

YHS BAND HANDBOOK 2025-2026



Ms. Kluga ~ Director

“To inspire character through the magic
of music and community building.”

YHS BAND HANDBOOK 2025-2026

Dear YHS Band Parents and Students,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year! Please take time to read this handbook so that you will understand the expectations and procedures of the YHS Band program. Your performing ensemble is a regular part of your academic schedule with requirements much like your other classes. Familiarizing yourself with our class policies will ensure that you have a successful (and fun!) experience.

****Please make particular note of our concert and event dates listed at the end of this packet.
BE SURE TO ADD THESE DATES TO YOUR FAMILY CALENDAR****

Expectations

For a student to participate in any ensemble at Yorktown High School, they must:

- Attend and be timely to rehearsals and lessons. Before the bell rings students should be seated with their instrument and music, ready to play.
- Attend and be timely for all ensemble performances.
- Actively and respectfully work toward the improvement of their ensemble during rehearsals.
- Follow the instructions of the Director.
- Complete assignments in a timely manner.

Students are expected to participate regularly in all facets of the band program - rehearsals, concerts, events and lessons. **We are a team**; our success will depend on our combined effort and responsibility!

YHS Band Grading System

A student's grade will reflect their effort and attitude, and the quality completion of assignments. Grades are part of the student's overall GPA.

Your quarterly grade will be determined as follows:

| Category | Points |
|---|---------------|
| Group Lessons and Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Lesson Attendance○ Performance Evaluations (Homework)○ Video Assessments | 50 |
| Class Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Prompt and regular attendance○ Active participation○ Required Daily Materials○ **Attendance at Concerts is required. Be sure to add our dates to your family calendar** | 45 |
| Extra Credit | 5 |

Earning an excellent grade is possible for everyone! Be an active contributor to our **musical team**; be responsible, respectful, try your best, and attend class/lessons/concerts. Doing all of the above will not only ensure your success, but also make band fun!

YHS Band Grading System (continued)

EXTRA CREDIT - How to earn an A+ in Band (5 points needed per quarter)

In addition to the requirements listed above, one point is added to your quarter grade each time you:

1. Play in Pep Band
2. Practice during a free period, or attend or lead a guided practice session
3. Help organize equipment or music, or set up for rehearsals
4. Volunteer at a band, orchestra, or choir event
5. Design a concert program
6. Write a review of any concert you attend (see Ms. K for a worksheet)
7. Form a chamber group & perform for the community (add **5 points** to your quarter grade!)
8. Participate in the NYSSMA Solo Festival (add **5 points** to your 3rd quarter grade!)
9. Play in Jazz Band (add **5 points** to your quarter grade!)
10. Play in the Pit for the musical (add **5 points** to your 3rd quarter grade!)
11. Enact any other ideas you may have that will improve our YHS Band program!

Honors Credit

In addition to the regular course requirements, students are able to receive honors credit for Concert Band or Wind Ensemble by preparing and performing a level 5 or 6 solo before a NYSSMA adjudicator at the regularly scheduled Zone 11 Up-County NYSSMA Solo and Ensemble Festival. To receive honors credit and level I weighting, the student must earn a score of **95 or above on a level 6** solo/ensemble, or a score of **97 or above on a level 5** solo/ensemble.

Performance Evaluations / Weekly Lesson Homework

We all know that “practice makes perfect!” Students will be given a playing assignment for homework at each lesson which will cover the basics of music (scales/rudiments, arpeggios, rhythms, technique, etudes and solos). Grading factors include; the student’s effort to practice and improve, accuracy of pitch and rhythm, correct articulation and dynamics, tone quality, intonation and musical phrasing.

Written Assignments and Quizzes

Students may be asked occasionally to express on paper some of the topics we have been studying in class. These exercises allow students to develop and demonstrate, their knowledge and understanding of musical vocabulary, keys, scales, time signatures, rhythms, music history, form, composition, etc.)

Concert Performances

We are a **team** and our concerts are the **big game!** Therefore, **participation in all concerts is required.** Students are expected to participate in all performances unless they are ill (absent from school) or excused by the director. Potential conflicts with jobs, games, family activities, etc. can be avoided with careful planning. Our concert dates are listed at the end of this packet. Achieving our most successful performance requires the contributions of every member of our **musical team!**

Seating

Just as any sports team needs to have balanced playing positions on the field, our musical team will perform and sound best when we are balanced. Please help your student understand that *no matter what part they are assigned, they are an invaluable member of our musical team.* All parts are needed to produce a beautiful and balanced ensemble sound, and strong players are needed on every part! In band, no player ever sits on the bench!

Lessons

Lessons are an integral part of our musical progress and are scheduled weekly on a rotating basis. The monthly lesson schedule is **thoroughly communicated**: posted on YHS Band Dashboard, on our classroom bulletin boards, sent in my weekly e-mail, and reviewed weekly in class. Students also receive an e-mail reminder 3 days before each lesson, and a text reminder the morning of their lesson.

Lesson Policy

1. Students are expected to attend a weekly small group lesson at the scheduled time. Students are assigned to a lesson-group, the period of the lesson will rotate.
2. In addition to their instrument, music and assignments, each student is also required to bring:
 - a. A pencil.
 - b. Any necessary musical accessories (reeds, reed guard, cleaning supplies, etc.).
3. Be sure you know your assignment! You will be graded on your preparation.
4. **Communicate!** YHS requires students to tell their classroom teacher **3 days in advance** when missing class due to a music lesson.
 - a. Each week during rehearsal students are given time and direction to e-mail their teachers regarding the next week's lesson.
 - b. Sometimes a student will need to miss a lesson if:
 - They have a test or lab that cannot be made-up after school.
 - They have one class that they are struggling in.
 - c. In both cases, communicate with me in advance.
 - It is still your responsibility to prepare the lesson assignment.
 - It is your responsibility to schedule a make-up lesson.
 - Students are allowed 1 week to make up a missed lesson.
 - Students are allowed 1 missed lesson each quarter without penalty.

Homework

Both musicians and athletes spend time practicing and refining their skills. Students are expected to practice the assigned lesson material. Individual musical ability, and the excellence of our musical team, is a result of the time and effort devoted to home practice.

To practice successfully you will need:

- 30 minutes.
- A ***quiet space*** free from distraction (turn off phone notifications). Be present in the moment!
- A ***metronome*** that you turn on and try to follow.
- A ***pencil*** to circle accidentals, dynamics and any tricky spots.
- Your ***fingering chart or other reference materials*** to help you answer questions.
- A ***music stand*** and ***correct posture*** to create good breathing and good sound.
- Use daily practice as a break from your other academic studies. Enjoy the art of making music!

Extra Help

I am always happy to help! If a student would like extra musical guidance, they should contact me to schedule an appointment after school. Additionally, our upperclassmen band students offer weekly guided practice sessions. Information about private lesson teachers is also available.

Private Lessons

Want to take your musicianship to the next level? The Yorktown area is fortunate to have access to many skilled private lesson instructors. Private lessons are a wonderful way to improve your musical confidence and really master your instrument. While band rehearsals and group lessons can develop basic instrument knowledge, ensemble skills and musicianship, there is no substitute for the benefits offered through private lessons.

Please see the list below for teacher information, or speak with Ms. Kluga.

| | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Holly Bernitt-Saks | 980-8059 | Flute | holly.bernitt@gmail.com |
| Rachel Bidwell | 845-406-2628 | Flute | Rachel.bidwell@gmail.com |
| Jennifer Flynn | | Flute | jflynn@yorktown.org |
| Marjorie Hone | 591-6851 | Flute | mhone@erols.com |
| Marianne Lepre-Nolan | 277-7712 | Flute | |
| Jennifer Pyne | 686-2688 | Flute | JennyPyne@gmail.com |
| Rebecca Quigley | 739-1927 | Flute | rebeccaquigleyflute.com |
| Victoria Vespucci | | Flute | vvespucci@yorktown.org |
| Diane Spitalny | 263-6711 | Flute | |
| Amy Richter | 845-424-8308 | Oboe | arichter@henhudschools.org |
| Troy Messenger | 827-8201 | Oboe | |
| Gina Serafin | 962-0361 | Oboe | musicbyserafin@aol.com |
| Tiffany Radovich | 845-225-4515 | Oboe | tiffany@radovichanddean.com |
| Dannielle McBryan | 724-992-8610 | Oboe | Danniellembryan@gmail.com |
| Garrett Brown | (484) 269-8771 | Bassoon | |
| Janet Grice | 693-0892 | Bassoon | jangrice@yahoo.com |
| Gilbert Dejean | 212-569-9385 | Bassoon | |
| Diane Fedora | 914-271-4375 | Bassoon | dfedora@verizon.net |
| Briana Lehman | (West Point Musician) | Bassoon | briana.lehman@gmail.com |
| Daniel Salvi | 962-5022 | Clarinet | clarindan@aol.com |
| Lisa Sable | 980-3875 | Clarinet | |
| Kristen Mather de Andrade (West Point musician) | | Clarinet | kristen@kristenmather.com |
| Joey Berkley | 666-8401 | Sax | |
| Allison Shapiro | 845-883-9723 | Sax | |
| Ben Acrish | 914-456-2369 | Trumpet | bcacrish@yahoo.com |
| Chris Melito | 276-3932 | Trumpet | |
| Micah Sprague | (845) 628-4289 | Horn | micahsprague@yahoo.com |
| Steven Shertz | (914) 505-0232 | Horn | sshorn2@hotmail.com |
| Kyle Kayler | 845-228-4167 | Horn | klkayler@gmail.com |
| Adam Schommer | | Horn | schommeradam6@gmail.com |
| Amanda Rimm-Hewitt | 917-363-1799 | Trombone | arimmhewitt@yahoo.com |
| Allan Goidel | 302-7334 | Trombone | goidela@ardsleyschools.org |
| Walter Barret | 914-318-6619 | Trombone | waltrittrombone@me.com |
| Kevin Quigley | 739-1927 | Trombone | |
| Declan Wilcox | | Trombone/Euph/Tuba | declanwilcox@gmail.com |
| Bijan Daneshvar | 845-926-0136 | Euphonium | bdaneshvar6@gmail.com |
| Robert LaPorta | 834-6248 | Euphonium | robert.laporta@verizon.net |
| Richard Williams | 833-2782 | Euphonium | rgtrombone@aol.com |
| Scott Rimm-Hewitt | 917-363-2138 | Tuba/Euphonium | scottrimmhewitt@yahoo.com |
| John Arrucci | 845-225-0356 | Percussion/Theory | |
| David Bergman | (West Point Musician) | Percussion | david.bergman@usma.edu |
| Elena Bonomo | | Percussion | embdrumsofficial@gmail.com |
| Simon Boyar | | Percussion | www.simonboyardrumschool.com |
| Paul Francis | | Percussion | paulfrancisdrums@gmail.com |
| Philip Greiss | 528-7190 | Percussion | |

Daily Supplies

Are needed to keep your instrument in working order. The tools to help you succeed musically! Available at these local music stores:

| | | |
|------------------------|--------------|--|
| Ardsley Music | 693-6639 | www.ardsleymusic.com |
| Music and Arts Centers | 241-0689 | www.musicarts.com |
| Radovich and Dean | 845-225-4515 | www.radovichanddean.com |

ALL BAND MEMBERS PLEASE PURCHASE:

- Metronome and tuner. (The TONAL ENERGY APP (\$5.99) is available for both iPhone and Android).
- A pencil. Put a few in your case so you always have them!
- Folding Music Stand.

INSTRUMENT SPECIFIC SUPPLIES:

Percussion:

- Snare drum (or drum pad) and snare drum stand.
- **A bell kit with mallets.** A good option is the CB Percussion 6854 Bell Kit

Flute:

- Cleaning rod.
- Soft cleaning cloth (about a 6" x 6" piece of an old t-shirt will work).

Oboe / Bassoon:

- REEDS: At least **3** quality reeds. Quality reeds can be found at Radovich and Dean (in Carmel) www.radovichanddean.com or on-line at: hodgeproductsinc.com or forrestsmusic.com.
- REED CASE: To hold 3 reeds. An old Altoids tin works well, or you can purchase one one-line. Some good options are the **Fox Oboe Reed Case**, or **Fox Bassoon Reed Case**.

Clarinet and Alto Sax:

- REEDS: **1 full box (contains 10 reeds)** of **Van Doren** reeds (strength 2.5 or 3).
At YHS, you will learn to rotate reeds. This supply will last you until December.
- REED CASE: A reed case that holds 4 reeds. An economical option is the **Rico "ReedGard IV."**
- A clarinet swab (inquire if this comes as part of your rental instrument).

Bass Clarinet and Tenor/Bari Sax:

- REEDS: **1 full box (contains 10 reeds)** of **Van Doren*** reeds (strength 2 or 2.5).
At YHS, you will learn to rotate reeds. This supply will last you until December.
- REED CASE: A reed case that holds 4 reeds. An economical option is the **Rico "ReedGard IV."**

Trombone:

- *Slide-O-Mix Trombone Lubrication System* (contains 1 small bottle and 1 large bottle)
- *Schilke* tuning slide grease
- Mouthpiece cleaning brush
- Spray bottle to keep at home (an old Windex bottle will do). Put only WATER in the spray bottle.

Trumpet, Horn, Euphonium and Tuba:

- *Al Cass* valve oil
- *Schilke* tuning slide grease
- Mouthpiece cleaning brush

Concert Dress

Look sharp! (Not flat ☺). As with an athletic uniform, our professional and unified visual appearance is an important part of every performance. Below are the required components of our concert attire. Failure to adhere to the following expectations may result in a student's inability to participate in our performance.

Concert dress for Girls:

- Black pants or LONG black skirt
- Black Blouse-- longish sleeves (no sleeveless shirts or spaghetti straps please)
- Black Dress Shoes

Concert dress for Boys:

- Black Pants
- Black Shirts--long-sleeved
- Black Socks (please no White Sox; great team, but on the concert stage they look so silly!)
- Black Dress Shoes

Band Officers

Our awesome student leadership! Officers are elected each June, act as liaisons to the director, organize special functions, and help with daily band activities. Band Officers must be "every day" participants in band, be in good standing in lessons, and are expected to demonstrate leadership in every aspect of student life. In rare instances, officers may be replaced if they consistently fail to act responsibly.

Wind Ensemble

Similar to the expectations of a Varsity sport, to be eligible for our top musical ensemble students must demonstrate a high level of dedication and musical ability. Specifically, a student must:

- Show a positive attitude towards their peers, director, and towards the music being performed.
- Attend all lessons.
- Be present at all performances throughout the year.
- Be a leader and team player within their section and performing ensemble.
- Be able to perform all music worked on in the ensemble.
- Complete all assignments on time, and work to maintain and improve their level of musicianship.
- Demonstrate superior knowledge of major scales (or rudiments), chromatic scale, alternate fingerings.
- Successfully complete the YHS Wind Ensemble audition on a NYSSMA level 4, 5 or 6 solo.
- These students should also participate in the NYSSMA Solo Festival on a grade 4, 5, or 6 solo.

Jazz Band

The Jazz Band is a group dedicated to the performance of music in the "Big Band" tradition, and follows standard instrumentation (saxophone, trumpet, trombone, rhythm section). Students learn to play improvised solos and participate in the performance of modern jazz/rock/pop music. The ensemble participates in school concerts, community events, and competitions/festivals. Jazz Band will meet one evening a week to rehearse.

Students selected to be in Jazz Band are making a commitment to our musical team for the entire year.

Prerequisites: By audition only. Enrollment in WE, CB, Orchestra, Choir, or Chorus

Memorial Day Marching Band

In support of our servicemen and women, Veterans, and community, the YHS Marching Band performs each year in the Yorktown Memorial Day Parade. All band members are required to attend. Of course, I realize that this is also a big family barbeque weekend. For students who have family obligations and are unable to attend the parade, please bring a parent note in advance.

Pep Band

The YHS Pep Band provides entertainment and inspiration at varsity football games. Decked out in our green and white finest, we have a blast performing exciting music and cheering on our Huskers! Not only is this a fun, positive, and safe weekend activity, but students also get free game admission, **and earn one point on their quarter average** each time they attend! (Performances dates listed on calendar below).

YHS BAND REGISTRATION

Parents and students, please register on our website. This system is Ms. Kluga's primary method of distributing information regarding band assignments, updates, and events.

- * **New YHS Band Students** – please register at **register.yhsbands.com**. Respond to the activation notifications received by text and e-mail.
- * **Returning YHS Band Students** – please log in to your Dashboard account at **my.yhsbands.com** to confirm your information. Use the first part of your @yorktown.org address to log in. (ex. if your address is john.smith@yorktown.org, use “john.smith” as your log in). Click on your name in the upper right of the screen and then click “Edit Contact Info.” Respond to the activation notifications listed.

WWW.YHSBANDS.COM

Offers helpful info about our program, events, instrument specific links, and my weekly blog post. It also contains links to registration and to your student's personalized “dashboard.”

DASHBOARD

Personalized access to learning materials including: a list of posted homework assignments, homework documents, instrument specific practice aids, professional recordings of our music, class documents, lesson calendars, and more.

ONE FINAL NOTE (ha!):

Please understand that this handbook is meant to offer a detailed explanation of how you can succeed. I am happy to help you in any way I can! Thank you for taking the time to familiarize yourself with how I run the YHS Bands. If you have questions, please contact me.

I'm looking forward to a fun and musical year together!



Ms. Kluga
Director of Bands
Yorktown High School
ekluga@yorktown.org
243-8050 Ext.22249
Twitter: @MsKluga and @yhsbands

YHS BAND CALENDAR 2025-2026

****PLEASE ADD THESE DATES TO YOUR FAMILY CALENDAR****

| DATE | EVENT | TIME-FRAME |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| 8/26 (Tues) | Band Retreat & Music Dept. Ice Cream Social | 3-8pm |
| 8/31 (Sun) | Summer Social at West Point Labor Day Concert | 7:30pm |
| 9/2 (Tues) | Freshman Big Buddy Day | |
| 9/3 (Wed) | Pep Band Rehearsal #1 | 1:45-3:00pm |
| 9/5 (Fri) | Pep Band @ Varsity Football Home Game (6pm) | 4:30-8:30pm |
| 9/10 (Wed) | Pep Band Rehearsal #2 | 1:45-3:00 |
| 9/11 (Thurs) | YHS Back to School Night (Band Parent Helpers ~ Event Planning Meeting | 7:00pm 6:00pm) |
| 9/14 (Sun) | Band Apple Picking Trip to Wilken's Farm | 10am-12 |
| 9/17 (Wed) | Jazz Band Auditions | 1:30-3:30pm |
| 9/19 (Fri) | Pep Band @ Varsity Football Home Game (6:30pm) | 5:00-9:00pm |
| 9/25 (Thurs) | Jazz Band Rehearsals begin | 7-8:30pm |
| 10/1-11/3 | Music Boosters Citrus Sale | 10/1-11/3 |
| 10/10 (Fri) | Pep Band @ Varsity Football Home Game (6:30pm) | 5:00-9:00pm |
| 10/17 (Fri) | Music Boosters Tag Sale (donation drop-off) | 3-7pm |
| 10/18 (Sat) | Music Boosters Tag Sale (SALE!) | 9am – 2pm |
| 10/24 (Fri) | Pep Band Homecoming Dinner & Varsity FB Game | 5-9:00pm |
| 10/31 (Fri) | YHS Band Halloween Costume Contest | During Class |
| 11/21-22 (Fri-Sat) | Tri-Towns Symphony Orchestra Festival | |
| 12/9 (Tues) | Winter Band Concert (Snow Date Thurs. 12/18) | 7:00pm |
| 12/11 (Thurs) | Citrus Sale Order Distribution | 3:00 – 8pm |
| 1/10 (Sat) | All County Jazz Band Auditions @ Hommocks MS | 9am –12pm |
| 2/4 (Wed) | Jazz Band and Chamber Orchestra "World Tour" | 8am-3pm |
| 2/7 (Sat) | YHS Band "Swing Dance" Concert (Snow Date 2/28) | 7:00pm |
| 3/26 (Thurs) | YCSD District Band Festival (Bandapalooza) | 6:00pm |
| 4/10-11 (Fri-Sat) | NYSSMA Piano Festival at Lakeland HS | |
| 4/18-20 (Sat-Mon) | Wind Ensemble Festival Trip TBD | |
| 4/27-4/30 (Mon-Fri) | '25-'26 Wind Ensemble Auditions | |
| *5/7 or 12 (Th/Tu) | TBD YHS Spring Band Concert | 7:00pm |
| 5/9 (Sat) | Music Department Festival and Six Flags Trip | |
| 5/25 (Mon) | Memorial Day Parade and Annual YHS Band BBQ | 10:00am |
| 5/29-30 (Fri-Sat) | Up-County NYSSMA Solo Festival @ Somers | |
| 5/29 (Fri) | Jazz Band performs at Relay for Life | Evening |

YHS BAND COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Student/Parent Response

**** Please return this sheet (digitally, or in person) to Ms. Kluga by Friday, September 12th ****

By signing below both parent and student agree that:

1. We have read the YHS Band Handbook, including the course expectations, lesson requirements and grading procedures. We understand what is required to successfully complete the course of study in the Band program at Yorktown High School.
2. We have completed, or updated, our registration information at **register.yhsbands.com**. We understand that this system is Ms. Kluga's primary method of distributing information regarding assignments, updates, and events.
3. We understand that by registering, our student will receive text message reminders for band lessons and band events from **914-685-5464**.
4. We acknowledge the YHS Band dates listed in this Handbook and will add them to our family calendar.
5. We acknowledge that to ensure a respectful, focused, and distraction-free learning environment, the **YCSD Internet-Enabled Device Policy** will be enforced in class as follows:
 - All internet-enabled devices (including cell phones and smartwatches) must be kept in your bag from bell to bell during the academic period. No cell phones, smartwatches, or electronic devices should be kept on your person (e.g., in pockets, hands, or clothing). If you do not have a bag, the device must be kept in your locker.
 - Unless specifically instructed otherwise, internet-enabled devices may not be used at any time during class activities, transitions, downtime, or bathroom breaks.
 - There will be a zero-tolerance policy in place. If any internet-enabled device is seen, it will be confiscated, given to the grade-level administrator, and returned at the end of the school day. A second violation will require a parent to come in and pick up the device.
 - Failure to turn over the device willingly will result in immediate contact with the grade-level administrator and will be considered an act of insubordination.
 - There will be an escalating set of consequences for repeated violations of this policy.

Student's Name (Print)

Student's Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date