

To the Ruth Musser Middle School Musician,

Welcome back to another exciting year at Ruth Musser Middle School! I am so glad you have elected to participate in the music program and know that you will find it to be a rewarding and worthwhile experience.

This year you will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of ensembles including Choir, Concert Band, Bulldog Band, and Percussion Ensemble. Each group participates in numerous performances throughout the school year, both on campus and in our community. Whichever ensemble(s) you elect to participate in it is important to remember that you will only receive as much as you put into the activity! Practicing everyday at home is vital to your success!

The parents of our musicians will have many opportunities to be involved with the music program and it is my hope that you will do so. If you are not already involved and would like to be, please contact Mr. Kotlewski and he will let you know how you may best help the music program. Support, patience and encouragement are important factors during this stage of your musician's development. It is very important to praise your student as you hear them learning and achieving.

All the information you will need about the instrumental music program is here in this handbook. Make sure you keep it in a safe place for later reference. Please take the time to read this handbook thoroughly and review it with you parents.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Kotlewski at (909) 980-1230 or by email at ckotlewski@csd.k12.ca.us. I look forward to a great year of making music together!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Kotlewski', written in a cursive style.

Chris Kotlewski

Music Director

Mission Statement

Through the study of music at Ruth Musser Middle School, each student will gain a lifelong appreciation and enjoyment of music while studying the fundamental skills necessary to perform on a musical instrument.

Description of Ensembles:

The music program at Musser Middle School is designed to be a three year program taking students who have never had musical training to a musician who is ready to perform at their best in high school. We also offer a variety of supplementary ensembles for students who are interested.

Music Appreciation

This ensemble is for all 5th grade students regardless of their prior musical experience. Students will learn to read, write, and perform music both alone and with others through the study of vocal music and the recorder. Students will work on writing simple compositions and participate in one performance during the school year. Students will be pulled from their P.E. class to participate in this activity. This class will prepare students to enter Beginning Band in 6th grade.

Beginning Band

This ensemble is for 6th grade students who have had no prior musical training and would like to learn a woodwind, brass or percussion instrument. They will use the Essential Elements 2000 band method and gain proficiency at the basic skills needed to perform on a musical instrument. This ensemble performs grade ½-1 music and will appear at several school concerts during the year.

Concert Band

This ensemble is for 7th grade students who have had one year performing on a musical instrument. They will study a variety of music representing many different genres and will perform at several concerts both on and off campus during the year. This class is designed to provide students with the extended skills required to perform more challenging music while preparing them for advancement to Wind Ensemble.

Wind Ensemble

This is the most advanced ensemble at Ruth Musser Middle School and is designed for 8th grade students who have had two or more years performing on a musical instrument. Musicians in this ensemble will perform music rated at a grade level 1.5-3 out of a possible 6 and will study music representing a wide variety of genres. Upon completion of the class students will have gained mastery of the skills required to perform successfully at the high school level. These students will have the opportunity to perform at many different venues in the local community.

Choir

This ensemble is open to any student interested in learning about singing in a choir. We will study a variety of choral styles and will be performing in several concerts throughout the school year. No prior musical experience is required.

Bulldog Band

This ensemble is open to any 7th or 8th grade student with at least one year of prior musical experience. This group is our school's "pep-band" and will perform at various pep-rallies, school functions and sporting events throughout the year. Students will perform a variety of popular and patriotic music and will work in conjunction with our school's cheerleaders. The goal of this group is to promote school pride while enjoying playing exciting music for a crowd!

Percussion Ensemble

This ensemble is open to any 7th or 8th grade student with at least one year of prior musical experience. Students will study the fundamental techniques required to perform on a marching percussion instrument and will participate in several concerts throughout the year. Students will also be introduced to the fundamentals necessary to be successful in the high school drumline. There is no cost associated with participating in this ensemble.

Rules:

1. *Be Respectful* – of your classmates, your teacher, the room, instruments, equipment and supplies.
2. *Be Responsible* – on time, with instrument, music, pencil and ready to learn.
3. *Be Courteous* – no profanity or hurtful comments will be tolerated.
4. *Be Smart!* – use your common sense and follow regular school rules.

Consequences

If a student chooses not to follow classroom or school rules, the following consequences may occur based on the severity and frequency of the behavior:

1. Verbal Warning
2. Stop Stamp
3. Behavior Essay Assigned
4. Call Home
5. Detention
6. Referral
7. Loss of privileges

Students who repeatedly choose to behave in a manner unbecoming of a Ruth Musser Music Student may be removed from the program.

Grades

Grades are based on the number of points a student earns throughout the trimester. These grades will be updated on Aeries every Friday and will reflect the student's current progress. There are five categories in which students may earn points and two which are based on work habits and citizenship:

1. Quizzes = 30% of the student's overall grade
2. Tests = 40% of the student's overall grade
3. Concerts = 15% of the students overall grade
4. Practice Logs = 10% of the student's overall grade
5. Class work/Homework = 5% of the student's overall grade
6. Work Habits = not factored into the student's academic grade
7. Citizenship = not factored into the student's academic grade

Quizzes

Quizzes may be written, electronic or performance based. Every other week students will be expected to play selected excerpts from their assigned scales, music book or concert music. Students will be graded using a rubric which will be provided to the students. Scale tests are Pass/Fail. These quizzes might be equated to a chapter quiz in a math class. Students will have an opportunity to retake any quiz for a better grade during the trimester. Retaking a quiz will never negatively affect a student's grade. Makeup times will be determined by Mr. Kotlewski

Tests

Tests may be written, electronic or performance based. Students will take a performance based test at least once during each trimester. Playing tests are larger in scope and could be equated to a Unit Test in a math class. The students will be given advance notice of any playing test. Students will have an opportunity to retake any test for a better grade during the trimester. Retaking a test will never negatively affect a student's grade. Makeup times will be determined by Mr. Kotlewski

Practice Logs

Every student will be issued a practice log at the beginning of each trimester. Beginning students are expected to practice a minimum of 30 minutes, 3 days per week. *Note: Practicing for 90 minutes on one day is not the same as practicing for 30 minutes on 3 separate days.* Concert Band and Wind Ensemble students should practice a minimum of 60 minutes, 3 days per week. These times are only a minimum; some students may require more practice to be prepared to play their assigned part. If more practice is needed, more practice is expected.

Classwork/Homework

Throughout the trimester students may be assigned written classwork/homework. Assignments are expected to be completed on time.

Concerts

Students are **REQUIRED** to attend all concerts. If a student must miss a concert due to illness or other emergency they will be required to complete a makeup assignment to be determined by Mr. Kotlewski. An excused absence is defined as an illness or family emergency. Any unexcused absence from a concert will result in a "0."

Work Habits

Students are expected to come to class ready to learn. Student should practice their assigned part and be prepared to perform it each day. Students should have the necessary supplies, equipment and music in class with them each day. Students should use class time effectively and maintain focus throughout the lesson. Students will receive a grade of O, S, N, or U on their progress reports and report cards.

Citizenship

Students who participate in the music program are representatives of our program and our school both on campus and in our community. Students are expected to display behavior which reflects positively on our program and school at all times. Students are expected to follow all classroom rules at all times. Students are expected to act in a manner which is conducive to the team; always supporting and encouraging fellow band members. Remember, citizenship is not only about how a student carries themselves when someone is watching but how they carry themselves when no one is watching. Students will receive a grade of O, S, N, or U on their progress reports and report cards.

Calendar

The music calendar available online at <http://ruthmussermusic.com> but *be aware that the dates may change due to factors outside Mr. Kotlewski's control.* Missing a concert because a student needs to complete homework or participate in other after-school activities (such as team sports) is not an example of an excused absence. Wind Ensemble students will be expected to attend mandatory after-school rehearsals once per month.

Music

Each student is issued music so that he or she may practice nightly. Students are expected to mark their music using only **pencil** during practice/rehearsals. Periodically Mr. Kotlewski will conduct folder checks looking for correct music, correct folder, sheet protectors and appropriate marks in the music made only in pencil.

Missing part problems must be dealt with before or after school, never during rehearsal. Students who come to class without the necessary music may receive a stop stamp in their binder.

Concert Band and Wind Ensemble students are expected to maintain a ½-inch three ring binder with page protectors for their music. The folder should be marked with the student's name and the name of their ensemble. Music and books may not be stored inside instrument cases.

Instrument Storage

1. Be advised: students who leave any instrument or other belongings in the music room or any storage space in the music room do so **at their own risk**. Mr. Kotlewski, Ruth Musser Middle School and Central School District cannot take any responsibility for damaged, lost or stolen items which were left in the music room.
2. Mr. Kotlewski will do his best to keep the storage closets closed and locked after school and over the weekend but *cannot guarantee the safety of any item left in the storage closets or music room.*
3. *Students who leave items in the music room accept all responsibility for these items.*
4. Only instruments/equipment may be stored in the closets. Music, backpacks, school books etc. must remain with the student throughout the day.
5. Any items left in the closets other than instruments/equipment will be removed by Mr. Kotlewski and placed in lost and found.

Concert Attire

When students participate in a public performance they are acting as representatives of Ruth Musser Middle School and the Ruth Musser Middle School Music Department. In order to present ourselves as professionally as possible and remove any visual distractions which might take away from this primarily aural experience, members of the Music Program are responsible for purchasing the following concert attire and wearing it at all performances both at school and in our community.

Gentlemen: A plain white formal dress shirt with buttons down the front and a collar (must be a dress shirt; polo shirts and T-shirts are not acceptable), black tie, black dress pants (jeans or Dickies are not acceptable), black socks, and ALL BLACK dress shoes.

Ladies: A plain white formal dress shirt (a T-shirt or Polo Shirt is not acceptable), black dress pants (jeans or Dickies are not acceptable), and ALL BLACK dress shoes. **No Skirts or Dresses Allowed!**

Students who do not come appropriately dressed will not perform. Financial assistance is available for those students who need it. Please advise Mr. Kotlewski by August 14, 2016 if your student needs financial assistance to purchase the required concert attire.

*All attire must conform to school dress code.

**"Black" refers to PLAIN black with no logo or other design on it.

***Families who need assistance should see Mr. Kotlewski as soon as possible.

Disclaimer

Mr. Kotlewski reserves the right to change any or all of the terms in this handbook as necessary to maintain an effective learning environment.