

# Make Music!

**JAMES A. GARFIELD  
MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
2025-2026

## Student and Parent Band Handbook



Mr. Theo Cebulla  
Director

Mr. Tom Bartz  
Principal

I understand that parents are inundated with paperwork at the beginning of the year. Thank you for taking time to read this handbook.

Upon completion, please fill out the last page of this handbook, sign, and return by Friday, August 29, 2025. Please be sure to mark your calendars with these important events, as performances are an essential part of your child's experience and grade.

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Dear Band Parents,

As a member of the Garfield Middle School Band Program, your son or daughter is part of one of the school's most important and respected "teams." As with all other teams, the success of the GMS Bands will depend on the loyalty, cooperation, and dedication of each and every member.

This packet serves as a handbook for the GMS Band Program. It should help you understand the policies, guidelines, and expectations for its members, and is designed to co-exist with the policies and procedures of Garfield Middle School and the James A. Garfield Local School District.

Please take a few minutes to read through this packet with your son or daughter and return all forms with your signature.

Feel free to contact me before or after school (330) 527-4341. At other times you may leave a voice message, and I will return your call as soon as I am available. The best way to contact me is via email (tcebulla@jagschools.org), as I check it on a daily basis, or by text through our free "Remind" messaging service.

Looking forward to an outstanding year,

Mr. Theo Cebulla  
Band Director

## 1. GMS BAND PHILOSOPHY

The instrumental music program at Garfield Middle School is based on excellence. Members strive for excellence in group and individual performance. The utmost standard is held in our conduct and academic standings, as well as our leadership and reputation as a campus organization. The end result of our program is more than great musicians. We desire to produce well-rounded students who can apply the concepts of discipline, teamwork, and leadership to their lives for years to come.

## II. EXPECTATIONS

From Student:

- To be present and on time at all band performances.
- To maintain your instrument(s) in a good working condition.
- To be prepared for each rehearsal.
- To practice individually in addition to group rehearsals.
- To be respectful in every way possible.
- To give your best effort and participate.

From Director:

- To be present and on time.
- To be prepared for each rehearsal and performance.
- To be respectful in every way possible.
- To be professional.
- To have an open mind.
- To give my best effort each and every day.

## III. DISCIPLINE POLICY

Excellent discipline and order is expected at ALL times. In band we mainly learn in a large group setting with many opportunities for distraction. Self-discipline is the first step in reaching our potential as individuals and as a group.

Classroom Rules:

- Students will RESPECT ALL PEOPLE (including themselves) and ALL PROPERTY (including their own) at all times. Keep your hands, feet and objects to yourself.
- Be in your seat with all materials (instrument, book, and PENCIL) at designated start time.
- Rehearsals are for rehearsing, not talking. Please finger along silently when not actively playing
- Raise your hand and wait to be called on before speaking.
- No food, gum or drink (except bottled water) is permitted in the band room.

Possible Consequences:

- Warning
- Loss of points
- Parent contact
- Removal from class

### III. CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

Entering the band room	Get instrument and move quickly and QUIETLY to assigned seat.
Before Class	Get instrument and ALL materials ready. Assemble instrument, soak reeds, oil valves, sharpen pencil, etc.
Beginning of Class	When director stands next to the podium, the class is to get silent.
Announcements	Check board
Someone is speaking	Everyone is quiet and is listening
Asking a question	Raise your hand and wait to be called on
Responding to questions	Raise your hand and wait to be called on
Instrument Lockers	Keep neat and orderly
Percussion Instruments	DO NOT TOUCH UNLESS YOU ARE A PERCUSSIONIST
Listening to recordings	Everyone quiet and listening. RESPECT!!!
Water	Get before entering the band room
Restroom	Use restroom before band. See director for emergencies.
Directors' Office/Desk	Not permitted in this area without directors' permission
Fire Drill	Quietly line up, follow teacher to assigned area, remain as a class, stay quiet
Packing Up	WHEN TOLD TO DO SO: Disassemble instruments quickly and safely. Swab out and properly clean instrument, reeds, and mouth piece. Percussionists will store and cover all equipment—even if you did not play that particular instrument.
Leaving the band room	Quietly and Calmly exit the room. NO Running!
Class dismissal	The directors dismiss, NOT THE CLOCK!

### III. GRADING POLICY

Band is primarily a performance-based lab class based on accumulated points. Points will be earned by exhibiting correct Rehearsal and Performance Skills during class and MANDATORY performances. Points will be earned by exhibiting correct instrumental music fundamentals. Points will also be earned through various tests and quizzes. Several playing tests will be administered throughout the year. Improvement in playing can only happen when skills learned in class are reinforced at home. Written tests/quizzes will occasionally be given. **Attendance at all concerts and/or performances is MANDATORY**, and will be totaled into the grade average.

#### **Playing Tests, Quizzes & Scale Grades:**

Points are accumulated through scale check-offs, playing and written quizzes, and work sheets. Physical ailments which prevent a student from playing on a given day should be reported to the teacher before the start of class

#### **Rehearsal Skills:**

Grades based on rehearsal skills reflect a student's contribution to the class and his/her ability to listen and follow instructions. Each individual's efforts must be constructive. Disruptive behavior by one individual weakens the band.

- Is the student following director cues?
- Is the student playing at appropriate times?
- Is the student silently practicing while waiting for another section to rehearse?
- Is the student able to participate without disrupting the classroom?

Every student is expected to come to class prepared each day. The student must bring all necessary materials (i.e. instrument, music, pencil). Failure to bring these things will result in a student who is unprepared and unable to rehearse effectively.

#### **Attendance Grade:**

Performances act as major test grades. Here is where your child has the opportunity to perform with his/her peers and to showcase what they have learned in class. Because band is a team effort, it is ***crucial*** that your child is present and performs with the team at the designated concert/performance dates and times. Please make arrangements now to ensure that your child will be present at their concerts.

## IV. PRACTICE

Practice is a necessary element for success on any musical instrument. The best way to make practice times more enjoyable and productive is to get in a regular habit of practicing on a **daily basis**. Listen for improvement – don't just "put in your time." When your playing improves, all the time spent will have been worthwhile. Be in charge of your progress.

Concentrate on making a **GOOD SOUND**. It makes no difference how fast or loud you can play if you cannot do so with a tone that is enjoyable to listen to. **NEVER SACRIFICE ACCURACY FOR SPEED**. Spend the majority of time practicing the techniques and sections that are most difficult.

Home practice should consist of the following:

- A. Warm-up exercises: long tones, mouthpiece work, lip slurs, fingering exercises, etc.
- B. Scales needed for check-off
- C. Rhythm exercises or method book exercises
- D. Difficult passages from band music
- E. Solos
- F. Anything that is already learned and fun to play

**"THE MORE YOU PRACTICE – THE BETTER YOU GET –  
THE BETTER YOU GET – THE MORE YOU ENJOY IT!"**

For optimal success, students should expect to practice a minimum 20 of minutes a day. **ALL INSTRUMENTS MUST GO HOME OVER THE WEEKEND!**

## V. PRIVATE LESSONS

Private lessons are not required, but **STRONGLY** recommended as a way of achieving increased musical growth. Students should take advantage of private lessons because of the individualized assistance they will receive. Private instructors can be found at the Hiram College Department of Music, local music stores, and/or local community members. Please feel free to contact the director if you would like assistance in finding a qualified private instructor for your child.

## VI. SCHOOL OWNED INSTRUMENTS

If you are fortunate to have been entrusted with a school-owned instrument, do not forget the special responsibility that accompanies its use. Any damage to the instrument, its case, or other provided materials, due to student carelessness or abuse will be charged to the student(s) responsible. Those students whose behavior becomes problematic or who exhibit carelessness with the instrument/supplies, etc. will be denied further use of the instrument. Please help your child understand the importance of properly caring for these expensive school items.

**\*\*NOTE** – James A. Garfield Local School District charges a "rental/maintenance" fee for all school owned instruments. A district rental contract must be completed and turned-in to the director before any student may begin use of that particular instrument. If you qualify for free or reduced lunch the district rental fee may be discounted or waived completely. Please check with the director for current fees.

## VII. INSTRUMENT REPAIRS and SUPPLIES

If an instrument should need repair, please consult with the director. If I am unable to deal with the problem, please take it to the dealer from which the instrument was purchased or rented. School-owned instrument repairs should ALWAYS be handled through your director.

Supplies (reeds, valve oil, slide cream, sticks/mallets, cleaning cloth, etc.) are essential items for band class and can be obtained from a local music store. All reed players are to have at least THREE PLAYABLE reeds at all times. (Reed guards are excellent for preserving the longevity of your reeds.)

### Needed Supplies:

All	<b>Essential of Elements Book #2</b> <b>Folding wire music stand for home practice</b> <b>Combination Lock - Report Combination to Director</b>
Woodwinds	Reeds (no colored or flavored) Reed case Swab Cloth Cork Grease (except for flutes)
Brass	Mouthpiece Valve Oil and Slide Grease Trombones: Slide-O-Mix Rapid Comfort - for main slide
Percussion	Beginning Percussion Kit One Pair Snare Sticks: <u>Vic Firth, Innovative Percussion</u> One Pair Hard Plastic Xylo/Bell Mallets: <u>Mike Balter Basic or Innovative Percussion Fundamental</u> One Pair Timpani Mallets: <u>Vic Firth T1General</u> One Pair Yarn Mallets: Stick Bag

It is the student's responsibility to maintain his or her instrument and to keep the director informed of any problems with the instrument that affect the player's ability to participate fully.

When an instrument is damaged or in need of repair, they will often need to be sent to the repair shop. If the instrument can be repaired at school by the director, then it will be repaired at no charge. Music store representatives will come every week to pick up instruments to be fixed and they are usually returned the following week.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** If your instrument is sent to the shop, students are required to pay for the repair before they get their instrument back. You can request a price quote before work is done on the instrument. (If you have maintenance and repair coverage on your instrument, there will be no charge in most cases.) Repair costs should be paid before receiving instrument.

Many times a student has a very minor problem with their instrument. **DO NOT TRY TO FIX THESE PROBLEMS YOURSELF.** The director needs to handle these problems, and if they cannot fix it then it will need to be put in the shop. It is very important that parents/students do not try to fix instruments. Instruments are very delicate and we have tools designed specifically for repairing instruments.



## VIII. CONCERT DRESS

All middle school band members will wear their black band t-shirt and jeans. This attire will be worn at concerts and various events as specified by your director. Additional t-shirts may be purchased. Shirts are \$10. Please make checks out to Garfield Band Boosters. More than one shirt may be purchased for students, parents, and/or friends. All sizes are available. Cost may increase for 2XL or larger sizes.

## IX. Trips

A Garfield Band member represents his or her school, community, family, and self when on a trip. Appropriate individual and group conduct is a must.

As an individual you can sometimes be passed unnoticed. However, as a member of a group, the public will observe your every action with interest.

**TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR BAND!  
BE LOYAL AND DEDICATED TO YOUR BAND ACTIVITIES!  
HELP TO CONTINUE THE TRADITION -  
MAKE THE GARFIELD BANDS THE BEST!!!!**

## X. BRACES

Many students during the course of middle school need to get braces or have other orthodontic work done. Although sometimes adding a temporary challenge, students quickly adapt. Perseverance is a learned skill that is rewarded with success.

Because orthodontia can temporarily affect playing, please be mindful when scheduling appointments. For example, DO NOT get the braces put on less than TWO WEEKS before a concert. DO NOT get braces tightened less than TWO DAYS before a concert. Your attention to our schedule will ensure that your child is able to perform to the best of his/her ability on those important days.

## XI. ILLNESS

Sometimes, students assume that they cannot play an instrument if they have a cold or sore throat. On the contrary, for the most part, playing an instrument while slightly ill will not add to the symptoms. Each student is expected to play to the best of their ability unless experiencing severe pain or trouble breathing due to illness.

Students too sick for band are likely too sick for school and should stay home. If a student becomes ill at school, they will be sent to the office for evaluation and treatment.

## XII. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged and invited to support the band program. Parents can support the band by encouraging their child's musical growth. Take your child to concerts in the Cleveland, Akron, and Youngstown areas. Cleveland is host to a top-rated orchestra and several very fine performing ensembles at local Universities and Colleges. James A. Garfield High School has a very active music program. Accompanying your children to a concert or musical production will encourage them to stay active in the band program throughout their middle and high school years, and throughout life. Join the Garfield Band Booster program and help support music at Garfield!

Extra Credit may be given to students who bring a program from non-Garfield School concerts they attend. \*Please check with the director for approved concerts.

### **How Parents can HELP:**

The band does not function efficiently without the HELP of parents and friends of the band. Here are some ways you can help your child have a high quality experience in the band.

- Show an interest in their playing.
- Arrange a regular time and place for your child to practice.
- Find a quiet place where he/she can practice without interruption.
- Listen to performances of practice material, when asked to do so.
- Help the student keep a daily record of practicing.
- Come up with a reward system for daily practice. Please DO NOT use practicing as a punishment.
- Keep the instrument in good repair and keep at least three good reeds in the case; invest in a metronome (or just explore fun music apps) and other suggested supplies!
- Be extra careful with personal and school owned instruments. Repair costs are high!
- Teach your child to be prepared and on time to each rehearsal or lesson.
- Provide private lessons!
- Make faithful and punctual attendance at all band activities important.
- Keep the Handbook in a safe place and refer to it often—go over it with your child.
- Double-check that your student has their instrument and materials for each lesson.
- Attend booster meetings, concerts, and other events.
- Take student to cultural events in the area.
- Participate in a band fundraiser.
- Sign up for our free “Remind” messaging to stay informed.
- Become involved in your child's education!

**With everyone working together, we can have a successful program!!!**

### XIII. CALENDAR

2025-2026

Date	Time	Event	Location
September 26	5:00 P.M. Practice 7:00 P.M. Kickoff	Homecoming Football Game vs. Southeast *Wear your band t-shirt and jeans. Layer underneath for warmth preferably with black, gray, gold, or white.	GHS Stadium
Dec. 14	4:00 P.M.	“Sounds of the Season” Annual Winter Concert	Auditorium
May 17	2:00 P.M.	Annual District-Wide Spring Band Concert	High School Gym

**\*\*All dates are subject to change. Other dates may be added, but these dates will be provided at least two weeks in advance.**

### XIV. “REMIND” Messaging System

Go to the following link to sign up for FREE Remind Messaging to keep up to date on GMS Band info.

**[remind.com/join/b4bk6e](https://remind.com/join/b4bk6e)**

### XVI. ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS ONLINE

Essential Elements Online is available online for FREE through a code in each student’s method book. We will be creating accounts and using this technology as an effective and fun practice tool. It also contains videos that are helpful to both students and parents hoping to learn more. I wish it was around when I was a kid!



PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN TO SCHOOL BY  
Friday, August 29, 2025

**Be sure you have marked dates on your family calendars!**

**Concert Dates**

Friday, September 26, 2025 at 7:00 P.M.  
Sunday, December 14, 2025 at 4:00 P.M.  
Sunday, May 17, 2026 at 2:00 P.M.

Homecoming Football Game vs. Southeast  
Annual "Sounds of the Season" Winter Concert  
Annual District-Wide Band Concert

***I have read the GMS Band Handbook and am aware of the above performance dates.***

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

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**GMS Instrumental Music Member Information**

Student PRINTED Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Instrument \_\_\_\_\_ School Owned: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: Please Print \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (     )- \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Cell Phone (     )- \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Make, model and serial number of instrument used at school. **Any instrument stored at GMS must have the student's name clearly marked on the outside of the case!!!**

Make \_\_\_\_\_

Serial # \_\_\_\_\_

I have signed up for the Free "Remind" messaging service for GMS Bands.

\_\_\_\_\_ YES! \_\_\_\_\_ No ☹ Please do!