

FIRST COLONIAL BAND NOTES

FEBRUARY 22, 2021

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings FC Band Family,

Tomorrow is the big day we resume face to face instruction for all of our Option 1 students! First, I am very excited to see our students again & have a "more normal" interaction. Second, I am excited to hear our students play live, in real time, again--which will soon allow us the opportunity of modified live performances later in the spring. While this will be a transition for us, with all of the safety & mitigation strategies present, we will do our best to make this return to school as positive & safe as possible. I encourage all of our members to review the VBCPS, FCHS, & FC Band mitigation strategies prior to returning to the building.

With the first grading period quickly coming to an end, I want to take a minute to offer a few words of advice to our students:

1. Band is an activity that you must participate in. Actively playing your instrument, asking questions, & participating are critical to success. This is not a class you can disappear in, not play an instrument, & try to complete assignments the day before the grading period ends.
2. The more involved you choose to be, the more you will get out of the band experience. If you only do "what is required" in class, you will have a very mediocre band experience. I urge everyone to participate in cocurricular ensembles, ask for help, get to know other band members, & push yourself past what is comfortable. The most successful band students that have gotten the most out of the program are the students that are the most involved.

One last reminder--all classrooms (band room included) will have windows open to allow for increased air circulation (assuming it is 40 degrees or warmer). With that in mind, I would advise all students to bring a jacket or hoodie to school with the likely cooler classrooms.

If you have any questions about the reopening plan, please feel free to contact me & I will do my best to assist!

Musically Yours,

Luke Walker

Director of Bands

Tri-M Music Honor Society Advisor

Performing Arts Department Chair

PBIS Team Leader

First Colonial High School

www.fcband.org



FIRST COLONIAL HIGH SCHOOL

COVID MITIGATION STRATEGIES

With our students returning in just a few short weeks, I want to update everyone on what we will be doing to keep our students safe. All of these guidelines follow VBCPS, VDH, & CDC guidelines. These guidelines were developed in conjunction with numerous aerosol studies specific to wind instruments & singing.

1. Social distancing: Students will be spaced a minimum of 6 feet while playing a wind instrument or singing. Trombones will be spaced 9 feet. (Notes: We are spaced more than 6 feet due to our available space. We are also facing the same direction in lines, no arcs or circles. This is not a requirement, but a suggestion we are able to follow).
2. Personal Protective Equipment: Students will be provided a Musician Mask by FC. The Musician Mask is a special mask that has a slit/flaps in the middle that allow students to play their instruments while still wearing masks. An adapted version of this is specific to flutes/piccolos.
3. Instrument Equipment: We have equipment specific to individual instruments that will be distributed to in person students. Brass players will be required to use a puppy training pad (pee pads) to empty all spit/condensation from their instruments (FCHS provided).
4. Rehearsal Time: Our rehearsals will be limited to 30 minutes (when playing or singing) in length. At the end of the 30 minutes, we will vacate the area & allow the air to recirculate. This period will last for 5 minutes for outdoor rehearsals & 40 minutes for indoor rehearsals.
5. Rehearsal Location: While not required, it is recommended that rehearsals are held outside when possible. Weather permitting (no precipitation, at least 40 degrees), we will do the majority of our playing outdoors.

6. Assigned Seating: All teachers at FCHS will be assigning seats for contact tracing purposes.
7. Pods: For ensembles that meet after school, students will be grouped into pods of 10 or less. Students will remain in these groupings for the duration of the after school ensembles.



COMMUNICATION

For all class related communication, we will be using the following methods of communication:

1. Schoology & Schoology Messenger
2. Remind (Concert Band: @fcbandcb21 , Wind Ensemble: @fcbandwe21)
3. [Email](#)

For all cocurricular ensembles & other information relating to our program:

1. BAND app (Marching Band, FCBB, Varsity Percussion, Chamber Ensembles)
2. Website: www.fcband.org
3. Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/firstcolonialband
4. Instagram: @firstcolonialbands

For all communications, messages will be responded to as seen during school hours (6:45am-2:30pm). Office hours are available daily from 2:00-2:30pm. Mr. Walker's Planning Block is from 11:10am-12:25pm.



CHAMBER ENSEMBLES

With face to face instruction resuming tomorrow, we will begin to form chamber ensembles in early March based on student interest. This year, due to limitations, each ensemble will be limited to 10 or less members initially. We will be looking to create:

1. Jazz Band / Combo (Jazz, Latin, Swing, Rock)
2. Advanced Winds + Percussion (Level 5-6 Concert Literature)
3. Intermediate Winds + Percussion (Level 3-4 Concert Literature)
4. Percussion: This will take the place of the VPE 2020-2021 Season. More info TBA

The goal for these ensembles will be a live, in person, performance later on in the spring (similar to the Park & Play in November). While our curricular classes during the school day will be studying & performing literature, they will be working towards a virtual performance at this time. These chamber ensembles are specifically designed for those able & willing to do live performances. Further information will be released in class as we enter March.



MARCHING BAND UPDATE

We currently are optimistic about being able to have some sort of marching season later in the spring. We do not yet know what this will look like due to changing guidelines, but we do expect to make a decision by the middle of March regarding the 2020-2021 Marching Patriots. More information will be shared as it becomes available.



HELP SESSIONS

All students are encouraged to ask questions if a topic, concept, or piece of music is challenging to them. Students are also encouraged to attend sessions for help as needed. These sessions can include:

- Office hours after school (2:00-2:30pm daily)

- Tutoring sessions by appointment (after school)
- Group sectionals as needed (after school)

We take pride as a band in helping each other achieve success. There is no shame or embarrassment in asking for help—we view this self-advocacy as a sign of maturity, professionalism, & as an indicator that you are driven to succeed. If you are a student that needs assistance in band, please feel comfortable reaching out to another band member or Mr. Walker for help. We want to see you be successful!

SMARTMUSIC

VBCPS has purchased SmartMusic accounts for all of our band students this year. We will be using SmartMusic as a tool (not the only tool) to assist in accessing music, gaining feedback from performing, & recording student performance. Each student should have set up their SmartMusic account in class on Tuesday, February 2nd—however we are still missing a few faces in each class. Information on joining SmartMusic is posted in Schoology for each band class. Join ASAP if you are not in—we have already had assignments in SmartMusic & will be using it daily moving forward.

The logo for SmartMusic, featuring the words "smart" and "music" stacked vertically in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font, centered on a solid orange square background with a white border.

smart
music

FCBB MARCH MEETING

WHEN

TUESDAY, MARCH 2ND, 6PM

WHERE

THIS IS AN ONLINE EVENT.

MORE INFORMATION

We will hold our monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 2nd at 6pm via Zoom. The meeting invite is linked below:

[March 2nd FCBB Meeting](#)

If you are a parent/grandparent/guardian/caregiver, you are invited to be a member of the First Colonial Band Boosters. Meetings are held monthly where we discuss program direction, fundraisers, student events, & much more. All are encouraged to participate & help make our program the best that it can be.

To join FCBB in Band, click [here](#).

GRADING POLICIES

All of the grading policies are posted in the Course Expectations for each class in Schoology, but there are a few points I would like to highlight:

1. All assignments can be attempted multiple times prior to submission (Schoology, Flipgrid, SmartMusic, etc).
2. Grading Dates: All work will be graded on Mondays, with progress reports being sent out weekly.
3. Missing/Late Work: Assignments can be turned in past the posted due date, but a reduction of points will occur. The deadline for submissions will be posted prior to the end of each grading period. If you submit something late, it is your responsibility to notify Mr. Walker to make sure it is graded.



ABOUT US

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