



St. Martha Catholic School
Crusaders Bravo Band
2016-2017 Practice Policy and Guidelines

Practice Policy

Students are encouraged to practice. Students who give their best effort during band rehearsal twice a week but who do not practice daily cannot be expected to progress and improve at nearly the rate of those who do practice regularly daily. Students are to record the number of minutes they practice each day outside of this band practice on the chart in the front of their Belwin 21st Century book.

Parents are to use reasonable discretion in accepting students' reporting of their minutes.* The parent's signature or initials indicates they believe the report to be reasonably accurate, within a 10 percent margin of error. Parents, please initial at the right side of the weekly row.

*For example, during a 20-minute practice session, the student need not be actually playing music the entire time. There may be minutes of focused silent study of the music and practicing of techniques, such as fingering, that will not make any sound at all. These minutes, too, would count toward their recorded minutes of practice.

Students may note which pieces or exercises they focus on during any particular week in the column on their practice record marked LESSON ASSIGNMENT.

It is important and quite valuable for students to be able to practice with a metronome. A metronome is a tool, a machine or an electronic device, for providing a beat for practice. The speed of the beat is adjustable, thereby making it possible to develop skills in a gradual way. Metronomes are available in music stores, priced around \$10-\$30. They are also available for free download on the internet (i.e. metronomeapp.com).

Practice Guidelines

For wind instruments:

In a typical practice session, the first five or so minutes should be used for warming up. In other words, simply playing long tones and listening to the tone, attempting to make the tone steady and pleasant, at medium volume.

For all musicians:

Practice pieces and exercises that we are playing in rehearsal. These should be practiced at tempos, that is, at speeds, at which the student can be accurate in terms of both rhythm and fingering or, in the case of trombone, slide positions, or, in the case of percussion players, the RL hand patterns. For this purpose, a metronome is a valuable tool. The student should note the speed at which he or she can perform the piece with accuracy and practice that piece at that tempo for a period of days. When the student feels confidence in his or her performance of that piece, he or she should increase the tempo of practice by about 10 beats per minute. Then for a period of time the student should work on this piece at this tempo, again, until he or she reaches smoothness and accuracy. This process should continue until the student is able to play a piece at the tempo that is appropriate for its performance.

Practice Guidelines

For snare drummers:

There should be a warm-up period of playing with the hands alternating left and right at a tempo of about 60 beats per minute and increasing gradually to 90 b.p.m. and then decreasing to the original speed of 60 b.p.m. This is to be done with sensitivity in the hands and ears to an evenness, an equality in volume of each tap.

This process should then be repeated with a hands pattern of RLLRLL...

This warm-up process should be given approximately four minutes.

For all musicians:

Practice pieces and exercises that we are playing in rehearsal. These should be practiced at tempos, that is, at speeds, at which the student can be accurate in terms of both rhythm and fingering or, in the case of trombone, slide positions, or, in the case of percussion players, the RL hand patterns. For this purpose, a metronome is a valuable tool. The student should note the speed at which he or she can perform the piece with accuracy and practice that piece at that tempo for a period of days. When the student feels confidence in his or her performance of that piece, he or she should increase the tempo of practice by around 10 beats per minute. Then for a period of time the student should work on this piece at this increased tempo, again, until he or she reaches smoothness and accuracy. This process should continue until the student is able to play a piece at the tempo that is appropriate for its performance.

Practice Guidelines

For bells:

There should be a warm-up period of playing at a tempo of about 60 beats per minute quarter notes on each tone of the scale, alternating left and right hands. This is to be done with sensitivity in the hands and ears to an evenness, an equality in tone and volume.

This warm-up process should be given approximately four minutes.

For all musicians:

Practice pieces and exercises that we are playing in rehearsal. These should be practiced at tempos, that is, at speeds, at which the student can be accurate in terms of both rhythm and fingering or, in the case of trombone, slide positions, or, in the case of percussion players, the RL hand patterns. For this purpose, a metronome is a valuable tool. The student should note the speed at which he or she can perform the piece with accuracy and practice that piece at that tempo for a period of days. When the student feels confidence in his or her performance of that piece, he or she should increase the tempo of practice by about 10 beats per minute. Then for a period of time the student should work on this piece at this tempo, again, until he or she reaches smoothness and accuracy. This process should continue until the student is able to play a piece at the tempo that is appropriate for its performance.

Practice Guidelines

For bass guitar:

There should be a warm-up period of playing at a tempo of about 60 beats per minute, eight quarter notes on each tone of the scale. This is to be done with sensitivity in the hands and ears to an evenness, an equality in tone and volume.

This warm-up process should be given approximately four minutes.

For all musicians:

Then practicing pieces and exercises that we are playing in rehearsal. These should be practiced at tempos, that is, at speeds, at which the student can be accurate in terms of both rhythm and fingering or, in the case of trombone, slide positions, or, in the case of percussion players, the RL hand patterns. For this purpose, a metronome is a valuable tool. The student should note the speed at which he or she can perform the piece with accuracy and practice that piece at that tempo for a period of days. When the student feels confidence in his or her performance of that piece, they should increase the tempo of practice by about 10 beats per minute. Then for a period of time the student should work on this piece at this tempo, again, until he or she reaches smoothness and accuracy. This process should continue until the student is able to play a piece at the tempo that is appropriate for its performance.

Items to be brought to rehearsals:

Instruments and music (all assigned music), music stands, pencils.