

FCA Falcon Bands Handbook

2025-26



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Band Website: <http://teachers.stjohns.k12.fl.us/zentz-l/band/>

Bands at FCA

Year-long academic electives

Beginning Band: Provides entry-level instruction on flute, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, baritone, tuba, and percussion.

Concert Band: For students who have been playing an instrument for at least one year.

Symphonic Band: For students who have been playing an instrument for at least one year and have demonstrated the ability to play at the advanced level.

Jazz Band: By invitation, for students who have been playing an instrument for more than one year. Students must play in one of the other bands in addition to Jazz Band.

The content is designed to challenge the students' skill level and promote the development of musicianship. Music theory, language arts, math, reading, writing, and history are woven into the curriculum through the study of quality literature and the elements of music. Learning goals are derived from the [National Standard for Music Education](#) and the St. Johns County Curriculum Maps for middle school band.

Student Goals

- Develop a love for musical performance and music as an art form.
- Build technique and positive practice habits on chosen instrument.
- Learn steadfast self-discipline and make a commitment to musical excellence.
- Learn the basic concepts of music theory and vocabulary.
- Participate in a musical “community” and contribute to the success of the ensemble.
- Through the art of music, become more responsive to the world around them.

Student Behavior Expectations

Be Prepared – Bring instrument and a positive attitude to class. Proficiency in assigned music and scales.

Be Respectful – Treat others as you would like to be treated. Treat instruments and our classroom equipment with care.

Be Kind – Support others as we get better together.

Make Music – Active participation and appropriate rehearsal etiquette during class.

Follow the FCA Way:

“Focused on Safety, Committed to Responsibility, Always Respectful!”

The school’s LiveSchool point system will be used in the band program. FCA is a gum-free school.

Chewing gum can be dangerous while playing a wind instrument.

Band Class Procedures

1. Be on time and prepared. Slow down and be respectful of our expensive instruments and equipment.
2. Exercise self-discipline in your voice level, and don’t talk during the rehearsal. If you are talking, you cannot listen or get better!
3. Have your music binder ready each day. Keep it organized.
4. Keep your music, instrument, and the band room neat and clean – this is our band “home”. Show PRIDE!
5. No food or drink is allowed in the band room. Water bottled with lids are OK. No gum, please.
6. Rehearse as if you were performing a concert. Sloppy practice does NOT make progress!

BAND FEE INFORMATION

The **Band Fee** is each student's "fair share" to help cover the operating expenses of the FCA Bands.

- You can pay **in full** or in **two installments**.
- If needed, we can arrange a **monthly or quarterly payment plan** — just reach out!

What does the band fee cover?

The fee helps fund essential items and activities, including:

- Sheet music & binders
- Educational materials & technology
- Uniform shirts
- Transportation for events
- Director's professional development

How much is the Band Fee?

- Base Fee: **\$150** per student
Payable by PayPal on our website, cash, or check
- Additional Costs (If applicable)
 - School-owned instrument: **+\$165**
 - Percussion: **+\$135**

No student will be denied the opportunity to participate in band because of an inability to pay the band fee.

Please contact Ms. Gassman if you desire a payment plan or payment waiver.

PERFORMANCES

There will be approximately **THREE required performances**, all specified well in advance via website, email, social media, and calendar. Every member is vitally important to the band and needs to attend performances. Performance attendance will count as Summative Assessments. Most performances will take place at FCA.

Uniforms

Informal Uniform: The official blue band t-shirt (provided by the band) with blue jeans and comfortable shoes.

Formal Uniform: The embroidered band polo shirt (provided by the band) with black pants and comfortable black shoes. Worn for Music Performance Assessment (MPA).

Solo and Ensemble

Students are encouraged (but not required) to participate in 'Solo and Ensemble'. With the help of the director, students prepare a piece of music to perform solo or in a small group in front of a judge. The performance is open to family and friends!

Books and Music

- All students will be provided with at least one method book, included in their "band fee". Lost books will need to be replaced at a cost of \$10 each.
- Music will be provided at no charge. A replacement fee will be charged for lost music and binders. Band arrangements for middle school are expensive. PLEASE KEEP UP WITH YOUR BINDER! It is your "textbook". There will be occasional "binder checks" for a formative grade.

Practice Requirements

Because many students walk, bike, or take the bus, most instrument practice happens during class, under the direction of Ms. Gassman.

What Practice Looks Like at Home:

- Watch **instructional videos**
- Listen to their **band music online**
- Complete **written music assignments**

Can Students Play their instrument at Home?

- Yes! Students who can take their instruments home are **encouraged to practice**.

After-School Practice Option:

- Students interested in practicing in the band room **after school (2:30-3:15pm)** should let Ms. Gassman know in advance.

GRADING OVERVIEW

70% - Performance tests in class, written tests

30% - Musician responsibilities and Rehearsal etiquette

Performance Tests/ Written Tests – 70%

Includes scales and exercises and any assigned individual playing tests. Attendance at performances is required.

Musician Responsibilities and Rehearsal Etiquette – 30%

Daily preparedness, folder checks, being on time, putting belongings away in the proper place. Forgetting an instrument or folder will lower this portion of the grade 5 points each time. Sustained focused attention, respect, and discipline are required during all rehearsals. Grade will be lowered 5 points each time these expectations are not met.

Playing Tests

Students will be assigned scales and exercises that will be played during class individually. A grade will be assigned for each playing test according to the band rubric.

FCA Band Booster Board Members

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