

TRUMPET

Welcome to G.C. Hawley Middle School! I am so glad that you want to be a part of the band! Since you have decided to play the trumpet, here are a few things you should know.

How To Take Care Of Your Instrument

Clean and oil your valves at least once a week. I recommend Hetman #2 valve oil or Monster “Regular” valve oil. Wipe clean your valves, don’t just add oil or dirt and residue will build up. I will show you how to do this in class.

Grease your slides once a month. I recommend the Conn-Selmer red grease in the white bottle. Wipe clean the slides before adding grease. You can also “give your horn a bath” by cleaning the insides of the pipes with a snake brush under water. I have a video that shows you how to do this on www.YouTube.com/HawleyBandRoom .

Play On A Good Mouthpiece

Bach 5C or 10½C. Mouthpieces come in many shapes and sizes. Most students will sound good and feel comfortable on a Bach brand mouthpiece, size 5C. If you have very thin lips and the 5C feels way too big, a 10 ½ C may be a better fit. Some students, especially if they have braces, may do better with a larger 3C. I can help you find the right “fit”, but a Bach 5C works for almost everyone and it is what I recommend.

What To Expect In The First Few Weeks

Spend lots of time buzzing notes on your mouthpiece. The most difficult part of learning to play the trumpet is learning to set your lips correctly and steady steady, good notes on the mouthpiece. Playing on just the mouthpiece, try holding steady notes for 5-10 seconds. Then try making higher and lower notes come out. This is an essential skill -- if you cannot change notes on the mouthpiece, then you cannot change notes on the trumpet. You need to spend at least 10 minutes doing this *every day*. You can do it watching TV so you don’t get bored. Practice this in addition to practicing the music that we are studying in class. FYI, I still practice mouthpiece buzzing every day for 15 minutes in the car on my way to school, and I have been playing trumpet for over 20 years.

Listen to professional trumpet players. Listening to great professional musicians on your instrument will inspire you and help you develop your “ear” for what you want to sound like. Get on Youtube or Spotify and search for “trumpet”. Have fun exploring! Make sure you listen to the Haydn Trumpet Concerto.

The Website and the Bandmate Chromatic Tuner iOS/Android App

www.JustinDickson.com/Band Our “textbook” is all online, on this website. You can also find information about our band program and links to articles about learning to play your instrument.

Bandmate Chromatic Tuner is a free app for Apple and Android phones and tablets that I designed, and I would like all of our band members and/or your parents to download it. It is a tuner that shows the note you are playing on a music staff, so you can check if you are playing the right note or note while you are practicing. It will really make things easier for you to learn!



Playing Tests, Practice Tips, and Expectations For Band Members

How we do tests in band. Your grade in band depends on passing our Playing Tests. You will have four tests each quarter, and you pass when you can play the music correctly. If you pass, you get a 100. If you do not pass, you get a 0, but you can come back and try again as many times as you want until the end of the grading period. The goal is for you to practice until you get it right (“mastery-based education”).

How to practice. Slow down. If you are having trouble with certain notes, practice them very slowly, and use Bandmate to make sure you are playing the right notes. Do not try to play the whole song at once, but rather stop and fix your mistakes. Just go over a few notes at a time, until you can play without mistakes.

Class rules. #1 Listen respectfully while your Director is speaking. #2 If it’s not yours, don’t touch it. #3 No gum, food or drinks except water. #3 is a rule while practicing at home, too, or your instrument will be ruined.

Everyone is important, do your part. Everyone is an important member of the band, and everyone has a job to do. As a member of the Hawley Middle School band, your job is to learn your music, to practice until it’s right, to take care of your instrument and bring it to class every day, to listen respectfully to your Band Director and follow directions, to be okay with making mistakes and keep trying, to help each other, to attend every concert, to work hard and have fun!