



JFK Catholic School

1627 W. 42nd St.
Davenport, IA 52806
563-391-3030
olvjfk.com



Band Program Handbook 2025-2026

Mrs. Mary Rohrer, Director of Bands
mary.rohrer@olvjfkmail.com | 563-391-3030 ext. 141 **Obtaining Instruments**

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Introduction

Welcome to the 2025-2026 JFK Band Program. I am excited to continue the proud tradition of musical and academic excellence of the JFK Band Program. I am so glad you chose to be part of this awesome musical program that brings so much pride to the school and to your families.

As members of the JFK Band Program, we strive to be the best people and musicians we can be. In our program, you will not only learn how to read music and play an instrument, but you will also learn how to work hard while developing perseverance, self-discipline, accountability, and teamwork.

The purpose of this handbook is to give you an overview of what to expect as a member of the JFK Band Program and parent/guardian of a student in band. Read this handbook, sign and return the handbook agreement form by September 12, 2025.

Family support and participation in your student's musical education is essential, so please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. The best way to reach me is via email, mary.rohrer@olvjfkmail.com, but you can also reach me by calling the school at 563-391-3030. I will do my best to respond as soon as possible.

Mission

Our mission is teaching children to become disciples of Christ by living Gospel values, nurturing gifts and talents, and pursuing academic excellence.

Philosophy

Our firm belief is that the primary nurturing and responsibility of educating children is the family. Education begins at home with the parents or guardians.

We, as a School, accept the supplemental responsibility as a continuum of home. Within the structure of our Catholic Christian teachings, we accept each child as a unique and individual gift of The Father. Recognizing this, we are a responsible entity to assist students in developing the riches of life spiritually, academically, physically, morally, emotionally, and socially.

With Jesus as the Primary Teacher of the global Christian faith community, we will continue to develop a firm and positive Catholic Christian attitude and environment that will tell the message of Jesus and the Gospels.

Objectives

- To develop the technical skills necessary to play a musical instrument satisfactorily in an instrumental group based on the knowledge needed to attain success at the Elementary and Middle School levels.
- To cultivate and develop cultural and aesthetic values in order to possess an understanding of beauty, expression, and the ability to appreciate the finer things in life through actual participation in a performing organization.
- To develop leadership qualities, responsibility, and citizenship in students through their dedication to a cause and service to both school and community.

Band Student Expectations

1. Respect the podium, yourself, classmates, and your teachers.
 2. Sit with proper posture. Stay in your seat.
 3. Keep your hands to yourself. Don't play instruments that don't belong to you.
 4. Be Safe. Walk in the bandroom.
 5. Be Prepared. Practice at home, bring your instrument & music, always have a pencil.
 6. Be On Time. Be ready & in your seat 4 minutes after the start of class.
1. Keep the bandroom clean.
 2. Water only in the bandroom. No gum or candy.

ATTITUDE: The greatest single factor determining the success of an individual or organization is attitude. Make the most of every rehearsal and performance.

DISCIPLINE: Because of the nature of the organization, discipline must be a necessity. Students should always remember that they represent the band program, school, parents, and community when they are in the public eye. Any misconduct casts a direct reflection on our school and community.

Behavior Protocols

Classroom rules in the bandroom are consistent with the classroom rules in each grade level homeroom. Students are expected to maintain the same levels of safety, leadership, and respect in the bandroom as they do in their normal classrooms. I will utilize the behavior folder used by all 5th-8th grade classrooms. If a student's actions cause them to be in the folder for the same behavior on several occasions, I will first bring it to the attention of the student, and then I will contact home. If you have any questions or concerns about this, please feel free to contact me so we can discuss this.

Obtaining an instrument

To ensure a successful band experience for your child, a reliable instrument in good working condition is essential. The instrument should meet certain minimum standards for musical performance and mechanical reliability. All students need an instrument to play during band rehearsals, lessons, and home practice. Families must provide instruments for students. For your convenience, this is a list of reputable instrument makers: Artley, Armstrong, Bach, Buffet, Bundy, Cannonball, Conn, Gemeinhardt, Jupiter, King, LeBlanc, Ludwig, Pearl, Selmer, Yamaha. Below are four options for providing instruments:

1. Use a personally-owned instrument.
 - a. This can be with a purchase from an instrument store such as West Music in Davenport in Geneseo.
 - b. It can also be an instrument purchased from Facebook Marketplace or other reselling platform. Please be aware that there are many beginning band instruments of unacceptable quality in the marketplace today. These instruments do not meet our performance, mechanical, and maintenance reliability standards. If you are unsure about the quality or price of an instrument, please don't hesitate to contact me.
 - c. If you have an old instrument from a friend/relative, I highly recommend taking it to West Music or Larson Band Instrument Repair in Geneseo, IL to have it evaluated and cleaned. Older instruments wear down quickly if they have been unused for years. A cleaning and repair will get an older instrument back to playing condition for less than buying new.
2. Purchase an instrument from an online marketplace. Beware of band instruments of unacceptable quality in the marketplace today. Many of these instruments do not meet our performance, mechanical, and maintenance reliability standards. If you are unsure about the quality or price of an instrument, please don't hesitate to contact me.
 - a. If you choose to purchase your own instrument, please come to me or West Music or Larson Band Instrument Repair if you have questions. Walmart and Amazon sell instruments cheaply, but you get what you pay for- their quality is not very good.
3. Rent an instrument from a music store.
 - a. I suggest West Music. There are a few other rental stores, but West has the most affordable and easiest-to-repair instruments when damage occurs. West has a variety of new and used instruments for a monthly fee ranging from \$30-\$210 per month. Most rental plans include repairs.
4. Borrow an instrument from JFK.
 - a. JFK has a very limited selection of instruments to borrow. Because of our limited selection, beginners may not get their top choice of instrument.
 - b. Any damage resulting from misuse or carelessness on the part of the student will result in repair charges being the responsibility of the student and his/her parents or guardians. It is strongly suggested that parents secure insurance coverage with their homeowners' policy for these instruments. Normal wear and tear costs will be covered by the school.

Instrument Maintenance

Instruments, like cars, need regular maintenance. Keys and valves should be oiled regularly, along with tuning slides. Reeds also need special attention for proper care. To keep your instrument the best it can be, you will need to keep your instrument properly maintained. Please refer to the front of your method book for proper maintenance requirements. Please ask Mrs. Rohrer for help or if you have questions.

Required Materials

5th Grade Band:

- Traditions of Excellence Book 1 by Bruce Pearson & Ryan Nowlin
 - Each instrument has its own book. Select the correct book for the instrument your child plays. West Music and Amazon sell these books.
 - Provided band folder
 - Pencil

6th Grade Band:

- We will use Traditions of Excellence Book 1 then transition to Traditions of Excellence Book 2 by Bruce Pearson & Ryan Nowlin
 - Each instrument has its own book. Select the correct book for the instrument your child plays West Music and Amazon sell these books. **Your student may need to replace book 1 from 5th grade.**
 - Provided band folder
 - Pencil

7th-8th Grade Band:

- Habits of a Successful Middle School Musician (everyone except percussion)
 - Each instrument has its own book. Select the correct book for the instrument your child plays. West Music and Amazon sell these books.
 - Primary Handbook for Mallets by Garwood Whaley (percussion only).
- Students will be required to purchase specific method books for their instrument to be used during their individual and group lessons. These books will be used for solo and ensemble contests. Information will be provided at a later date.
- Provided band folder
- Pencil

All Students are required to have the following for each instrument. Instrument tags and cotton cloths are new required items this year:

Flute

West Music Flute Care Kit
*Lint-free Cotton Cloth, 6"x6" (old shirt works well)
Polishing Cloth
Instrument Case Tag

Clarinet

West Music Clarinet Care Kit
10, 2-2.5 Vandoren or Rico reeds
Cork Grease
Soft Cleaning Swab
Instrument Case Tag

Saxophones

West Music Sax Care Kit
Neck Strap
*Lint-free Cotton Cloth, 6"x6" (old shirt works well)
Cleaning swab
Cork Grease
Instrument Tag

Oboe/Bassoon

West Music Oboe or Bassoon Care Kit
Cork Grease
Soft Cleaning Swab
3-5, Medium-Soft Reeds
Reed case (pill bottle works okay)
Instrument Case Tag

Trumpet, Trombone, Baritone, Euphonium, Tuba

West Music Specific Brass inst. Care Kit
*Lint-free Cotton Cloth, 6"x6" (old shirt works well)
Mouth Piece Brush
Valve Oil
Tuning Slide Grease
Instrument Case Tag

Percussion

Bell Kit with stand for home practice
Snare Kit with stand for home practice
1 pair of 2B, 5B, or SD1 Drumsticks
Plastic Mallets
Instrument Tags for Both Kits
"A Fresh Approach to the Snare Drum" by
Mark Wessels (snare drum lesson book)

How to Practice Effectively at Home

1. Find a quiet place, away from the TV, phones, etc. where interruptions will be kept to a minimum.
2. Have a straight back chair, music stand, and proper lighting in this practice area.
3. Work to schedule a daily practice routine of approximately 10-20 minutes.
4. Look up fingerings you do not know in your band book.
5. Circle your problem measures, name and finger the notes slowly over and over without playing (air playing). This process will help you establish the fingering patterns of a piece of music.
6. Using a metronome app, play the problem measure slowly, gradually increasing the tempo.
7. If counting problems persist, take time to figure the counting system and count/clap the rhythms. If you cannot count a rhythm, you cannot play it with accuracy.
8. Record your practice. The recording will tell you the truth about how you are doing. It will help you assess what you still need to improve.
9. Remember: How you practice is much more important than how much you practice. Practice makes progress. Try to improve, every day.

Grading

Students will be graded on three areas and will receive four grades per quarter on the following aspects: rehearsal and lesson participation and preparation, playing check-offs, and concert etiquette and participation.

Grading Rubric:

E Exceeding 90-100%

M Meeting 80-89%

D Developing 70-79%

B Beginning 60-69%

IE Insufficient Evidence 0-59%

Add/Drop Band Class Policy:

6-8th Grade Band class can be dropped from a student's schedule without penalty before the first mid-quarter of each semester. If the student drops band after the first mid-quarter, an IE grade will be added to any graded activities through the end of the nearest quarter, and the grade would be calculated as such. Band class can be dropped at the end of the quarter.

5th Grade Band class can be dropped at the end of the first quarter of the first semester without penalty.

5-8th grade students can join Band class at the beginning of semesters, fall and winter.

Honor Bands

5th-8th grade band students are encouraged to audition for honor bands. Auditioning for honor bands requires much more practice and dedication than typically required. Students must prepare required music, record an audition with Mrs. Rohrer, and work with her to submit audition materials. Honor bands are a great way to connect with like-minded kids from around the state, play interesting new music with cool directors, and have tons of fun. The process of auditioning, rehearsing, and performing in an honor band is very rewarding.

Rehearsals

5th Grade Band Rehearsal: Wednesday at 12:40-1:20 & Friday 7:35-8:15

6th Grade Band Rehearsal: Wednesday at 11:10-11:55 & Friday at 10:15-10:55

7th/8th Grade Band Rehearsal: Monday 9:35-10:15 & Thursday at 10:15-10:55

Individual and Group Lessons:

- 15 minute graded weekly lessons will be scheduled after the school year starts.
- Students need their instruments and music on their lesson days, which might be different days than their band rehearsal days.
- An email will be sent to families when lessons are scheduled for the school year.

Music Boosters

The Music Boosters Program is a group dedicated to continuing and improving the music department at JFK. The program consists of the music teachers and parents of **all** students at JFK. The Music Boosters provides ALL funding for band, choir, and general music. The program also helps with important discussion and decisions such as cost of student trips, student trips offered, fundraisers, honor bands, instrument purchases/repair, and many other behind-the-scenes tasks to keep the music program running smoothly.

All parents and guardians of band students are automatically part of the Music Boosters Program. You are welcome and strongly encouraged to attend meetings or respond to meeting information via email for your interest and opinions to be shared. We value your opinions and contributions as we try to make the music program beneficial to each and every student in the classroom.

Important Dates

August 25- September 5, during school

- 5th grade instrument testing

September 8 at 6:30

- New & returning band parent meeting
- Music room

September, 18 at 6:30

- Music booster meeting
- Music room

October 3 at 1:30

- QCSO ensemble school visit

October 10, 10:00-2:00

- 7th & 8th marching band practice at AHS
- Pizza lunch
- Kona Ica after packing up

October 10

- 7th & 8th grade marching band event at AHS homecoming
- More details to come

November 11 at 1:30

- Veteran's Day event
- School gym

November 13

- Marion Honor Band nominations due

December 5

- SEIBA Honor Band entry deadline

December 11 at 1:00 and 6:30

- Christmas concert
- 5th-8th grade band concert

Trivia Night, TBA

January 10, Fairfield

- SEIBA honor band auditions

January 17, Marion Honor Band

- 5th & 6th Grade
- Vernon Middle School Cedar Rapids

January 23

- Coe College honor band nominations due

January 24

- Marion honor band

January 24, Hancher Auditorium, U of Iowa

- SEIBA honor band

February 1

- SEIBA honor band weather date

February 7 at 6:30pm

- Trivia Night
- OLV Parish Center

TBA Late February/Early March

- Music boosters meeting

March 9-13

- 7th & 8th grade solo and ensemble week

April 12, Coe College

- 7th & 8th grade honor band chair placement & rehearsal

April 18, Coe College

- 5th & 6th grade honor band concert

April 19, Coe College

- 7th & 8th grade honor band concert

April 25, SEIBA Elem Honor Band

- Iowa City West High School
- Elementary honor band concert

TBA Late April/Early May

- Music boosters meeting

May 12, 1:00 and 6:30

- 5th-8th grade band concert

May 22

- Adventureland

May 27,

- All-school Mass & awards

May 29, 6:30

- Graduation Mass



JFK Catholic School Band Handbook Agreement Form

FOR PARENTS: Handbook Agreement Form

This is to acknowledge I have read and understand the requirements, expectations, and grading procedures as set forth by the JFK Catholic School Band Program. I agree to support the band program by making sure my student complies with these policies and procedures and encouraging my child to do their very best in band. I also understand the consequences that will occur if he/she chooses not to follow them.

Parent Signature

Date

FOR STUDENTS: Handbook Agreement Form

This is to acknowledge I have read and understand the rules, requirements and grading procedures set forth by the JFK Catholic School Band Program. By signing this contract, I agree to make a positive contribution to the JFK Band and adhere to these policies. I will also accept any consequences that will occur if I choose not to follow them.

Student Signature

Date

INDIVIDUALLY OWNED INSTRUMENT INFORMATION

In case of an emergency, the band program would like to have your student's instrument brand and serial number on file. Complete the following and notify the band director of any changes throughout the year.

Instrument _____

Instrument Brand Name _____

Serial Number _____

Retain this copy for your records.



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