

# Welcome to the Alston Ridge Elementary School Band!



It is our pleasure to welcome you to the Alston Ridge Elementary School band! We thank you for choosing to be a part of our band, and look forward to making music with you this year.

As a member of the Alston Ridge Band, you have chosen to embark on a rewarding journey with a fine group of people. Our band isn't just something to do after school; it's a team and a family. Students, band is a place where you can have fun, meet new friends, and build musical skills that you can enjoy for the rest of your life. Parents, band will give you the experience of a lifetime, too--the joy of enriching children's lives with music (whether you're musically inclined or not!)

You may find band to be very different from other music classes you've taken in the past. Since band is a team, it functions best when everyone--students, parents, and director--brings forth their best effort. In the Alston Ridge Band, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of behavior, and are committed to doing our very best every time we play.

This handbook is designed as a resource to answer your band-related questions throughout the school year. Please read and keep this handbook, and feel free to contact us if you need any band-related help or advice. Best wishes, and I look forward to sharing a year of wonderful musical experiences with you!

Your Band Directors,

Christina Thompson and Andrew Munger

## **our philosophy**

We believe that music is a powerful medium that can help students discover their unique capabilities, build positive relationships with their peers, and foster meaningful connections with the larger community. As directors, our job isn't just waving the baton--it's conducting ourselves and our band in a way that brings the benefits of music into the lives of our bandmembers and community neighbors.

### **As band directors, we are committed to:**

- Providing a safe place for students to grow musically
- Helping students develop a feeling of musical competency
- Guiding students toward creating their signature musical sound and style
- Fostering students' love of music and an appreciation for fellow musicians
- Helping students begin to establish their place in the global community of musicians
- Giving back to the community through music
- Cultivating meaningful partnerships among students, teachers, families, and community members

## what parents need to do

Parents are a vital part of children's music education. A child's success in music often depends on the level of support the parent gives. An encouraging comment about your child's practice, cheerful attendance at band concerts, and a positive attitude about your child's efforts can give your son or daughter the confidence to excel musically. Here are four things I ask of all Alston Ridge band parents:

- 1. Be informed.** Please read this handbook and all band correspondence. You'll not only be "in the know," but you'll also model responsibility and commitment to your child.
- 2. Support your child.** Make practice a part of your daily routine by setting up a special place and time for your child to play at home. Ask your child to play for you often, and show an interest in what your child is learning in band. Attend your child's concerts and let your encouragement flow freely!
- 3. Realize that greatness takes time.** Beginning musicians are not going to sound like the pros you hear on the radio. When listening to your child practice or perform, train yourself to focus on growth and progress. And please, NEVER joke about your child's sound--it hurts more than you'd think.
- 4. Support your directors.** Your band directors have made it their life's work to help kids through music. They are on your side, and is here to support and nurture your child's musical growth. Please keep this in mind in your interactions with the directors, and treat them with respect and kindness. Also, please follow the directors' policies and encourage your child to do the same. They are the result of years of successful teaching, and are in place to give you an excellent band experience.

## how a band kid should act

Although our band meets after school, the expectations for behavior are the same as they are during the school day. Band students are expected to practice good character traits at all rehearsals and performances.

Band students are typically some of the finest young people in the school. At all times, you should be able to say these things about yourself:

### **I Respect Myself.**

If I make a mistake on a song, I laugh it off and try again.  
I practice daily so I'm prepared for band rehearsal.  
I am a good example to those around me.

### **I Respect Others.**

I don't laugh at or make fun of other people's playing.  
I have kind words to say to my fellow band members at all times.  
I allow my band teacher to teach without interruptions.

### **I Respect Property.**

I take good care of my instrument and respect my bandmates' instruments.  
I hold my instrument securely so I don't drop it.  
I put my instrument together the way Ms. Thompson showed me.  
If I am not a percussionist, I don't touch the percussion equipment.

## **YOU HAVE A CHOICE!**

You are an important member of our band, and your actions will affect everyone else in our group. Your behavior will determine how much we learn and how well we play, and will also show the community what the Alston Ridge Band is all about. *When you choose your actions in band, always remember that you are choosing your consequences as well.* When you do your best, band class becomes energized with music-making excitement! However, poor behavior can ruin people's good impression of our band--and even worse, it can make learning music more difficult and less fun.

## **HOW MS. THOMPSON AND MR. MUNGER WILL HELP**

One of your directors' most important jobs is to help band students develop character traits to help them excel both in the band room and beyond. Throughout the year, Ms. Thompson and Mr. Munger will model productive behavior, establish helpful classroom routines, and provide boundaries and guidance to help students learn to make good behavior choices. Through group reflection and teacher-student meetings, behavior issues in the Alston Ridge Band will be used as opportunities to help students grow.

## **a typical band rehearsal**

Our band rehearses on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 4-5pm in the music room.

You will be dismissed to band at 3:45pm. Your first job when you get to the band room is to set up your instrument and music stand. Then, you're welcome to eat your snack in the hall, get water, and use the restroom. Be sure to rinse your mouth once you're done eating, so you don't blow food through your horn!

If you have a question before class, please feel free to come up and ask Ms. Thompson or Mr. Munger. During class, please raise your hand if you have a question.

In class, we'll warm up, count rhythms, work on pieces of music together, and learn new things. This is a great time to listen, ask questions, and be a good example to your fellow students.

Sometimes, your teacher may ask you or your section to play alone in class. This isn't to torture you; it's a way to make our music sound better. When we ask you to play solo, it helps other kids understand specific musical techniques--but it makes you a better musician, too!

When class ends, your teacher will dismiss you. Pack up carefully, and enjoy the rest of your day!

## **financial, attendance, and weather policies**

Because our band does not receive funding from WCPSS, we cover our operating expenses by charging a nonrefundable tuition fee for each band student. Tuition includes Virtual Band Camp, performances, sheet music, and twice-weekly rehearsals with a caring, professional music educator.

### **You have three payment options:**

- 1. Pay for the Year** - Pay an entire year of tuition (regularly \$480) and receive a \$20 discount.
- 2. Pay by the Quarter** - Pay four installments of \$120 each.
- 3. Pay by the Month** - Pay 11 monthly installments of \$45 each

Please make all checks payable to Summerglen Music.

Band tuition is figured based on rehearsals during which your child is tracked in. While a tuition payment may come due during trackout, you are still only paying for your child's tracked-in rehearsals.

Students are welcome to attend rehearsals during trackout free of charge.

Band Tuition does not cover the cost of purchasing an instrument or supplies for your child.

No portion of the Band Tuition will be refunded if your child is tardy or absent from a rehearsal or concert, or if your family decides to withdraw from band before the year is over. If your directors must cancel rehearsal, they will offer a make-up time before the end of the academic year.

If you must withdraw from band prior to June 20, you are eligible for a 100% refund of your tuition. If you withdraw between June 21-30, you will receive a 50% tuition refund. No refunds will be issued after July 1<sup>st</sup>. Instrument rental fees will be refunded/prorated based on the date the instrument is returned.

For families facing economic hardship, scholarships are available to defray the costs associated with participating in band. Scholarships are flexible, and can range from discounted tuition to a full scholarship including a loaner instrument depending on level of financial need. Please contact Ms. Thompson at [christina@summerglen-music.com](mailto:christina@summerglen-music.com) for more information.

If Wake County Schools are closed for inclement weather on a rehearsal or concert day, our band will not meet. If the schools operate on a delay, we will meet as scheduled. We are unable to offer make-up rehearsals due to inclement weather; however, you may create your own make-up day by attending rehearsal during trackout.

## **all about instruments**

### **Choosing an Instrument:**

Each spring, our band holds an Instrument Show & Tell for rising 3rd-5th grade students who are interested in band. Ms. Thompson will play each instrument and briefly discuss its characteristics and challenges. Then, students may try each instrument. By the end of Show & Tell, each student should have an idea of which instrument he or she wants to play in band. **Students should have their instrument by our first class. (If you buy/rent from the band, we will bring your child's instrument on the first day.)**

### **Obtaining an Instrument:**

#### **1. RENT OR PURCHASE THROUGH THE BAND.**

Our band offers name brand, precision-refurbished used instruments for rental or purchase. The rental fee is \$25 per month, and includes any maintenance needed due to regular wear and tear. You can rent for any duration of time, and you can also choose our Rent-to-Own option, which will apply 100% of your payments toward the payoff price of the instrument (generally \$450 for saxophones, \$250 for percussion, and \$350 for all others.)

If you would rather purchase an instrument outright, you can do so for a reduced price (generally \$375 for saxophones, \$200 for percussion, and \$250 for all others). If you start out renting, and pay the balance of the purchase price when your second rental payment is due, you will be eligible for the lower purchase price. All instruments purchased through the band come with a 1-year repair warranty.

#### **2. BORROW IT.**

If you know a friend or family member who has a band instrument they don't use, ask if your child can borrow it to use in our band. This can be an easy, low-cost way to obtain an instrument for your child. Make sure, though, to make an agreement with your friend and put all the details in writing; for example, who will pay for repairs, and when the instrument needs to be returned.

### 3. RENT OR PURCHASE FROM A STORE.

If you'd prefer to obtain a new instrument, we recommend Music & Arts and Chuck Levin's. Music & Arts is a local store that both sells and rents new instruments. Chuck Levin's is located in Washington, DC, but you can get great deals on new instruments by calling them. Contact info for both stores is listed below.

**\*\*\*WARNING!--DO NOT OBTAIN AN INSTRUMENT ONLINE!** The internet is crawling with low-quality, cheaply-made instruments that break easily and cause students enormous amounts of unnecessary frustration. We have had several that didn't even make it through one semester. Before you buy or rent an instrument online, please check with Ms. Thompson first. We do not want you to waste your money!

### Required Band Supplies:

The following supplies are needed to keep the instrument clean and functional, and to allow your child to learn to read music. All students should have their supplies by the first day of band.

<b>For flutes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Handkerchief (to clean flute)</li><li>• Cleaning rod</li><li>• <i>Standard of Excellence</i>, Book 1 for Flute</li><li>• Folding music stand</li></ul>	<b>For clarinets:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FOUR reeds: Vandoren or Rico, strength 2 or 2.5</li><li>• Swab</li><li>• Cork Grease</li><li>• <i>Standard of Excellence</i>, Book 1 for clarinet</li><li>• Folding music stand</li></ul>
<b>For saxophones:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FOUR reeds: Vandoren or Rico, strength 2 or 2.5</li><li>• Swab</li><li>• Neck strap</li><li>• <i>Standard of Excellence</i>, Book 1 for alto saxophone</li><li>• Folding music stand</li></ul>	<b>For percussion:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 percussion kit (containing bell set, drum pad, sticks, mallets, and music stand)</li><li>• <i>Standard of Excellence</i>, Book 1 for Drums &amp; Mallet Percussion</li></ul>
<b>For trumpets:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Valve oil</li><li>• Mouthpiece brush</li><li>• <i>Standard of Excellence</i>, Book 1 for Bb trumpet</li><li>• Folding music stand</li></ul>	<b>For trombones:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Slide oil or cream</li><li>• Mouthpiece brush</li><li>• <i>Standard of Excellence</i>, Book 1 for trombone (not T.C.)</li><li>• Folding music stand</li></ul>

### Where to Buy Your Supplies (and New Instruments):

**Music and Arts** – new instrument sales, rentals  
5950 Poyner Village Pkwy, Suite F101, Raleigh  
<http://www.musicandarts.com>  
(919) 872-1601

**Chuck Levin's (Washington, DC)** - new instrument sales  
<http://www.chucklevins.com/>  
(301) 946-8808 - Browse online, but call for the best price!

**2112 Percussion** – for all things percussion  
1003 E. Whitaker Mill. Rd, Raleigh  
<http://www.2112online.com/>  
(919) 833-0046

## A NOTE ON PERCUSSION

Percussion is a very popular instrument family, but often for the wrong reasons. Many children mistakenly think percussion is "easy" or that playing percussion is all about "rocking out" on drums. Many of these children are sorely disappointed when they discover that percussion is challenging, and requires that they learn more instruments than anyone else in the band. I strongly encourage parents of future percussionists to discuss the following with their children:

1. Percussion is more than just drums. You will start on bells, and will have to learn to read music just like everyone else. You will only play drums if you become good at bells first.
2. Percussion instruments are as difficult as every other instrument in the band.
3. You have to build a strong foundation to "rock out" successfully.

## Changing instruments:

Switching instruments early in one's musical career tends to make learning music more difficult and more time-consuming. Every instrument in the band is equally difficult to play, and each has its own set of problems for the player to solve. You will not be able to conquer these problems overnight—just like with a friend, you have to spend many years with your instrument to really know it. So, I ask students to commit to learning only ONE instrument while at Alston Ridge Elementary.

## all about concerts

Alston Ridge Band students will have many chances to perform throughout the year. We will perform at several school functions at Alston Ridge; plus, we'll play some exciting "gigs" around town. Our concert dates are listed online at <http://www.alstonridgeband.com>.

## CONCERT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Performances are an integral part of every student's band experience. Performances give students chances to celebrate their hard-earned musical skills and give back to the community with their talents. Therefore, attendance at concerts is **mandatory** for all members of the Alston Ridge Band. We will let students and parents know in advance of any additions or changes to the concert schedule, and will send reminders as concert dates draw nearer. If you cannot attend a concert for any reason, please notify Ms. Thompson *well* in advance (months and months ahead of time is best!)

## FAQ's

### Why does Ms. Thompson keep telling me I need to practice?

***Daily practice is vital to musical success, and is REQUIRED of all band students!*** Just as doing your math homework will make you better at math, practicing your instrument will make you a better musician. At each rehearsal, you will be assigned a piece, a scale, or several measures to practice at home. It's your job to practice learning your fingerings, counting your rhythms, and making your assignment sound a little bit better every day. Don't worry if you don't sound perfect! If you practice thoughtfully and do your very best, you've done your job. Sitting in band class will make you an OK musician. But practicing on your own is what makes you EXCELLENT, and is what makes band so fun. **Practice for 15 minutes a day--it works!**

### **Can I still play if I get braces?**

Yes, many people with braces are able to play in band. If your mouth hurts because the orthodontist just tightened your braces, I will allow you to refrain from playing in class. I will work with you on this as long as I feel you are not taking the situation for granted. Follow your doctor's instructions and gargle with warm salt water to help ease the pain.

### **What if I forget my instrument at home?**

If you forget your instrument (or necessities required to play your instrument, like reeds), it means you have to work even harder than normal in class that day. You're still responsible for participating and learning the material, even if your stuff is at home. Remember, it's not your director's or your parents' responsibility to bring your instrument to class--it's yours. Good musicians come prepared!

### **What if I can't make it to a concert?**

Please tell Ms. Thompson or Mr. Munger as soon as possible! The more advance notice you can give, the better. We work hard to prepare for our concerts. Band members who don't show up or cancel at the last minute let their band--and themselves--down.

### **What if my instrument breaks?**

In many cases, Ms. Thompson can fix minor problems on the spot; just show them to her **before or after class**. If Ms. T is unable to fix your instrument right away, she will be happy to take it to her shop and fix it there. Depending on the severity of the problem, an instrument repair can take from one day to over a week, and will incur a cost. Ms. Thompson strives to keep her repair prices reasonable, though, and will give you an accurate estimate before commencing work.

## **in closing...**

Students, in joining band, you have taken your first step onto the path that every great musician has walked. Band will be fun, but be aware that there will be some spots on your path that are difficult to pass. When things get tough, remember that you have the ability to keep practicing and beat any challenges that come your way. Also, your teachers and parents are here to help you become the best musician you can be.

To Parents: Young people need positive direction in their lives, and our community is in constant need of good music and happy news. Let's make the Alston Ridge Band a positive force that provides both! Working together, we can design a band that not only influences our students' lives for the better, but also allows them to influence the *world* for the better. I invite you to become active in our program. Get to know your director, encourage your children to practice, and come hear us play. This is your band, too.

Many thanks for your support and best wishes for a safe, happy, and successful school year!

### **Got questions?**

**Ms. Thompson:** [christina@summerglen-music.com](mailto:christina@summerglen-music.com)

**Mr. Munger:** [andrew@summerglen-music.com](mailto:andrew@summerglen-music.com)

**Or, visit the official Alston Ridge Band website!**  
<http://www.alstonridgeband.com>