



Victor J. Andrew High School

“Thunderbolt’ Band

Hand Book



PURPOSE

The Andrew Band is a vibrant part of Andrew High School as well as the Music Department. The following manual was designed to aid students and their parents to better understand the policies, organizational structure and general functioning of the band program. It also outlines the rules and responsibilities of every student so that every parent and student will know exactly what is expected. It is our sincere wish that we will have a successful and rewarding year. Please read this manual in its entirety and keep it in a handy place for future reference. Detach the form found on the last page and return it to Mr. Iwinski or place in the yellow box on the band room wall.

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Handbook form to be signed and returned.

A. PHILOSOPHY

It is the desire of the Music Department of Andrew High School to always represent itself well through excellence in performance. This excellence can only be attained through discipline, hard work, sacrifice, dedication, and pride. Our success as a group and as individuals is based upon our willingness and determination to be the best that we can be. It is the hope of the directors that, among other values, a sense of responsibility will be realized. This responsibility should not only be concerned with every note or symbol on a page of music, but should also be concerned with a feeling of loyalty and obligation to every member. This loyalty can best be evidenced, in an external way, by presence, punctuality, and wholehearted participation in whatever capacity is deemed important by the directors. Let us remember that each of us is dependent upon the other.

Student Responsibilities

1. Arrive on time for rehearsal("To be on time is to be late, to be early is to be on time"). Plan to arrive 10 minutes before scheduled times.
2. Prepared with materials and instrument (folder, dot sheets, pencil, etc.)
3. Appropriate behavior in rehearsal and performance situations (No food or gum, good posture, use time wisely by studying your part when another section is rehearsing, and do not talk, etc.)
4. Respect given toward staff and appointed help.
5. Preparation of music and dots. (includes warm-ups)
6. Desire to improve. (Private lessons are **strongly** encouraged)
7. Attendance at all practices.
8. Attendance at all performances.
9. Respect and care of uniforms.
10. Respect and care of school property (instruments, folders, stands, etc.) Should any damage come to school owned instruments occur while in the possession of a student, that student is responsible for repair or replacement.
11. Proper behavior on buses and respect toward bus drivers, van drivers, and especially chaperones.
12. Proper behavior at performances and areas outside school grounds.
13. Wearing of proper outfit at performances, even when not performing or if wearing the uniform all day is required.
14. The student's individual competent playing ability (which would tend to indicate that he has practiced at home or away from school
 - a. Keeping instruments in good playing condition
 - b. All necessary accessories, reeds, oil, mutes, sticks, etc.
 - i. See your specific Marching Band Supply List for marching band

B. REHEARSALS, PRACTICES, AND PERFORMANCES

Rehearsals are the most important aspects in perfecting a performance. If a student misses a practice, not only will he/she suffer, but the band suffers also because each student is vital to a certain formation or a certain move. **If a student has more than two unexcused absences, he/she will be dropped from the program.** If a student is to miss a rehearsal, he/she must have a valid reason. An approved or valid reason must be accompanied by a letter from home, at least twenty-four hours in advance. As we all know, some situations warrant missing a rehearsal; however, some are very trivial and cannot be warranted as excused, even with a note. **WORK AND NON SANCTIONED SCHOOL EVENTS ARE NOT CONSIDERED VALID OR EXCUSED ABSENCES.** School Athletic Events that have been cleared by the director and the coaches are excused as long as prior notice has been given. Make sure to check ALL your calendars. (see page 9 & 10 on attendance procedures) Please look for any conflicts WEEKS in advance rather than DAYS.

Students and Work -- Many high school students work at paying jobs outside of school hours. This certainly is an admirable quality which often times becomes a necessity for some families. Band students must know all of their schedules and secure a replacement at work in order to keep their band commitments. In short, working a job outside of school cannot be sufficient reason for a band member missing a practice or a performance. The band rule is -- **"Get a sub at work!!"**

Baby Sitting -- Many times older children are required to baby sit younger siblings. However, baby sitting is not an excused absence. It is important for both parents and students to plan out conflicts in advance with the calendar for the school year.

Performances -- Performances are the culmination of the hard work and excellence achieved at rehearsals. They are the goals for which we rehearse. Any student who misses a performance cheats the band out of performing at its optimum.

At the beginning of the school year, you will receive a year calendar with important dates for concerts, rehearsals, and competitions. Since band is a performance based class, all performances and rehearsals are mandatory and attendance is a major part of the grade a student will receive. Since a performance can not be recreated, it is important for the success of the student to clear any dates in which these performances fall on.

If a student misses a performance the student will receive an F for the quarter.

Please note in the marching band, if a student misses the rehearsal before a performance for whatever reason, to be fair to those other students, that student will not be able to perform for the competition/performance.

Travel -- The band, and marching band especially, does travel and as such are considered "ambassadors" of Andrew High School. All rules and policies of Andrew High School and School District #230 shall be followed. Anyone found in direct violation of any policies and rules will be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the director. Disciplinary action may include immediate return of the student to the custody of his/her parents at the family's expense and may also include immediate dismissal from the band. A permission form must be signed by each student and at least one parent/guardian for the student to travel with the band.

We want all parents to feel comfortable that their students are in good care. Since the band is large, it can become difficult to keep track of each and every member who travels with the group. Therefore any band-related activities (contest, competitions, concerts, etc.) that take us away from school that and require the use of School District buses, students must ride the bus to and from the sites, unless the director has in advance, a signed and written note from his/her parents stating otherwise. If the students do not ride the buses, **a travel release form must be brought, in advance**, so the director can inform the chaperones in charge. This form can be obtained from the website - vjamusic.com. Also, provisions must be made to return equipment and uniforms to the school for proper storage.

C. UNIFORMS

For the most part, a \$400.00 band uniform is supplied by school finances and the Music Parents Organization. Parents and students conduct many excellent fund-raising activities to improve the band uniforms. A uniform will be assigned to a student with all parts in good condition and the student will be required to take care of the uniform issued. **A \$25.00 fee** (must be a check made out to Andrew Music Parents) will be collected at time of uniform pick-up. This fee will be returned by the Andrew Music Parents when the complete uniform is returned on time clean and undamaged. Parents and students will be required to sign an understanding agreement in regard to lost or damaged uniforms and/or it's accessories. A price list will be included identifying the cost of replacement or repair to the uniform.

If a uniform is damaged, misused, abused beyond normal wear and tear, or if a minor accident should occur, the parent will be responsible for cleaning, repairing, or replacing the uniform. Uniforms are very expensive items and not easily replaced. An unkept uniform shows disrespect for the organization.

The uniform is not only a sign of school spirit, but of personal pride and gives the feeling of unity and belonging to the band. In competition, when the band is not actually performing, the uniform will still be worn, or an approved alternate uniform shall be worn to preserve spirit.

Marching Band Winds and Percussion

School Supplies:

White Jacket, Bib Pants, black gloves(for wind players), hat, hat box, gauntlets, and garment bag.

Student Supplies:

Black Super Drill Master Shoes (NEW THIS YEAR)

Black Socks and Black gloves(percussion uses wrist bands, not gloves)

White plain tee shirt(to be worn under white jacket)

Black Compression Shorts (Spandex)

Black, fitted, long johns for colder weather

Guard

School Supplies:

Appropriate uniforms-standard and competition to reflect field show theme, garment bag, and rain coat

Make-up

Student Supplies:

Approved guard shoe
Leotard
Gloves

Concert and Symphonic Band

School Supplies:

Boys: Black concert jacket and bib pants
Girls: Long black concert skirt

Student Supplies:

Black dress shoes(boy may wear drill masters)
Boys supply black plain tee shirt
Appropriate socks or nylons
Girls will buy a required white blouse(same as one used in choir)

Wind Symphony

Student Supplies:

Boys: There will be a change in the concert dress this year. Information will be distributed in the beginning of the year.
Girls: Black concert dress. (Information will be passed out at the beginning of the school year with order forms and fitting instructions.)

General Rules

1. Uniforms will be kept at home at all times. Please note: This policy may change as we acquire more storage facility at school and once we receive our new uniforms near the end of the season.
2. They are to be hung in an appropriate area where they will not get damaged.
3. Uniforms will be fitted and passed out during the summer and the beginning of the school year by the music parents, and returned at the end of the year.
4. No jewelry, medals or makeup are worn on or with the uniform. Compression shorts (black) are acceptable underneath the bib pants. In colder weather black long johns will provide warmth. Sweaters and sweat shirts are not permitted to be worn under uniform. For the concert uniform, boys must wear a **black plain tee shirt under the jacket. (Concert and Symphonic Bands only)**

D. EQUIPMENT

Andrew High School supplies some of the very high-priced instruments, but, for the most part, parents supply the less costly ones. Some band members will also require the use of school equipment, and we gladly supply such equipment because of the enormous cost of such items, **however members of the guard and percussion sections will be charged a \$125 usage fee.** The following items will be supplied: Large instruments, drums and special mallets(not sticks), flagpoles, show uniforms, make-up, and flags.

It is required that the school equipment used by the student be maintained and returned each time it is used. If a student is assigned a certain piece of equipment, it is the student's responsibility to see that it is loaded safely, taken off safely, and stored back in the band room safely after each use. Only the student to whom the instrument is assigned may use that piece of equipment, unless provisions are made otherwise. If this is not the case, the student will be reprimanded, and not be allowed to use that piece of equipment again. If damage is done, a fee will be assessed to repair or replace that piece of equipment.

E. STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Student Leadership, and the willingness of the membership to respect and follow that leadership, is one of the keys to the band's success. An organization is only as strong as its leadership. We strongly believe in the development of young leaders. The band program provides numerous opportunities for students to develop leadership skills. Each Spring and Fall, students are selected and/or elected for the various ensembles. Some of these students attend a leadership workshop that develops many concepts of leadership. Student leadership authority is delegated by the directors. Student players are expected to listen to the student section leaders so that the band can operate most efficiently. It is important that students understand they should follow and respect ALL student leaders, not just the ones for their section. Below are the responsibilities/job description of the leadership positions:

Drum Majors

The Drum Majors are very likely the most visible part of the marching band and are the main student representatives to the public and community. The Drum Majors will be chosen by the director through a conducting audition and an interview. Though the Drum Majors are chiefly in charge of conducting the ensemble during performance, it is widely considered that their most important duties concern the overall appearance, professionalism, and morale of the marching band. These students should represent the epitome of the marching band membership in every way.

Section Leaders

Section leaders will be chosen for each of the performing sections of the bands. These students will be chosen via interview by the directors and instructional staff. Position decisions will be based upon several factors including, but not limited to: performance ability, previous experience, leadership qualities, recommendations, and the formal interview. Seniority may not necessarily be taken into consideration.

Section Leaders will be responsible for holding sectional rehearsals outside of regularly scheduled rehearsals as needed. In general, these student leaders will be the core of a leadership team established by the directors on an annual basis. These students will be responsible for reporting directly to the directors and instructional staff on matters pertinent to the overall performance of the organization.

Executive Committee

The executive committee chosen by a simple majority vote of the members of the wind symphony, symphonic, and concert bands. The following officers will be elected:

President - conduct the band in warm ups and provide director with help

Vice President - sets room up for class, sets up for concert with officer help

Secretary/Treasurer - acts as the band librarian, maintains music folders

F. PERFORMING GROUPS AND CRITERIA

Wind Symphony

Wind Symphony is a very elite group of students who have achieved a very high level of proficiency on their instruments. Membership is based on the scores from the audition. The audition is held usually in March or early April. All students(8th through 11th grade) will audition on the same music, and will be passed out by the director. The audition music will include scales, major and minor, IMEA etudes for the following year's District I audition, and short sight-reading selection. Wind Symphony members will all audition for IMEA in October.

Students in the Wind Symphony will be involved in scheduled outside practices, sectionals, contests, and/or performances beyond the regular concert schedule and outside the normal daily schedule(after the marching season). Please be prepared to arrange your schedule accordingly.

Symphonic Band

Symphonic band will consist of players who have obtained a high level of skill on their instruments. Placement and seating in the band is determined by an audition. Membership is based on the scores from the audition. The audition is held usually in March or early April. All students(8th through 11th grade) will audition on the same music, and will be passed out by the director. The audition music will include scales, major and minor, IMEA etudes for the following year's District I audition, and short sight-reading selection.

Students who make the symphonic band will be involved in some outside practices, sectional, contests, performances beyond the regular concert schedule and outside the normal daily schedule(when director sees need).

Expulsion from the group will be based on students behavior and attitude, lack of proficiency on rehearsed pieces, not working to full potential, and attendance at concerts and practices. The goal of the symphonic band is to provide a challenging outlet for more proficient players and to expand their musical growth individually and collectively. Private lessons are strongly recommended for all members of the program.

Concert Band

The Concert Band will consist of younger members and freshmen who did not audition. The concert band will perform at all scheduled concerts and an emphasis will be placed on developing individual skills as musicians. The goal of the concert band is to provide an organization to develop essential skill sets and to grow as an ensemble. The band will work with several concept books, Foundations for a Superior Performance and the chorales of Bach to develop individual and ensemble skills. Music will get progressively more difficult throughout the year. The Concert Band may have other performance opportunities and/or clinics outside of the regular concert schedule.

Percussion

Students who play percussion will be required to have the following: concert drum sticks, xylophone mallets, timpani mallets, and a stick bag. The school will provide the required sticks, mallets, and bag. The school also does provide the more costly xylophone, bass drum, and auxiliary mallets.

Students will be auditioned based on their abilities and will be assigned to play in the Wind Symphony, Symphonic or Concert band. Students will be assigned parts based on the requirements of the composition to be performed. As part of the grade for the percussion class, students will be required to participate in the IHSA Solo/Ensemble Contest in March, extra practices with the wind players, and an end of the year recital. All Wind Symphony members will audition for IMEA in October.

Challenge Procedure

Within each band:

Students may challenge up only one chair at a time. Students must fill out a challenge form signed by the person they are challenging. The challenge will take place the following Friday or scheduled date agreed by the students and the director. Music will be chosen and passed out the following Monday by the director. If a student refuses a challenge, the person making the challenge will automatically win the challenge. If a student does not show up for the challenge, the challenge will go to the individual who was at the challenge. If a student loses a challenge, he/she may not challenge that same student for two weeks. Students will not be allowed to challenge two weeks before a performance.

G. GRADES

1. PERFORMANCE SKILLS 40%

This grade will be based on the student's ability to demonstrate improvement of given skills in the following categories:

- a. Tone Quality
- b. Intonation Accuracy
- c. Rhythmic Accuracy
- d. Scale knowledge(Major, minor, and chromatic)
- d. Rudimental knowledge(percussion)
- e. Musicianship

These areas will be evaluated through performance checks(both taped and live), ability to play music given during rehearsals and performances.

Each student is evaluated on a standard of excellence on their own performance, not against one another.

2. REHEARSAL ATTENDANCE 20%

Band is a team activity with the end result dependent on mutual effort and cooperation of each individuals contribution to the betterment of the entire group's improvement. Absence of the individual or the instrument from rehearsals prevents the attainment of this goal. The successful member NEVER has an unexcused absence of tardiness. There can be no make up, only a zero for each absence.

All members are expected to give a minimum of 24 hours notice in the event of a rehearsal that must be missed. Email Mr. Iwinski first, then call the office 342-5938 to give notice. If you are 30 minutes late, it becomes an unexcused absence.

An excused absence requires a note from the parent or guardian specifying the date and activity to be missed and the SPECIFIC reason for the absence. "Needed at home", "family business", "personal reasons", "out of town", etc. are NOT specific reason for absence.

Students and Work -- Many high school students work at paying jobs outside of school hours. This certainly is an admirable quality which often times becomes a necessity for some families. Band students must know all of their schedules and secure a replacement at work in order to keep their band commitments. In short, working a job outside of school cannot be sufficient reason for a band member missing a practice or a performance. The band rule is -- "Get a sub at work!!"

Baby Sitting -- Many times older children are required to baby sit younger siblings. However, baby sitting is not an excused absence. It is important for both parents and students to plan out conflicts in advance with the calendar for the school year.

Performances -- Performances are the culmination of the hard work and excellence achieved at rehearsals. They are the goals for which we rehearse. Any student who misses a performance cheats the band out of performing at its optimum. Students are expected to remain until the end of the concert for that evening. This promotes an atmosphere of support and esprit de corps for each performing ensemble.

A. Excused Absence:

If you miss a concert and it is excused, you must record your concert music for the director to grade and evaluate. It is important that you must seek out the director to arrange this recording.

B. Unexcused Absence:

If a student misses a performance, the student will receive an F for the quarter.

Please note in the marching band, if a student misses the rehearsal before a performance for whatever reason, to be fair to those other students, that student will not be able to perform for the competition/performance.

C. Conflicts

Scheduling conflicts between band, choir, theater, athletics, and other school related activities will be avoided whenever possible. However, should a conflict arise, please notify both your director and your coach immediately. At that time, the director and the coach will work to come up with a mutually agreed solution. Please do this as early as possible. Give both of us the opportunity to work it out and to schedule a time to do a make up of missed material. If you come to us at the last minute and it is 10 that enough time could have prevented this it may affect your overall grade if you miss the performance.

3. ATTITUDE, CONDUCT, EFFORT 20%

To accomplish the goal of excellent musical performance, we must act responsibly and keep the good of the group in the forefront of our minds. This necessitates an attitude of cooperative TEAM WORK enabling the band to succeed.

4. INVOLVEMENT/RESPONSIBILITY 20%

1. Students are encouraged to become involved in other musical activities that do not conflict with the band rehearsals and performance(i.e. solo/ensemble contest. I.M.E.A. auditions, special ensembles. practicing, taking music home to practice, asking for help from section leaders or director)

2. Students are expected to maintain their instruments. Since band instruments are mechanical in nature they require continual care and maintenance to avoid loss of use. The possibility of a "double wham" exist if poor care causes loss of use of rehearsal(see Rehearsal/Attendance section). In addition it should be realized that instruments that are not in good repair and adjustment cannot be played in tune with other instruments. Students who abuse school instrument will have to pay for repair and is considered vandalism which requires the office of the dean.

3. Not having the proper equipment at every rehearsal and/or instrument results in receiving a zero for that day. Being prepared includes having playable reeds and backups, mutes, pencil, sticks, slide or valve oil, etc.

4. Each student is provided a locker and lock in the band/percussion room for the purpose of keeping your instrument/stick bag safe and off the floor. The locks and lockers are considered school property so please take care of them as such. There are many people that use the band room after hours so in order to maintain the safety and security of the instruments and our facility, locks need to be locked at the end of each rehearsal. Lockers are for your music class related items, **do not keep your closed or a personal text book library in your instrument locker.** Only band department locks are permitted to go on band area lockers.

The band provides a medium through which students progress academically, musically, and socially. Musicianship, attitude, attendance, punctuality, conduct, and a desire for excellence are absolutely expected from each member of the Victor J. Andrew High School Band Program. **INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE AND PREPARATION ARE ESSENTIAL.** No other discipline in education requires the high level of achievement from all participants, as does musical performance. Through the level of commitment required we hope to better prepare our students for the responsibilities encountered throughout their lives.

H. AWARDS AND PATCHES

All band members will be eligible to receive an award if they earned the minimum number of award points and maintain a "C" average in Band. Participation in outside of class instrumental activities such as; Jazz Band, Pep Band, Musical Orchestra, Solo/Ensemble Contest, etc. are considered extra and points earned can go toward making up deficiencies in the other areas. Any class directly related to your grade, such as Concert Band, Symphonic Band, Wind Symphony, and Percussion Band **will not receive extra credit for merit points.**

ALL AWARDS GIVEN REGARDLESS OF POINT AVERAGE WILL BE GIVEN AT THE DISCRETION OF THE DIRECTOR

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA BAND AWARD

1. Must demonstrate excellent musical ability.
2. Generally given to a Senior but it could go to a Junior.
3. Must show excellent attitudes.
4. Given at the end of the school year.
5. Person most likely to carry on the tradition of band.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG JAZZ AWARD

1. Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, or Senior member of jazz band.
2. Must show good improvisation.
3. Demonstrates excellent performing ability in jazz
4. Must be enrolled in band.
5. Given at the end of the school year.
6. Person most likely to carry on the tradition of band.

PATRICK GILMORE AWARD

1. Must demonstrate excellent musical ability.
2. Generally given to a Senior but it could go to a Junior.
3. Must show excellent attitudes.
4. Given at the end of the school year.
5. Person most likely to carry on the tradition of band.

Outstanding Class Awards

1. Must demonstrate positive attitudes.
2. Maintain "B" average or higher.
3. Contributed to the building of the band.
4. Given at the end of the school year..
5. Given to the outstanding members the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior class

The Daniel S. Romano Award

1. Works to maintain the proud traditions of the Andrew Band Program.
2. Demonstrates the highest leadership qualities.
3. Demonstrates a strong moral character.
4. Demonstrates a selfless attitude to the band program and its members.

I. SENIOR SCHOLARSHIPS AND MUSIC CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS

The Music Parent Organization offers four(4) \$500.00 scholarships to senior band and choir students. Senior students who are continuing their education beyond high school are encouraged to fill out the applications are offered in April. Mr. Moan and Mr. Iwinski will collect and jointly agree on the four students to be awarded the Music Parent Organization Scholarship. It is NOT required that a student major in music to be awarded this scholarship, but is based largely on the service, attitude, contributions that individual has made to the music department over the four years they have been involved in their high school career.

With the many summer music camps available to you, it is suggested that you try to attend one. Most colleges and universities offer some type of summer camp. Those who have been to one will know the value of it and lasting friendships may result. Camps are various lengths from several day to two weeks, depending on the program.

The Boosters offer twenty(20) \$100 scholarships for those attending camps(Ten for band and ten for choir- if the ten in band are not used, the remaining will transfer to choir and vice-a-versa. If you would like to go to a camp but you don't know which one is for you, talk to Mr. Iwinski and read all of the posters on the wall in the band room. Students are required to fill out the scholarship form and include a photo copy of the application to the camp. These are on a first come first serve basis and students are encourage to apply early.

Private Lessons

If you go to a school were the music program is superb, you will find that about 70% of the students take private lessons. This is the case with schools such as Marian Catholic, Lincoln-Way, and Joliet Central. They readily boast about the number of students who study privately. The quality of a program relies on the quality of the individual in the program. Their technique , tone, practice habits, and of course, approach to a group affect the quality of the program. At Andrew, we have a fine program because of the dedication of students and instructors, but we can not approach the quality of some of the area schools simply because of the ability of our students.

Students simply gain so much more during private lessons than can be achieved only during class time. They get individualized attention, work on problems that the student could be having, they get expert guidance from someone who is highly skilled in that instrument and they get to work on solo and other material that is different from the usual band music. They gain self confidence and esteem as they find themselves progressing on their instrument, and see it as an important investment as they meet with more success.

One of the biggest problems in taking private lessons is finding a qualified teacher. Here at Andrew, we will have seven teachers coming in after school to give private instruction. Schedules of instruction can be arranged so that students could even take activity buses home, and parents would not have to worry about picking up or dropping off students. Enclosed is a list of private teachers and their phone numbers. Prices range from \$7.50 to \$15.00 a half hour. (A sampling of teachers show this is the low-average rate) Realizing this can become a financial burden, scheduling lessons every other week could ease the problem. Please help us to help your students grow musically.

HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN TO PRACTICE

by Barbara Prentice

(taken from the "Instrumentalist", November 1987)

Barbara Prentice is Director of Bands at Boles Junior High School in Arlington, Texas and a Contributing Editor of the Instrumentalist. She holds degrees from Texas Tech and North Texas State University

Before school started last year my eight-year old son could hardly wait for Day One. He counted his pencils over and over as he put things in and toll them out of his back-pack. I knew his sense of excitement because I see it every year in my students.

As parents, you can stimulate this kind of excitement about school by helping your child learn to practice techniques. Playing an instrument develops more than musical skills, It also teaches children how t plan time and set goals. By showing your child how to get organized for practice sessions, you will be helping him develop skills that will carry over into other academic subjects.

Naturally, your child will need the right supplies, but parents soon catch on to the difference between wants and needs. You don't need an expensive inventory, by do keep a backup supply of items such as reeds, oil, cleaning supplies,m and music. A metronome and a folding music stand are useful for at-home practice.

A song with the right supplies., a child needs something to help him get those things to and from school., Tote bags, pack packs, or duffel bangs will help a child "get it all together." At home designate a launch/landing pad where your child can set down his belongings upon arrival and gather items before departure. The mechanical activity of putting his own name on everything will help your child keep track of things.

Get to know your child's band director. Go to parents' meetings and band band booster meetings. Be aware of assigned tryout materials and audition dates so that you can give support at home.

Create an environment where practicing is easy:

-Set aside a place for practice. For some it's in the den by the piano; other kids have a practice area in their own bedrooms. Check for adequate lighting, ventilation, and temperature.

-Schedule a regular time for practice. Mornings are a good alternative to busy afternoon schedules.

-Control the television or put it in another room so that it does not tempt your child to neglect practicing.

-Participate in the practice sessions. My neighbor sat in on her son's private lessons and coached him each day in his practice, reminding him of his private teacher's suggestions and rehearsal hints. That boy made All-State every year he auditioned.

-Set up a supportive environment for your child. Encourage his practice, and don't hound him to stop because you want peace and quiet. Never use practice as a punishment.

Parental responsibilities include patience in repeatedly reminding your child, "It's time to practice," and offering encouragement when the going gets tough. Some things are easy to learn; others require intensive and repeated practice. Parents should show imagination in creating a musical atmosphere at home, whether by playing recordings, performing together in family ensembles, or watching musical programs on public television.

Even if you are not a trained musician or teacher, you can give your budding trumpeter or trombonist help in his practice sessions. Remind him to work on new music first, adding to his repertoire of solo pieces and exercises. If you keep hearing the same sour notes, suggest practicing in short sections. Recommend isolating the problems - a few notes or measures - and working those out slowly.

Remember the axiom computer experts use: "Garbage in, garbage out." Check the notes carefully to see that the child is reading the accurately. No rewriting or composing is allowed.

No beginner plays his instrument beautifully. Even Chris Martin once probably sounded like a sixth grader, so be patient. Expect only gradual improvement; praise work well done.

Parents should have the firmness to insist upon what they know is best in the long run, regardless of the frequency, length, and volume of the resistance.

Just as a good academic student develops a system for keeping track of assignments, class hand outs, and notes, a good music student learns to pace practice throughout the week instead of rushing madly to learn the music at 10 p.m. the night before tryouts. Organization is the key. Give your child that key, and he can unlock the joys of music and the satisfaction of future accomplishments.

When should I practice?

Everyday - even if you're not feeling well. Regular practice, even a small amount, is much better for you than a single, exhausting two or three hour session once a week.

Set a regular time and stick to it, rather than just practicing when you think about it or after you've finished your homework, or if there's nothing good on T.V.

Where do I practice?

You need a place where distractions are minimal.

What do I need?

You need your instrument and music. In addition, have a back-up supply of accessories such as reeds or valve oil.

A straight chair and music stand, don't sit cross legged on the bed leaning over your music.

A pencil with an eraser, mark your music in pencil. A metronome; it will help you play steadily and it will also help develop your technique.

Many teachers recommend using a cassette recorder to play back practice sessions.

How much time do I have to practice?

That depends. Ask yourself some questions. How long have you played? How much do you need to accomplish? How much better do you want to be? Beginners may not have the endurance to work more than 15 minutes at a time, but a high school player should plan for a 45 minute session, or even longer.

Just what do I do?

Start by warming up. Scientific studies show that muscles work most efficiently after warming up. As a musician you also need to warm up to avoid injury to the muscles of your embouchure. Each instrument requires its own routine. Lip slurs are a must for brass players. Scales are good for everyone.

What should I practice?

After your warm-up, work on new material first while you're fresh. Review music you have learned previously, and review your own performance. You can do this by taping your practice session and replaying the tape.

How do I work on the music?

Slowly. Even the master musicians of the world don't practice at breakneck speed; they practice slowly and carefully. Your brain is the greatest computer ever invented. If you program it carelessly, with wrong notes and sloppy playing, that's exactly what you'll get in a performance. Practice slowly. Remember the key to fine playing is repetition - correct repetition. There are no shortcuts.

Tricks to learning technical knuckle-busting spots

Work on one small area at a time. If you play straight through your music, you'll create a mess that will seem overwhelming and you may end up frustrated, wanting to quit before the job is done.

Begin by working a technical passage at a slow tempo, marking your music or notebook with the metronome speed so you'll know where to start the next day. Circle the troubled notes. Your eye will see it before your fingers get there, and you'll have time to send a message via the brain to the fingers to get ready for this troublesome passage. Mark the music for other reminders.

Isolate the problem. Practice just the spot you're having difficulty with. If you can play through the passage five times in a row without making a mistake, then increase tempo or continue to next area.

2011 - 2012 Handbook Form

PLEASE NOTE

Yes, our family has read and understands ALL of the material expressed in and implied by the 2011 - 2012 Victor J. Andrew 'Thunderbolt' Band Hand Book. We will look at the current band schedule posted at vjamusic.com and acknowledge that all of the rehearsals and performances stated are required for full participation and credit. Parents, it is important that you go over this hand book with your child. Please return this form signed by yourself and your child to Mr. Iwinski. This will show that you have read the handbook. If you have any questions regarding this please feel free to call Mr. Iwinski at school.

We must receive this signed form before we can issue any grades. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Student Signature

Date