



MUSIC DEPARTMENT HANDBOOK 2020 – 2021

Staples High School
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STAPLES HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

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August, 2020

Dear Students and Parents of SHS Music Department,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year!

We have missed you all terribly and can't wait to start making music with you again. We would be remiss to not acknowledge the difference in the beginning of this year, however, we remain united in our efforts to best prepare all of you for musical success this year. As a department, we value both your musical and social contributions to our community and will do everything in our power to make this year a safe and positive experience whether you are learning in school or at home.

As a department, we are working on innovative solutions to provide you with as many opportunities as possible to share your creativity, talent, and achievements while following the health and safety guidelines and protocol. Please refer to the Staples Music webpage throughout the school year for updated information about events, performances, and rehearsals which will evolve and be fluid given the changing circumstances of the global pandemic.

Within this handbook you will find the following information:

- SHS Music Department Grading Policy
- Attendance Policy
- ***New*** Concert Attire Policy
- Performance Assessment Rubrics
- Concert Etiquette expectations for performers and audience members

We are eager to see you all and to create new musical moments this year. Please be sure to thoroughly read through the handbook with your family and return only the final page to your ensemble director by Friday, September 25th.

Sincerely,

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STAPLES HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

COVID-19 Safety Policies and Procedures

The primary focus of our reopening is the safety of all students and teachers. Secondly, we aim to maintain the quality of Staples' music program in the age of COVID-19. The Staples High School music program is a cornerstone of the school's curriculum, given the understanding that music has a distinct and significant impact on students' growth and development.

The district is following state guidelines regarding the performing arts to ensure a safe learning environment. Staples Music is committed to providing music performances to the greatest extent possible during the 2020-2021 school year regardless of whether students are learning in school, at home or a combination of both. We are working on innovative solutions to allow students to share their creativity, talent and achievements.

Equipment: Students should not share classroom materials such as pencils, sheet music, music stands, rosin, etc.

Facility: Wherever possible, one-way traffic patterns will be established for entering and exiting the room, pick-up, and storage of instruments. The storage of student instruments cases will be assigned by class cohort groupings within the music department for the ease of exit and entry into the facility keeping social distancing. Groups may utilize outdoor areas, the auditorium, and other large spaces to distance students.

Performance Ensembles: Students may be divided into smaller groups to allow social distancing. When students are not performing they will work on music literacy, composition, and/or project-based learning to enhance musicianship and performance practices online. When performing, students will face forward at all times.

String players will maintain distancing of 6 by 6 feet when performing in all instructional spaces. Students must wear masks at all times.

Singers will maintain distancing of 9 by 6 feet when performing in all instructional spaces. Singers will wear masks at all times, this includes when they are performing.

Wind and brass students will maintain distancing of 12 feet when playing wind or brass instruments in all instructional spaces and will maintain 6 feet when not performing. Wind and brass instruments will use bell covers for every wind instrument (provided by the district). Flutists will have flute shields (provided by the district) and wear masks when not playing. Percussionists will wear masks at all times. **All musicians except flute and percussion must bring and wear masks with a slit cut out for the mouthpiece.**

Live Performances: In-person concerts will occur when approved by the district in coordination with our local health district, State Department of Education, and the Governor's office.

STAPLES HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Attendance Policy

Our goal in the Staples High School Music Department is to achieve musical excellence at all times. We are committed to engaging music on both the expressive and technical levels. In order to achieve musical excellence, rehearsals must be approached with a purposeful and artistic mindset. Therefore, it is necessary for all musicians in our ensembles to fully participate in the process. Each individual musician is an integral part of the ensemble as a whole and their presence is vital to elevate our ensembles to the artistic levels our art deserves.

**** FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR: Due to the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Staples High School Music Department attendance policy will be flexible and will remain in accordance with district health and safety policies.**

REHEARSALS

Students are expected to attend all scheduled rehearsals. If a student is excused from school on a given day, they are also excused from that day's rehearsal. However, if a student has accumulated 3 or more absences prior to a concert and has not demonstrated the level of preparation expected, they may be required to attend one or more extra help sessions with the director. These extra sessions will be scheduled in consultation with the student's parent/guardian.

CONCERTS

Per the Staples High School Attendance Policy, students who are not present at the end of the school day are not eligible to participate in any after school activities, including concerts. However, a concert for a music class is similar to a test in a science, math, or English course, and must be made up whether the absence is excused or not. Make-up assignments will be determined by the ensemble director and will be due within two weeks after the concert.

If a student's absence from a performance is unexcused, the student's final grade will be lowered by one full letter grade. Validity of excused absences will be reviewed and determined by the entire Staples High School music staff. Valid excuses include, but are not limited to: family medical emergencies, documented illness, religious holidays, or unavoidable catastrophic events. Should the staff find the absence to be excused, the ensemble director will determine make-up assignments.

For a student to be excused from a performance due to a family trip or other pre-planned event, the ensemble director must be notified, in writing, **at least one month prior to the performance**. If excused, students will have to complete a make-up assignment in order to prevent a negative effect on their final grade.

STAPLES HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Concert Dress Black

Ensemble attire is extremely important. A group who comes onto the stage well-dressed shows respect for their audience, reflects personal pride, and gives off an aura of “something special is going to happen.”

For all performances, Staples High School students will wear the “uniform” of professional musicians; Concert Dress Black or Dress Blacks.

What is Concert Dress Black?

First and foremost, it is completely solid black (thanks, Captain Obvious!); no patterns, no embellishments, no sheer, and no accents. Dress blacks are formal, classy, and elegant. Students are free to choose the components of their dress blacks within the following guidelines.

- black dress pants, skirt, or dress (length is to the ankle for all bottom attire)
- black dress shirt with collar & buttons, sweater, or blouse (All sleeves must be to the wrist)
- black dress socks or black opaque stockings
- black dress shoes
- black jackets, ties or scarves are welcome, but not mandatory

*Previous concert attire fits within these guidelines and is available to grades 9-12 with the following adjustments: tuxedos must be worn with a black collared shirt and dresses must be worn with a long sleeve sweater.

What is not Concert Dress Black?

- dark navy or dark indigo tones (stage lights will illuminate the difference!)
- jeans, sweats, yoga pants, leggings, cargo pants/shorts, mini-skirts, or shorts
- t-shirts, tank tops, spaghetti straps, crop tops
- flip-flops, athletic shoes, or black sneakers with colored stripes or logo
- no-show socks, white socks, colored socks, sans-socks, bare legs, or bare feet

Some hints on putting together your dress blacks

- because students are growing, borrowing from older siblings, or even parents (especially shoes) is a great idea
- if you decide to buy, allow room for growing (not quite clown suite big, but enough for a year or two)
- thrift stores can be a great place to find formal clothing in good shape
- if you are not sure if something meets the requirements, ask before you buy or make sure you can take it back

STAPLES HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Responsibilities and Expectations

In order to achieve to the highest levels of rehearsal efficiency, learning and performance, each musician in the Staples High School Music Program is expected to:

Attend every rehearsal

- On time
- No food (including gum) or drink (except water) is allowed in any of the music areas
- With a clean, fully functioning instrument in good playing order (Band/Orchestra)
- With all music neatly kept in a music folder
- With a sharpened pencil and eraser. **NO PEN!!**
- Prepared to rehearse and contribute in a positive manner! (BYOD only when requested)
- Cell phones are not permitted at your seat and/or stand during ensemble rehearsals or performances. All cell phones must be placed in folder slots at the beginning of rehearsal.

Attend all performances

- On time (call time for all musicians will be designated by the students' director and is typically 45 minutes to an hour prior to the beginning of the concert).
- With instrument and music
- Appropriately dressed (The purpose of appropriate concert dress is to establish the proper concert atmosphere that will reflect your hard work. Dress must not serve as a distraction.)
- All students will attend the entire concert regardless of when they perform in the program.

A significant component of the musical process is the performance. It is vital that you attend all scheduled performances. The absence of an ensemble member will impact the balance and blend of your section as well as the execution of the overall musical performance. Therefore, any **unexcused absence** from a performance will result in a deduction of 10 points from your final grade for the quarter average (one full letter grade).

Excused absences are up to the discretion of the director and school administration. In order for a student to receive an excused absence, the student and/or their parents must contact the ensemble director no less than 4 weeks prior to the date of the performance. Emergency absences include, but not limited to the following circumstances will also be excused:

- Documented illness
- Medical emergency (family)
- Religious holiday
- Death in the family

HOW DO WE DEFINE RESPECT IN THE REHEARSAL PROCESS?

- **Respect for the Rehearsal Process**
 - Demonstrating respect for the rehearsal process by following teacher and/or student leader directions. Do not speak out of turn (disruption) or create a distraction (improper use of BYOD) during rehearsals or lessons. Raise hand at the appropriate time and wait before speaking.
- **Respect for Others**
 - Showing courtesy and tolerance, respect differences and make others welcome. Listen when others are talking and do not prevent others from rehearsing or listening to teachers and/or student leaders.
- **Respect for Self**
 - Striving for excellence by participating actively and positively at all times. Do not settle for anything but your very best efforts. Be on time and prepared every day.
- **Respect for Property**
 - The classroom sheet music, pianos, guitars, computers, music department and other school equipment must be respected and treated properly at all times.

STAPLES HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Ensemble Grading Policy

In order to achieve our goals of growth and excellence as a performing ensemble, every student must strive to improve on a regular basis. Therefore, to have an accurate sense of individual understanding, each ensemble member will be assessed on the following:

Performance/Written Assessments - 70%

Each quarter, a combination of assessments will be selected from the following:

- **Performance Assessments**

- Musical Excerpts - solo and/or small ensemble
- Concert Self-Assessment
- Technical Exercises
- Scales/Etudes
- Sight-reading
- Excerpts

- **Written Assessments**

- Music Annotation
- Music Theory (i.e. Rhythm sheets, Scales, etc.)
- Articles
- Journals/Reflections (Instrumental only)

*****Please note, all assessments can be made up as many times as necessary. Our goal is for every student to improve and to continue working towards mastery!*****

Performance in a Large Ensemble Rehearsal - 30%

2-3 large ensemble assessments per quarter will be given based on the following:

Large Ensemble Participation Rubric

Fulfills Westport 2025 Expectations for Civic, Social, and Ethical Values:

~Encourages students to find solutions through the process of understanding their role in ensembles and through individual practice~

	8	12	15	20
BEHAVIOR/ RESPECT	Student does not display appropriate behavior and respect during class.	Student rarely displays appropriate behavior and respect during class.	Student usually displays appropriate behavior and respect during class.	Student always displays appropriate behavior during class.
ATTENDANCE/ PROMPTNESS	Student is never on time to class.	Student is rarely on time to class.	Student is usually on time to class.	Student is always on time to class.
PLAYING POSTURE	Student never uses correct playing position.	Student rarely uses correct playing position.	Student usually uses correct playing position.	Student always uses correct playing position.
PREPARATION	Student is not prepared for class with a music folder, instrument (Band/Orch), and a pencil.	Student is rarely prepared for class with a music folder, instrument (Band/Orch) and a pencil.	Student is usually prepared for class with a music folder, instrument (Band/Orch), and a pencil.	Student is always prepared for class with a music folder, instrument (Band/Orch), and a pencil.
ENGAGEMENT	Student does not sing/play with concentrated effort; does not listen when teacher or others are speaking; or follow the conductor's cues.	Student rarely sings/plays with concentrated effort; listens when teacher or others are speaking; and/or follows the conductor's cues.	Student usually sings/plays with concentrated effort; listens when teacher or others are speaking; and/or follows the conductor's cues.	Student always sings/plays with concentrated effort; listens when teacher and others are speaking; and follows the conductor's cues
CELL PHONE USE	Student did not store cell phones appropriately 13-16 times during the quarter.	Student did not store cell phones appropriately 9-12 times during the quarter.	Student did not store cell phones appropriately 5-8 times during the quarter.	Student did not store cell phones appropriately 1-4 times during the quarter.

STAPLES HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Vocal Sight-Singing Assessment Rubric

Fulfills Westport 2025 Expectations for Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

Encourage student to find solutions through the process of problem solving musical issues in ensembles and individual practice.

Name: _____ Period: _____ Quarter: 1 2 3 4

Beat Accuracy GRADE /4	Rhythm Accuracy GRADE /4	Pitch Accuracy GRADE /4	Solfege Accuracy GRADE /4
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Sight-Singing Exercise # _____

Total Score ____ / 16

RHYTHM / BEAT ACCURACY

	Does Not Meet	Proficient	Meeting Goal	Advanced
Beat Accuracy	Steady beat maintained for little to none of the example (> 6 mistakes)	Steady beat maintained for some of the example (3-5 mistakes)	Steady beat maintained for most of the example (1-2 mistakes)	Steady beat maintained for the entire example
Rhythm Accuracy	Few to none of the rhythms performed correctly (> 6 mistakes)	Some of the rhythms performed correctly (3-5 mistakes)	Most rhythms performed correctly (1-2 mistakes)	All rhythms performed correctly

PITCH / SOLFEGE ACCURACY

	Does Not Meet	Proficient	Meeting Goal	Advanced
Pitch Accuracy	Few to none of the pitches sung correctly (> 6 mistakes)	Some of the pitches sung correctly (4-5 mistakes)	Most pitches sung correctly (2-3 mistakes)	All or nearly all pitches sung correctly (0-1 mistakes)
Solfege Accuracy	Few to none of the correct solfege syllables used (> 6 mistakes)	Some of the correct solfege syllables used (4-5 mistakes)	Most of the correct solfege syllables used (2-3 mistakes)	All or nearly all solfege syllables used correctly (0-1 mistakes)

	Interpret	Analyze	Synthesize and Apply	Evaluate	Global Students
Critical Thinking	Understands the significance of the concepts and content	Break down ideas, concepts, and content	Connect ideas and apply to other contexts	Make knowledge-based decisions using credible evidence	Create an original product or idea to arrive at new meanings.

STAPLES HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Concert Etiquette Reminders for the Audience

1. Refrain from talking.

This is the first and greatest rule. When the first piece starts, the concert has begun. Please cease all talking at this point. Talking of any kind during the performance is distracting to the performers and other audience members.

2. Turn off pagers, cell phones, tablet computers (i.e. iPads), watch alarms, and electronic games.

While many phones and pagers now have very symphonic-like rings, they don't always fit into the musical score, nor do they provide pleasant sounds for your neighbors. The light from the glowing screen is also very distracting for those around you and those seated above you in the balcony.

3. Do not call out to your child as he/she walks onto the stage or at any time during the performance.

They do know who you are already and they know you are there; you most likely brought them to the concert. The students have been asked to focus on the performance at all times, you can help them maintain that focus by not distracting them.

4. Do not take flash photography.

You don't want your child to walk off the edge of the stage from flash blindness, do you?

5. Do not leave as soon as your child's portion of the concert is over.

All students deserve a full audience for their performances.

6. Applaud at appropriate times.

Some music has several sections. Remember, it's not over until all of the sections have been performed. Performers appreciate a round of applause at the end of a scene or a song; your cue for applause is when the conductor lowers their arms.

7. Do not get up and move around or leave the auditorium during the music.

If several performers or groups are performing, stay for all. It is rude to leave between performers. Wait for a break in the concert, or for applause, to visit the restroom, unless there is an emergency or you are carrying a screaming child, in which case you should leave quietly and quickly. *PLEASE!*

8. If younger children are attending the performance, please keep them with you at all times.

Children are not allowed to walk around the theatre or talk during the performance.

9. Do your best to arrive early.

Arrive on time, before the concert begins. Arriving late is a theatre no-no! Late entry disturbs everyone, including the performers. We understand that life can sometimes throw us a curveball and we can't help being late, but if that is the case, wait until applause begins to enter the concert.

STAPLES HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT
Concert Etiquette Expectations for the Performers

Pre-Concert

- Wear the designated performance attire. You must inspect all of the pieces of your uniform a few days before the performance to make sure they are clean and wrinkle free.
- Any jewelry or accessories worn must be simple and elegant; they may not be distracting from the performance or impede your ability to perform. Directors reserve the right to decide whether or not your jewelry is acceptable.
- Hair
 - Gentlemen – Hair must be neatly combed out of the eyes. If you have long hair that falls past your shoulders, it must be neatly pulled back with a hair tie.
 - Ladies – Long hair that falls past the shoulders must be pulled back into a neat bun, twist, or an elegant ponytail. Please do not throw your hair back into a loose or messy ponytail as if you were going to the gym.
- Arrive at the designated call time – Enter the building quickly and quietly.
- Listen carefully to all pre-performance instructions.
- Always be in the appropriate designated place at the appointed time prior to performance.

During a Concert

- Maintain a proper playing posture – sit on the front edge of the chair with a straight back
- Always keep your eyes on the conductor. Do not look around or to the audience – keep your focus on the music.
- Never sit directly behind the person in front of you – find your window and stay in it.
- Avoid all scratching, rubbing your eyes, adjusting glasses or hair, etc.
- Never do anything that would call unnecessary attention to yourself – the audience should be focused on the music of the ensemble as a whole, not on YOU!
- Walk on and off the stage in a disciplined fashion.
- Quiet MUST be maintained backstage before, during, and immediately after a concert. If you are seated in the audience while another ensemble is performing, you should be setting an example of perfect audience etiquette.

Students will be graded on the following:

- Punctuality
- Proper Attire
- Proper Concert Etiquette as detailed above
- Playing to the best of one's ability

STAPLES HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Guidelines Agreement

2020 – 2021

**PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN TO
Mr. Giampietro, Miss Mascaro, Mr. Rosenberg, or Mrs. Muehleise**

BY FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25th (10 point quiz grade)

STUDENT

I have read the Staples High School Music Handbook. My signature below indicates that as a member of the Staples High School Music Program, I agree to all aforementioned policies and procedures.

_____	_____	_____
Student name – print	Ensemble(s)	Grade
_____	_____	_____
Student signature		Date

PARENT/GUARDIAN

I, too, have read the Staples High School Music Department Handbook. My signature below indicates that as a parent/guardian of a student in a Staples High School music ensemble, I agree to the aforementioned policies and procedures. Additionally, I will do my part to make sure my student is punctual and present for all performances and after school rehearsals.

_____	_____
Parent/Guardian name – print	
_____	_____
Parent/Guardian signature	Date