



**Brownell Middle School Bands**  
**Ascencion Solorsano Middle School Bands**  
**South Valley Middle School Bands**

**2020-2021**

**Student/Parent Handbook**

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# Welcome to Middle School Band!

We Believe:

- Everyone should have the opportunity to participate in music.
- Music is an integral part of a student's development, emotionally and intellectually.
- Band and Instrumental Music develop self-discipline, positive work habits, and group skills necessary for success in life.
- By achieving high quality standards in Band and Instrumental Music, these will transfer into all other areas of the students' lives.
- Band and Instrumental Music offer creative and aesthetic opportunities that provide for emotional development.
- Students' social skills, self-esteem, and positive attitudes are developed through Band and Instrumental Music.
- Music classes afford an emotional and expressive release during the school day.
- Band and Instrumental Music classes teach students to strive for excellence – a major goal of education.
- In order to achieve greatness, you have to **WANT** it.

**Remember:**

Everything you do in band is important,  
which makes YOU important!

Excellence is attained through this  
attitude, and it is this attitude that is the  
basis of the GUSD middle school bands!





Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Gilroy USD Middle School Band Programs! My name is Aaron Shemas, and I am the band director for Brownell and Ascencion Solorsano Middle Schools. This will be my ninth-year teaching middle school band. I am excited to get to know you, and I look forward to a fun and exciting school year!

This handbook is designed to give you a reference for the band program's policies and operations. Please read through it carefully, as a family, and keep it in your binder for reference throughout the year. **After you read the Handbook, you will need to sign the Handbook Agreement Form located on our band website (shared with Christopher High School), [www.christopherbands.com](http://www.christopherbands.com) – this will need to be completed by Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

As a member of the band program at our middle schools, you will have the opportunity to learn how to play an instrument at a high level and will develop important life skills along the way. It is not our goal as teachers to make professional musicians, but to instill in our students a love of music that lasts a lifetime. Recent studies also show that students who participate in music programs such as band become the strongest academic students and have measurably higher acceptance rates into colleges and universities.

The skills learned in our band program – perseverance, responsibility, integrity, dedication, effort, and self-discipline – will be reflected throughout their time in the program and in their future as adults. Students will also learn how to work as a team and make a positive contribution to the entire band. Learning an instrument is a rewarding experience, and we are honored to have your child as a part of the band this year!

If you have any questions about the program, please reach out to myself ([aaron.shemas@gilroyunified.org](mailto:aaron.shemas@gilroyunified.org)), Ms. Camp ([trena.camp@gilroyunified.org](mailto:trena.camp@gilroyunified.org)) or Mr. Bellon ([zebulon.bellon@gilroyunified.org](mailto:zebulon.bellon@gilroyunified.org)) via email.

Thank you,

Aaron Shemas, M.M.

Director of Bands

Brownell Middle School, Ascencion Solorsano Middle School

[www.christopherbands.com](http://www.christopherbands.com)

# Table Of Contents

1. Cover Page
2. What We Believe
3. Welcome Letter
4. Table of Contents
5. About The Directors
6. General Overview
7. Attendance Expectations
8. Behavior and Classroom Expectations/Procedures
9. Grading Procedures and Rubric
10. School-Owned Instruments & Equipment
11. A Parent's Guide to Purchasing or Renting a Band Instrument
  - a. General Information on Musical Instruments
  - b. Strongly Recommended BEGINNING Brands/Models
  - c. Buying or Renting an Instrument
  - d. Important Information On "Off-Brand" And Poor-Quality Instruments
  - e. Our Necessary Policy On Extremely Low-Quality Instruments
13. Materials Needed for Class
14. Donations & Fundraising
14. Performance Attire
14. Medical & Dental Appointments
15. Online Learning/COVID-19 Addendum
15. Link to Handbook Acknowledgement Form

## **About The Band Directors**

### **Aaron Shemas, M.M. - Director of Bands, Brownell & Ascencion Solorsano Middle Schools**

Aaron Shemas is a native of Ohio and graduate of Dublin-Coffman High School in the Columbus Metro. Prior to coming to Gilroy, Mr. Shemas taught in both New Mexico and Texas, producing highly successful ensembles. Bands under Mr. Shemas' direction have shown exponential growth and constantly earned superior ratings and "Sweepstakes" in the Texas UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Contest, and NMMEA Music Performance Assessments. An accomplished clarinetist, Mr. Shemas has also performed in orchestral, chamber, and wind ensembles, as well as a soloist, in various collegiate, community, and professional ensembles across the United States. His experiences include performances at the College Band Directors National Association Conferences, numerous music festivals, and the 2018 Midwest International Band & Orchestra Clinic in Chicago as part of The Woodlands Concert Band.

Mr. Shemas holds membership in the California Music Educators Association, the New Mexico Music Educators Association, the Texas Music Educators Association, the Texas Bandmasters Association, and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Music Fraternity. His primary teacher was Mr. Richie Hawley, Principal Clarinetist of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Professor of Clarinet at the Rice University Shepard School of Music. Mr. Shemas holds Bachelor of Music degrees in both Music Education and Clarinet Performance, as well as Master of Music Degree in Clarinet Performance from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

### **Trena Camp, B.M. – Director of Bands, South Valley Middle School**

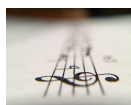
Ms. Camp is a native of Louisiana and graduate of Bossier High School. As a trumpet player and bassist her performance expertise is broad, including extensive experience in both classical and jazz, as well as numerous other genres. Prior to working coming to GUSD, Ms. Camp help positions with the Shreveport Symphony Orchestra, Band House, and worked with schools across Louisiana. In addition to her work with Christopher Bands, Ms. Camp serves as Director of Bands at South Valley Middle School. Ms. Camp holds membership in the National Association for Music Education, the California Music Educators Association, the Texas Music Educators Association, Sigma Alpha Iota Women's Music Fraternity. Ms. Camp holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Business from Northwestern State University.

### **Zebulon Bellon, M.M., D.M.A – ABD, Director of Bands, Christopher High School**

Zebulon M. Bellon is a native of Nevada and graduate of White Pine High School (Ely, NV). Prior to coming to Gilroy, Mr. Bellon taught high school band in Nevada, Idaho, and New Mexico, and at the university level in Louisiana and Texas. Mr. Bellon's notable performances include appearances with the Boston Brass, the Music for All Southern Festival, Big 12 Tournament and NCAA tournaments, multiple College Band Directors National Association Division Conferences, and the Midwest International Band & Orchestra Clinic in Chicago. He also participated in the production of studio recordings of "Urban Requiem" by Michael Colgrass and Avner Dorman's "Ellef Symphony."

Bands under Mr. Bellon's direction have received consistent superior ratings in both concert and marching, and accolades that include a multitude of sweepstakes awards, numerous students selected to all-state and all-northwest ensembles, the US Marine Corps Semper Fidelis Award, FBS bowl game appearances, appearances at major televised parades, and both placement and finals appearances at multiple USBands and Bands of America Regional Championships. As a high school director, Mr. Bellon previously worked with Drum Corps International to revive and host DCI Drums Along the Rockies, in Boise. He frequently serves as a clinician, adjudicator, and consultant with band programs across the country.

Mr. Bellon holds membership in the College Band Directors National Association, Texas Music Educators Association, National Association for Music Education, California Music Educators Association, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Music Fraternity, and Phi Kappa Phi Academic Honor Society. His primary teachers include Dr. Sarah McKoin, Dr. Jeffrey Mathews, Dr. A.G. McGrannahan III, Dr. Lauryn Salazar, R.Alan Sullivan, and Andrea Lenz. Mr. Bellon holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education from the University of Nevada and a Master of Music degree in Wind Conducting & Music Education from Northwestern State University. He is currently a candidate for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Wind Conducting at Texas Tech University.



## General Overview

This handbook addresses the procedures, policies, and expectations for students in our grade level bands – **Symphonic Band (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade)** and **Concert Band (6<sup>th</sup> Grade and any beginning 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders)**. Please read through this entire handbook and take note of the policies that affect each level, as there are differences between the levels.

Music is a performing art. Performance and the preparation for performance are essential to the art. Membership in a performing organization is a privilege. Each member of a performing organization has a responsibility to attend ALL rehearsals and ALL performances of the group. All students are vital to the success of the whole ensemble, and their presence is necessary to prepare for and execute a performance. Multiple unexcused absences from rehearsals and/or performances demonstrate a lack of dependability in accepting the responsibility of group membership.

The director will communicate with students and parents in a variety of ways. It will often be email and verbal, but the director will also send announcements to you in writing as far in advance of any obligation as possible. We have carefully constructed the calendar so that major band events, such as concerts, do not fall on school-sponsored athletic events (game days), district events, or major community events. Symphonic Band will develop a schedule for weekly section rehearsals that will minimize or eliminate conflicts with before and after-school practices, choir rehearsals, game days, and other school activities. The band directors and the school staff will work closely together to ensure that students may fully participate in school activities that they want to be a part. When conflicts arise, please understand the necessity of informing us of them as soon as possible so that we have the time to resolve or work around them in a timely manner.

What follows is a list of our expectations in terms of classroom interactions and performances.



## Attendance Expectations

- Students are expected to attend ALL rehearsals and ALL performances of the group in which they are a member. Failure to attend required rehearsals and/or performances is **not** acceptable unless it is an extreme emergency.
- Unlike assignments for core classes such as English and Math, it is not possible to make up a rehearsal or performance. This is because each individual's musical contribution is crucial to the success of the group. The band directors must approve all absences in advance if they are to be considered excused. In order for an absence to be considered for excuse, notice must be given according to the following timeline:
  - **Sectional rehearsal** – one school day prior
  - **Outside of school full rehearsal or concert** – two weeks prior to event
  - **Contest performance/participation** – two months prior to event
- An **excused absence** is one that the director has prior knowledge of and/or is based upon an acceptable reason (ex. illness, unforeseen family emergency). An **unexcused absence** is one that the director has no prior knowledge of and/or is based upon a reason that is unacceptable to the director.
- In the case of **ANY** absence (excused or unexcused), the student will be allowed to complete an alternate assignment that will be given by the director. For an excused absence, the student will have to complete an assignment no less than five pages in length. For an unexcused absence, the student will have to complete an assignment no less than ten pages in length.
- If a student has an unexcused absence from a rehearsal, it will result in a grade of zero for that rehearsal.
- If a student has an unexcused absence from a concert or contest performance, they will receive a zero. If a student has two unexcused absences from performances, they will be removed from band. There will not be an opportunity to make up concert grades in this instance.
- Illness that results in the student missing the school day is always excused. We do ask that you still communicate with us in a timely manner, especially if the illness will affect the student's ability to participate in a concert or contest.
- We do understand that very occasional instances can come up that could prevent your attendance at a band event. In such a case, be sure to communicate with the band directors in as timely a manner as you can, and when possible, we will always work with you!

## **Behavior and Classroom Expectations/Procedures**

To provide and protect an enjoyable and productive learning environment for all students, the following expectations must be adhered to, by all students, always:

1. **Enter the room quietly. Prepare for class as quickly as possible.**
2. **Be seated, with all needed materials by the tardy bell.**
3. **There is no talking, without permission, while the teachers are working.**
  - If you ever have a question – raise your hand silently and wait to be called upon.
4. **All musical sounds stop when the conductor or teacher stops.**
  - Any sound, musical or non-musical, which disrupts learning for others in the classroom will not be tolerated.
5. **Respect all people and property.**
  - Any form of disrespect towards staff or fellow peers will be dealt with quickly and without prejudice.
  - Your instrument belongs to you and no one else – do not let others handle your instrument. Percussionists are only allowed to handle percussion equipment.

While the expectations are shared throughout all GUSD Middle School Bands, consequences for expectations and general policies not followed will be given based on protocol established by each student's individual school site (Ascencion Solorsano, Brownell and South Valley).

Any student specific, alternative, or intermediate corrective action needed will be discussed with parents, students and campus administration.

Additionally, we ask that students refrain from bringing food, drinks, or gum into the classroom at any time. These can not only damage band instruments but pose a choking hazard to students while playing an instrument.





## Grading Procedures and Rubric

Students in BMS and ASMS bands will be graded accordingly:

- **Participation (40%):** Includes bringing necessary materials to class daily
- **Homework Grades (10%):** Includes practice records
- **Performance Grades (50%):** Includes concerts and playing tests

Students should expect to turn in a Practice Record every Friday and have at least one major performance grade every week to two weeks. The grading procedures for our Practice Records will be listed on the page itself.

Playing tests and chair tests will also occur for all band students. If a chair test is missed for an unexcused absence, the opportunity for chair placement will be lost. Below is a brief rubric of how points are determined in playing and chair tests:

Music Performance Grades	
Tone	30
Articulation	15
Technique	15
Rhythm & Pulse	15
Metronome	10
Dynamics	10

Students are welcome to re-attempt an assignment once to earn a higher grade.

## School-Owned Instruments and Equipment

While we **STRONGLY** encourage students to purchase or rent their own band instruments, and provide resources to assist with this, there are a limited number of used school instruments available to students on a first-come, first-serve basis. Our primary concern is that every student has the opportunity to experience band and we will do whatever it takes to ensure that this happens. Additionally, a link or information on purchases and rentals (such as rental nights through our partner vendor Music & Arts/Guitar Center) will be provided to those interested.

If using a school instrument, it is the responsibility of the student (and the financial responsibility of the parent) to return the instrument in the same condition that it was issued. Any damage or necessary repair must be immediately reported to a Band Director, regardless of the cause; failure to properly care for school instruments will void the privilege of using them. All equipment issued to your child is the property of Gilroy Unified School District and must be maintained in good operating condition. Damages caused by neglect will be the responsibility of the student and their parents. Fees assessed will either be in the amount of the new replacement cost of the item, or costs of repair of to the damaged equipment/instrument – whichever is needed.

# **A PARENT'S GUIDE TO PURCHASING OR RENTING A BAND INSTRUMENT**

## **GUSD Middle School Bands**

If you have never purchased a band instrument before, the whole process can be quite confusing and intimidating, particularly if you have never even played an instrument before. Instrument features, terminology, cost, and brands that are familiar only to musicians, are just some of the factors that contribute to the anxiety that many new buyers feel. If you factor in a music store—a place where many parents have never been, an item that they know little about, and a salesperson they know even less about, the whole thing can be quite overwhelming. If you are planning to purchase or rent a flute, clarinet, trumpet, or trombone, for your beginning band child, you should find the following information helpful. If you need to purchase or rent some other instrument for your 7-12<sup>th</sup> grade child, much of this information still applies, however a FULL recommended equipment list can found on the band website. Always contact a director if unsure about an instrument rental or purchase!!!

### **A. General Information On Musical Instruments:**

Band instruments are marketed in three types depending on the age and ability level of the student: (1) Beginner, (2) Intermediate, and (3) Professional. Most so-called “intermediate” grade instruments are actually “beginner” instruments with only a few modest cosmetic improvements such as better cases or silver-plating. None of these improvements really add much to the actual playing sound of the instrument, but do add to the cost. Examples of truly “intermediate” quality improvements (worth paying more money for) generally relate to woodwind instruments. These include features such as a solid silver head joint for a flute or clarinets with a body made of grenadilla wood rather than plastic/synthetic material. Beginner/Intermediate instruments are recommended for students in middle school and early high school. As the student advances in high school, they will generally want to invest in a professional-level instrument to meet the needs of their higher skill-level. These are the instruments that will allow students to play at a collegiate level and are a worthy investment as students prepare to submit college applications and prepare for scholarship auditions (even those who do not plan to major in music).

### **B. STRONGLY Recommended BEGINNING Brands/Models**

The following band instrument brands and models are the instruments that we personally recommend to our beginning band students, to ensure their greatest level of enjoyment and success in band. These will also be the most durable, cost-effective (in the long-run), and easily repaired, as well as the models that maintain the highest re-sell value. Only beginner brands appear here. (A list that would include professional instruments would include additional brand names – IE the full recommended equipment list for all grades located on our website.) The brands listed below have been tried and proven in many successful band programs, and are recommended by the majority of the strongest band programs across the United States. Also included is the recommended mouthpiece set-up, the estimated cost of renting or making payments on the instrument, and the student’s best options should they choose to switch to a “color” instrument after completing beginning band.

## **BEGINNING BAND MODELS (For Advanced Options See Full Recommended List On Band Website)**

### **FLUTES:**

- Strongly Recommended Models: Yamaha 222, Yamaha 262, Yamaha 362
- Estimated Monthly Rental or Purchase Payment: \$22-\$40
- Switch Over Options in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Oboe, Bassoon, Percussion
- Other Quality USED Beginner Brands: Yamaha, Gemeinhardt, Pearl, Armstrong, Buffet, Haynes Amadeus, Jupiter, Powell Sonaré, Pearl, Trevor James, Blessing, Selmer, Bundy II. Contact your director if you are not sure!

### **CLARINETS:**

- Strongly Recommended Models: Yamaha 200AD, Yamaha 250/255, Buffet B10, Buffet B12
- Mouthpiece: Vandoren 5RV Mouthpiece
- Rovner "Dark" Bb Clarinet Ligature
- Reeds: Vandoren Blue Box (Beginners should start at strength 2.5)
- Estimated Monthly Rental or Purchase Payment: \$25-\$40
- Switch Over Options in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Saxophone, Oboe, Bassoon, Percussion
- Other Quality USED Beginner Brands: Yamaha, Buffet, Leblanc, Noblet, Normandy, Vito, Selmer, Bundy II. Contact your director if you are not sure!

### **TRUMPETS:**

- Strongly Recommended Models: Yamaha 2330, Bach TR200, Bach TR300
- Mouthpiece: Vincent Bach 7C or Yamaha 7C
- Estimated Monthly Rental or Purchase Payment: \$25-\$40
- Switch Over Options in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: French Horn, Percussion
- Other Quality USED Beginner Brands: Yamaha, Bach, Conn, Getzen, Besson, King, Blessing, Holton, Jupiter, Kanstul. Contact your director if you are not sure!

### **TROMBONES:**

- Strongly Recommended Models: Any Bach or Yamaha Model
- Mouthpiece: Vincent Bach 6 ½ AL or Yamaha 6 ½ AL
- Estimated Monthly Rental or Purchase Payment: \$40 or less
- Switch Over Options in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Tuba, Euphonium, Baritone, Percussion
- Other Quality USED Beginner Brands: Yamaha, Bach, Conn, Getzen, Blessing, King, Holton, Jupiter. Contact your director if you are not sure!

## **3. Buying Or Renting An Instrument**

Most music stores have a variety of instrument rental plans and buyer options, that include rental and "rent-to-own" plans, where the amount paid in monthly accumulates and eventually the instrument becomes the property of the student. Some music stores will apply the entire amount paid on your child's first instrument to a more advanced intermediate or professional instrument when they are ready step-up. We generally recommend our partner vendor Music & Arts due to their low cost (beginning instruments starting at \$22) and the flexible options they provide to students, but many music stores sell quality equipment. To ensure that you get the most for your money and your child has the best experience possible, it is important that one of the directors inspect any used instrument, or any new instrument not found in the brands listed above. **Any instrument, new or used, whether it is purchased from a music store, online, or from an individual, should be purchased with the clear understanding that it may be returned, if found unsatisfactory.** Do not purchase an instrument without a return policy unless you are 100% sure you are buying a quality product that your child will be able to use in band. We are happy to help guide you if you are unsure.

#### **4. Important Information On “Off-Brand” And Poor-Quality Instruments:**

**(This includes ANY beginner instrument brand imported from Asia that is NOT included on the recommended lists above)**

In the last 10-15 years, many online and in-person retailers (including music stores, Amazon sellers, eBay sellers, and big-box department stores) have begun selling extremely low-quality instruments. Most (almost all) of these are imported from Asia and are non-functional after a few months of playing. These brands generally also do not have a service department, therefore, are not in a position to service or provide parts for what they sell. Replacement/repair parts for these instruments are almost non-existent and the quality of the materials used in their construction is highly suspect. Manufacturing techniques used to produce these inexpensive imports are far behind those of the companies that manufacture the recommended brands listed above. Some of these instruments can even present a safety concern for students because of their tendency to shatter, cause chemical reactions with students' skin/natural oils, and the possibility of low-quality needle springs popping off (which often rust within weeks of use).

It has been consistently observed by successful band directors across the country that students find these poor-quality instruments harder to play, nearly impossible to play in-tune, and severely lacking in durability. Sadly, often the end result of purchasing these instruments is the student quitting band, out of frustration. For this reason, the overwhelming majority of music teachers **STRONGLY** recommend against these instruments. The phrase “you get what you pay for” is extremely true concerning musical instruments. An instrument being new is absolutely no guarantee that it will play well - In fact, many low-quality imports are already broken/non-functional when they are purchased and students do not realize it because they are beginners. A used quality instrument will always be a better option than a brand new instrument of low quality.

Please do not misunderstand - This is not an indictment on all imported musical instruments. Many of the world's finest musical instruments are imported, including some that are our list of recommended brands (Yamaha being our top recommendation). The difference is that these recommended companies, Yamaha in particular, adhere to very high industry standards and produce instruments that are functional, durable, re-sellable, and above all, repairable. This ensures that your student is successful and your investment remains intact.

## **5. Our Necessary Policy On Extremely Low-Quality Instruments:** **(For The Safety And Success Of ALL Of Our Students)**

Finally – It is important that parents know that, to ensure the success and safety of the entire band class, these low-quality instruments **WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE USED IN OUR BAND PROGRAMS**. This is primarily because they cause rehearsals to slow, stop, and become unproductive every time they break or fail to play. When an instrument becomes non-functional, we must take class time to stop and assess the issue while the rest of the class (often over 50 students) sits and waits. It is the only way we can discover if the issue resides with the student themselves or their instrument. In a short, 45-minute band period, this can quickly derail an entire lesson. Additionally, these instruments simply do not play in-tune, no matter how skilled the player is. This makes it impossible for us to adequately teach concepts like tonal center, ensemble pitch, blend, balance, and intonation – all part of the curriculum and state standards by which we and our students are assessed. The issues with these instruments ultimately affect instructional and rehearsal time, as well as enjoyment for ALL students in the class. This time could be better used teaching and making music!

If a student brings an extremely low-quality instrument (as determined by the directors) to class, even a brand new one, they will simply be asked to leave it at home and play on a more functional district-owned instrument instead. Ultimately is a matter of pedagogy, safety, instructional time, and progress that affects all students in the class, which is the reason for the policy.

### **Materials Needed for Class**

All students in the BMS and ASMS Band Programs will need to be prepared for class every day. This is done in several ways. First and foremost, come to class having practiced your part or assignment adequately so that you will make a positive contribution to the ensemble and make individual improvement. Staying on top of your own assignments in band will help you improve on your instrument and will help the ensemble be successful!

In addition to the above, here are materials that you will need every day:

1. A positive, “I want to learn” attitude
2. Pencil with an eraser
3. A black band binder with pockets (sheet music and method books will be provided)
4. Instrument in good playing condition and any needed accessories (valve oil, slide grease, slide spray bottle, reeds, etc.)
5. Percussionists will always have (and use) their own assigned sticks/mallets that they will keep in their personal stick bag (have a name tag on your stick bag and your name on all your sticks/mallets)

## Donations and Fundraising

Band is expensive, and having a basic budget allows us to repair equipment, purchase new equipment, buy music, bring in professional clinicians to work with our bands, and provide fun experiences for the students. We kindly ask that each band student make a “Fair-Share” donation of \$100 for their student’s participation in band. Checks should be made payable to “Brownell Middle School Band,” “Ascencion Solorsano Middle School Band,” or “South Valley Middle School Band,” and can be dropped off at or mailed directly to the school site. These donations will be the student’s “fair share” of what is needed to support and improve the entire band program and all students involved. While we hope that every family will contribute a donation, we understand that not all are able to do so. All students are treated equally, and students will NEVER be denied participation in band due to lack of a contribution.

Band fundraisers will be held periodically. This is another way in which special band activities are paid for. Encouraging your child to participate is appreciated by all band members. We will have sales of certain items (i.e. candy, pizza, etc.) to help with the costs of the band program. Event-based and virtual fundraisers may also be held in compliance with all district policies.

## Performance Attire

For all formal public performances, **Varsity Symphonic and JV Concert/Beginning Band** students of the GUSD Middle School Bands will need to wear solid black dress pants (NO jeans) and a solid black button up dress shirt, along with long black socks with black dress shoes or close-toed dress shoes with black dresses. Solid black means solid black – no accents or combinations of gray, white, silver, etc. – Black only. Students should let the directors know immediately if they need assistance acquiring these items. ***Students in inappropriate attire will not be allowed to perform with the band and will receive a grade of zero for that performance.***

## Medical and Dental Appointments

Please schedule dentist, doctor, and orthodontist visits for times other than band class, sectional rehearsal, or a performance. Because of the group dynamic involved with band membership, all students need to attend all rehearsals and performances. When someone is missing, the group is incomplete, and they miss out in contributing their own part. We do recognize, however, that there are situations where this is impossible or unavoidable, such as an emergency.

**Regarding braces and orthodontia** – Woodwind and brass players, if there are plans (even if only a consideration) for braces, please be mindful of the timing involved in getting them. Braces are a fact of life for many students, and should you get braces, you will continue to be successful after the first week or so of getting them. It takes time to get used to them. For this reason, we ask that you kindly consider not getting them put on or removed close to performances (particularly spring contests and festivals). Please inform us of your early intention to get braces (or remove them) so that you have adequate time to adjust to your “new” mouth. There is never a perfect time to get braces put on or taken off, but some times are worse than others

## Online Learning “Addendum”

We understand that with the ongoing pandemic, we will be learning in an online environment this year; something that poses a unique challenge. During the online classes, it is important that:

- The student’s microphone is turned off unless otherwise asked,
- That we can see your child over video camera playing their instrument. For your child to experience success, they will be taught to sit with correct posture, the correct “face” for their instrument, and where their hands should go. It is critical that the band directors can monitor and encourage good fundamental habits, so that playing their instrument can be easy and enjoyable, rather than difficult and stressful.

All class expectations mentioned above are in full effect during online learning and will be followed. Additionally, all existing and new GUSD procedures will always be followed, as they are directed. We appreciate your flexibility in this environment that is fluid and ever changing.

Thank you for reading through the BMS and ASMS Band Handbook. If you have any questions about this document, please do not hesitate to reach out to the directors. To find a list of the band performances this year, please visit [www.christopherbands.com](http://www.christopherbands.com).

**\*\*\*Please remember to fill out the Handbook Acknowledgement Form, which is located on the Christopher Bands website. The link to the form is [here](#).**