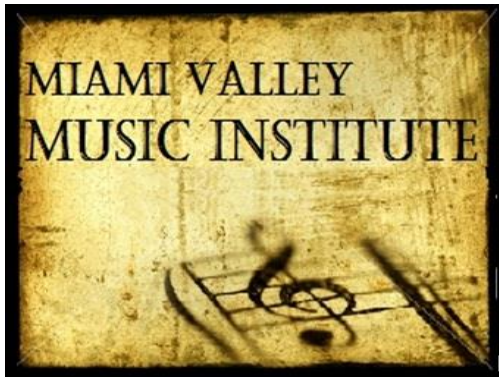




**BEGINNING BAND & STRINGS
HANDBOOK
2024 – 2025**



STEPS TO SUCCESS!



The Miami Valley Music Institute Beginning Band & Strings Handbook

MY CONTACT INFO; LOCAL MUSIC STORES:

MVMI - Dennis Farmer	937-403-8229 dfarmer2663@yahoo.com
Hauer Music, Repair & Supply	937-222-2815
McCutcheon Music, Repair & Supply	937-435-2900
Baroque Violin Shop (Cincinnati)	513-541-2000
The Loft Violin Shop (Columbus)	614-267-7221

All for shops do in-house instrument repairs. The last two are exclusively orchestral strings

SCHEDULE:

I plan on doing in-person as well as live Zoom private lessons and classes from my home at 351 Christopher Drive, Dayton Ohio 45458. These lessons and classes will be held during daytime hours (basically 10am – 4pm with some wiggle room) on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

PRACTICING:

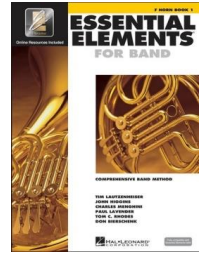
The beginning student will be very successful if they try to practice 10 - 30 minutes a day most days of each week. . A minimum of an hour a week should allow them to keep pace with the class curriculum. Practicing can be done at home or with a friend *but* class rehearsal time isn't considered practice time.

Short periods of focused practice are better than longer periods of unfocused practice time. If you can provide a quiet place at the same time every day where your child will be uninterrupted, he/she will develop correct practice habits that will last a lifetime. A well fitting chair, a music stand and adequate lighting will all help to insure success. The book we have selected for lessons...

BOOKS NEEDED:

Beginners will probably use either of these two. I'll let you know!

"**Essential Elements EEi**", (*please put your name on it*). contains many familiar songs that you will easily recognize. You do not have to have a background in music to know if your child is playing correctly. Your interest and praise are very important factors in guaranteeing your child's enjoyment of music, and success in playing their instrument.



"**Suzuki Method Volume 1**", (*please put your name on it*). This is the book we use for string players (along with the Pre-Suzuki Packet – downloadable on my website for free) for students too young to read. A parent/guardian must pay attention and take notes in class so they can help their child practice at home.



SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Everyone:

- "**Essential Elements interactive**" **Book 1** for your instrument (*please put your name on it*).
- Nametag on your instrument case (Luggage tag or self-adhesive label work well.)
- Pencil w/eraser
- Music Folder with your name on it (I will supply) Any handouts that I give throughout the year.

Woodwinds:

- At least 3 working reeds, strength 2 ½ to start
- Cork grease
- Swab (it's very important to clean out your instrument after EACH USE!!! Not doing so leads to expensive repairs and frustration from an instrument that doesn't work right).



Brass:

- Valve oil (slide oil or cream for trombones)
- Slide grease (or Vaseline) for all.



Percussion:

- Appropriate mallets and sticks (we will discuss the recommended instrument to practice at home)

Strings:

- Cleaning cloth
- Rosin
- Shoulder rest or sponge



If you're not close to a music store, let me know . I might be able to pick up something you need and bring it with me to the next class. Hauer and McCutcheon's are both withing 10 minutes of my home in Centerville.

MR. FARMER'S WEBSITE:

www.MiamiValleyMusic.com



GENERAL RULES AND POLICIES:

Concerts

We will probably have two concerts this year. We really want everyone there! Once we establish dates, parents PLEASE give me as much advance notice as is possible in the event of a conflict. I will try to help work out conflicts, many of which can be worked out with appropriate planning. We want every student to be able to be there for the concert if possible!!!

Rehearsal Attendance

Please call, text or email to let me know if you can't be in class. With advance notice I can sometimes plan some time to help you catch up on what you missed. Students should always come to class with their instrument. Even if they can't play that day because of illness or other problems we find ways for them to participate. Please let me know if your instrument is going into the shop for repairs (you can still come to class if it is though!). Also, let me know if you aren't feeling well. It's nice to know the reason you aren't being yourself.

Rehearsal Needs

Things go much better if you have the following at all classes and rehearsals:

- Instrument
- Lesson Book / music / folder
- Pencil with eraser
- Students should *always* sit up straight and hold instrument properly when playing

Having your instruments and supplies at each rehearsal is a key to success!

Always carry your instrument in its case. PLEASE be super quiet while heading to our space so you don't disturb others. Please don't enter more than 5 minutes before your class time to allow the last class time to pack up.



Care and Maintenance of MVMI and Classroom Property

IF IT'S YOURS... COOL, IF NOT....PLEASE DON'T TOUCH!

No student should play any other student's or Location's instruments (germs, damage etc. 😞)

IF YOU USE IT, TAKE CARE OF IT

All instruments, chairs, stands, accessories, etc. should be treated with loving care.

IF YOU TAKE IT OUT, PUT IT AWAY/ IF YOU MOVE IT, PUT IT BACK

All instruments, sticks, bows, music, percussion accessories, etc. should be put away at the end of class.

PLEASE BE CAREFUL ON THE STEPS ALWAYS AS WELL AS THE DRIVE IN BAD WEATHER

Care and Maintenance of Your Instrument

- Always clean your instrument. Strings; loosen bow immediately after playing.
- Always store your instrument in its closed case when not in use.
- Don't put anything in your instrument case that it was not designed to hold.
- Never let other children, family members or friends hold or play your instrument "just for fun". Way too often this leads to an "accident" and accidents can be expensive to fix!
- Mom, Dad... we ask that you don't try to "fix" an instrument that appears to be broken or not working unless you are trained. Have the Director look at it or take it to an authorized instrument repair technician.

EVALUATION (this is a self-Evaluation unless you make a plan with me):

You can evaluate your progress in the following areas:

Strings:

Music Standards

Proper posture and playing position
Uses correct bowing
Demonstrates correct fingering
Intonation (playing in tune)
Knows music terms appropriate for grade level
Names notes accurately
Counts rhythm values
Produces characteristic tone quality
Responds to Conductor's directions
Uses appropriate dynamics, expression and tempo
Playing tests
Plays scales/ rudiments to appropriate level
Performances (attendance, focus, etiquette)

Skills and Behaviors That Support Learning

Adequate home practice
Brings instrument, pencil, book, folder to class
Follows classroom rules
Works well in the group setting
Always wants to do their best.

Band:

Music Standards

Proper posture and hand position
Uses proper breath support
Demonstrates correct fingering or sticking
Uses correct tonguing
Knows music terms appropriate for grade level
Names notes accurately
Counts rhythm values
Produces characteristic tone quality
Responds to Conductor's directions
Uses appropriate dynamics, expression and tempo
Playing tests
Plays scales/ rudiments to appropriate level
Performances (attendance, focus, etiquette)

Skills and Behaviors That Support Learning

Adequate home practice
Brings instrument, pencil, book, folder to class
Follows classroom rules
Works well in the group setting
Always wants to do their best.



Steps to Success

1. **Practice!** Practice is important, even vital to your success, but even so...practice does not make perfect. Practice makes *permanent!* **Only perfect practice makes perfect!** (we'll explain later)

Use the **Whole-Part-Whole** approach. The **wholes** are the "run-throughs" of a large section of music **without stopping**. Stopping to "fix" every mistake immediately after you make it only serves to train you to stop after making a mistake. Force yourself to play the whole piece or section without stopping! The key is to make a mental note of the trouble spots along the way so that you can then go back and spend time fixing the problem areas. It is far less effective to just play the piece over and over again from the beginning because you're spending time on the places that are already pretty good too.

Practicing the **parts of a song you have the most trouble with** should take up the bulk of your time and effort. First, after noting the trouble spots, break your music down into bite-size pieces of notes that I call "chunks". A chunk may be as small as getting from one note to the next. It may be half a measure, parts of 2 measures, or possibly longer. After you work hard on and figure out the 'chunks', play the whole song. Look for patterns in the music and use them as a guide for making chunks. Second, practice each *chunk* SLOWLY (as slow as it takes to play it *perfectly*) until the notes and rhythms fall easily under your fingers and you are able to match it to the tempo and style of that particular piece or section of music. Then, gradually increase speed until you get it up to tempo. Use the **Four Times Rule** – you must be able to play a chunk PERFECTLY four times in a row if you want to say you mastered it. If you mess up on any of the four times, you need to start over.

Continue to expand outward, like a ripple from a stone thrown into a still pond, by adding new *chunks* to either side of your original starting point. Finally, combine the larger chunks to play the whole section or piece of music. Again, take mental note of trouble spots and come back to them the next time you practice the piece of music.

2. **Be Prepared!** Think ahead! ("Do I have everything I need for music today?").
3. **Be a winner!** Work as a team! Winning teams have members that do their own jobs well, help each other, stay positive, and believe they will succeed.

Easy Ways to make me SAD:

1. Throw pieces of your instrument or articles of clothing (or anything else) at someone across the room while I'm talking or working with another section.
2. Create your own little soundproof bubble to insure that any directions or reminders cannot possibly get through to you or interrupt your day-dreaming session.
3. Leave your instrument/music/pencil in the wrong place in the morning so that you can show up fashionably late and unprepared for class.
4. Forget to mark concert dates on your personal calendar and miss a performance because you didn't know about it in time.
5. Wait until the night before a concert, quiz or practice assignment to start practicing your music.



Easy Ways to keep me HAPPY:

1. Remember your instrument, pencil and music each class
2. Paying attention and being respectful so you and others around you can learn.
3. Quietly work on your music – your fingerings or rhythms if I'm talking or working with a group or section different from yours.
4. Always do your best!!



OK, LET'S MAKE MUSIC!!!!