

DEER CREEK MOUNTAINEERS



Instrumental Music Handbook

2024-25

Mr. Sudano, Director

A note from the director:

Welcome to another year of fantastic music making at Deer Creek! Our program has a long tradition of excellence through performance as well as producing strong individual musicians. The goal of our program is to provide an open and welcoming environment for students to grow as musicians and human beings. All students are required to give their best effort daily, whether playing a simple warm-up or a difficult concert piece. We strive for excellence in rehearsal, in concert, and as community members.

My teaching style is high energy and fast tempo mixed with humor and lots of passion for the subject of music. I believe that every child can benefit from a music education, because of the subject's worthiness, as well as its positive effect on other areas of learning.

Bio:

Mr. Sudano received his B.M.E from DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana in 2005, and his Master of Music (conducting emphasis) from Colorado State University in Fort Collins in 2011. He has studied trombone with members of the Lafayette (IN) and Indianapolis Symphonies, as well as professors at Butler, DePauw, and Indiana Universities. He started teaching private lessons to students of all ages in 2000. He began formally teaching in 2005 in Avon, Indiana where his duties included teaching 5-6th grade general music, choir, and band, earning superior ratings at each festival he attended. He also directed the Jazz Band and assisted with the Marching Band at Avon High School. Mr. Sudano moved to Littleton in 2009, and began teaching Band, Orchestra and Jazz band. Since 2009, Deer Creek's ensembles have received numerous awards and accolades, including superior ratings at festivals in Denver, Lakewood, Golden, Arvada, Thornton, Canon City, and Grand Junction. Since 2009, Deer Creek has established itself as one of the finest instrumental music programs in Jefferson County, and the State of Colorado. Mr. Sudano hopes to continue this tradition of excellence at Deer Creek, as well as continuing to grow the program every year. In his free time, Mr. Sudano loves to spend time with his beautiful wife and 2 awesome boys. He enjoys cooking, golfing, biking, and full contact underwater basket weaving. He also enjoys Ice Fishing at his private island estate in Hawaii.

Supply lists for Band and Orchestra:

ALL STUDENTS NEED:

- Band/Orchestra binder (provided to the students in class) with 25 sheet protectors.
- Instrument in proper working condition with accessories (rosin, valve oil, etc.)
- Combination Lock for personal instrument (Not required, but HIGHLY recommended)
- Pencils
- Metronome/Tuner (I recommend the Tonal Energy App)
- Supplies for their specific ensemble. Please see below.

Band:

- 6th Grade Band: Standard of Excellence Book 1 by Bruce Pearson (Red Book) Book 2 in January.
- Concert and Symphonic Band: Foundations for Superior Performance by Richard Williams and Jeff King

BAND supplies continued:

Flute Accessories needed: Cleaning cloth, tuning rod, name tag for case, Snark tuner.

Oboe Accessories needed: 3 reeds to rotate through daily, cleaning swab, cork grease.

Clarinet Accessories needed: 4 reeds to rotate through daily (I highly recommend Vandoren brand reeds), cleaning cloth, cork grease.

Saxophones Accessories needed: 4 reeds to rotate through daily (I strongly recommend Vandoren brand reeds), cleaning swab, cork grease.

French Horn Accessories needed: Rotor oil, cleaning cloth, tuning slide grease.

Trumpet, Trombone, Baritone, Tuba Accessories needed: Valve Oil or Slide-o-mix (trombone only), tuning slide grease, cleaning snake, polishing cloth. I like Blue Juice or Al Cass Valve oil.

Percussion

Sticks and accessories needed: Stick bag with: Vic Firth SD1 Snare sticks, Timpani mallets (soft or medium), Medium yarn mallets, Hard Mallets. Denver percussion will have a "Deer Creek" stick pack available.

Orchestra (All Strings):

- 6th Grade Orchestra: Essential Elements for Strings Book 1. (Book 2 in January)
- 7th/8th Grade Orchestra: Habits of a Successful Middle Level String Musician.

Accessories needed: Extra set of strings, shoulder rest (NOT A SPONGE!), rosin, cleaning cloth, Snark clip-on tuner. Several free metronomes are available on the app store. Tuners WILL be used in class daily, while metronomes are for at-home practice.

Grading and Classroom Policies

Grading

Band and Orchestra are art forms, and thus subjective. To make the grading process easier to understand, I use rubrics and include a few other assignments that do not involve playing. However, the majority of your grade comes from performance-based assessments. This means that **your success in this ensemble is directly related to the quality of your outside practice time.** Quality does not necessarily mean quantity, but it does mean that all of your parts and playing tests are well-rehearsed. You will need to perform in front of your classmates this year. All playing tests will be performed individually, in front of the class. Practice hard so that nerves will not become a factor!

Grading is broken into content knowledge and work habits. Playing Tests (over your repertoire), Practice Charts, and other written assignments and quizzes will be included in these categories.

Breakdown is as follows:

Content Knowledge:

Playing Tests, Written Work, Tests/Quizzes

Work Habits:

In-class participation, concert participation, class materials (including instruments)

Playing Tests (Content):

Playing tests usually occur weekly or every other week on Fridays. Each student will be assigned a small excerpt from our method books or current repertoire. Students will perform live in class or record a video on Google Classroom, and will be assessed using a performing rubric.

Practice Charts (6th GRADE ONLY)

Practice charts are a way for students to get credit for their work and study outside of the classroom. Just like daily homework in other classes, practice is ESSENTIAL to learning the material and being prepared for each day's rehearsal. All Practice charts will be turned in the first day of every week (usually Monday) and must be signed by a parent to receive credit. Any forged signatures will result in a zero. Copies of the practice chart will be available in class.

Grading Continued

Written Homework/Tests/Quizzes (Content)

Most grades in Band and Orchestra are performance-based, but occasionally students will have written assessments. These assessments may include evaluating music performances, learning vocabulary, or other skills than can be assessed through writing.

Concert Attendance (Work Habits)

All concerts are mandatory, and graded. Band and Orchestra are performance-based classes, and we ultimately demonstrate our learning through performance. Emergencies and medical issues will be excused, but conflicts with sports practices/games, birthday parties, and other avoidable events will not. Please contact Mr. Sudano as far in advance as possible if you know of a conflict with a performance or rehearsal.

Behavior Expectations:

- 1.) Students will be in their seats, ready to play 3 minutes after the bell sounds.
- 2.) Students will respect their classmates' right to learn without distractions.
- 3.) Students will not cause distractions while the director is offering instruction.
- 4.) Students will only bring water into the rehearsal space—no food, gum or other drinks.
- 5.) Students will bring proper supplies to every rehearsal (PENCIL!!!!)

Behavior Policy:

- 2 warnings offered for distractions.
- After the second warning, the student will be removed from rehearsal, and parents will be contacted.
- Lunch detentions will be served for repeated punctuality issues.
- Severe behavior or academic honesty issues will be handled by the director and dean/admin.

Classroom Environment:

- Stay curious and hungry for knowledge.
- Ask questions if you don't understand something.
- Don't let making mistakes in front of your classmates stop you. We're all here to get better!
- Show kindness, and encourage one another.
- Push yourself to be the best musician that you are capable of being.
- Enjoy the process of learning.
- Make beautiful music every day!
- Be a leader by example.

Frequently asked questions:

Q: Can my child use a school instrument? Is there a fee?

A: I have a very small inventory of school instruments available for rental, and yes--there is a small fee. The current Jeffco district-wide policy is that students and parents must sign a rental agreement, and pay a fee of \$62.50 per semester, or \$41.67 per trimester. This is far less than renting one from a music company. I am obligated to charge this fee, unless the student receives free or reduced lunch. I have a small collection of instruments available; please email me if you are interested in renting a school-owned instrument.

Q: Where should I get my child's instrument repaired?

A: There are several places that will fix an instrument, but some take longer than others.

Music and Arts (Bowles in Littleton), Rocky Mountain Music Repair (Broomfield).

Q: How long and what exactly should my child should be practicing?

A: Your child should be bringing their instrument home and practicing most nights. If you never see their instrument, there's something wrong. **The quality of their practice time is directly related to their success in my class (and as a musician).** A minimum of 4 nights a week is required to meet practice standards in my ensembles. Practice time should be between 15-30 minutes (longer if they can handle it). Have your child play their playing test materials (tested most Fridays) in front of you to help with their nerves. I HIGHLY recommend private lessons for every student regardless of their ability level. One-on-One music lessons have proven incredibly valuable for the students at Deer Creek.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Concert Dress

Students participating will be required to adhere to the DCMS Instrumental Music concert dress code, which is all black. Absolutely no t-shirts, jeans, or tennis shoes allowed. Details as follows:

Young Men: Black collared shirt (long sleeve preferred), black dress pants, black dress socks, black dress shoes, black belt. Black tie optional.

Young Ladies: Black top/blouse with black pants OR black top with black skirt, OR black dress. Dresses and skirts should be at least knee length.

Young ladies wearing a dress or skirt must not have bare legs on stage. Leggings are not dress pants, and thus are not appropriate concert attire. High heels are not recommended due to the walking required at some performance venues. Examples of concert dress are on our website.

Fundraising

We will participate in at least two fundraisers each year. These are highly encouraged, and the instrumental program **could not** survive without them! The funds will be used for music, instrument repair and maintenance, copies, paper, contest entry fees, busses to and from festivals/contests, chair rental for concerts, purchasing needed instruments, hiring specialists to run sectionals, conference fees for Mr. Sudano, and more. The annual cost of running a successful band program *far* exceeds the little that is provided by the district, so raising money is completely necessary for our program.

Trips/Festivals/Contests

Deer Creek participates in several contests and festivals throughout the school year that require missing part or all of a day of school. These can

include local festivals during the week, day trips on the weekend, or overnight trips farther away. All work that is missed while the students are gone will be expected to be made up and turned in when due.

Jazz Band

Jazz Band is an auditioned group that meets before or after school 3 times weekly. All students must audition for Mr. Sudano before being selected into the group.

Auditions for jazz band will be held in late August/Early September, and our first rehearsal will be in September. See our website/Google Calendar for the specific date. If selected for this ensemble students must commit to outside practice and performances.

Instrumentation for jazz band includes: alto, tenor and bari sax, trumpet, trombone, electric bass, guitar, piano, drum set and vibes. Students playing other instruments may opt to learn one of these and audition, especially if more players are needed. Typically, the instrumentation is 5 Trumpets, 5 Trombones, 5 Saxes, and Rhythm section but we can exceed this.

Extra Credit

Deer Creek Middle School does not offer extra credit in any curricular class, but allows assignments and assessments to be redone for a higher grade.

Extra Opportunities/Challenges

Jazz I at DCMS:

As described in the section previously, Jazz I is a by-audition only group that meets 2-3 times a week before school. Jazz music is typically more rhythmically complex and difficult than concert band music. Because this ensemble is an auditioned group, it will move more quickly than a standard mixed-ability level group.

Jeffco Honor Band/Orchestra:

A by-audition honor group for the top musicians in Jefferson county. Audition music will be handed out in September, and auditions are usually in November. Students that are selected into the ensemble will have one sectional rehearsal, and one all day rehearsal, with the final performance happening in the evening after the full day rehearsal. A guest conductor/clinician will be hired to work with the ensemble. The clinician must be an outstanding director at the Middle, High School, or Collegiate level. The final performance has been mid-late January. Locations and times TBA.

Jeffco Honor Jazz Band:

The same basic model as the Band/Orchestra, but with auditions usually occurring in February, and the performance occurring in April.

Private Lessons:

Private lessons are **HIGHLY ENCOURAGED**, and completely achievable with most schedules and budgets. Every great music teacher and performer that Mr. Sudano has ever met has received private lessons. Band, Orchestra and Jazz Band have very little time to adjust and work on individual issues, because of the sheer number of students in the room. We focus on fundamentals and technique, but Mr. Sudano cannot give each student much individual time during the school day. **Please see our website for a suggested list of private teachers.**

Mr. Sudano's Practice Guidelines/Tips

- 1. Find a well-lit, quiet space that is comfortable for you to play your instrument without distractions and have a tuner and metronome close.**
These are simply “tools of the trade” and every musician should have them!
- 2. Practice difficult sections slowly and in “chunks.”**
Don't try to tackle a 2 page etude in 10 minutes. Break passages down into phrases, measures or individual notes and start slow. The firmer the foundation, the better.
- 3. Strive for a quality practice session, not for quantity.**
3 hours of practicing pieces you already know doesn't get you anything. You should sound bad at some point in your practice session!
- 4. Warm-up correctly and concentrate on tone and technique first.**
Do some long tones or slow scales and ask yourself if you are achieving the sound that YOU want. Are you satisfied with how you are playing?
Concentrate on posture too.
- 5. Practice in front of a mirror to eliminate bad habits.**
A new habit takes about a month to form. Puffing cheeks, bad wrist technique, and shaky embouchures can be fixed through simple muscle memory often.
- 6. Ask parents/siblings/friends to come and listen to you.**
Practicing in an anxious situation will help you identify how you react in front of people and can help you better prepare for a playing test in class.
- 7. Find some music that you LOVE to play.**
Get some music from a movie you love, or from a band you listen to.
- 8. If nothing changes, then nothing changes.**
If you don't practice, you will stay exactly the same as a musician. Growth is essential to learning and vice versa.