

Rockwall Heath HS & Maurine Cain MS Instrumental Music Private Lesson Handbook 2008 - 2009



PRINCIPLES OF THE PROGRAM

PURPOSE

1. To improve the quality of music education in the Rockwall Independent School District.
2. To provide for the individual differences of music students.
3. To boost the achievement level of all students.
4. To aid the student in mastery of essential elements as set forth by the Texas Education Code.
5. To provide private teaching in the school building after school hours allowing students to take advantage of the convenience, expense, and time saving factors lost by traveling elsewhere for this instruction.
6. To provide the student with one-on-one guidance by a specialist on the student's instrument.
7. To aid the student in attaining the musical goals as set forth in the Rockwall Public Schools music curriculum guides.

QUALIFICATIONS

Student - optional for any student enrolled in middle school, junior high, or high school band in the RISD.

Teacher - qualified persons by training and experience, certified to teach by the Director of Bands in the RISD.

FINANCING

Fees for this program are district-wide and are set at \$16.00 per lesson. Payment shall be made directly from the student or parent to the private teacher. Payment shall be made for one calendar month in advance for the one 25-minute lesson per week. If a particular month should have five weeks, the monthly payment shall be increased accordingly. It shall be the responsibility of the private teacher to invoice parents on a monthly basis, keep proper and accurate records of the transactions, and furnish proper receipts to the student. Invoices should be sent out on the last lesson of each month for the upcoming month. The invoice will indicate any missed lessons (by teacher or student), any owed lessons due to teacher absences, amount due for next month and a due date. Teachers may use their own invoice or the one provided on the band website.

SCHOLARSHIPS

There will always be students who are in need of financial aid. There are three sources for student lesson scholarships: 1) the Rockwall Alliance for the Arts, 2) the RHHS Band Booster Club, and 3) the campus fund raising/district professional services budget. It is the private teacher's responsibility to verify if a student is the recipient of a private lesson scholarship and from which source this financial aid is distributed. Scholarship forms are available for private teachers on the band website at www.mightyhwawkband.org. Students receiving a scholarship will be asked to complete a contract that requires several commitments from the student as well as the student's family. Once agreement must be "band commitment" agreement stating that the student will be continuing with band during all of their high school years. This contract can be obtained at the RHHS Band website and from a band director.

SCHOLARSHIP FORMS

There are several important forms on the band website that teachers will need to submit for scholarship payments. The **Form "A"** is used to document each student's lesson. The student must initial this form at each lesson. The **Form "B"** is used to summarize your monthly lessons in order to invoice the band program for your lessons. There is also a "Missed Lesson Notification Form" available to help with communicating to your campus director.

PRIVATE TEACHERS WILL HAVE 7 DAYS AFTER THE LAST DAY OF EACH MONTH TO SUBMIT THEIR MONTHLY SCHOLARSHIP INVOICES. INVOICES WILL NOT BE TAKEN AFTER THE 7TH DAY OF THE FOLLOWING MONTH. BE SURE TO STAY CURRENT WITH YOUR SCHOLARSHIP PAPERWORK.

MISSED PAYMENT POLICY

As previously mentioned, payment for private lessons can be expected one month in advance, however it is also permissible for the students to pay by the lesson IF approved by the private instructor. **In the event that a student falls behind in payments, it is the private instructor's responsibility to contact the parent to discuss payment.** The campus director will usually be more than happy to help remind a student that their payment is late, but directors should not be asked to contact parents for delinquent private lesson payments.

Private teachers must bring it to the head director's attention before a student becomes more than two or three weeks behind in payments. Private teachers should call the parents at the point when the student becomes one month behind. The teacher may choose to continue teaching the student into the second month; however, the band program will not be responsible for any back payments. The purpose of this policy is to protect both the teacher and student from having to deal with excessive financial debts. Neither the band directors nor the RISD Band Program will be responsible for paying for missed private lessons. Again, the most important aspect is communicating with your campus director so he/she can assist you while the problem is still manageable.

MISSED LESSONS and SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS

An obviously important aspect of scholarships is making certain that we use our financial aid monies wisely. If a student on scholarship misses a private lesson, it is very important that you notify the band director IMMEDIATELY upon the student's FIRST absence. We will make sure that the problem is immediately addressed. NO SCHOLARSHIP CHECK WILL BE ISSUED FOR A STUDENT WHO HAS MISSED MULTIPLE LESSONS. Complete the form and notify a director ASAP or email him/her.

SCHEDULING

Scheduling of lessons shall be initiated by each campus director for the private teacher and students. Teachers are expected to be proactive in setting up lessons at the beginning of each semester. Private lesson schedules shall observe all school holidays. The director shall furnish private teachers with a school and organization calendar.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Occasionally there will be a reason for not attending a scheduled private lesson. Acceptable excuses for missing lessons are:

- Student Illness
- Family emergency
- Scheduled band performance

Please understand that the following are not acceptable reasons for a student to miss a lesson:

- Babysitting, or other work related excuses
- Homework
- Band rehearsals (unless approved in advance by the director)
- Non-school athletic practice

There are certainly other valid reasons for missing a private lesson; however, it is in the best interest of the student to limit the number of absences. Students MUST develop a habit of consistency with their lessons if the lessons are to be of any benefit. If a student is unable to be present for a regularly scheduled lesson, the student must notify the private teacher 24 hours prior to the lesson time. It is therefore important that all students and parents know their private instructor's phone number and can contact him or her. It is the responsibility of the private teacher to schedule the make-up lesson. If a student's reason for not attending a lesson is unacceptable or if proper notification is not made, the lesson may not be made up, and the private teacher is to be compensated for the lesson time.

BAND WEBSITE – PRIVATE LESSONS

There is a link on the homepage of the RHHS Band website dedicated to the RHHS and Cain MS private lesson program. By clicking on the "Lessons" button, students have access to private lesson teacher's email addresses, contact phone numbers, and lesson schedules. It is important that you always send an updated schedule (in Excel) to the RHHS head band director whenever your private lesson schedule changes. We want to always make sure your schedule is current and accurate. Private lesson teachers and students will have access to the private lesson handbook and all scholarship documentation via this page on the band website located at <http://www.mightyhawkband.org>.

BAND BOOSTER TREASURE CONTACT

The RHHS Band Booster, in conjunction with the Hawk Booster Organization (HBO) will be the person responsible for processing scholarship checks once they are submitted to the campus band director. If you should need to contact the RHHS Band Booster Treasurer, you may do so by contacting:

Marsha Heinkele, 972-771-1781, heinkele@classicnet.net
For Cain scholarships, contact Jason Wallace, jwallace@rockwallisd.org

This information can also be found on the band website.

COOPERATIVE OBLIGATIONS

RISD Will furnish facilities, scheduling, and orientation of the private lesson staff.

A process is being developed that will enable our parents to pay each private teacher via the band website through an electronic payment system (similar to PayPal). The goal is to make it easier for our teachers to receive payment from their students and to receive these payments faster and more timely than when sending the check to school with the student.

PRIVATE TEACHERS

- Will provide professional, reliable, and conscientious efforts so that our students receive the best instruction possible. Will be dependable and on time to all lessons and will maintain regular contact with the directors and parents concerning the students' progress.
- Private teachers are responsible for establishing a set teaching schedule. The campus directors can help you with this, but it is ultimately your responsibility. Your schedule must be consistent in order for you to be an effective teacher.
- Your schedule is to be submitted to the campus directors at the beginning of the year. It is also very important to notify the campus director when your schedule changes so that he/she may reflect all changes and updates to the online webpage. Also, be sure to communicate any openings in your schedule that you would like to fill.

Attendance – If you have to miss a lesson or a day of lessons, please call or e-mail the student/parent in advance. It is also appropriate to make the campus director aware of your absence, however this should not be the only means of communicating your absences with the student. Please understand that if you miss too many lessons and are not consistent with your schedule then we will be forced to find someone else to teach our students.

In each lesson private teachers are to:

- Assess the achievement level of each individual student.
- Prescribe individual exercises, etudes, and other materials that her maximum potential.

STUDENTS/PARENTS will make every effort to:

- Practice will lead the student to achieve his/ and be properly prepared for each lesson.
- Understand that the private teacher's livelihood depends upon prompt and consistent payment.
- Attend each lesson on time and to make up lessons missed.

It is important to realize that the degree of his/her success is directly proportional to the degree of his/her effort and dedication.



CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Due to the individualized nature of the private lesson program, it is highly impractical to suggest an overall, specific plan for the private teacher and his students. However, there are several items of importance that the private teacher should know.

1. **High school and junior high all-region contest music should be emphasized during the fall semester.**
2. High school and junior high students taking lessons are expected to perform a solo provided by their private instructor at solo contest in February. You may wish to combine students with another private teacher.
3. It is the private teacher's obligation to check with the directors concerning which students are required or eligible to play at these events.
4. With beginner band students, the emphasis should be placed on tone quality and production, ease of playing, and basic fundamentals of reading.
5. Each student should be working out of a method book designed to supplement the school curriculum. You may wish to ask the directors for suggestions in this area.
6. Each different level of player has different scale requirements. Check with each director for details concerning scales and technique requirements.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE GRADES

There are FOUR MAJOR Performance Grades Taken During the School Year:

- a. Marching Band Show Music
- b. All-Region Music and Scales
- c. UIL Solo Music
- d. UIL Concert Band Program Music

ALL-REGION PREPARATION

Directors at each campus will be testing students on the all-region etudes and scales during the fall semester. **WE WILL NOT TEACH THIS MATERIAL IN SECTIONALS AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL.** We feel that, by teaching the region music in high school sectionals, we are, in fact, discouraging students from taking private lessons. We want each student to understand that the private lesson teacher is their main source of assistance in preparing this music. Please make it a priority in your lessons.

SOLO AND ENSEMBLE PREPARATION

Performing a solo at UIL contest is a requirement for all students in the band program. Private teachers should begin working with the campus directors regarding solo and ensemble contest during the month of November.

At RHHS, we will begin administering assignments to our students designed to help them select a solo for UIL competition using the SmartMusic program. Private teachers are encouraged to be part of this process in helping their students in selecting a solo appropriate for their playing level.

Please understand that the deadlines associated with these assignments are driven by UIL deadlines. Be aware of these deadlines and also of how difficult it is to change a solo title or other performance requirements AFTER the UIL deadline has passed.



MUSICAL EXPECTATIONS

Each lesson should focus on the following concepts:

- ☑ Motivation
- ☑ Tone quality
- ☑ Intonation
- ☑ Musicianship
- ☑ Technical facility
- ☑ Sightreading
- ☑ Basic music theory
- ☑ Practice techniques

1. **MOTIVATION** - This is perhaps the single most important factor for success in any endeavor. The private teacher must continually seek new methods of getting the students to be self-motivated. Teachers should also realize that different personalities require different approaches. However, almost all human beings respond to **positive encouragement and success**. It is imperative that these be used to instill motivation in your students. The successful teachers are those that are truly able to motivate their students.
2. **TONE QUALITY** - Beautiful tone quality is the result of physical actions and mental concepts. Proper attention must be paid to correct breathing, embouchure, and correct adjustment of the mouthpiece and/or reed. Correct modeling of a good tone is of utmost importance in developing the student's aural concept.
3. **INTONATION** - Playing in tune is a result of good tone quality in addition to learning to match pitch. Training a student to listen critically is a lesson for all levels of musicians. It is helpful for the teacher to be discriminating in knowing when to play along with the student.
4. **MUSICIANSHIP** - Sensitive musicianship is a result of constant encouragement by the teacher for the student to perform with feeling, emotion, and sensitivity. Once good tone, technique, and intonation are established, a student can then give proper attention to dynamics, phrasing, tempo, and other nuances.
5. **TECHNICAL FACILITY** - Good technique is a result of consistent and constant drill that enables the student to adequately manipulate the instrument and perform music. Assigning appropriate materials requiring practice time in order to master these skills are very important. Major and minor scales and interval studies must be a portion of these materials.
6. **SIGHTREADING** - The ability to sightread successfully is a result of a combination of technique and music literacy. Students should have a grasp of rhythm and note-reading skills that aid them in playing new material. The private teacher should outline steps that will enable students of all levels to successfully sightread music appropriate to their level of musicianship.
7. **BASIC MUSIC THEORY** - Knowledge of theory is the result of the private teacher's consistent use of language referring to the basic elements of music theory. Constant reference to key signatures, intervals, music terms, and rhythm counting must be a part of each lesson.

PRACTICE TECHNIQUES - These techniques are a result of the student learning order, importance, and benefits of consistent practice. The private teacher should aid the student in organizing and keeping track of their practice times. Since a private teacher's time with a student is limited to 30 minutes a week, every effort should be made to enhance the lesson by establishing proper practice techniques the student can use outside of the lesson.

Guide to Appropriate Practice Habits

Guide to Region Band and Solo Preparation

When you play a solo or region music, **you must understand that it is classified as serious music literature**. Further, you must perform and practice the music accurately and precisely. By following the steps listed below, you **can** achieve a high level of performance.

- **Play all the notes in the music correctly.** Make sure that each note has a clear and good sound. Good sound is achieved by maintaining good air support and a firm embouchure. Strive to keep your facial muscles still as you play. Make the best possible sound every time you play your horn!
- **Play all the rhythms accurately.** Make sure that each rhythm is counted correctly. Make sure that you maintain a steady slow tempo when learning your solo. ***USE A METRONOME!***
- **Play the entire selection at a slow pace.** One half of the correct tempo is a good starting tempo. For instance, if a selection is marked 120 beats per minute, then a good beginning tempo is 60. Once you can accurately play all notes and rhythms at half the tempo, the tempo should be increased by 10 beats per minute, per week. If the tempo is not marked, a director or private teacher will be glad to give you a tempo marking.
- **Play the music with the correct style.** For instance, make sure you are aware of accented notes, staccato notes, legato notes, slurs, and non slurred notes. Articulation and achieving the correct style go hand in hand.
- **Play the music with all dynamic markings in place.** Make sure that you are aware of crescendos, diminuendos, volume marking (f,ff,p,mp,etc....), and any other listed change in volume. It is a good idea to highlight dynamic markings with a color that will catch your attention as you play.
- **Lastly, it is important that your music be practiced daily with all of the above items in place.** You must play with the best possible sound on your instrument each and every time that you perform or practice!! High level work is difficult!! A little hard work will go a long way. Remember, hard work guarantees nothing, but without it, you do not stand a chance for top performance!

IN CLOSING

We believe that YOU are the **most** important aspect of our band program in regards to student improvement. There is no other factor more significant in the development of great musicians and great music programs than the private instruction staff. We are here to help you and the student. Our desire is to have private lesson teachers that enjoy teaching our students enough to remain part of our program for many years.

Please keep the lines of communication open with the campus directors. We will appoint a director on each campus to serve as a liaison for you and to provide any assistance you may need.