

St. Francis High School

2010-2011



Music Department Handbook

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MUSIC DEPARTMENT HANDBOOK

The Music Department handbook contains very important information for students who are involved in the music program at St. Francis High School. It is requested that all students and parents read through the entire handbook except for sections that do not pertain to them (for example, choir students do not have to read the instrument accessories section). Please do not just skim through the sections and disregard things that may seem obvious. Studying music takes a lot of discipline and commitment and most importantly is a TEAM effort. The teachers, students and parents all need to work together to make it successful. At the end of the handbook there is a contract for students and parents to sign and return to the Music Director. I expect that by signing it you have read all applicable sections *carefully* and that you agree to follow them throughout the entire year. Please also note the due date for returning it.

Music Department Website

The music department website has a lot of important information and is always available. In addition to containing an electronic version of this handbook it also has electronic versions of all course syllabi, lesson schedules and my teaching schedule. Perhaps most importantly it also hosts an online calendar. All major events for the entire music program (including those from Deer Creek and Willow Glen) will be entered in this calendar. Please do not rely on the district calendar or even the course syllabi alone for information about important dates! Because the online calendar can be changed it will always contain the most up-to-date information regarding all music events. Some events have already been changed from the district calendar and some changes may be made during the year, which will be different from the course syllabus. The calendar, however, will always reflect what the correct information is. Please plan on checking it often!

Main Page: <http://www.stfrancisschools.org/faculty/poestre/department.cfm>

Calendar: <http://www.stfrancisschools.org/faculty/poestre/calendar.cfm>

Classroom Expectations and Dress

All students in music classes will be expected to follow rules and regulations as noted in the SFHS Student Agenda. In addition, the instructor and students of each class will develop a classroom expectation list at the beginning of the year. All items on the classroom expectation list will be daily requirements of the instructor and the students and will serve as a portion of the attendance/participation grade.

All students will also be expected to dress appropriately in accordance with the school dress code. In addition to the dress code, a no gum chewing rule will be applicable for all music courses. All expectations will be strictly enforced.

Grading Scale

Each course has a specific breakdown of how the grade will be assessed. Below is the breakdown of the grading scale set by SFHS:

A (93+%)	A- (90-92%)	B+ (87-89%)
B (83-86%)	B- (80-82%)	C+ (77-79%)
C (73-76%)	C- (70-72%)	D+ (67-69%)
D (63-66%)	D- (60-62%)	F (59-%)

Absence Policy

Since music requires every student to be present it is simply imperative that students attend all required events! Music requires students to participate outside of the normal school day, however other than extreme illness or family emergencies there will be no excused absences. All dates are provided well in advance so there is no reason for students to be absent. In order for a student to be excused the last page of this handbook must be filed out and returned BY THE DUE DATE. All other absences will be marked as a zero with no chance for making it up.

Lessons

All students enrolled in Concert Band, Percussion Ensemble, Concert Choir or Chamber Choir are required to take lessons. Students will meet with the instructor on a regular basis either individually or in small groups during study hall, lunch or before or after school. Students will have individual work to have prepared for each lesson. The quality of performance of that work will determine the grade for that lesson (A–F). Materials for lessons can include music from class, solo/ensemble pieces, exercises, scales or other work.

Practicing

Most of the class periods for the large ensemble courses will be rehearsing music as a group. We need to work on group issues such as coming in and cutting off together, balancing the volume of different parts and tuning. It is not to learn pitches or rhythms. That fundamental work should primarily be learned at home, which means practicing! There is no set time that students will be required to practice; instead students will be required to practice as much as they need to in order to perform the music accurately. It is important to develop good practicing habits (including not practicing something incorrectly over and over) and to practice often. Please treat practicing seriously: Professional players practice for hours every day!

Personal Health

Since music is a performance based class it is imperative that every student maintain excellent personal health. This includes getting enough sleep! In the large ensemble courses every student plays an important role. Each person contributes sound to the overall music that is performed, so if even one person cannot perform due to illness (or any other reason) the sound will not be the same. If you are extremely ill you may be excused from performance, but a specific agreement must be worked out between the student and the director.

Concerts

Each large ensemble will perform at concerts and other public performances throughout the year. These performances are like semester exams in traditional classes; they are a culmination of the work that is done throughout the semester. Therefore it is extremely important for students to attend every performance. Students who are unable to attend a performance for any reason will have to make it up by an assignment determined by the Music Director. If that assignment is not completed the students' grade will be lowered accordingly.

Historically musical performances have been regarded as special events. They have a special etiquette and dress code. Students and their families are encouraged to continue this historic tradition. What this basically means is that everyone should be respectful and quiet at all times during the concert and should clap when appropriate. In addition everyone needs to remember that the focus and purpose of this event is to perform/listen to music. It is not time to do homework, text message, etc. Even though the activity may be very quiet or silent, it detracts from the music that is being performed. It is extremely disrespectful to the performers and defeats the point of doing the concert. Please simply come and enjoy the great music that we are doing here in St. Francis!

In addition to the concert etiquette students are required to adhere to a special dress code. Below are the generic guidelines for concert dress. The ensembles and director may choose to change some parts of the dress code for some concerts. Specific information will be sent home.

Men	Women
Black dress pants	Long black/white shirt/blouse
White long-sleeved dress shirt	Black dress pants or long black skirt
Dark tie	Black dress socks and shoes or natural colored hose with black dress shoes
Black socks	
Black dress shoes	

220 Busing Needs

220 students who will need a bus for a concert must inform the director of their need by the specified date, which is usually two weeks before a concert. A bus will not be guaranteed if the student makes the request after the deadline. Please keep in mind that the student has the option of being delivered to school from home OR being delivered home after the concert.

Instrument Rental

St. Francis High School does own some instruments and makes them available for rent. The school board assesses a fee of \$50 due at the beginning of the year to rent a school instrument. To check availability of school instruments and set up a contract for renting please contact the Music Director. Students are responsible for supplying their own accessories.

Instrument Accessories

All instruments require additional materials for performance and maintenance. The following is a list of required materials for each instrument. Please consult the Music Director with any questions or suggestions. All of these items can be purchased at local music stores.

Flutes: cleaning rod, cleaning rag, and polishing cloth

Oboes/Bassoons: cleaning swab, 3 good reeds, and cork grease

Clarinets: cleaning swab, 4 good reeds, cork grease, and mouthpiece guard

Saxophones: cleaning swab, 4 good reeds, cork grease, and mouthpiece guard

Trumpet/Horn/Euphonium/Tuba: valve oil, polishing cloth, mutes (trumpet)

Trombone: slide cream, polishing cloth, mutes

Percussion: one pair of good drum sticks (5A), practice pad

Practice Rooms

St. Francis High School houses four practice rooms in between the choir and band rooms (directly outside the music office). Each of these practice rooms is available to students for personal practice before and after school as well as during study hall on a first come first serve basis. Students who are using those rooms during their lesson time have priority. Some practice rooms have a piano, which is available for practicing (not plunking keys). In accordance with school policies these rooms remain locked throughout the day so students have to ask to have them opened.

Smart Music

SmartMusic is the name of a new software program that greatly enhances the way students practice music and also includes ways for students and teachers to assess musical performances. We are in the process of implementing this new software in our school district and will hopefully have it running during the course of this school year. We will provide more information as it becomes available.

Awards

There are a few awards (non financial) that are given out to seniors at the awards ceremony each year. These awards recognize students for their participation in the music program. These awards are selected by the music director.

Music Letter

Music letters for band or choir as well as chevrons are awarded each year. The policies concerning this process are currently being evaluated and changed in coordination with the music boosters. More specific information regarding letters and chevrons will be sent home during the point in the year when final decisions have been made. Please direct any questions/comments to the music director.

Solo/Ensemble Festival

Solo/Ensemble Festival is an event through WSMA (Wisconsin School Music Association) where students can perform a solo or ensemble piece (e.g. duet, woodwind trio, barbershop quartet, percussion ensemble, etc.) for a judge. Each student will receive the judge's evaluation sheet (listing what the judge heard and what he/she thought) and a medal if the student(s) play(s) very well. Music is divided up by class, which indicates the level of difficulty. If a student performs a Class A (the hardest difficulty) extremely well they can receive a 1* rating, which means that they can perform the piece again at State Competition. Students may also receive extra credit in band or choir for participating in this event. All students are encouraged to participate in this event. Playing in front of a judge is an excellent opportunity to develop musicianship, playing ability, and even preparing for a job interview. It also is beneficial to participate for students who plan on applying for honors groups or attending post-secondary schools. Applications for those groups often ask for honors received and earning these medals is one of the things they look for. In addition, all students will be working on solo pieces in their lessons, so it is not much extra work to perform those pieces for this festival.

Large Group Festival

The Wisconsin School Music Association (WSMA) requires that schools participate in a large group activity once every year to maintain membership. This can either be performing at a festival or hosting a clinic. Festivals are days that groups travel to a particular school and play a few pieces and then listen to another group. A clinic would involve the students performing during the school day (at St. Francis) and a judge/clinician would come into the school to critique the students as well as work with them. This festival espouses many of the same values as the Solo/Ensemble Festival, but in the context of a large ensemble. More information concerning this possible event will come later in the year.

Student Council

In previous years, the high school music program has had a student council with representatives from each class filling the positions of President, Vice President, Fundraising Coordinator (formerly Treasurer), and Secretary. These students meet regularly with the Music Director to discuss musical and non-musical aspects of the music program and help to make decisions. The student council may or may not exist this year depending on how the students vote.

Music Boosters

The St. Francis Music Boosters Association (SFMB) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization set up to support the music programs in the St. Francis School District. It is governed by the Music Directors of the St. Francis schools and some parents. It functions mainly to provide aid to the directors through volunteer workers and to raise money for the music programs. Each year the Music Boosters sponsors various fundraising activities. We need as much parent and student involvement as possible to make this group a success. Boosters like this one that have dedicated students and parents, have made extraordinary differences in their music programs and have led to many of the greatest music programs in the country. Since the Boosters is an organization of many people, it does not require a huge amount of extra effort to make great things happen. Big events or tasks can be broken down into small, simple things when we have many students and parents involved. Part of the handbook contract will ask for each student and parent's willingness to participate in this organization. It's not asking for any specific commitment, but rather that the directors can ask you if you're available to help or participate at the time it's needed. Please consider signing up and please also plan on attending any booster meetings. More information concerning the boosters will be given out soon. Please visit the website for more information:

<http://www.stfrancischools.org/faculty/poestre/boosters.cfm>

Handbook Contract – First Page

Please sign and return this form to the Music Director by **Friday, September 10th**.

*****SEE THE BACK SIDE REGARDING ABSENCES*****

READ THIS CAREFULLY!

We have read and understand the Music Department Handbook for St. Francis High School. We understand that we can download a copy of the handbook from the music website at any time or request a copy from the Music Director. We plan to follow everything that is written in this handbook and to contact the Music Director immediately with any questions, concerns or comments.

(Parents) Please check one of the following boxes:

- Yes, I would like to be a part of the Music Boosters.

The best way to contact me is: _____

- I am not interested in being in the Music Boosters at this time.

(Student Name) (Parent Name) (Date)

(Student Signature) (Parent Signature) (Date)

(for the director)
Received on _____ Initials _____

Handbook Contract - Last Page

Please fill out this form if there will be any events that the student cannot participate in during the 2010-2011 school year. ANY ABSENCES NOT LISTED ON THIS FORM WILL BE MARKED AS A ZERO WITHOUT ANY CHANCE TO MAKE UP THE GRADE!

Date _____ Event _____

Reason for being absent

Parent Signature: _____

Date _____ Event _____

Reason for being absent

Parent Signature: _____

Date _____ Event _____

Reason for being absent

Parent Signature: _____