

# CONESTOGA JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL BAND HANDBOOK 2020-2021

Cassi Vallis, Director

**Welcome to instrumental music at Conestoga! It's a pleasure to have you as part of this organization!**

This handbook outlines procedures and activities that make up the instrumental experience at Conestoga Jr./Sr. High School. It is provided to each band student so that they and their parents/guardians are aware of the expectations and goals of the band. This handbook is a guide to reasonable expectations of behavior, conduct, and contribution. This should answer any questions you might have about your instrumental music experience. All students and parents/guardians should fully read this handbook.

If you have any further questions or concerns about instrumental music policies, please do not hesitate to contact me at (402) 235-2271 or by email at [cvalis@conestogacougars.org](mailto:cvalis@conestogacougars.org)

## I. COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

This year is unlike any other we've experienced. All performances, rehearsals, can come to a halt at any moment depending on the decisions made by the National Association for Music Education and Conestoga Jr/Sr High School. In order to keep students, instructors, and families safe and healthy, necessary changes have been made to the structure and set-up of the music program:

1. The music department will follow the stated COVID-19 Protocols provided by Conestoga Jr/Sr High School.
2. Class and rehearsals will be held outside whenever possible to provide fresh air and more space to social distance.
3. The music room is a mask mandated room. Band students are to wear slitted masks (provided by the school) at all times.
4. Students will be expected to sanitize their instrument and rehearsal space at the conclusion of each rehearsal with school provided materials.
5. If at any time a student or parent has questions or concerns, do not hesitate to reach out to Mrs. Vallis

## II. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS AND PROCEDURES

Students in band receive fine arts credit toward graduation. The band grade is included in the grade point average. Students who treat the instrumental program as a, "study hall" or "Easy A" are NOT working toward our goals. These attitudes are inappropriate and unacceptable. We are here to create beautiful music, explore creativity, encourage self-expression, and promote teamwork. This will require consistent effort and a positive attitude on the part of every band member. The class expectations that govern band members are designed so that maximum learning can be achieved.

1. Students are expected to be on time. Tardies will be issued to students who are not in their assigned seat, with their instrument and music ready, at the sound of the bell.
2. Treat teachers, accompanists, substitute teachers, and other students with respect. Talking during class instruction and rehearsal is disruptive to the learning environment.
3. Food, gum, and drinks are not allowed in the classrooms. Water is permitted in a sealed container.
4. Bring any supplies that you may need with you.
5. Maintain respect for the music room, the instruments, and the equipment. This includes your music and folder. If they are damaged beyond normal wear, you will be required to pay for their replacement. All class materials must be stored at the end of each period. Keep the room clean and orderly. Do not use any equipment (piano, sound system, etc.) unless you have received permission from the director.

### **III. REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

The only way to succeed at anything is through repetition and constant practice. This is true in all academic core classes, athletics and MUSIC! Fine-tuning your instrument takes time and focused practice. Be patient, attentive, careful, and cooperative in observing these rehearsal expectations and procedures.

As in any other class, students' work habits will greatly affect their grade.

1. The ensemble will warm-up together as a group. I DO want you to play scales and tune your instrument BEFORE we do full scales and exercises together.
2. When the director is working with another section your job is to be studying your music. Other homework or visiting is not permitted.
3. At the end of each rehearsal, students are expected to put all instruments away, and return the room to any designated set-up per the director.
4. Cell Phones: **Off and out of sight.** Not to be out or used during rehearsal. They are not to be hidden on stands during rehearsal. During marching season, they do not come outside with us.
5. ALWAYS have your music, folder, and pencil.
6. Be conscious of GOOD POSTURE at all times.
7. Keep your EYES on the conductor during rehearsal.
8. LISTEN to the conductor at all times. Talking while the conductor is rehearsing or giving instructions is NEVER appropriate.
9. Take a MATURE ATTITUDE toward correction. Drama and bad attitudes will not be tolerated.
10. Rehearsals are not over until the director dismisses the band. Do not begin to put materials away until instructed to do so.

### **IV. DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Students who are unable or unwilling to follow classroom rules and procedures or persist in disruptive behavior will be subject to the following disciplinary sequence:

1. For most episodes of disruptive behavior or breach of rules, the student will receive a verbal warning.
2. Upon further disruptive behavior, the student will schedule a conference with Mrs. Vallis to review the expected behaviors listed in the handbook. Parents/guardians will be contacted.
3. After three instances of disruptive behavior, a conference will be held with Mrs. Vallis, Mr. Geise, said student, and parents/guardians. Together we will come to an understanding of expected behavior in the band classroom.

**\*\*Severe Clause:** A student who is constantly disrupting class, insubordinate, uses inappropriate language, is abusive or is in any way violent will be immediately referred to the office. Parents/guardians will be contacted. In extreme cases, whether the student's involvement in the instrumental program will continue, will be evaluated between Mrs. Vallis, Mr. Geise, and Dr. Johnsen.\*\*

## V. CHAIN OF COMMUNICATION

Open, honest, and respectful communication is essential to the success and positive experience for our students, parent(s)/guardian(s), and staff. The following list are examples of the types of appropriate communication:

1. Email: [cvalis@conestogacougars.org](mailto:cvalis@conestogacougars.org). I will respond to emails within 24 hours of the received message and within the hours of 7am-7pm.
2. Phone #: The Conestoga Jr./Sr. High School phone number is (402) 235-2271. My personal cell phone number is (402) 269-0304. This number should only be used in the case of emergencies and within the hours of 7am-7pm.
3. TeamApp and ParentSquare: All handouts of information will be sent out through these electronic forms of communication. Join TeamApp by searching "Conestoga Band" to receive notifications. All parents should be enrolled in ParentSquare through the school.

I encourage everyone to reach out with questions, comments, and/or concerns throughout the school year. When there is an incident of concern, the chain of communication is as follows:

- First conference: Parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or student conference with Mrs. Vallis. This can be done in person by scheduled meeting, or over email to discuss the incident of concern.
- Second conference: Parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or student conference with Mrs. Vallis and the Secondary Principal, Mr. Geise. This conference will be conducted in person at a previously scheduled meeting to discuss the incident of concert.
- Third conference: Parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or student conference with Mrs. Vallis, Mr. Geise, and Conestoga Superintendent, Dr. Beth Johnsen. This conference will be conducted in person at a previously scheduled meeting to discuss the incident of concert.

## VI. GRADING

Grading in band is different than in other subjects. Students will be graded in 4 areas:

1. Performances. 40% of total grade. School concerts, individual assessments, and uploaded recordings.
2. Projects. 25% of total grade. Compositions, music technology collaborations, created art.

3. Worksheets. 20% of total grade. Assessments over notation, rhythm, history, and vocabulary.
4. Rehearsals. 15% of total grade. This is your daily contribution to the class. 5 points are given per rehearsal, and a point will be taken away for each instance of lack of effort, disruptive behavior, loss of materials, failure to follow instructions, and removal from class.

## VII. PERFORMANCES

STUDENTS MUST ATTEND ALL CONCERTS IN THAT THEY ARE TO PERFORM AND REMAIN UNTIL THE END OF THE CONCERT. WORK IS NOT AN EXCUSED ABSENCE. Please take a copy of our schedule and hand it to your employer to avoid scheduling conflicts. If they have questions, they may contact me at the school. *A schedule of all concert/contest performances can be found on the Conestoga activities calendar. This link is a live update for all potential changes.* [https://www.nebraskacapitolconference.org/g5-bin/client.cgi?cwellOnly=1&G5statusflag=view&schoolname=&school\\_id=4875&G5button=13&G5genie=475&vw\\_schoolyear=1&vw\\_agl=20479-1-0,&manual\\_access=1](https://www.nebraskacapitolconference.org/g5-bin/client.cgi?cwellOnly=1&G5statusflag=view&schoolname=&school_id=4875&G5button=13&G5genie=475&vw_schoolyear=1&vw_agl=20479-1-0,&manual_access=1)

**Definition of an “EXCUSED ABSENCE”** - Illness, family-related emergencies, and planned family trips. A note or phone call from the parent/guardian must be submitted to the director well in advance for review and consultation with the student. In the case of sudden illness, a note, phone call, or email from the parent/guardian should accompany the student’s return.

**Definition of an “UNEXCUSED ABSENCE”** – Work, social activities, and non-school related activities.

### Concert Performance Alternative Assessment

If students are unable to attend a concert for whatever reason, students will complete an individual performance assessment. Students will sign up for one of the following times, and individually perform the music repertoire they would have performed at the concert. This policy gives students the opportunity to express their knowledge of the content matter and receive direct instruction and immediate feedback from the director. **Failure to complete an individual performance assessment will result in a zero percent.** Listed below are the individual performance assessment dates and times for each concert.

## IX. FEES

Students do not have any fees to enroll and participate in the instrumental program. The two types of fees that may come up throughout the year:

1. Purchase of reeds, oils, lyres, flip folders: Mrs. Vallis **does** stock the band room with band equipment and materials. If a student needs these materials immediately rather than purchasing them at a music store, they may purchase them from Mrs. Vallis. Students are expected to **pay** for any materials they use by the **end of the year**.
2. Honor Band involvement: If students so choose to audition for honor bands, all-state band, and conference bands there **will be a fee** regarding audition, enrollment, and purchase of music. Each fee is unique to each opportunity. Students and parents will be notified of these fees.

## **X. MARCHING BAND**

The first quarter of the school year is dedicated to combined 7-12<sup>th</sup> grade Marching Band. Marching Band is a physical activity that combines marching, coordination, discipline, leadership, musical context, storytelling through imagery, and expression into a performance. Marching Band prep for the school year begins **in the summer** with Band Camp. Families will receive a calendar of summer rehearsals and fair parades in May, so there is no reason to miss these opportunities to strengthen our band. Once the school year starts, we will be playing and marching in competitive shows. It is **unacceptable** to miss these performances. Many parades take place on Saturdays and overlap with sports. Communicate with Mrs. Vallis and we will make accommodations for you

## **XI. MARCHING BAND UNIFORM POLICY**

Uniforms are property of the school district and are cared for by the music department. We have some of the nicest uniforms available and taking care of them is key. Uniform Expectations: Properly hang up the uniform: pants must be folded on the crease and hung with NO wrinkles, jacket must be zipped. It is the student's sole responsibility to keep track of shoes, garment bags, hats, cape, sash, gloves, and plume. Hang up the uniform in the correct numbered spot with your NAME showing. If a student fails to put their uniform away or hang it up incorrectly, they will be put on "uniform duty" and will check and organize the uniform closets. If a student must leave a parade competition with an authorized parent, the **STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE** for finding a peer to take care of their uniform in their absence. If a student loses or damages a uniform beyond normal wear and tear, the student will be expected to pay to repair and or replace the uniform.

## **XII. PEP BAND**

Pep Band is part of the band experience. One of the functions of instrumental music in a high school setting is to create and support school pride in all activities. All band members 7-12 are required to be at pep band assignments. On each assigned pep band night, members are required to attend. As a collective ensemble there will be no more than two pep bands per week per the recommendations of the Nebraska State Bandmasters Association. This is done in an effort to not overwhelm or abuse the instrumental students within our school. Weekend pep bands will not be assigned unless it is a District Final or State Tournament. If a District Final or State Tournament pep band is announced, all members will participate.

## **XIII. CONCERT BAND**

Concert Band is designed to continue building students' performing skills through high quality literature and competition. The group will perform and compete at 3 school concerts, the Veteran's Day Program, and District Music Contest in April. Students will have the opportunity to audition for a number of honor bands throughout the year. These include, but are not limited to UNK, UNL Winter Winds, Hastings Honor Festival, Chadron Honor Festival, ECNC Honor Band, Wesleyan, and All-State.

#### XIV. CONCERT DRESS

**Marching Band:** All members will wear full band uniforms unless otherwise noted due to weather.

**Pep Band:** Students are to wear any Conestoga gear they own. There may be some events where they are asked to specifically wear their band camp or music t-shirt.

**Concert Band:** All members will wear concert black. Men must wear black dress shirt (tie optional but highly encouraged), black dress pants, black shoes (not tennis shoes) and black dress socks. Women must have black closed-toed shoes (no sandals or tennis shoes), black knee-length skirt or pant, and a black blouse, and minimal jewelry.

##### Winter Concert and May Concert

For the Winter Concert, students will be able to wear clothing that is Red, Green, Black, White, or an APPROPRIATE ugly festive sweater. For the May Concert, students are simply to wear nice dress clothes. Knee length dresses/shirts, dress blouses, sweaters, polos, shirt and tie, black dress pants, khaki pants, and dress shoes are a few of the examples. Students are encouraged to ask Mrs. Vallis if their concert attire is appropriate before the night of the concert.

##### All Members

Please avoid using perfume, cologne, and heavy hair products before concerts, as these can cause severe allergic reactions in a concert setting. Students who are not able to provide concert dress will need to visit with Mrs. Vallis prior to the performance. **Failure to abide by the concert dress policy will result in a percentage loss of grade.**

#### XVI. HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC LETTERS

A student must go above and beyond what is expected in class to earn a letter. At the beginning of the year, students will receive a list of all opportunities and point values toward achieving a letter for band. Mrs. Vallis is not responsible if you forget to submit a lettering opportunity. Absence from a concert will affect your ability to letter.

#### CONCLUSION

The performing arts have always been a vital part of our society. YOU have been given a very special talent. You now have the obligation and responsibility to use that talent for the betterment of our community, and for the development of yourself as an individual. The accomplishments of the Conestoga Band depend on each member of the organization. Even if just a few members do not cooperate fully, the band becomes an inefficient organization. It is our hope that each member of the band will assume an immediate obligation to do his or her part in making our year in the Conestoga Band family a memorable one for all.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Cassi Vallis  
Music Director  
Conestoga Jr./Sr. High School

**BAND CONTRACT 2020-2021**  
**DUE August 25, 2020**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT:**

I have read and understand the Conestoga Band Handbook governing my participation in the Conestoga Instrumental Program. I accept my personal responsibility and obligation to the Instrumental Program and I pledge my support to other members of this group in meeting their responsibilities.

**PARENT/GUARDIAN:**

I accept my responsibility in supporting and assisting my child in living up to the responsibilities and obligations as outlined. I understand that any questions about department procedures can be found in the Band Handbook and any further questions should be directed to Mrs. Vallis.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I have read the following handbook and understand all of its policies and expectations for this ensemble, and will abide by its rules and regulations.
  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I realize the importance of this group, and will follow all of the expectations and guidelines presented in this handbook.
  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I understand the repercussions, responsibilities, and alternative assessment that follow an excused **AND** unexcused absence from a performance.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please check the lines for the following statements, sign both student and parent/guardian and **return this page only** to Mrs. Vallis.