

LVMS BANDS of DISTINCTION

September 11, 2017

Dear Students and Parents:

Welcome to the LaVenture Middle School Band Program for the 2017-2018 season! I am excited and honored to be teaching such fine musicians. The following outlines my personal philosophy for creating distinguished bands and developing the individual musicianship of each student. I love what I do, and am always available to talk with you regarding your ideas and concerns to further strengthen our program. Please feel free to call me at school or on my cell :360.630.0025 (before 8:30 pm).

EXPECTATIONS

Students will give and show their:

- ❖ **Determination**
- ❖ **Respect**
- ❖ **Integrity**
- ❖ **Personal Responsibility and Pride**

in rehearsal EVERY day.

These four elements, when practiced daily by students, and myself will create an atmosphere which allows the **freedom to learn** from mistakes, and the **courage** to take musical risks.

GRADING

1. Individual and Professional Responsibility

- ❖ Participating fully in daily rehearsals with **respect, determination, integrity and pride** and with **instrument in working order, and music folder with fundamentals book current repertoire, rehearsal calendar and a pencil.**
- ❖ **Daily Independent Practice:** Our strength as a band depends upon individual mastery, which can only be achieved by regular practice at home. Students will be *required to maintain weekly learning logs and demonstrate practice proficiency through assigned playing tests.*

STANDARD:

Five 15-20 minute practice sessions/week. Weekly goals will be clearly communicated through rehearsal calendars. Updates may also be found on the band website:

www.mvbands.org/laventure-current-events-and-assignments

Practice rooms are available from 6:30-7:15 am, and 2:00-2:30 pm daily for students unable to complete practice at home.

2. Quizzes and Tests

- ❖ Playing Tests will always be announced.
- ❖ If a student does not demonstrate mastery on a test, a personal appointment will be made with me to learn the material. **A student may re-take any test until mastery is achieved without penalty.**
- ❖ One of the joys of working with smaller bands is the opportunity it affords to develop fine individual musicianship. **Students may *always* schedule individual or section tutorials with me before or after school!**

3. Attendance at Performances

Attendance at formal concerts is REQUIRED of all students. *Extraordinary* family circumstances or *extraordinary* illnesses are the only excused absence, and I must be called in advance if at all possible in the event of such an absence. The students work *extremely* hard to prepare their music for a concert. Concerts are a celebration of this hard work, and a chance to show their families and the public the very best they have to offer. Each student's effort and part are essential to the performance of the entire group. To not be present for a concert takes away not only from the individual, but also from the experience of the entire group.

CONCERT DRESS

Professional appearance is important for fine bands. The required attire for concerts is:

- ❖ Solid black dress slacks ("Dockers" are fine but, please, no jeans), or solid black calf-length skirt for young ladies (we play on an elevated stage).
- ❖ Black dress shirt with a neck tie of choice for young men; dressy black shirt, blouse or sweater for young women (young woman may choose to wear a solid black, calf-length dress)
- ❖ Black dress shoes
- ❖ Black socks ☺ or neutral hose

My goal is to have our bands look professional, not to cause you great expense. Required concert dress remains the same for all bands throughout middle school, and, hopefully, the basics of black slacks and dress black shirt will carry over to other occasions.

2017 - 2018 CONCERT DATES Cadet, Concert and Symphonic Concert Bands, Jazz Ensemble

November 16, 2017 (Thursday) 7:00 p.m. Fall Debut Concert- *Cadet, Concert and Symphonic Bands, LaVenture Jazz and Marimba Ensembles (LaVenture)*

March 8, 2018 (Thursday) 7:00 p.m. Spring Showcase- *Cadet, Concert and Symphonic Bands and LaVenture Jazz and Marimba Ensembles (LaVenture)*

May 29, 2018 (Tuesday) 7:00 p.m. All-City Band Festival *Cadet, Concert, and Symphonic Bands and Jazz Ensemble (MVHS Fieldhouse)*

June 7, 2018 (Thursday) 7:00 p.m. Finale Concert *Cadet, Concert, and LaVenture Jazz and Marimba Ensembles (LaVenture)*

Additional Events (subject to change)

May 24-25, 2018 (Thurs.-Fri) Symphonic Band Tour to Washington State Capitol/Seattle *funding permitting!*
June 2 or 9, 2018 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. Jazz and Marimba at Mount Vernon Farmers' Market

Additional Jazz Ensemble performances to be scheduled.

Please scrutinize these dates. I try VERY hard to pick dates that do not conflict with other school functions, community sports activities, academic testing weeks, and the LaVenture theater production. If you do see a major conflict however, please let me know. Over the years, I have developed a good relationship with local coaches and youth activities leaders, and we always work out a solution! Also, middle school years are the orthodontia years! Orthodontics can pose a serious challenge to musicians. For the sake of minimizing your child's anxiety, please schedule orthodontic work carefully to avoid major changes within 2 weeks of a concert. Additionally, tightening braces on the day of, or the day before, a concert can have a major impact on the quality of performance.

I look forward to a year of hard work, great fun, and fine music! I welcome your feedback and ideas. It is a great privilege to teach band at LaVenture Middle School.

Thank You!

Amy E. McFeely

Please sign below and return to me by Friday, September 15, 2017.

YES!! We have shared all the information in this letter together, including band member expectations, grading procedures, performance attendance, and CONCERT DATES!

Student Signature _____

Parent Signature _____