cut down on confusion and to make it possible to hear, do not play after the director has stepped on the podium.
9. Do not chew gum in rehearsals or performances.
10. Do not handle or play an instrument that does not belong to you. This invites possible damage and transmission of germs.
11. If you cannot participate in band due to a medical/dental reason or instrument being repaired, you must have a note from home stating the reason and when you will be able to participate.
12. **TAKE INSTRUMENTS HOME AND PRACTICE REGULARLY.** The only way to improve is through regular practice and consistent practice.
13. It is impossible to produce your very best sound without correct playing posture. To assure the best possible posture the school has purchased posture chairs. However, to keep us mentally alert, when playing – sit up tall.
14. Be it a student conductor, your own band directors or a guest clinician, always show respect by stopping all conversation when the individual steps on the podium. Please do not have to be asked to stop talking.
15. To reach the high level of excellence we will be striving for, it is absolutely necessary to mark every detail on your music. Keep a pencil on your music stand ready for action. (Never use ink.)
16. Don’t waste rehearsal time. If another section’s problems are dominating the rehearsal, use the time to silently work through difficult sections of the music. In the early stages of a composition’s development, writing in rhythmic counting syllables, circling dynamics, routing endings, D.C. & D.S.

markings, and searching out key signature and accidental traps will benefit not only you, but all the other band members as well.

17. Exert control over yourself. Demand alertness, vitality, musical expression and a positive attitude from yourself.
18. **BOTTOM LINE!** Do nothing to take your attention or anyone else's attention away from the music or subject of the rehearsal. With everyone concentrating hard for 50 minutes every day, we can achieve all our goals!!

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## **MUSICAL EXPECTATIONS**

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The following musical expectations will be used as a yardstick for all our performing organizations. When your individual performances are evaluated this will be the criteria used:

1. Correct rhythms and notes.
2. Performing in phrases by breathing at phrase endings and following the natural nuance of the line.
3. Performing all the written articulations.
4. Performing all the written dynamics.
5. Playing in tune with yourself and with musicians you are performing with by adjusting flawed notes on your instrument.
6. Maintaining a steady tempo as you perform.
7. Improving your range, both ascending and descending.
8. Demonstrating your ability to balance musically with the other members of the ensemble.
9. Demonstrate musical term knowledge.
10. Exhibit knowledge of music form and theory.
11. **IMPROVE YOUR TONE QUALITY DURING THE COURSE OF THE YEAR.**
12. **STRIVE FOR MUSICALLY EXPRESSIVE PLAYING.**

**Creating a beautiful band sound  
requires a total daily effort  
on everyone's part.**

Festus is a proud, progressive community. Festus Middle School is a great school. The Festus Bands are significant representatives, helping nourish the proud reputation of the community and the schools. We will strive to be an exemplary example of music education for schools around the area and state. As your teachers, our goals are to provide for the elevation of your lives through musically artistic experiences, inspirational performances, and a structured approach to attaining excellence. In addition, the bands will provide unique opportunities to develop interpersonal relationship skills and to cultivate leadership potentialities. None of the goals can ever be realized without each of us striving to be Festus' finest representatives, unwilling to compromise in the quality of our behavior or the quality of our performances. It is self-evident that a quality program for you will never be realized if we are reduced to dealing with petty behavioral problems or the breaking of band or school rules, or worse, federal and state laws. For these reasons it is extremely important that every member of the FMS Band understands the responsibility that you automatically assume when you accept membership in our organization.

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## ATTENDANCE

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Attendance at all rehearsals, performances and competitions is expected. Excused absences are personal illness, death or emergency in the immediate family. It is important that the directors be notified prior to the absence for illness, emergency, death in the family, or situation approved by the directors.

This notification needs to be as soon as possible and always before the rehearsal or performance except when it is impossible because of an unforeseen situation. Basically, we ask for each member to use common courtesy and responsibility in these matters, so the effort of the other members can best be served. If an absence is necessary because of a conflict of activities, this must be discussed and decided on as early as possible, so it may be worked out with the best possible solution. If cases arise where there is a day or two of notification of a conflict, and it could have been earlier, it will be handled not only as a conflict, but also as a lack of responsibility on the member's actions. (Think and plan ahead to the best of your ability.)

<p><b>Actions Leading To Excellence:</b> <b>DEDICATION – PROGRESS – ACHIEVEMENT – ATTAINMENT</b></p>
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*You never know what you can do  
until you TRY!*

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## **GRADING POLICY**

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Assuming that everyone has a good attitude toward cooperation, initiative, dependability, and the desire to improve themselves and the band, grading is very positive and rewarding. The grade earned in band will consist of four important areas:

### **A. Evaluation of Performance**

Students are expected to show measurable progress with regard to the degree of proficiency they demonstrate on their particular instrument. The grade for this category reflects improvement (or lack thereof) of musical skills, related to individual performance. This portion of the grade will be determined in part through individual playing tests. If a test is missed because of an absence, sufficient time will be given to make-up the test, but it is the responsibility of the student to schedule this make up. Make up tests will not be allowed in cases of unexcused absences. Make-up tests will be allowed if an instrument is being repaired with a note from home, but not if the student fails to have their instrument the day of a test for any other reason.

A musical performance is the culmination of the materials presented in class and other performance techniques taught in class throughout the year. Students participating in band are learning individually, but a substantial part of band is learning how to work together as one large ensemble. Therefore, students will be required to attend all performances and will be given credit for each performance. An unexcused absence will result in a lower letter grade. There are three acceptable reasons for being excused from a performance: (a) unavoidable conflict, (b) student illness, and (c) emergency. **All absences require prior personal director notification**. Absences due to a student's work schedule, vacation, or non-school sport event are not considered excused.

### **B. Ensemble Contribution/Participation/Effort**

Students must be on time to rehearsals, performances, etc., with the right equipment and music. As part of the intended learning objectives, this aspect merits evaluation. Students are expected to show a willingness to learn and work together toward the goal of improving both individual and group skills. The grade for this category covers both musical skills, desire to improve those skills, and general demeanor.

Daily attendance in band is crucial because of rehearsal technique, group cohesiveness, ensemble playing, and the difficulty of arranging credible make up work. If a student is unable to play due to illness or medical reason, but is in class, they must have their music out and be actively involved in the rehearsal mentally. If a student is unable to play a second day in a row, they must bring a written excuse from the parent. If a student is unable to play three or more days, they must bring a written excuse from a physician. In any event of inability to play, the student must notify the director prior to the beginning of rehearsal. Make up work may be assigned by the teacher, however there can be no real substitute for class rehearsal time. Make up work may include rehearsal time after school with the director, written reports, or projects. Points may be deducted for unexcused absences, lack of participation, gum/candy chewing, tardiness, lack of instrument, equipment or music, position and posture, inattentiveness, talking, and disrespect. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated and will only hinder the child's development as well as the participation of other students. Conduct will be handled in the room and with the office, and reported to the parents.

The "A" student shows positive leadership and interest in their particular section; makes outstanding progress in self-improvement, makes strong, positive contributions to the band as a whole through participation in various groups, and shows personal integrity and character.

### **C. Practice Log**

Practice time will be collected each week and graded as outlined in this handbook (see page 3). In the case of an inability to play their instrument, exemptions will be made within reason. Make up work may include participation in the Accelerated Reader program in the library, written reports, or projects.

### **D. Written Assignments**

For cross-curricular writing support, notebooks will be used to answer board questions, write down instructions, music theory/history instruction, and a listening log of recordings for the class. Expect periodic completion grades for the notebook. Written quizzes are also included in this category.

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## EXPECTATIONS FOR EQUIPMENT CARE

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The Festus R-6 School District is not responsible for stolen or damaged instruments that are owned, rented, or borrowed by students. Although the school has instrument storage available, no storage space is 100% secure. Instrument storage rooms and practice rooms are not secure, and the school cannot be responsible for anything left in them, either during the school day or overnight. Instrumental students are expected to take their instruments home every night to practice. Parents are advised to make sure their homeowners or renters policies cover musical instruments, most do. Students must take proper care of instruments including not leaving them in classrooms, buses, hallways, etc., during the school day, weekends, or vacations. Under no circumstances will private instruments be housed at school during the summer.

Students need to take care not to leave instruments unattended in precarious positions (on music stands, which can be easily bumped, on chairs sticking out into aisles, and standing or lying on the floor where someone could knock them over, step on them or kick them). Instrument cases must not be used as chairs, foot rests, or bowling balls, as these uses can impair their ability to protect the instrument inside from damage, dirt, or moisture.

A musician playing a great instrument which is kept in perfect working order is in perfect condition. A musician playing a poor instrument or a great instrument which he/she fails to keep in perfect working condition does himself/herself and the listener a great disservice. Now let's define perfect working condition:

### Brass Instruments:

1. The inside of the instrument must be kept clean and free of germ cultures. Clean it thoroughly at least twice a year.
2. All the tuning slides must be free and easily moved.
3. The trombone slide and the valves on all the valved instruments must be working freely and quickly.
4. The mouthpiece must be cleaned often for the best response.
5. All major dents should be removed. Dents in the lead pipe will cause intonation problems.
6. Water key corks must not leak air or water.
7. The outside of the instrument should be kept clean. You may use a clean dry cloth to wipe it down.

### Woodwind Instruments:

1. The keys must be kept in adjustment. Keys too far from the instrument will cause tuning problems and technique problems.
2. Alternate fingering keys must be kept adjusted and responsive.
3. Worn pads must be replaced or they will cause tuning and tone problems
4. A special note about reeds:
  - a. Buy your reeds by the box if possible

- b. Have at least four good reeds in a reed case and alternate them often. When one splits, break in a new reed immediately, that way you will always have four good ones ready for performance.
- c. At the middle school level, clarinet players typically need at least a 2.5 (med soft) strength reed. Use a firm reed that plays in tune.
- d. Saxophone players should never use anything stronger than a 3 strength reed.
- e. NEVER use a chipped, split or worn out reed in our band.

Percussion Instruments:

- 1. Keep all equipment packed away properly and/or covered when not in use.
- 2. Worn, dented, or cut heads must be replaced for all instruments.
- 3. Use of the proper sticks is required for all instruments.
- 4. Never play with broken or split sticks.
- 5. Tune drum heads at least once a week outside class.
- 6. Always return all instruments and mallets back to their place of storage.

**A YEARLY TRIP TO THE INSTRUMENT REPAIR SHOP (DURING THE SUMMER) IS STRONGLY SUGGESTED TO KEEP INSTRUMENTS IN THEIR BEST PLAYING CONDITION. THIS KIND OF ROUTINE/PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE IS CRITICAL TO KEEPING THE INSTRUMENT IN PLAYING CONDITION.**

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## UNIFORMS

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**Concert Black Attire** – Everyone should be in a nice all-black top, black dress pants/skirts, black dress shoes. No flip flops or sneakers. All black - no other colors. School dress code applies to all attire. Example of appropriate clothing: Collared black dress shirt, black slacks, black socks, and black dress shoes.

To sum it up – the better we look, the better we feel when we perform. The better condition we keep our instrument in, the better we will feel about how we sound when we perform. The better we feel about how we look and sound when we perform, the better our performance will be.

### **ATTITUDE FOR SUCCESS:**

**Do Your Best**

**Do What Is Right**

**Treat Others As You Want To Be Treated**

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## EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

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### **Band Method Book**

All students are required to purchase a band book. Sixth grade students can get their book when they rent their instrument (they are also available at music stores that service band instruments). The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade books will be ordered and be available through the school when they are needed.

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade      Tradition of Excellence Bk 1 & 2**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Grade      Tradition of Excellence Bk 2 & 3**

### **Class Notebook**

All students are to have a *single subject wire-bound notebook* for band class (75-100 pgs). This notebook will be used to answer board questions, write down instructions, and for music theory and music history instruction. The notebooks may be collected and graded each quarter for content and completeness.

### **Instrumental Needs:**

#### **Flutes**

- tuning rod
- cleaning swab
- polishing cloth

#### **Oboes**

- cork grease
- water container
- two good reeds
- cleaning swab

#### **Clarinets & Saxophones**

- cork grease
- 4 good reeds at all times
- mouthpiece cap
- cleaning swabs
- neck strap (saxophones)
- cloth for cleaning mouthpiece
- reed guard

#### **Bassoons**

- cork grease
- water container
- cleaning swab
- seat strap
- 2 good reeds

#### **Brass**

- slide cream (trombones)
- valve oil (except trombones)
- polishing cloth
- cleaning snake
- mouthpiece brush

#### **Percussion**

- 2 pairs of snare drum sticks
- practice pad or snare for home
- 1 pair bell mallets
- 1 pair timpani mallets
- 1 small stick bag
- 2-4 pairs of yarn mallets

It is recommended that all students have a music stand (folding or wire) for home practice.

**It is essential that all students have the proper equipment for their instrument. If there are any questions concerning these lists do not hesitate to contact your child's director.**

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# Why Performing Ensembles Require Attendance

1. The opportunity to perform for a public audience is an integral part of the curriculum that cannot be taught, provided, or experienced during the school day. For those who are not present to perform, the education conditions presented in a performance cannot be effectively recreated at a future time. Having a student play the concert or music *after* the performance may measure a student's ability to play correct notes and rhythms, but is otherwise useless.

Missed completely is the measurement of the ability to control and develop skills such as balance, blend, intonation, adjustment to an audience, recovery from nervous anxiety, and adjustments to one's own and others' mistakes.

2. Performances are exams! This is the means with which we as music teachers measure and evaluate the group performance class. If we as music educators compromise this requirement, it merely serves to chip away at the importance of not only the individual but the worthiness of our subject area.

Teachers want each performance to be at its best; failure to insist on full attendance hampers the ability of the entire group. It also makes for the perception that is it only "extra-curricular" and not really that important. Extracurricular applies to those activities not taught during the school day ... such as clubs and sporting activities. Music ensembles, such as band and choir, are actually co-curricular and tied to a class that complements regular school curriculum.

3. In most regular classrooms, student's ability to perform, as well as the success of the overall class performance, is NOT usually damaged by a single student absence. In fact, a better student-teacher ratio exists if fewer students are in the classroom.

In music ensembles, however, a single absence impairs the other students' ability, morale, and group reputation. When only one person is missing it does affect balance, blend, intonation, and technical proficiency.

4. If a student is absent without cause and no penalty/punishment is given, the morale and dedication of other ensembles members will decrease. This, of course, leads to many other problems including more absenteeism.

# PLEASE SIGN & RETURN THIS PAGE TO YOUR BAND DIRECTOR BY THE END OF THE WEEK

## MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND HANDBOOK APPROVAL FORM

Please take the time to read the contents of the Middle School Band Handbook located at: [www.festusbands.org](http://www.festusbands.org) or on [www.CharmsOffice.com](http://www.CharmsOffice.com) (school code: FestusBands) and sign this form indicating an understanding of all expectations. You also indicate knowledge of all the required performances and understand the commitment. If you have any questions concerning this handbook do not hesitate to contact Mr. Evans. This form should be signed and returned to the band directors during the first full week of school.

I have read and understand the contents of this handbook.  
[www.festusbands.org](http://www.festusbands.org) or on [www.CharmsOffice.com](http://www.CharmsOffice.com) (school code: FestusBands)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Student Name

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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### REQUIRED 2021-22 PERFORMANCE EVENTS

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