

2025-2026 Elementary Band Handbook



Dubuque Community School District - 5th Grade Elementary Band

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Welcome to 5th Grade Band!

Dear Parents,

If you are receiving this letter, it is because your child has joined band this year! You've done the registration, got the instrument and the fun is ready to start. We are very excited and cannot wait to get working with your student!

At registration, you completed the "5th Grade Instrumental Commitment Form," along with learning a little bit about our program! Now that band is in full swing, this handbook will hopefully communicate important information about 5th Grade Band. Please keep this packet to reference throughout the year.

As a parent, you have an especially important role to play in your student's music education and in our district's music program. Without your support, our concerts, festivals, rehearsals, honor ensembles, field trips and more would be possible- so thank you for all you do!

We can't wait to begin working with your students! Please feel free to contact us with any questions regarding the handbook or band in general.

Sincerely,

The 5th Grade Band Team

David Thom (*Bryant, Carver, Eisenhower, Hoover, Kennedy, Lincoln*)

Kate Arnold (*Prescott, Table Mound, Audubon, Marshall*)

Dale Risher (*Sageville*)

Communication

We will communicate through Parent Square, Seesaw messages, and newsletters sent home with students. Please ensure that you are signed up to receive messages through one or both platforms to stay informed about what is happening in band.

Concerts:

1. December Informance: Students' first concert!

Wednesday, December 10, 2025 – Hempstead Auditorium, 6:30 PM

Student Arrival time: 5:30 PM through the Events Entrance.

Please bring instrument, folder/method book, and a folding stand

2. Zone Festivals: 5-12 Band Performance at either Senior HS or Hempstead HS

This event includes a Daytime Field Trip to the High School for Large Group Rehearsal

Monday, March 16, 2026, 6:30 PM – Senior Nora Gym

OR

Monday, March 23, 2026, 6:30 PM – Hempstead Moody Gym

Student arrival time: 5:30PM. Please bring instrument, folder/music, and a folding stand.

3. Spring Concert- Combined 5th Grade Band and Orchestra Concert

Monday, May 18, 2026, Senior High School- Evening Time TBD

Please bring instrument, folder/music, and a folding stand.

Concert Dress Code

- Jeans or dark pants
- Any T-shirt- Students will put district provided T-shirt over top (to be given out at the concert)

Concert Expectations

Concerts are an extremely important part of being a part of a musical group. Not only do they allow for the students to show off their hard work and newly developed skills, but they also help to build self-confidence, and etiquette skills in different settings than the students may be used to.

While band is an elective, students are expected to attend every concert. If you see a conflict with a concert date, time, or trouble getting transportation for your student, please address these concerns **at least 2 weeks prior to the concert.** Your director will be happy to assist you in making alternate plans.

Band is a team activity where all students play a vitally important role in the group. Please make every attempt to put concerts first before other extracurricular practices, as concerts only happen 3 times a year. We understand if there is an occasional conflict, and we appreciate your communicating that with us in advance!

Lessons and Rehearsals:

Students will have one 15-20 minute lesson during the school day each week. During this time, students will learn how to play their instrument and work out of their method book.

Students will have one 30 minute rehearsal which will take place before or after school one day a week. These days and times will be communicated with students and families once the teachers have a better idea of how many students they have. During rehearsal, students are practicing music for the concerts, while developing collaboration skills with the rest of the members of the band.

Please communicate with your teacher if the student will have to miss rehearsal or if your student will have a continuous conflict with their rehearsal time.

On the day of a lesson or rehearsal, students will need to remember to bring their instrument, music, stand, and all other supplies to school.

Please see the **Rehearsal and Lesson Checklist** for what else to bring!

Rehearsal and Lesson Supply Checklist:

Each week, students should come to class prepared with these items:

- Instrument
- Pencil
- Music Folder (To be distributed)
- Measures of Success Book 1
- Performing Percussionist Book 1 (Percussion only)
- Folding stand
- Supplies stored in case:
 - Flute: cleaning cloth, cleaning rod
 - Clarinet or Saxophone: swab, cork grease, playable 2.5 Rico reeds, mouthpiece brush, neck strap (saxophone only)
 - Brass: Valve oil (trumpet) or slide oil (trombone), cleaning snake
 - Percussion: Drumsticks, Mallets

Instrument Care and Maintenance:

Whether the instrument belongs to you or the school, it is the student's responsibility to take good care of their instruments. Here are some important tips for students:

- Please make sure to not keep instruments in your car overnight or for long periods of time or expose them to extreme heat/cold (playing outside etc.).
- Keep it clean and functional by swabbing it, emptying spit valve, wiping it down, storing reeds properly in their cases, etc. If you don't remember what to do, please ask!
- This is a big responsibility, so it is up to YOU (the student) to keep it safe.
- **If your instrument is not playing well or needs a repair, let your teacher know as soon as possible or if renting from West Music, let them know so they can get you a loner instrument.**
- **Please do not try to fix the instrument at home.** Household tools can damage the instrument and potentially increase repair costs.

Practicing

Students should practice 60-100 minutes each week for consistent progress on their instrument. We recommend students practice 20 minutes a day 4-5 times a week.

How can parents support practicing?

- Help them find a quiet space to practice in. Like other subjects, a quiet, distraction free place is where the best learning happens.
- Help establish a practice routine. (Ex. 4pm, after supper, etc.)
- Listen and encourage. (Ask questions about what they are working on.)
- Treat practicing like you'd treat reading; there is always an assignment to work on.

Grading:

During the trimester, each director will be teaching on a variety of music standards with the goal to help your child grow musically. For many students, this may be the first time that they have been expected to take this level of responsibility for their own

learning. From practicing on their own each week to learning to remember their own pull-out lessons, students will gain a lot of important skills this year. Band students will receive comments on their report cards for the first two trimesters. These comments will give insight on where they are at in their learning and areas where they can improve. At the end of the third trimester, students will receive a grade of Met/Not Met for each of our music standards.

During conference time, more information will come out about how to meet with your teacher. Conferencing will be available virtually or in person. We look forward to meeting with you!

Give us a Follow! - DCSD Elementary Band

We have a Facebook page! You never know when we will post something...

Our Facebook is mostly for documenting the ins-and outs of our class with pictures and progress updates. There will also be occasional reminders of upcoming concerts and other musical community events.

Instrumental Commitment Form 2025-2026 School Year

(For your records-Electronically submitted through registration)

As a member of band or orchestra, I understand that...

1. Each week I have a required lesson and a required rehearsal. This means that I will bring my instrument/music/supplies to school on the day of my lesson, and that I will attend all rehearsals. If a conflict arises, I will let my teacher know I cannot be there.
2. Being a part of a musical group is a team effort! I understand that the work I put in affects myself and others around me. I understand that to be a team player, I

need to practice my lesson assignments outside of class. (The goal is 15-20 minute practice sessions a few times a week.)

3. Band and orchestra have the same expectations and consequences as a normal class. I understand that one of the most important contributions I can make as a team player is to be positive and respectful to my peers, my teacher, my instrument, and myself. I understand that I am accountable for my own actions and will do my best to keep a positive and respectful attitude in the classroom.
4. Concerts are a required part of being in band or orchestra. I understand that as a member of a musical group I will attend all concerts throughout the year. If there is an issue getting a ride to and from the concert, I will communicate this to my teacher at least 2 weeks prior to the event.
5. Following through on promises is important. I understand that joining band or orchestra means committing to being enrolled throughout the 2025-2026 school year. If I realize that band or orchestra are not for me, I understand that I commit to staying in the group at least through the next performance.