

Levittown Public Schools

Music Performance Handbook



Success For Every Student

Introduction

Music is ubiquitous, a universal language that has connected all human beings since the dawn of time. Indeed there is a reliable scientific research that suggests that humans were singing to one another long before they formed a coherent language from which to speak with one another. Music is the language of the soul, capable of expressing the full breadth of emotions, from our greatest joys to our deepest sorrows. For most, it would be impossible to imagine a world without music.

We in the Levittown Public Schools District Music Program have as our primary goal the sharing of the extraordinary gift of music with as many students and members of the Levittown community as is possible. This is done not only through a well-planned course curriculum, but also through the many concerts, productions and special performances in which our students participate. We hope that all students who graduate from Levittown Public Schools do so as talented and educated young musicians, encouraged to continue their experiences in music throughout the rest of their lives. The National Core Arts Standards define such individuals as artistically literate citizens.



Grading Policy

Elementary

Elementary instrumental music students in grades 3, 4, and 5 will receive grades in the following categories on their report cards at the end of each trimester: lessons performance, lessons attendance, and lessons participation and effort.

Lessons performance and lessons attendance grades will appear numerically:

- 4 – Mastery of Standards
- 3 – Meeting Standards
- 2 – Working Towards Standards
- 1 – Below Standards

Lessons participation and effort will appear as a letter grade:

- E – Excellent
- G – Good
- I – Inconsistent
- N – Needs to Improve

Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 who participate in a performing ensemble (band, orchestra, and/or, chorus) will receive an overall grade (numeric, see above) as well as a participation and effort grade (letter, see above) in each ensemble.

Secondary

Secondary students (grades 6 through 12) participating in Band, Orchestra, and Chorus will receive a quarterly percentage grade that is included in their overall GPA as well as quarterly progress reports. Each quarterly grade will be based on classroom participation, lesson attendance, concert attendance, homework, practice logs, playing/singing tests, and written tests. *Refer to your child's band, orchestra, or chorus teacher for a specific grading policy and guidelines.*

Performances

Performances are one of the highlights of the district music program, the culmination of hours of practice both at home and in ensemble rehearsals. Performances are opportunities for students to share the gift of music with parents, friends, family and members of the Levittown community.

It is expected that all students enrolled in the performing music program participate in all of the scheduled performances of their group(s). Some of these performances include:

Winter Concerts and Spring Concerts
Graduation and/or Moving Up Ceremonies
Parades
Football Games (some high school Marching Band students)

Parents and students will receive dates of performances well in advance so that all necessary scheduling arrangements can be made to enable students to participate in each performance. Performances currently on the calendar for this school year are printed in this handbook.

Dress Code:

All performers are required to adhere to the specific dress code outlined by their ensemble director. Generally speaking, appropriate dress for concerts will include:

Boys: Dark dress pants, white collared shirt, dark shoes and dark socks. A neck tie may also be required.

Girls: Dark dress pants or dark full length skirt, white blouse or white collared shirt, dark shoes and socks.

Jeans, sneakers, flip flops, sandals and t-shirts with graphics and/or writing of any kind are not appropriate concert dress.

If for some reason a student has a problem with wearing appropriate concert dress, a parent/guardian should contact the performing music teacher well in advance of a performance. Students who do not follow a required dress code may not participate in the performance.

Preparation:

All of the members of a performing group count on one another to be prepared for each performance. Being prepared includes:

- Arriving on or before the required report time. On time for musicians is 15 minutes early!
- Making sure instruments are in good working order and reporting any problems with an instrument to a music teacher well in advance of an upcoming performance.
- Practicing all of the required performance music to the best of your ability.
- Arriving with extra reeds, rosin, valve oil and other accessory items, as needed.
- Making sure to eat, hydrate and get sufficient rest, as needed, so that you can perform at your best.
- Follow appropriate performance dress code.

Lessons

All instrumental music students and high school choral students will be scheduled to attend a small group lesson on a weekly basis. Students will be assigned to groups based on their instrument or voice type, performance ability and grade level.

All beginning elementary instrumental students start instruction with music lessons and are invited to join a performance ensemble after they have achieved a required level of proficiency.

Music lessons are an essential and invaluable part of the music curriculum.

The classroom environment of a performing music ensemble is as diverse as any in a school district, consisting of a large group of students, often times from multiple grades, with varying levels of learning ability, learning styles and musical achievement. The only way to offer students the individualized attention required for them to succeed in such an environment is through small group lessons.

Music lessons are scheduled on a rotating basis during the school day in order to minimize disruption of other class instruction. Schedules are distributed to students in advance. As is the case with any other absence, students are responsible for making up any and all required classwork. Teachers are asked to not deny students the opportunity to attend music lessons unless there is an exam scheduled in that class.

Attendance at music lessons is mandatory and required of all instrumental students and high school choral students. Because of the importance of every music lesson, students should see their music teacher to schedule a make-up lesson if they miss a music lesson for any reason.

Instrumental Music Registration

Here at Levittown Public Schools, we are dedicated to providing students with the best musical opportunities and experiences possible. Elementary school students in grades 3-5 are eligible to participate in our instrumental music program for band and orchestra. Potential band and orchestra students must choose three possible instruments to learn and selections must be chosen from both Groups A and B (at least one from each group). Your final instrument assignment will be made by the instructor and will be based on availability, preference and consideration of our district's policy regarding balance of instrumentation.

Group A

String Bass
Cello
Viola
Trombone
Baritone Horn
French Horn
Tuba
Oboe

Group B

Violin
Clarinet
Trumpet
Flute
Alto Saxophone

To help children select an appropriate instrument and to provide parents with details about our program, Levittown Public Schools hosts an annual *District Instrumental Music Night* each spring. During this event, students and parents will listen to a brief musical performances by students from the high school, attend a mini-expo providing an up-close look at the instruments we offer, and have an opportunity to meet with students who play the instruments, as well as members of our music faculty.

Registration forms will be available for the first time at *District Instrumental Music Night*. Since instrument assignments are made based on preference and availability, **attending and registering this evening will certainly increase the chance of your child receiving his or her first choice.**

School music programs generally do not offer drum kit. **Percussion** is closely related but entails learning to read snare, bass drum and timpani parts as well as reading mallet percussion such as xylophone and chimes. Students with a piano/keyboard background are at an advantage. Teachers will audition and select percussionists based on the needs of their ensemble.

Helping Your Child Choose

Selecting the right performance group for your child is an important factor in your child's continued musical success. Making the best choice will often lead to the love of music making we want for each student. As you help your child choose the right performance group and instrument, consider the following points:

The student must like the sound of the instrument they choose. If your child doesn't like the sound of an instrument, they won't enjoy playing that instrument.

If you are concerned about the size of an instrument in relation to your child, speak with to your child's music teacher. They will have a good sense of what instrument is right for the learner. String instruments come in various sizes to accommodate the size of the student. Also, remember your child will grow.

One potentially problematic aspect of choosing a performing group/instrument is its "social image," meaning kids will choose the group/instrument they think is the "coolest" even if it seems like a bad fit. For some, this will lead them to the musical experience they love but for others it will be a dead end because the "coolness" factor wears off when the real work of learning an instrument or singing begins.

Assist your child in exploring music. Take your child to museums, libraries, or other venues where music is being performed. Exploring music will help your child figure out what kind of musical group or instrument will interest them.

Musical Instrument Maintenance Guidelines

The following will constitute guidelines for the Levittown Public Schools regarding the use of musical instruments:

1. Instrument Maintenance Fee

The instrument maintenance fee is defined as a charge made for the maintenance of district-provided musical instruments. It is not a participation fee. Instruments will be made available solely to students who are enrolled in an appropriate music program of the Levittown Public Schools.

The fee will include the instrument itself and such accessory items as to make the instrument playable, such as mouthpiece, reed, neck strap, etc. as applicable to the particular instrument. Accessories will be provided for “start-up” purposes only, and as expendable accessories are used up during the year, replacement costs will be borne by the student.

The fee will be \$75.00 per school year (September, or as early in the school year as possible, through a date in June to be assigned by the instructor, or through the date a student ceases to be enrolled in an appropriate music program of the district, whichever comes first), except for percussion instruments which, due to their nature and manner of use and assignment, will be without cost (percussionists, however, will be required to purchase their own practice pads, sticks, etc.). The fee must be paid within the time limit set by the instructor. Instruments cannot be issued until the appropriate payment and signed contract have been received.

The fee is non-refundable, either in whole or in part. Payment may be made on the district website (www.levittownschoools.com) via PaySchools.

Any student (with the exceptions noted elsewhere in this document) who uses a district-provided instrument is required to pay the fee, even if such is solely for in-school use (the student does not intend to take the instrument home). Students who quit playing their instrument prior to the end of a school year are required to promptly return it to the appropriate music teacher.

In no way is the use of a school instrument required. The use of privately owned instruments and/or privately rented instruments is encouraged.

2. Damage to the Instrument

The assignee or his/her parents will pay for the cost of any damage caused by the assignee. This includes direct abuse/misuse of the instrument or neglect, either in the care of the instrument or in failure to notify the instructor of any needed repairs. Levittown Public Schools does not accept responsibility for such damage, even if it occurs on school property or in one of our approved storage facilities.

The cost of repairs stemming from normal usage will be incurred by the school district. Normal usage will be defined as any repair that in the opinion of the instructor is not described in the above paragraph.

3. Storage of Instruments

Any instrument stored in any school facility is done so at the risk of the student. Levittown Public Schools does not accept responsibility for any instrument lost or stolen on school property, including in any of our approved storage facilities.

4. Loss or Theft of an Instrument or Accessories

In the event that an instrument is lost or stolen, the cost of replacing the instrument, or actual replacement of the instrument, will be the responsibility of the assignee. The assessed replacement cost, may or may not be the same as the original cost of the instrument due to inflationary price increases.

A replacement charge, or actual replacement, will also be assessed for any missing accessories, which are expected to be returned along with the instrument. Levittown Public Schools does not accept responsibility for any instrument lost or stolen on school property, including in any of our approved storage facilities.

5. Use of More Than One Instrument by a Student

There will be no additional charge for the use of more than one instrument, if the teacher requests such use.

If requested by the student, the additional instrument(s) may be obtained in accordance with normal procedures, subject to availability.

Depending upon availability, students who play larger instruments i.e. Tuba, Baritone, French Horn, String Bass and Cello are normally provided with an extra instrument for at home practice at no additional charge, if available in our district-owned inventory.

6. Enrollment in the Music Program by More than One Student From the Same Family

Each student may obtain an instrument according to normal procedures. Instrument Maintenance charges will be on a per instrument basis.

7. Summer Use of Musical Instruments

Upon special parental request, musical instruments will be made available to students for the summer at no further charge according to the following guidelines:

- A. Summer use of a musical instrument will be made available only to those students who have obtained instruments from the school district during the preceding school year, and/or enroll in the Levittown Summer Music Program. In addition, non-summer students must be enrolled in a school district music program for the upcoming school year.

- B. Availability of the instrument will be in accordance with the number of instruments in the school's own inventory, excluding instruments rented by the district from outside sources (these instruments have to be returned in June).
- C. Priority will be on a first-come, first-served basis.
- D. Students who will be changing schools (elementary to middle school or middle to high school) may only request instruments for summer use from the school they will be attending in the fall.
- E. The instrumental music teacher will keep strict records, including a new Musical Instrument Maintenance Contract (even though no funds will be collected for summer use).

8. Financial Hardship and Further Questions

In case of financial hardship, summarize the difficulty in writing and send it, through the school music instructor, to the District Music Curriculum Associate For Music for consideration.

9. Registration

Registration forms will be available from your child's music teacher in May. Registration forms will also be available on the district website, www.levittownschools.com.

Practice Tips

To the student (parents, you can read this also!): you play an instrument in school, or sing in the chorus. Participating in lessons and rehearsals is only part of your musical experience. Practicing at home will greatly affect your success and enjoyment of music!

- ♪ **Practice is your homework** for your music class. The more you put into it, the more you will get out of it!
- ♪ **Set up a practice routine or schedule.** Figure out the best time to practice- after other homework, before dinner, etc... Practice as many days a week as possible. Your teacher can help guide you about how much you should be practicing.
- ♪ **Set up a good place to practice.** Find somewhere quiet, with minimal distractions. Put the phone aside! Have your instrument, music, stand, a straight-back chair, a pencil, and water ready before you start.
- ♪ **Have a plan.** Think about what you need to work on in each practice session. This will include method book assignments, solos, and ensemble music.
- ♪ **Start every practice with a warm-up.** This may include scales, long tones, rudiments for percussion, and technical or vocal exercises.
- ♪ **Practice with a purpose.** It is not enough to play/sing through each piece once, then call it a day! Don't just practice what you already know. Set goals for what you need to improve in your playing. Mistakes are opportunities for learning.
- ♪ **Focus on technique.** Practice with good posture, proper breathing techniques, good hand position, bowing fundamentals, etc...
- ♪ **Be a problem solver.** When you have difficulty, figure out what specifically is giving you trouble. Fingerings, rhythm, breath control, sticking for percussionists? Isolate difficult sections of your music to focus on. Take out small "chunks" of music to practice, then when they are better, add them back into the piece.
- ♪ **Occasionally record your practice sessions.** Listen and reflect on what you can improve.
- ♪ **Play something fun at the end!** Pick something that you know well or really enjoy playing. End on a positive "note!"

How Parents Can Help

Parent involvement is very important to a developing music student! Your support and encouragement is vital to your child's success. Here's what you can do to help:

- ♪ Encourage your child's practice efforts, and recognize progress. Teach your child that studying music is a long-term commitment. Encourage him/her to "stick with it" when facing challenges.
- ♪ You do not need to have musical experience to help your child. Simply ask questions about what they are learning, and most important- ask them to play or sing for you!
- ♪ Help your child set up an area to practice at home. The area should have a music stand, be well-lit, and have minimal distractions. Help your child develop a practice routine or schedule.
- ♪ Keep track of your child's music schedules and events. Mark important dates (dress rehearsals and performances) on a family calendar. Make sure your child is prepared with his/her instrument and/or music for all lessons and rehearsals.
- ♪ Make sure your child's instrument is in good repair. Please don't attempt to fix an instrument yourself! If your child owns his/her instrument, please take it to a qualified repair technician. The music teacher can assist you in finding one. If using a district-owned instrument, please notify the teacher right away if you think it is not working properly.
- ♪ If you are interested in purchasing an instrument, please consult with your child's teacher. He/she can help steer you towards a quality instrument that will be suitable for your child.
- ♪ Please purchase your child's supplies for music as soon as possible. The teacher will supply a list of needed items. This may include lesson method books, reeds, valve oil, rosin, and other needed accessories.
- ♪ Private lessons are encouraged. This is an excellent supplement to the music instruction your child receives in school.
- ♪ Make music an important part of your family life. Expose your child to a wide variety of musical recordings at home. Take your child to live concerts as often as possible.

Levittown's music teachers are committed to providing high quality, comprehensive musical education for your child. Parents are an important part of the "team." Please contact your child's music teacher at any time with any questions or concerns.

Ten Rules of Concert Etiquette

- I. **Please refrain from talking.** This is the first and greatest rule. Talking or whispering can become a distraction to the performers and the audience members.
- II. **Refrain from making any noise (opening wrappers, etc.) during the performance.** Many of our concerts are recorded and all sounds will be picked up by microphones
- III. **Please turn off electronics, cell phones, and watch alarms or set to vibrate.**
- IV. **Do not wave to or call out to your child during the concert.**
- V. **Please do not take flash photography.** This can be a distraction to performers and to the conductor as well as to other audience members.
- VI. **Do not walk down the center aisle with your video camera.** This can be a distraction as well and can be discreetly done from the seating area.
- VII. **Please stay for the entire concert.** All students deserve a full audience for their performances. In many cases ensembles that have already performed will be held until the end of the concert.
- VIII. **Applaud at appropriate times.** Some music has several sections. Remember, it's not over until all of the sections have been performed and the conductor lowers the baton or their conducting hands.
- IX. **Do not leave the auditorium during music.** Wait for a break in the concert to visit the restroom, unless you are carrying an upset child, in which case every effort should be made to leave quietly and quickly, please!
- X. **Go to the concert expecting the best.** You just might be surprised how good your student sounds when other students join in.

NYSSMA Festivals

Each year, music students have the opportunity to participate in the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) Solo and Ensemble Evaluation Festival. Students are evaluated on their performance of a composition that must be selected from the current NYSSMA manual. Compositions are organized according to difficulty: Level I (least difficult) through Level VI (most difficult). Students have the opportunity to perform both solo and ensemble literature (duets, trios, etc.).

Participation in the festival is valuable as it provides the student with an opportunity to perform in an audition-like setting and to receive an expert, objective evaluation. Some considerations for participation:

1. Participating in the NYSSMA Festival is an extracurricular activity designed to supplement and enhance the student's music education.
2. Students are responsible for preparing solos outside of school time. Most soloists find that a private music teacher is the best way to prepare. Teachers will be available as time permits during the school day for extra help.
3. It is not necessary or even recommended to progress at a rate of one level per year. The student's real level of ability should determine which piece (or level) is selected, not the level passed the prior year.
4. The Levittown School District does not pay NYSSMA registration fees.
5. Payment must be made online at www.levittownschoools.com/district/payschools. All payments are non-refundable. The fees are as follows:

Levels 1-4 Solo and Ensemble	\$16
Levels 1-4 Piano Solo	\$22
Levels 5-6 Solo and Ensemble	\$24
Levels 5-6 Piano Solo	\$30
All-State Solo	\$30
6. All NYSSMA vocalists and most All-State level evaluations require accompaniment. This can be a paid professional pianist or a recording (student must provide their own recording and play back equipment).

Check with your school music teacher to make sure the piece selected is from the current NYSSMA manual and for specific scale, rudiment, and sight-reading requirements.

*****The current NYSSMA manual is Edition 32 (effective July 2018)*****

***You must provide TWO original pieces of music: one for the performer(s), one for the accompanist (if applicable), and one for the adjudicator.
Photocopies are not permitted!***

All-County

Each year, the Nassau Music Educators Association (NMEA) hosts an All-County Music Festival. This festival gives the top student musicians of Nassau County the opportunity to perform together at the renowned Tilles Center for the Performing Arts. These musicians are chosen for the various performing groups by a committee of Nassau County music educators based upon NYSSMA scores and teacher recommendations. They are divided into five divisions according to their grade level: Division I (grade 5), Division II (grade 6), Division III (grades 7-8), Division IV (grades 9-10), and Division V (grades 11-12). As participants, these musicians perform major masterworks under the baton of master conductors and music educators.

Levittown All-District Music Concert

Each year Levittown hosts an All-District Music Concert for Band, Orchestra and Choral performing groups. Exceptional students in each area are recommended by their performance music teacher to participate. Participation is voluntary. So that we can prepare our students in the best possible way, please know that all rehearsals are mandatory, and that we expect students to practice the music at home. Students will not receive additional lessons during school for preparation of the All-District concert. Music and additional information will be disseminated through the conductors of the ensembles.

Summer Music Program

Introduction

If your child wishes to begin or continue studying a musical instrument, Levittown's *Summer Music Program* might be just the right opportunity! Offering instruction on band and orchestra instruments, the program provides a head-start for beginners or enrichment for those already involved in our music program. Because the program is open to the entire district, students might make new friends with similar interests.

Program Details

The Summer Music Program will run for 6 weeks. Each student will receive two half-hour lessons per week. The teaching staff will consist of certified music instructors from the district's music faculty.

Enrollment

The program will be open to all students who will be in grades 3 through 12 in the upcoming school year, regardless of level of ability. All enrollees must be students of the Levittown Public School District.

Program Cost

Summer music is a self-sustaining enrichment program. Therefore, there will be a non-refundable charge of \$100.00 for each participating student. Siblings may receive a 10% discount. Payments will be made through *PaySchools* on the district website.

Instruments

As a courtesy, and upon special parental request, enrollees in the Summer Music Program may secure free use of a musical instrument for the summer. Students who will be changing schools (elementary to middle school or middle school to high school) should request summer instruments from the school that they will be attending in the fall. Priority for district instruments will be on a first-come, first served basis. Continuing percussion students must provide their own practice pad and sticks. *See Music Instrument Maintenance Guidelines, section 7 for more details.*

All students must purchase the assigned lesson book and appropriate basic instrument accessories.

The Tri-M Music Honor Society

The Tri-M Music Honor Society is the international music honor society for secondary school students that motivates and recognizes musical achievement.

Tri-M shares and supports the objectives of every dedicated music educator – to increase student and school involvement with music and to strengthen and unify the school music program. Tri-M offers a complete system of rewards that help motivate effort and recognize excellence in individuals and chapters. With this system. The society builds self-esteem and provides for a channel of personal fulfillment. A student who is inducted as a Tri-M member has achieved one of the highest honors in the Levittown Music Department.

Tri-M is a program of NAFME: The National Association for Music Education – the largest non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of music education. Through its many programs, activities, publications, and conferences, NAFME addresses all aspects of music education and works to ensure that every student has access and exposure to a balanced, comprehensive, and high-quality program of music instruction.

