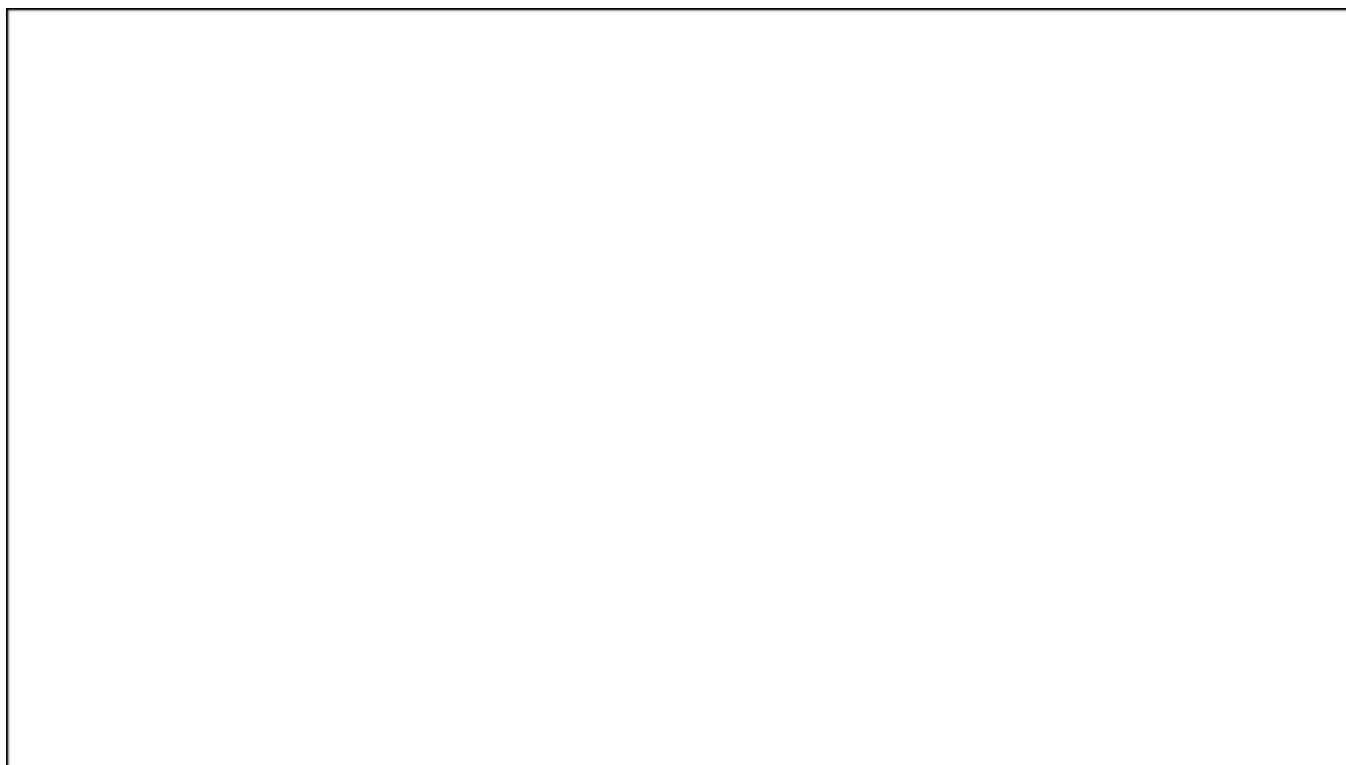


First Colonial High School

Band Handbook

2023-2024



Director: Mr. Nicholas Craig

www.fcband.org

“Music is about communication, creativity and cooperation. By studying music in school, students have the opportunity to build on these skills, enrich their lives and experience the world from a new perspective.” – Bill Clinton, Former President of the United States

January, 2022

Band Students and Parents,

Welcome to one of the most exciting experiences in which you can be a part —the band! Now, more than ever, we have information to justify why we participate in this demanding, yet rewarding activity. Experts have concluded that the study of music helps with spatial reasoning, test taking, and overall quality of life! Factor in social skills, emotional development, leadership training, group interaction, aesthetic perception, music-making, and the discipline of being in a band program, and I don't know why anyone would not want to be involved in a successful band program like the one at our school. The ultimate goal is a lifelong understanding and appreciation for high-quality music and music-making!

The document you are holding is the **2023-2024 First Colonial Band Handbook** *Everyone should read the information in the handbook*, even returning members. Most questions can be answered by consulting *the handbook*. Policies will be adjusted from year to year as the need arises to clarify issues within the program. It is my hope that the information contained in this handbook will both inform and inspire.

This school year is one unlike any other we have experienced. While performing arts classes might look different this year with social distancing, virtual learning, & all of the changes to our everyday life; these courses & ensembles are still pressing forward to make an impact in the lives of all who participate. This past year was full of successes by our students. In our program, we saw growth and indications that the program is only going to continue to prosper. As of this writing, we are exploring a multitude of different possibilities regarding performances this term including virtual concerts, live streaming events, & outdoor concerts later in the year. Regardless of the circumstances, we will continue to make music.

This handbook is designed to answer any questions you might have concerning the program. I am honored to be your band director and am looking forward to a great year!

Mr. Nicholas Craig
Director of Bands

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Band Policy

In order to help band members and parents in understanding areas of individual responsibility, a statement of band policy is herein set forth. Becoming familiar with this policy will enable each individual to make the most of this outstanding musical and personal opportunity.

We firmly believe that the happy, successful student is one who improves through regular practice and personal dedication to individually appropriate musical standards. In addition, we expect that each student will proudly demonstrate the high moral standards of our program at all times, bearing in mind that the Band is a highly visible organization within our school and acting in accordance whether serving as a section player or in a leadership role. Personal responsibility focused on individual growth, self-improvement and the overall success of our peers is the focus of this program. We intend to conduct ourselves at all times in a manner that will facilitate the learning of all students, both personally and musically.

Objectives of the Band Program

- To teach music through the understanding of music literacy & fundamentals.
- To develop performance skills on the various wind and percussion instruments.
- To provide for the musical needs of the school and the community.
- To acquaint the students with music theory/history and how history and musical composition relate to students' lives and musical experiences.
- To provide all students with the opportunity for a positive use of their time, a means for self-expression, and a healthy social experience.
- To develop the ability to function as a responsible member of a group, enhance interaction, and develop *esprit de corps*.
- To foster leadership skills & personal growth within each student.

BAND COURSE OFFERINGS

Wind Ensemble (Advanced Band)

The Wind Ensemble is designed for the more advanced musicians with emphasis placed on the musicianship skills required for performance of sophisticated literature. Membership is based on audition and director recommendation. Students in this ensemble are **required** to audition for VBODA All-District Band (in a typical year) and will receive a grade for this audition. Private lessons are strongly recommended. This ensemble performs VBODA Grade 4-6 literature. After-school rehearsals & concerts outside of the school day are required of all students in this course. This is a full year, one credit course.

Concert Band (Intermediate Band)

The Concert Band is designed to develop & refine basic fundamentals, instrumental technique, and musicianship skills. Concert Band is open to all students that have completed the Beginning Band course or through the recommendation of the HS/MS director. Performances include concerts, performance assessments, and festivals. Members are strongly encouraged to audition for VBODA All-District Band. This ensemble performs VBODA Grade 2-4 literature. After-school rehearsals and performances are required of all students. This is a full year, one credit course.

Beginning Band (Beginning Band)

The Beginning Band is designed to develop basic fundamentals, instrumental technique, and musicianship skills. Beginning Band is open to all students without an audition. Performances include concerts, performance assessments, and festivals. This ensemble performs VBODA Grade 0-2 literature. After-school rehearsals and performances are minimal but required of all students. This is a full year, one credit course.

Percussion Class (Advanced Band)

The percussion class is composed of all Beginning/Intermediate percussion students in the band program. Basic skills and fundamentals are taught with the goal of continued student progress. Students from this class will perform as a percussion ensemble throughout the year. Members from this class will be assigned to perform with the Beginning Band, Concert Band, & Wind Ensemble as assigned by the director. Students will sometimes be

broken up into groups based on skill level. Part assignments will be determined by the director & are not always based on students getting their “best” instrument. All students are expected to learn & perform on the multitude of percussion instruments. After-school rehearsals and performances are required of all students. This is a full year, one credit course.

CONCERT REQUIREMENTS

Being a performance-based course, students enrolled in band classes are required to attend & perform in multiple concerts during the year. A dress rehearsal will be held prior to each concert, which is mandatory (graded) for all students. Students that are unexcused/absent from the dress rehearsal will not be allowed to perform at the concert. The specific dates for these events are found later in the handbook. Students are required to arrive at the given call time before each concert actually begins. Specific call times are given out at least one week in advance of the concert & are typically 30-60 minutes before the actual concert begins.

Concert Dress Requirements 2023-2024

Students are required to own the items listed below. Uniform requirements not only make the ensemble look uniform, it is a criteria we are assessed on at VBODA Concert Band Assessment. Items are not provided by the school. Appropriate concert dress is part of our assessment score, so please double-check this list prior to each concert.

Ladies & Gentlemen: Black dress slacks Black dress shoes Long Black dress socks
Black Button down dress shirt

CO CURRICULAR ENSEMBLES

Marching Band (Information TBD for Spring 2024)

Membership in the marching band requires a substantial time commitment in the summer and fall. Members in the band should be prepared for strenuous physical activity and the ability to play challenging literature. The marching band performs at all home football games and competes in various competitions during the fall. Membership is open to all students enrolled in a music performance class or by audition with the director. Due to the substantial planning & financial efforts for this ensemble, there is a firm cutoff date for joining each spring, as the drill & music is written specifically for our instrumentation.

Color Guard (Information TBD for Spring 2024)

Students who are interested in dance, choreography, and movement may choose to audition for our marching auxiliary unit.

FC Chamber Ensembles (Information TBD for Spring 2024)

Depending on student interest, chamber ensembles will be formed during the school year. Possible groups are woodwind quintet, brass quintet, saxophone quartet, trombone quartet, low brass ensemble, flute choir, clarinet choir, and additional small groups.

Varsity Percussion Ensemble (Information TBD for Spring 2024)

The Varsity Percussion Ensemble, or VPE, is our competitive percussion group that performs & competes in the Atlantic Indoor Association & WGI circuits. This group is open to all band members, not just percussionists, by audition. This ensemble begins rehearsing in December & the competitive season ends in early April. Rehearsals are typically held Tuesdays/Thursdays/Saturdays & all competitions are held on Saturdays.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

In general, each rehearsal & performance is considered mandatory. From time to time, special events will arise & are usually considered optional (i.e. visiting brass ensemble or soloist concert). Being a team activity, it is critical for each member to be present for not

only their benefit, but for the benefit & success of the ensemble. Practice is when you learn your part, rehearsal is when the ensemble learns each others' parts.

Conflicts with Band

Resolving conflicts with mandatory band rehearsals/concerts and other activities or events is the responsibility of the student. Rehearsal and performance schedules for the entire year are given out well in advance so that arrangements can be made. **Students are encouraged to participate in other clubs & activities, but should keep in mind that band activities are curricular & take precedence over extra-curricular activities.** Skipping a band activity for an unexcused reason will result in the student receiving a “o” for that event. Students that miss a dress rehearsal for an unexcused reason will not be allowed to perform at the concert. Students should have a calendar and be aware of all band dates well ahead of schedule. Information will be made available at the beginning of each concert unit, announced in class, posted on our bulletin board, published on the website, & emailed out via our monthly newsletter. Students are reminded that band is a curricular activity that requires dedication to be successful. All conflicts with performances must be resolved in favor of band participation or discussed with Mr. Craig in advance. Work, clubs, sports events, homework, and other extra-curricular activities are not considered excused absences for missing any mandatory band activity.

Excused Absences

Similar to the VBCPS absence policy, a legitimate excuse for absence is personal illness, illness or death in the family, exposure to contagious disease, religious holidays, or extremely inclement weather. For illness related absences, a doctor's note is required for the absence to be excused. In the event of religious holidays, advanced notification of at least 2 weeks will be required for the absence to be excused & for proper measures to be taken to ensure the success of the ensemble. Students that miss a mandatory band event with an excused absence will have the opportunity to complete an alternative assignment to replace the grade for the missed activity. All alternative assignments will be due prior to the end of the unit of study. Alternative assignments are composed of 2 portions, a written concert reflection (must attend an approved concert) & the performance of all concert literature for the director.

Unexcused Absences

Students that miss a mandatory band event with an unexcused absence will receive **no credit** for the event. Students that miss a mandatory dress rehearsal may not be allowed to perform at the accompanying concert. Students that miss multiple required rehearsals or performances may be removed from the performing ensemble at the director's discretion. (Please see grading Policy for more information)

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Student Expectations

- Students will commit to attending and participating fully in all rehearsals and performances.
- Be on time to all rehearsals and performances. **Early is on time—on time is late.**
- Be responsible and assume responsibility for your own actions.
- When the director steps on the podium, rehearsal has begun. Students are to listen at all times.
 - Cell phones, headphones/earbuds, & laptops should be stored in the student's bookbag unless the director indicates they will be needed for class.
- There should be no talking or playing out of turn during a rehearsal.
- Come to rehearsal with a good attitude.
- Demonstrate proper respect to yourself, your peers, all equipment, and those in authority at all times.
- Students will practice regularly to achieve the highest possible levels of individual and ensemble musicianship.

Failure to comply with the student expectations listed above may result in:

- Reduction of rehearsal grade for the day.
- Assignment of alternative work for the day in question.
- Detention (Academic or Disciplinary)
- Referral
- Removal from ensemble performance

Cell Phone & Device Policy

All cell phones are to be shut off and placed in a book bag for the duration of the block. If a student chooses to keep their phone in their possession and takes it out during instructional

time, a referral will be submitted . With every student having their own issued device, there is no instructional need for cell phones. (Please see VBCPS cell phone policy for more information)

Classroom Procedures

Regular, productive participation in band class is essential to maintaining a superior band program as well as a superior grade. During class students are expected to abide by the following rules:

- Rehearsal begins when the bell rings each day. The rehearsal outline will be posted on the board at the beginning of each class. Make sure you have extra reeds and all necessary supplies **at your seat** at the beginning of rehearsal.
- No gum, food, or drink in the band room during rehearsal, only water. During band class all personal items including book bags, coats, and other class materials are to be kept out of the way.
- All instruments are to be stored properly in the correct storage area. Proper storage includes latching instrument cases. These areas are to be kept clean and free from clutter. Food, clothing, textbooks, & other personal items are not to be kept in the band room.
- Percussion instruments are stored in specific areas, based on their size & instrument type. Percussionists are responsible for returning all school instruments to the designated areas.

Seating/Part Assignments in Ensembles

Seating in ensembles is handled through an audition process. The audition process typically consists of scales, prepared selections, & sight reading. The auditions will be judged by the director and by outside adjudicators as needed. A student's usable playing range on their specific instruments will also be taken into account during this audition. Seating assignments will be specific to each concert program and will be open for audition at the completion of each program. If a student's attendance, preparation, or attitude becomes an issue, the seating/part assignment can be changed at the discretion of the director.

Required Materials

Students must possess all the materials needed for the band classroom to maximize their learning experience. Students who do not bring the required materials will not receive the maximum class participation points.

Instrument

- All instruments must be in good working condition.
- Reed players must have at least 3 working reeds in a reed case/holder(no chips/cracks).
- All students must have materials necessary in maintaining their instrument (e.g. valve oil, slide grease).
- Percussionist must have the following :
 - A pair of general concert snare sticks
 - A practice pad
 - A stick bag
- A student will not receive the maximum amount of daily points if the condition of their instrument adversely affects their performance.
- Students may be asked not to participate in a concert if their instrument adversely affects their performance and/or the ensemble's performance.

Pencil

- Students must have a sharpened pencil (not pen) with eraser for marking music and taking notes.

Metronome

- A metronome or metronome app is required for all students. These will be used during individual practice & sectional rehearsals.

Tuner

- A chromatic tuner (not a guitar tuner) is required for all wind players. FCHS has a class set of tuners that are available during class, however each student should practice with a tuner regularly at home.

Notebook

- Students are required to have all of their band materials in a 3-ringed binder with clear plastic sheet protectors,
- This notebook should contain all concert music, all exercises, a scale sheet, a fingering chart for your instrument, and any other handouts or information given out.
- Students will receive an original part for each piece of concert literature. Students are allowed to lightly write in pencil on these parts, but must erase all markings before music is collected. If a student loses their music, a charge of \$5 per part will be assessed to cover the cost of replacing the part. Copyright law forbids the

copying of most ensemble pieces, thus it is necessary for each student to take care of their parts. Showing up to rehearsal without the appropriate music will result in a grade deduction for that rehearsal.

Periodically, notebook/reed/supply checks will be held. As a student, it is your responsibility to stay organized & maintain your instrument in proper playing condition.

First Colonial Band Boosters & Fundraising

The First Colonial Band Boosters Association (FCBB) is a volunteer organization that helps raise necessary funds and provide volunteer support to run the band program. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in FCBB. There are many roles and opportunities for parents to volunteer throughout the year. Booster meetings are held each month at 6:00PM in the band room.

Every student involved in the First Colonial High School Band Program benefits from the funds generated by FCBB. A frequent misconception is that FCBB only helps Marching Band members, but there are numerous other things that FCBB helps fund during the year such as:

- Band banquet and awards
- New music purchases
- Private instructors for band classes
- Travel for ensembles
- New equipment
- Spring Trips

Fundraisers are done throughout the year. It is vital that all members put forth effort to raise funds during these events. If every student participated in these fundraisers, only a few would be needed throughout the year. When only a fraction of the students participate, it requires year-round fundraising as well as eliminating things that would make the band better in order to meet the budget. It is hoped that everyone does their part by participating in these fundraisers and volunteering to help maintain the quality of this program.

Band Letter

Varsity lettering is an award earned for excellence above and beyond what is required in band. Points are given for activities that are not required, but help the overall band program or enrich the student's band experience.

Students must earn a total of **200** points to earn a letter. Students who commit serious offenses are subject to the forfeiting of your letter points. Students may earn points by doing the following:

<u>Marching Band (Attendance to all required events)</u>	<u>150</u>
<u>Colorguard/Drumline</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>Varsity Percussion</u>	<u>150</u>
<u>Auditioning for District Band</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Making District Band</u>	<u>50</u>
<u>Auditioning for Senior Regional Orchestra</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Making Senior Regional Orchestra</u>	<u>50</u>
<u>Auditioning for All-State Band</u>	<u>50</u>
<u>Making All-State Band</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>Approved solo or recital performance (outside of FCHS)</u>	<u>50</u>
<u>Approved private lessons 6 months of school year</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>Approved regular participation in outside ensemble (church or community band, notation required for approval)</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>Summer Band Camp (not FCHS Marching Band Camp)</u>	<u>50</u>
<u>FCHS Chamber Ensemble</u>	<u>50</u>
<u>FC Band Leadership Position</u>	<u>15/30/50</u>
<u>Event Help</u>	<u>0-25</u>
<u>Fundraiser Participation</u>	<u>10</u>

To turn in band letter points, students must fill out a form, have it signed by the designated person for the event (band director, band parent, etc), and turn it into the music office in the band room.

Points for Event Help will be determined and announced before each event. Students may ask the directors for an update on their current point status, and a full list of points earned will be posted periodically in the band room.

To earn points for the listed extra-curricular ensembles, a student must attend all performances & events associated with each ensemble. The student must also be present at 90% of rehearsals, with no more than 2 unexcused absences. Students that do not meet these criteria will not be awarded letter points even if they still participate in most rehearsals & performances. The awarding of letter points is for students that demonstrate extraordinary commitment above & beyond what is required during curricular ensembles.

MISCELLANEOUS

Add/Drop

If a student drops band in the middle of the year, they may not return to band until the beginning of the next academic year.

Alternative Assignments

Students who come to class without an instrument are provided with a written assignment to complete instead. Sometimes this alternate assignment is a theory worksheet or a short paper on a famous composer, piece of music or musician. All alternate assignments are due by the end of the school day on which they are assigned.

BAND

We use the BAND app for each of our cocurricular ensembles. Volunteer signups, rehearsal dates, competition dates, group communication, & file sharing all occur through BAND. Students in each cocurricular ensemble will be invited to join the appropriate BAND group.

Contact

Email is the Director's primary method of contact with parents and students.

Extra Help

Extra help is available as needed. If the Director feels that a student is falling behind, the parent will be contacted and a help session will be arranged. Students or parents can initiate this process as well, and are strongly encouraged to do so since the Director's perception of student success isn't always the same as that of the student and/or his or her parents. Please don't hesitate to ask for extra help. If a student feels they're progressing more quickly than the rest of the class, the Director may be able to provide more challenging work and materials upon request.

Instrument Storage

Students may store instruments on the shelves in the Band Room. Students may not leave instruments on the floor. Instruments should go home each day (to practice) and brought back to school the following band day. Students with larger instruments (tuba, bari-sax, percussion) may schedule time to practice before or after school or may be given a second "home instrument" to practice with if available.

Practice

Band students are not required to complete practice records, but they are expected to practice daily. As a rule, high school students typically should practice at least 5 times per week. More or less daily practice than that is fine as long as students play their instrument every day at home and students keep up with the rest of the class. If students start to fall behind, they'll be asked in for extra help and one of the first things discussed will be their practice habits. Parents are strongly encouraged to monitor and guide their child's daily practice. If you would like more information on how to practice, don't hesitate to contact the Director.

Private Lessons

Students are strongly encouraged to take lessons with one of the outstanding professionals in the area. Wind Ensemble students are highly recommended to take weekly private lessons. A list of local teachers is available upon request.

SmartMusic

SmartMusic is the online platform we will be using to guide practice & for playing assessments. Each student will be give login credentials to access their personal account. This is an excellent practice tool, as students can practice their part with the full band accompaniment at home. Students will have unlimited attempts to take playing assessments (up to the given deadline) until they are happy with the grade they have earned. SmartMusic grades the performance based on rhythmic & pitch accuracy, showing the student the correct & incorrect notes they played each time.

Social Media

The First Colonial High School band program maintains active accounts on Facebook & Instagram. Reminders are posted regularly on both accounts. It is expected that all communications on social media remain professional & stay centered on band related topics. Social media is used as an additional source of information, but should not be the primary source of information for band events.

Website:

Please use www.fcband.org as your primary reference for band-related questions