Welcome Fort Couch Band Students and Parents/Guardians!
The Fort Couch Band Program is an exciting part of your musical journey towards a lifetime of participation in music and the arts! Learning to play an instrument and being a part of a successful school band fosters creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, discipline and self-esteem. The hallmarks of a successful music program include effective communication and a cooperative effort involving the student, teacher, and parent/guardian. These procedures provide the first step in becoming familiar with our band program. I am looking forward to an exciting year!

**Goals**
- To provide a comprehensive music education experience for all students who demonstrate the aptitude and interest in learning instrumental music
- To benefit the school and community through the public performance of quality music
- To model and encourage the development of strong character traits like personal responsibility, integrity, hard work, and respect for others
- To provide students with a positive group experience where they may grow socially as they learn and help one another succeed in music

**How Can Parents Help?**
- Sign and return the **Fort Couch (FC) Middle School Band Statement of Responsibility Form**.
- Be sure your child is practicing regularly and sign the practice chart weekly.
- Check the FC Band website regularly and **join the Remind and Canvas class(es)** for your child’s ensemble(s) (e.g., Concert Band, Symphonic Band, FC Jazz Band, and Percussion Ensemble).
- Please consider volunteering to assist with Fort Couch Band Events. This is one of the best ways for a parent/guardian to learn more about the band program and provide additional opportunities for our students.

**Band Room Rules and Expectations**
- No food, candy, drinks, and gum in the band room.
- No use of cell phones or iPods
- Only students enrolled in band are allowed in the band room.
- Instruments are to be placed in the storage room on the designated instrument shelf. The seating area should be kept clear of backpacks, cases, etc.
- Instruments are to be taken home at the conclusion of the school day.
- Fort Couch Bands will have an official Facebook page. Under NO circumstances can students create a Facebook page representing a group in the band.
Performing Ensembles at Fort Couch

Membership in a Fort Couch Ensemble is a privilege, not a right. Each band member is expected to attend a one pull out lesson and the requisite ensemble(s) rehearsals each week, and complete the assigned Spot Check(s) from the band literature or method text(s). If a student has three or more unexcused absences from rehearsals or does not successfully complete the Spot Check(s), they will not perform in the concert. However, each student should continue to attend lessons and rehearsals for the next performance. Please note that the students will be working each week in lessons to complete the requisite Spot Check for the upcoming concert. Students are encouraged to attend help sessions during Panther Time on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday each week to prepare or complete their Spot Checks. The lesson and rehearsal schedule will be posted weekly on the Fort Couch Band website.

Concert Band
The Concert Band is comprised of all 7th and 8th grade band students. The ensemble rehearses on Tuesday and Thursday mornings before school from 8:00 to 8:40. Students in this ensemble have at least one year of experience playing their instrument. This ensemble will perform at specific Fort Couch Band Concerts.

**NOTE:** All eligible Fort Couch Band members will perform with the Concert Band.

Symphonic Winds
The Symphonic Winds is Fort Couch’s premier performing ensemble. The ensemble rehearses on Tuesday and Thursday mornings before school from 7:40 to 8:00, as well as Wednesday mornings from 7:40-8:40. Members of the Symphonic Winds are selected in a tryout process. The students are held to strict attendance and performance requirements. Students who fail to maintain the standards of the Symphonic Winds may be removed at the director’s discretion. The Symphonic Winds represents Fort Couch Middle School in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) Concert Festival, as well as other regional festivals.

Symphonic Winds members are encouraged to be enrolled in private lessons and to be available for additional rehearsals (e.g., Symphonic Sectional Rehearsals, Symphonic Winds Clinics). Missed rehearsals and performances will affect the student’s standing as a member of the Symphonic Winds.

Jazz Band
In order to join the Jazz Band, the student must be a member of the Concert Band or Symphonic Winds. The Jazz Band is open to all 7th and 8th grade band students interested in learning the jazz style. The ensemble rehearses before school on Monday mornings from 8:00 to 8:40, beginning on Monday, November 6, 2017. The students will learn to improvise and play in a variety of genres. The Jazz Band will perform at Fort
Couch Band events as well as regional jazz festivals. Missed rehearsals and performance(s) will affect the student’s standing as a member of the Jazz Band.

**Beginners**
All beginning instrumentalists are expected to attend one pull out lesson each week. However, they are not expected to attend an ensemble rehearsal. In order to perform with the Concert Band, the student must successfully perform all of the exercises on page 27 of the *Sound Innovations Book 1* text. Beginning students are encouraged to enroll in private lessons.

**Rehearsals and Concerts Outside of School**
*Rehearsals outside of school are crucial in preparing for the concert.* These rehearsals are the *only time that the band meets as a full ensemble* and each student's presence is important. As a member of the band, the student is required to attend all rehearsals and concerts. If a student has *three or more unexcused absences* from rehearsals or does not successfully complete the Spot Checks, they will not perform in the next concert. However, they are encouraged to continue to attend lessons and rehearsals to participate in future performances.

**“I Forgot My Instrument”**
If a student forgets their instrument, they are expected to attend their lesson and/or ensemble rehearsal. They are welcome to participate in lessons without an instrument. However, in many cases, there are school-owned instruments they might borrow for the lesson. If they forget their instrument for a rehearsal, they are expected to complete the “Rehearsal Detective” form on the FC Band website and submit the form after rehearsal for credit.

**Policy for Rehearsal or Concert Absences**
*No missed rehearsal or concert will be excused without prior written notification.* Parents, if a student will miss a rehearsal before school, please send an email to Dr. Seybert indicating the reason for the absence in advance of the rehearsal. In the event of an emergency, written notice should be provided within 24 hours of the student's return to school.

*If the student will miss a Saturday rehearsal (Symphonic Winds/Jazz Band), Dress Rehearsal or Band Concert;* please complete the Music Event Excused Absence Form at least three weeks prior to the event. Failure to arrange transportation, athletic practices, or try-outs, or other events will not be excused. If a conflict is unavoidable, please notify Dr. Seybert.

**NOTE:** *Excused absences will not affect the student's grade or standing in the ensemble. More than three unexcused absences from rehearsals will result in suspension from the*
performance. If a student is late to rehearsal, they are considered tardy. Three tardies equal one unexcused absence.

Inclement Weather
Since our ensemble rehearsals are before school, if there is a school delay or closing, all before school rehearsals are cancelled. If there is a delay, we will have lessons during the school day.

To be early is to be on time, to be on time is to be late.

Classroom Rules and Rehearsal Behavior
• Be polite to other students and instructors.
• Enter the band room in a quiet, calm manner and be on time for each class and rehearsal.
• Walk while in the band room and refrain from horseplay.
• Have their instruments assembled when the teacher begins class or rehearsal.
• Have their instrument, binder, music, and pencil in class each day.
• Not talk during instruction time.
• Follow the directions issued by Dr. Seybert, clinicians, and chaperones.
• Handle your own instrument.

Questions for Students to Consider for all Band Events
• Did I do the right thing?
• How have my actions affected others?
• Did I live up to our band motto? Be YOUR Best.

Consequences for Inappropriate Behavior
1. Verbal warning from teacher
2. Meeting with Dr. Seybert
3. Lowered participation grade or Chair demotion, depending on behavior
4. Discussion with parents, either through a phone call or parent conference
5. Meeting with administration, parents, and student
6. Removal from the band program subject to administrative approval

Concert Etiquette
At various times during the academic year, students will attend or perform in concerts. The following are the standard set of manners to be used when attending a live performance:
• Dress nicely for all live performances. Arrive at a concert ten to fifteen minutes early. If you are late, wait until you hear applause before entering the concert area to find a seat.
• Clap when the conductor comes onto the stage as a sign of welcome to the musicians.
• Do not talk during the performance.
• Do not bring food, drinks, or gum into a concert area.
• Clap only at the end of an entire selection. If there are movements within a selection, wait until the conductor turns around and faces the audience before applauding.
• In a jazz concert, clap at the end of each song and clap after the end of each solo.
• Please **AVOID** leaving performances until the entire program is complete. This is disrespectful to the other performers, so plan to make the concert night an evening to relax and enjoy the performance.

**Band Member Expectations**

• Some band members may attend events that may include missing portions of the school day, therefore additional conduct and grade expectations exist for these students. Band members represent themselves, Fort Couch Middle School, as well as the Fort Couch Band program at all times. Band members who do not meet the following additional expectations may not be allowed to go on band field trips:
  • *Students are expected to maintain a strong academic standing in each class*, as well as an 80 average or above in band to be eligible for trip participation
  • Prior to a band trip or activity in which participation involves missing all or part of the school day, the student should make arrangements for the successful completion of all missed assignments.
  • Students must submit all required paperwork for the trip **ONE WEEK** in advance of the departure date. Students failing to do so will not be allowed to travel with the band.

*Practice does not make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect!*

**Homework/At-Home Practice**

All Band Members are expected to practice outside the classroom, maintain an accurate record (see Fort Couch Band Program Practice Record) of this practice time and submit to the director on a weekly basis. Any *individual* practice time your child completes on his/her band instrument outside of the classroom may be included on the practice record. Students will submit their practice record in the specified box in the band room. Research indicates that 15-20 minutes of deliberate practice is necessary for students to make steady and consistent progress on their instruments.

**Spot-Checks**

Spot Check assignments provide a method of individualized instruction in the band program. Spot Check material will be from the *Essential Elements 2*, *Making Music Matter*, and *Foundations for Superior Performance* texts as well as the concert repertoire available on *Smart Music*.

• The director will create assignments, and the student is expected to be complete the assignment on/before the deadline.
• Any material left incomplete by the deadline will adversely affect the student’s grade.

**Outside Concert Attendance**

Students learn to gauge their own level of performance and to appreciate the talents of other ensembles by attending events and concerts offered by our neighboring schools and in the community. This may include Fort Couch Band performances in which they themselves are not
performing. Upcoming qualifying performances will be posted on the Fort Couch Bands website and posted in the band room.

**Concert Evaluation Form**
- To receive credit, students must turn in a program from the event and a Performance Evaluation Form (on/before May 30, 2017). Programs and evaluations after the deadline will not be counted.
  - *Three* Concerts = Requirement for Fort Couch Honor Band Award
- Attendance at performances by the Upper St. Clair High School, Mt. Lebanon High School, Bethel Park High School, and North Hills High School are encouraged

**Concert Attire**
Uniform attire at performances is very effective. Each band member is required to wear the designated outfit for his/her particular group at all public performances. Specific information regarding cost, ordering information, and payment schedule will be sent via email and posted on the Fort Couch Band Website.

**General Uniform Rules and Guidelines:**
- Uniforms are to be neatly pressed and clean for each performance.
- Young ladies with long hair are encouraged to pull their hair back for uniformed performances.
- No jewelry is to be worn with the uniform, other than discreet, stud type earrings for young ladies.
- Under no circumstances are jeans, capri pants, yoga/sweat pants, tennis shoes and sandals acceptable performance attire
- Socks should be all black and cover the ankle when the student is seated
- Parents are responsible for ensuring the uniform fits well and is hemmed appropriately.

**Concert Band and Symphonic Winds**
**Boys:**
- White dress shirt, Black suit pants
- Black dress socks/Black dress shoes.

**Girls:**
- Long black concert dress *or* Black pants and white blouse
- Plain black dress shoes (closed toe, conservative heel)
- Neutral hose

**Jazz Band**
The Jazz Band Uniform *varies* based on the performance venue. For example, each member will wear the Concert Uniform when they perform with other related arts groups. However, they will wear the Jazz Band Uniform when they perform at various school and educational functions.
The Jazz Band uniform includes:

- Concert uniform

OR

- Red Fort Couch Band Polo

- Black pants, socks, shoes, and belt

Please let Dr. Seybert know if you need any assistance in regards to purchasing materials for your uniform.

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Concerts</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Weekly participation (School Lesson and Rehearsals)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Out of School Rehearsals</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dress Rehearsals and Concert(s) are MANDATORY</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Playing Test</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In Class playing tests -Spot Checks and SmartMusic assignment averages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written Test</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Written musical concepts, performance evaluations, theory tests</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Outside concert attendance (Due at the end of the second semester on/before May 30, 2017)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice Charts/Private Lessons</td>
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<td>• Weekly practice charts are homework grades due on Friday. There are nine weeks in the grading period and seven charts will be included in the final grade.</td>
<td>Credit added to Playing tests grade.</td>
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Chair Placement

**Concert Band and Symphonic Winds**
Chair Placement Tests will be given throughout the year, and students will be seated based on their results. In general, there will be two chair placements per year, one during the first and third weeks.

**Fort Couch Honor Band Award**
The Fort Couch Honor Band Award is the most prestigious award given by the Fort Couch Band Program. In order to receive the Honor Band Award, a student must perform at the highest levels of achievement throughout the entire year.

- Maintain an “Outstanding” grade in band for each grading period, **AND**
- Attend ALL band performances, **AND**
- Attend at least three outside concert performances per SEMESTER, **AND**
- Score a minimum of 20 points from the list below:
  - Smart Music/Lesson Honor Pass-offs = 12 pts
  - Band Volunteer Merit - 3 hours* = 3 pts*
  - Rehearse/Perform with an Additional FC Ensemble (upon Director’s Request) = 6 pts
  - Saturday Rehearsal (each) = 3 pts

*Indicates - The Band Volunteer Merit System includes points towards the Fort Couch Honor Band Award when the student or family volunteers a *minimum of three hours in service to the band*. No partial credit is given; a minimum of three hours is required to earn these points.
FORT COUCH MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND
STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

Student

I have completely read the Fort Couch Middle School Band Procedures. I understand and agree that I will follow each rule as outlined in the procedures, including those on classroom and rehearsal behavior, before/after school rehearsals, and concerts. I understand that my contribution to the band is an important part of the ensemble’s success. I understand that if I miss an out of school rehearsal or band concert that my grade and my participation will be affected, unless that absence is excused.

______________________________   ______________________________
Student Last Name     Student First Name

______________________________  ______________________________
Student Signature     Date

Parent/Guardian

I have completely read the Fort Couch Middle School Band Procedures.

• I understand that my child is expected to follow each rule as outlined in the procedures, including those on classroom and rehearsal behavior, before/after school rehearsals, uniforms, and concerts.

• I understand that my child’s contribution to the band is an important part of the ensemble’s success. I understand that if my child misses a before/after school rehearsal or band concert, that his or her grade and participation in the ensemble will be affected, unless that absence has been excused.

• I also agree to pick up my child no later 10 minutes after the rehearsal has ended. If I am going to be late, I will telephone Dr. Seybert so that he may be made aware of the situation.

_______________________________  ______________________________
Parent/Guardian Last Name   Parent/Guardian First Name

______________________________  ______________________________
Parent/Guardian Signature    Date