



Vista Heights

BAND

Better because we want to be

Band Handbook

Mr. Paul Lemen
Director of Bands



Vista Heights Middle School Bands

Better Because We Want to Be!

August 15, 2013

Dear Parents, Guardians and Students,

Welcome to a new and exciting year of music at Vista Heights! I trust you had an enjoyable summer and are looking forward to the upcoming school year. I take this opportunity to introduce myself and invite you to join me in engaging these great students in the excellent education they will be provided.

Enclosed you will find course descriptions, policies, procedures, and other important information regarding the Vista Heights Middle School Bands. Please take time to read this material, as the success of our bands depends upon each individual working toward the same goals.

Middle school is the paramount time to learn the important techniques and habits that will make a great performer. All of the ensembles are important to the instrumental music program, and every one has a special role in the school, as well as the community. Each student is vital as without all of us, none of us can perform to our highest level! Students will become prepared to enter the high school arena through their participation in the Vista Heights Middle School Bands.

Please sign and return the acknowledgement and order forms to me by **September 15th, 2013**.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at school: (801) 610-8770 ext. 128, or email plemen@alpinedistrict.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Lemen', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Paul Lemen
Director of Bands

Vista Heights Middle School is an equal opportunity school. It does not discriminate in provision of services due to race, color, religion or nation of origin.

Vista Heights Band

Course Description

Vista Heights Band is a fun, but rigorous class designed to help students learn the playing skills necessary to perform in the high school band. Students will learn playing skills, interpersonal skills, basic music theory and how to work together to attain a great performance. While a great deal of importance is placed on concert performance, the primary goals of the Vista Heights Band are to foster a love for music and prepare the students to continue their band experience in high school. The VHMS Band program consists of three performance levels:

- **Beginning Band:** This is for students with little to no performance experience on their instruments. This level is divided into three areas: woodwinds, brass and percussion. For woodwinds and brass, no musical experience is necessary. Percussion students should have two years of piano background and teacher permission in order to be in the class.
- **Concert Band (Intermediate):** This is primarily for 8th grade students and 7th graders that have had previous band experience. Students will continue to develop their musical skills in preparation for our advanced band or for high school band.
- **Symphonic Band/Advanced Percussion (Advanced):** This band is our elite band at Vista Heights. Students will be exposed to high school level literature and will have many expectations that are common to high school bands. Since the expectation level is very high, the level of accomplishment is equally high.
- **Pony Band:** This is for students in 5th and 6th grade who would like to participate in band this year! The class meets on Tuesday and Thursday from 4:15-5:15 in the VHMS Band Room starting on September 24th. The fee for Pony Band is \$50 for the year.

Classroom Expectations

As members of this performing ensemble, students are expected to set an outstanding example of student behavior in and outside of rehearsal. The following rules will be observed at all times in the classroom;

- Absolutely NO food or drink (with the exception of water) will be allowed in the rehearsal room. **Gum is strictly forbidden.**
- Students will come prepared to class, with all of their equipment (see below), and with an appropriate attitude.
- Students will actively and positively participate in rehearsal at all times. Talking and questions will be limited to that which is applicable to the rehearsal.
- Students will have respect and courtesy for themselves, for their classmates, for the instructor, and for all personal and school equipment.
- Students will work hard to improve themselves musically while having fun!
- Students will laugh at all of Mr. Lemen's jokes! (failure to follow this rule will result in owing Mr. Lemen brownies!).
- All school rules and dress code policies will be enforced in the music classroom.

Responsibilities and Consequences:

It is anticipated that members of this ensemble have honed their self discipline skills through the course of their previous band experience. It is the director's philosophy that the only true discipline is SELF discipline. As the students show good behavior, rewards shall follow. As students show poor behavior, the consequences shall be as follows:

- First offense: Verbal Reprimand.
- Second offense: Loss of participation points.
- Third offense: Lunch detention.
- Fourth offense: Parent correspondence.
- Fifth offense: Parent/teacher/student conference.
- Sixth/Severe offense: Administrator involvement/expulsion from ensemble.

Again, it is expected that students participating in Band know what is expected of them and actively engage in performing to that standard.



Materials

Students are required to bring the following items to class daily (all are open to inspection at any time):

- Instrument and necessary accessories in working condition.
 - Reeds (at least 3 working reeds of an acceptable brand...NO RICO!!!!).
 - A Cleaning Kit (can be purchased at local music store or at www.wwbw.com).
- Pencil. (Absolutely NO PENS!!!) Yes, you need one in class with you EVERY DAY....
- Method Books:
 - **VHMS Band Warm-up Folder (you will receive from Mr. Lemen).**
 - **Your band book, based on class:**
 - **Beginning Woodwinds and Beginning Brass**
 - **“Band Expressions: Book 1”.** You can get it at pretty much any music store.
 - **“Foundations for Superior Performance” book (You can get it at pretty much any music store).**
 - **VHMS Sightreading/Rhythm reading book.**
 - **Beginning Percussion and Advanced Percussion**
 - **“Hit it Hard” Percussion Book**
 - **Mr. Lemen will give this to you. DO NOT BUY A BOOK AT THE MUSIC STORE FOR PERCUSSION!!!**
 - **A Digital Metronome.**
 - **Concert Band**
 - **“Band Expressions: Book 2”.** You can get it at pretty much any music store.
 - **“Foundations for Superior Performance” book (You can get it at pretty much any music store).**
 - **VHMS Sightreading/Rhythm reading book.**
 - **A Digital Tuner/Metronome**
 - **Symphonic Band:**
 - **“Foundations for Superior Performance”** Make sure you get the correct book for your instrument.
 - **“Warm-ups that Work”** Will be supplied by Mr. Lemen
 - **VHMS Sightreading/Rhythm reading book.**
 - **At digital tuner/metronome**

Grading

Assessments: The student's Grade will be figured by individual performance and knowledge-based assessments of objectives taken from the Utah State Core. Grades will be determined based on the following formula:

Assignments:	10%
Homework (Practicing):	25%
Quizzes (in class, E-quizzes and written):	15%
Tests (Playing and written)	50%

In Class playing tests and quizzes may be retaken. If a student refuses to attempt the test in class on the day it is due, however, they will receive one opportunity to take that test within the next week, or they will receive a 0 for the test.

This year, VHMS will be utilizing Smartmusic music assessment software. At the end of this document, you can find out how to purchase a one year license for Smartmusic and be able to take most of your tests at home. We will have opportunities to take them at VHMS, but with over 250 students, students will have a limited amount of time.

Vista Heights is in the process of establishing a school-wide homework policy. VHMS Band will apply this policy once it is established.

PLEASE NOTE THAT STUDENTS WILL BE GIVEN FOUR "EQUIZZES" PER TERM, WHICH WILL BE POSTED ONLINE AT THE BAND WEB SITE.

Citizenship:

All students will begin the quarter with an "S" (Satisfactory) in Citizenship. Performance beyond the call of duty will be rewarded with an "O" as observed by Mr. Lemen. Students with excessive tardiest, poor behavior or attitude will incur lower citizenship grades.

No-Horn Policy:

Students are expected to have their instruments with them at all rehearsals. If a student does not bring their instrument, they will lose their participation points for that day and an email or phone call will be sent home to parents. Additionally, if a student fails to bring their horn for more than three days in a given term, they will not be permitted to perform at the next concert. If a student's horn is in for repairs, they must bring a note from a parent and sit in their seat and finger along.

Concert Attire:

Concert Band will have both formal and casual concerts to dress for. The “Formal” concert attire will be “Concert Dress”: Girls: a nice dress, dress pants, or skirt, with a blouse/top. Dress shoes (please NO flip-flops or athletic shoes). Boys: dress shirt, dress pants, tie, dress shoes (NO flip-flops or athletic shoes) and black socks.

Symphonic Band and Advanced Percussion members please note that we wear Concert Black. Girls: a black dress (or black top with nice black dress pants) with black shoes. Boys: Black pants, socks, shoes; a white shirt, tie and a black suit jacket.

PLEASE get this attire early so that you do not have to rush the day before the concert to get it!

Casual concert attire will be the Vista Heights Band t-shirt (or an all black t-shirt with absolutely no writing of any kind on it) and blue jeans.

Classroom Maintenance:

Lockers are available for student use. Due to the lack of band lockers, you will be required to share a locker with other student(s). Although Mr. Lemen is careful to lock the band and storage rooms, the school can not be responsible for lost or stolen items. Please lock up your instrument!

Students discovered breaking or abusing band room lockers or other equipment will be fined. Percussion instruments are strictly for the use of percussion students. Non-percussion students may not use the instruments under any circumstances. Continued violation of this policy will be considered to be destruction of school equipment and will be dealt with accordingly.

Instrument Hock Policy:

If instruments are found in the hallway, or left out in the band room after school, those instruments will be deposited in Hock. The first time an instrument lands in Hock, the student will be warned and returned the instrument. The second time, the parents will be notified and requested to pick up the instrument. If the instrument is left out again, the parent will be required to pick up the instrument, and the student will no longer be allowed to keep the instrument in the band room outside of class (they must either carry it with them or put it in their regular locker or have a parent bring it for band periods. This policy is not only for “housecleaning” purposes. Instruments that are left out, either in the band room or elsewhere in the school, are often the first instruments that are stolen. Please educate your students in the importance of keeping their instrument safe.

Travel:

As members of the Vista Heights Band, students may have opportunity to travel within Alpine School District. Students are expected to be on their best behavior, knowing that they represent themselves, their school, and their community at all times. Parents are invited to join the band on these outings whenever possible.

Online:

Parents can track their student’s progress, as well as pay fees, online at the Vista Heights Web Page vistaheights.alpineschools.org

See VHMS Band online at our web site!

www.vhbandrocks.com

Calendar

Please make sure the following dates are on your calendar. Failure to plan for these dates does not constitute an excused absence.

You can always check on the Vista Heights Band schedule by looking at the band web page.

Attendance at all Concerts and after school rehearsals is mandatory. Failure to attend will result in a 20% reduction in your grade. If you find that you have an unavoidable conflict, you **MUST** let Mr. Lemen know **IN WRITING** *at least two weeks before the date of the concert.* Mr. Lemen will work with students in emergency situations, but those situations are rare. If the student knew about the conflict more than two weeks before, the student will **not** be excused.

Event	Date	Location	Call Time	Perform Time	Performers
Westlake HS Band Bash	October 29th, 2013	Westlake High School	6:15 PM	7:00 PM	Symphonic Band and Advanced Percussion
VHMS Fall Band Concert	October 22nd, 2013	VHMS Auditorium	6:15	7:00	Beginning Band, Concert Band, Jazz Band and all Percussion.
Winter Concert	December 18, 2013	VHMS Auditorium	6:00/7:30	6:30/8:00	All Bands and Percussion
District Honor Band	January 10-11, 2014	American Fork Junior High School	TBA	TBA	Selected 9th grade students
VHMS Solo Night	February 11, 2014	VHMS	TBA	TBA	All Concert, Symphonic and Percussion Students
District Jazz Festival	February 21, 2014	TBA	During School	During School	Jazz Band
Peaks Jazz Festival	February 27-28, 2014	VHMS and Westlake High School	During School	During School	Jazz Band
State Band Festival	March 13-14, 2014	University of Utah	TBA	TBA	Symphonic Band and Advanced Percussion
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BYU Band Festival	March 15, 2014	BYU Fine Arts Building	11:00 AM	Afternoon	Symphonic Band, Concert Band, Advanced Percussion
VHMS Pre-Festival Concert	March 19, 2014	VHMS Auditorium	6:00/7:30	6:30/8:00	All Bands and Percussion
Percussive Arts Society	March 22, 2014	TBA	TBA	TBA	Advanced Percussion (optional for Beginning Percussion)
Intermediate Band Festival	March 25, 2014	VHMS Auditorium	During School	During School	Concert Band and Advanced Percussion
Advanced Band Festival	April 1, 2014	American Fork Junior High School	During School	During School	Symphonic Band and Advanced Percussion
UVU Band Festival	TBA	UVU			Symphonic Band And Advanced Percussion
Spring Band Concert	May 15, 2014	VHMS Auditorium	6:00/7:30	6:30/8:00	All Bands and Percussion

*Performances that take us away from Vista Heights will be on buses and will require parent chaperones (except for those at Westlake High School). . If you would like to help, contact Mr. Lemen. Parents are always welcome to ALL performances! ALL performances are free to the public.

Smartmusic Information

This year we are incorporating an exciting, interactive software program into our music program. This software is called SmartMusic, and it provides great value for students at all levels. For example:

- Students practice with background accompaniment and get visual and audio feedback on each assignment, which makes practice more meaningful and productive.
- SmartMusic motivates students to continue practicing to improve their scores, similar to a video game, which makes practice more fun.
- I can provide more individualized attention for your child with SmartMusic's assignment features, including notes of encouragement.
- Parents have access to their student's progress 24/7.

Click here to view a [SmartMusic video](#) or go to www.smartmusic.com/students.

Although a SmartMusic home subscription is not a requirement, I want to highly encourage you to get a subscription. I believe your child will enjoy practicing more and improve faster. Please purchase a SmartMusic subscription for your child:

- Place your order at www.smartmusic.com by clicking on the Order Now button. All you will need is a PC, Macintosh or iPad with an Internet connection. Complete system requirements are listed at www.smartmusic.com/support.
- To get started, just follow the on-screen instructions for installation and activation. Your e-mail address is required to activate SmartMusic and so that I can send your child messages to encourage them, along with assignments and lesson reminders.
- An annual subscription is \$40, plus a one-time cost for a microphone if you don't already have one (\$19.95 for Windows and \$29.95 for Mac if you want to buy them from Smartmusic. The SmartMusic microphones are more sensitive and responsive, which makes the assessment and recording features work better, but most microphones work well enough). SmartMusic is set up in our practice rooms for students to use when they don't have SmartMusic at home. If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail me at plemen@alpinedistrict.org. I'm looking forward to a great year working with your student.

Sincerely,

Mr. Lemen
Director of Bands
Vista Heights Middle School

NOTE!!!

Smartmusic is now also available on iPad!