

# ***USD 345 Seaman Elementary Band Handbook 2023-24***

Cary Stahly, Director

Seaman Elementary Band Staff:

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*[www.seamanschools.org/SEBO](http://www.seamanschools.org/SEBO)*

## **Introduction**

Welcome and congratulations on becoming a part of the Seaman Elementary Band program! Many years ago, band was provided before or after school at each of the eight elementary schools. Those bands were quite small and the band instrumentation was not complete. In 2001 we combined the elementary bands into two bands that rehearsed at the junior high schools. Since then, we have seen tremendous growth in numbers, but more importantly, growth in the students' skills and musicianship. In 2008 we finally managed to get all of our band students under one roof, and the program is still growing!

We believe that one of the most important aspects of a child's education is the development of the ability to set and achieve short and long term goals. Music education is an excellent vehicle to help instill this trait in our young people. The band curriculum teaches self-discipline, self-esteem, social skills, mind and body coordination, and provides students with a feeling of well being and pride – all of which comes about through patience, persistence, and the willingness to overcome failures through hard work. Music combines the academic and artistic minds, and at the same time allows students to express themselves in a personal, emotional, healthy, and creative way. What an excellent discipline for your child to study!!

It is our hope that all of our students will continue in band throughout their entire academic career. The Seaman District is very proud of its honored band traditions and high standards. The Seaman High School Band boasts an enrollment of 150 students, and is one of the premier high school band programs in the state. The middle school and high school band programs that our 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will grow into are second to none. With your support and help, we aim to make this the best band year ever!

-The SEB Staff

- **Rehearsal Schedule**

The 6<sup>th</sup> grade band rehearses in the Seaman Middle School band room from 7:45-8:20 every day Monday – Friday. The first day is September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

- **Bus & Car Rider Drop-off Places & Times**

If you requested a bus ride, the transportation department will list the pickup time and location in your Powerschool account. The information usually shows up 3-5 days before band gets started. If your pickup information is not posted 48 hours before band starts, please call the transportation dept. at 785-286-8440.

Students that ride the secondary buses will be dropped off in the bus loop in the back of Seaman MS along with students from SMS. The SMS kids will take the door to the commons area, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade band members will enter through a door that leads directly into the band room.

Car riders should be part of the car line that drops off students at the front door to SMS. Band members will enter through the front doors, walk past the commons, and enter the band room through the hallway doors.

**IMPORTANT note about the drop off time:**

The jazz and stage bands at SMS rehearse in the band room from 7-7:30am. 6<sup>th</sup> grade band members that arrive before 7:30am will need to wait in the hallway outside the band room until the SMS bands are finished. Bus riders will come in when they are dropped off, but car riders need to drop off during the 7:30-45am window, no earlier please!

- **Busing Back to School After Rehearsal**

Buses will transport students from SMS to their home schools after rehearsal each morning. Band students that attend Northern Hills will walk from SMS to NH with a staff member.

- **Class Attendance and Absence Notifications**

Attendance will be taken at every rehearsal. If a scheduled appointment will cause a student to miss a rehearsal, or if a student misses one unexpectedly, parents should notify the band staff of the absence so that it may be recorded as excused, and so that it will not affect the student's band grade. Notes may be sent with students to rehearsal prior to or immediately following absences, or you may notify us via email.

*Emails pertaining to attendance should be directed to Mr. Stahly:  
cstahly@usd345.com*

**Note:** *If you use email to notify your school of an absence please add us as well, we don't get absence information from each school. Thanks!*

- **Conflicts with other before school activities**

We understand that there are occasional school activities that may conflict with morning band rehearsals and these are handled on a case by case basis. If a conflict arises please notify Mr. Stahly as soon as possible.

- **Attendance at Concerts**

Band member attendance & participation in all SEB Performances is required!

Why? Every single band member is a critical part of the whole. All of the students that make up the band are counting on each other to meet the obligations that they accepted when they joined the band organization, and concert attendance is the most important obligation of all of them. Concerts are the vehicle that we use to teach cooperation, teamwork, goal setting, motivation, self-discipline, and practice. Concerts are what we strive toward, and if students do not perform in them, then we have fallen short on all of these incredibly important concepts.

Absences will be defined as excused or unexcused. The following reasons for missing a band performance will be considered unexcused unless they are accompanied by an extenuating circumstance:

- Sports practice, game, or tournament
- Non-school related activity (scouts, dance, theater, gymnastics, etc.)
- Not having a ride
- Forgetting

If an unexpected and truly unavoidable conflict with a band event occurs, we are happy to be understanding and flexible. Please contact Mr. Stahly with as much advance notice as possible to discuss the situation. **Thank you for your cooperation.**

- **Grades**

A band grade report will accompany the students' grade reports from their home school at the end of each semester. The categories for grading will be as follows:

Fall Semester

- Daily attendance and in-class assessment scores – 90%
- Concert attendance – 10%

Spring Semester

- Daily attendance and in-class assessment scores – 80%
- Concert attendance – 20%

In order for a student to receive grade points for rehearsal attendance students must not only be at practice, but they also need to have their necessary materials – their instrument, supplies, and their music (book or band folder).

Grades will be determined on a percentage basis according to how many rehearsals the student attended (only unexcused absences will count against a student's attendance record).

Additionally, all band students will be periodically assessed to determine their development as young instrumentalists.

## **Practice**

There are few subjects that require the amount of mental and physical discipline that is required to learn how play a musical instrument. One must sit correctly, breathe correctly, tongue correctly, finger the instrument correctly, produce a tone, listen to the tuning, blend the sound with the ensemble, watch the director, and read music - all at the same time! In order to be successful at this tremendous amount of multi-tasking students must practice! At-home practice is essential in order for the student to make sufficient progress, especially in light of our every-other-day rehearsal schedule. 10-15 minutes per day is usually sufficient, provided the student is focused on the practice material.

- **Parent Responsibilities**

To help ensure the success of your child's band future, take time at least once a week to sit in on your one of your child's practice sessions. Showing interest and listening to their progress over the course of the school year is vital to their success.

It is also very important that your child's instrument is kept in good playing condition. Occasionally minor repairs are needed to keep the instrument in optimal shape. We are lucky to have an in-house repair facility that can take care of minor repairs at a very low cost. Students may bring their instrument to a Band Staff member if it is not working correctly to determine if it's a repair that we can take care of. For larger repairs, there are several good instrument repair shops in Topeka:

*Manning Music 785-272-1740, Underground Instrument Repair. 785-230-0379,  
G Clef Repair. 785-221-1052*

Additionally, please see to it that your child has the needed accessories and materials to keep their instruments in good condition. Students should have the necessities such as: reeds, valve oil, slide oil, cork grease, swabs, books, etc.... These supplies will vary depending on what instrument your child plays - please refer to the supplies list to determine what your child needs.

- **Band T-Shirts**

Band members will wear band t-shirts at all of our concerts. Families that already own a band shirt will not need to purchase a new one. Band shirts cost \$15 and will be passed out to the students in class, usually in early November. Information and order forms will go home with your students in early October.

## • Telephone Numbers & Email Addresses

Keeping the lines of communication open between the band directors and parents is important to everyone. Specific situations that involve individual students may be addressed by any of the SEB directors and lines of communication should be directed accordingly, but general questions can always be sent to Mr. Stahly.

<u>Director</u>	<u>School Phone Number</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
Cary Stahly	785-286-8400 SMS	cstahly@usd345.com
Ryan Simpson	785-286-8400 SMS	rsimpson@usd345.com
Emory Dease (percussion)	785-286-8300 SHS	edease@usd345.com
Cale Paquette	785-286-8300 SHS	cpaquette@usd345.com

## • Necessary Equipment

All students will need:

- ***The Standard of Excellence Band Method Book #1***
- A place to practice at home
- A music stand or other good means to hold music so that posture and instrument carriage is not compromised

There are some supplies that you will need to purchase to go along with your instrument, they are listed below. These are the bare minimum essentials, local music stores sell “kits” that include these items as well as items for cleaning your instrument. These kits are a great investment.

### Flute

- Polishing cloth
- Cloth/t-shirt/handkerchief/ to wrap in tuning rod for cleaning

### Clarinet

- 4 or 5 #2.5 clarinet reeds. Rico Royal is a good brand of reed at a moderate price
- Cork grease
- Silk or cotton pull-through cleaning swab

### Saxophone

- 4 or 5 #2.5 reeds (for Alto or Tenor, depending on what you’re playing. Rico Royal is a good brand of reed at a moderate price
- Cork grease
- Silk or cotton pull-through cleaning swab

### Trumpet, Euphonium/Baritone, Tuba

Valve oil – any brand will do, just make sure it's not rotor or slide oil

Slide grease (same as cork grease)

### French Horn

Rotor oil – any brand will do, just make sure it's not valve or slide oil

Slide grease (same as cork grease)

### Trombone

Slide lubricant – this can be in the form of a drip on oil, a cream, or even from a spray bottle (this is for the main slide)

Slide grease (same as cork grease, this is for the tuning slide)

### Percussion:

- Students will need a "Percussion Kit", which includes a snare drum, snare stand, keyboard instrument(bells) and a bell stand. Snare drum sticks should be purchased separately, Vic Firth SD1 model sticks are recommended.

\*\*\*\*All percussion students must have their own snare drum

### **• Cheap instruments – not such a good deal after all....**

Over the last decade the market has been flooded with discount instruments.....cheap deals on bright & shiny instruments that look beautiful and claim to match the quality of name-brand instruments.....

Parents should NOT purchase instruments from vendors who are not specifically band instrument retailers!! Places to stay away from include department store catalogs, discount membership warehouses, EBAY, AMAZON, and other on-line retailers that prevent you from handling and playing the instrument before it is purchased. Several problems can exist with these types of purchases:

- The quality of these instruments is generally poor, and will cause playing problems and tremendous frustration for your child.
- When these instruments need repair, the repair can be difficult (or impossible due to the quality of the parts used, including pot metal) and more costly than the cost of the instrument. Often local music stores will not or cannot repair discount instruments.

**Low price instruments, although appealing in price, are of low quality, and will lead to low student achievement....we've seen it first hand.**

If you are in the market for an instrument, please don't hesitate to ask for some guidance, or run what looks like a potential good deal by a Band Staff member. A quick email might save you a lot of trouble in the future!

## • Requests for Changing Instruments

Changing instruments mid-year or in between years is *highly discouraged*. We strongly advise students to choose their instrument carefully at the beginning of their first year of study because once the decision has been made and the course of study has begun, it is very difficult to change; however, each year we receive requests for students to switch instruments at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> grade. In order to do change, students must receive private lessons from a qualified instructor over the summer and then pass a proficiency exam to play in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade band.

Diligent, self-disciplined students with a solid practice routine have successfully switched instruments in the past, but more often than not, students get discouraged at having to repeat the curriculum on a different instrument, and they quit. With this in mind, if a student is absolutely insistent on changing instruments, there are some switches that can be more successful than others. Some students have found success switching within the family of their original instrument – brass to brass, or woodwind to woodwind. Switching from brass to woodwind or vice versa is difficult.

There is only one switch that we do not allow – students may not switch from a wind instrument to the percussion section. This is a very common request, but history and experience shows us that while students think that playing the drums will be easier than their current instrument, they quickly discover that this is not the case, and frustration and failure eventually result.

## • Write it Down!

Please keep a copy of your student's instrument type, brand, model, and serial number written down at home. It's a good idea to have this information available if unusual circumstances should occur, such as a fire at school, tornado, theft, etc.

## • Band Members' Rules to Live By

1. Act like ladies and gentlemen at all times.
2. Do not hold or play another student's instrument – you break it...you pay to fix it.
3. Do not take your instrument out of the case outside or on the bus.
4. No food, gum or candy in the band room, or before you play.
5. Take your instrument home every day to practice. Don't leave it at school!

## • Conclusion

As your child's instrumental music teachers, we promise to give 110% in the classroom every day. You, the parent, can make a difference by supporting the efforts of the band program, the school staff, and especially your student's practice habits. Please feel free to visit rehearsal any time. You need not make an appointment, and you have an open invitation. If we can help your child in any way, please don't hesitate to call. Let's have a great year!

# **2023-24 Elementary Band Events**

Monday, September 11 - 1st day of band rehearsals (dry run for transportation, no instruments)

Tuesday, September 12 – Everyday rehearsals w/ instruments start @ SMS

Tuesday, December 5 - Winter Concert @ SMS, 7pm. Last day of band for the Fall semester

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Thursday, Jan. 4 - Band resumes

Wednesday, March 20 – All-District Band concert @ SHS, 7pm

Thursday, May 2 - Spring Concert @ SMS, 7pm. Last day of band for the year

