

Stuart Middle School Band Handbook 2025-2026

Greetings Raptor Band Members and Families!

In the last school year, the Stuart Raptor Band program performed at multiple sporting events, concerts, and on stages across the state. We added another performance to the annual routine, combining forces with the Prairie View High School band for our first ever “Spooky Christmas” concert with a real whip-crack for our favorite tune, Sleigh Ride! We also added a 7th grade band field trip to Elitch Gardens for the music festival there, where we earned the “Gold Elite” award for a top-notch performance. On top of all that, our 8th grade band received their first-ever Superior rating at the Canon City Music Festival. It was an incredible year and we’re excited about the new year upcoming!

This handbook is designed to give answers to your questions about being a part of the Stuart Raptor Band program. It will explain what you can expect this year, what our goals are, and how we will achieve those goals. It has great information about what you need to get the most out of your band experience and where you can find those things, online resources, our grading policy, and a whole bunch of other stuff. If you have difficulty with fees, getting an instrument/supplies, field trip costs, or other financial issues, please contact me after you’ve reviewed this information to find out more about how we can help you! Cost should never be a reason for a student to miss playing in band!!!

Signing this handbook shows agreement and commitment that we (student, family, and teacher) share these goals and will work together as outlined here to reach them. Please read it carefully before signing and returning the final signature page to signify your willing participation and support of our band program. We’re so excited to have you along for this fantastic year of music making! Parents/Guardians - if you’re interested in helping support the Raptor Band through chaperoning, fundraising, organization, etc, please email me and let me know!

Our website (stuartraptorband.com) is often the most up-to-date source of information about upcoming events, so always check there for the latest and most accurate idea of what the heck is even going on.

Sincerely,
Brent Roach
Band Director

broach@sd27j.net
720-588-3059
stuartraptorband.com

2025/2026 CALENDAR

10/9/25 - Thursday @ 6:30PM @ OSMS - Intermediate/Advanced/Jazz Band concert

12/11/25 - Thursday @ 6:30PM @ OSMS - Intermediate/Advanced/Jazz Band concert

1/22/26, 2/5/26 - Thursdays - 27J Middle School Honor Band rehearsals (by audition)

2/6/26 - Friday - 27J HB rehearsal - ALL DAY

2/6/26 - 27J HB Concert @ 6:30pm

3/12/26 - Thursday @ 6:30PM @ OSMS - ALL bands concert

3/19/26 (?TBD?)- 27J MS Band Festival Field Trip (7th + 8th Grade Band)

TBD - 7th Grade Field Trip to Elitch Gardens Music Festival

TBD - 8th Grade/Jazz Band Field Trip to Canon City Music Festival

5/15/26 - Thursday @ 6:30PM @ OSMS - ALL bands concert

A list of up to date performance dates and times are at

stuartraptorband.com

Other performance opportunities may arise during the school year and will be considered with adequate notice. Students present for less than 75% of rehearsals must adequately perform required concert excerpts before the concert date and may instead contribute through stage crew duties in setup/transitions/strike/etc.

*Concert attendance is mandatory for all Stuart band students. Severe illness and bereavement (with documentation submitted to Mr. Roach) are excusable absences to be made up by performing concert piece excerpts upon the student's return and completing the listening form while reviewing the concert.

Attendance and performance at all concerts are required in order to attend band field trips.

Grades

Per the Stuart Middle School handbook, students will be graded in two categories: Assessments (60%) and Practice (40%). Assessments are made up of performances (the concert, ensembles, and solo/classroom tests) and written exams. Practice grades come from our daily Rhythm Transcriptions, sectional rehearsals (during classtime), listening logs, quizzes, rehearsal techniques, and Band Portfolio.

Grades are posted in Infinite Campus; assignments are explained and collected in Google Classroom (GC). If you want to improve your grade, start by looking at Infinite Campus (IC) to see which of your assignments have M's ("missing") or low scores, then go to the corresponding assignment in GC, read and follow the directions, submit that assignment, then email Mr. Roach to let him know you turned it in. Grading will be based on achievement of program expectations, district and state standards.

Daily Classtime Bands:

Beginner Bands (6th grades, meets during school every day; BEGINS IN JANUARY) perform in quarterly band concerts, as well as for other student events. No musical skill or experience is required to join this class! Just fill out the “Join the Band” form on

Intermediate Band (students that passed one year of beginner band class) perform at quarterly concerts and the 27J Band Festival (school day field trip), with potential for other performances and band festivals.

Symphonic Band (8th Grade Band, meets during school every day) performs at quarterly concerts, takes a field trip around Commerce City for a day of performing Holiday Music at various venues, and plays at the Canon City Music and Blossom Festival in May with potential for other performances and band festivals.

Optional Weekly After-School Bands:

The Jazz Band (Wednesdays 4:40 - 6:00PM) is an after-school performance group for intermediate/advanced band members to rehearse and perform jazz. They perform at quarterly concerts, perform at the Solo/Ensemble Festival and the CCMBF, and more!

Mr Roach’s “Office Hours”: Mr Roach is available by appointment for meetings, tutoring, and more on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 8:00am - 8:30am and 4:32pm - 5:00pm.

Band Polo/Uniform

The Raptor Band Polo is the shirt we wear in performances. We’ll use the same shirt every year. We’ll order them in the first month of band.

At performances, this is worn with solid black pants, solid black socks, and solid black shoes, no hat.

“What am I gonna play?!” - The instrument selection process

There are three main factors that play in selecting the best instrument for you and for your band:

- Your 3 favorite instruments (ranked)
- Your ability to learn those instruments quickly and easily
- The instrumentation needs of the band.

Each band is like a team, and teams depend on division of labor. If we had a band made up of only snare drums and alto saxophones, it would be difficult to find appropriate music and performance opportunities. With a full instrumentation of tubas, euphoniums, F horns, clarinets, trumpets, saxophones, flutes, double reeds, and percussion, our band will be able to play many amazing pieces of music in all kinds of styles. Your instrument in band should be something you want to play, but if you don't have a specific instrument in mind that can actually be a great thing because it allows us to base that decision on what you are capable of and what the band needs!

After completing the “SMS Music Elective Sign Up” when the band visited your elementary school (or the online Raptor Band Signup Form), where the student lists their top three instrument choices, they will be “fitted”. After the fitting process is over, Mr. Roach will share the results so each person can get their needed instruments and supplies. The tubas, euphoniums, French horns, and some percussion equipment are loaned from the school (they are very expensive to rent/purchase from stores). There is also a limited inventory of other school-owned instruments that are available on a first-come, first-served basis to those who have turned in the completed the steps below. If getting your own instrument is difficult, please contact Mr. Roach for help. Please make sure your instrument has been confirmed with Mr. Roach before getting any supplies.

Sometimes instrumentation within the band changes within the school year and it is necessary to move a student from one instrument to a similar (but different) one. For example, beginner trumpet players sometimes transition to French Horn, and flutes/clarinets might start playing a double reed instrument like oboe or bassoon. Mr. Roach will start this process by talking with the students one-on-one.

To use a school-owned instrument:

Percussion equipment not listed on the Supplies page of this handbook, Tubas, Euphoniums, F Horns, Bari Sax, Bassoon, and Oboes *are all provided* by the school using an annual use fee and agreement. For all others, we have instruments to help, but they are limited. In order to make sure all students have an opportunity to play music, especially those with very tight budgets at home, please follow these directions: For those large/expensive instruments listed in the first sentence of this section, you just need to get the supplies for that instrument. For all others (trombone, trumpet, alto sax, clarinet, and flute):

-FIRST: check with *each vendor listed* in the “Area Music Stores” page of this handbook to see if they have an affordable option for you!!! This is the first step and very important.

-THEN, if you're not able to find one that fits your budget, return the completed signature page of this handbook and a parent/guardian should email broach@sd27j.net and let me know which company/store offered the lowest rental rate for that instrument (it helps me stay informed!) and that you need to use a school instrument instead.

- FINALLY, if we have an instrument you can use, complete the Instrument Use Agreement and send the annual fee (or make arrangements for payment through the office).

That helps keep instruments in good condition for the next generations of Raptor Band. Money should never be the reason a student doesn't play in band, though - please let us know if you need financial assistance! Percussion students pay an annual \$60 use fee to cover regular maintenance of normal wear and tear on the shared school instruments and equipment.

Required Supplies

Method Books - **NOT** school-supplied:

Beginning Band: **Essential Elements Book 1**

Intermediate & Advanced Bands: **Foundations for Superior Performance**

General Supplies

Pencil, Notebook, Music Folder/Binder

Folding music stand for home practice

Performance uniform: Raptor Band Polo Shirt, solid black pants/skirt, solid black shoes and black socks.

Instrument Specific Supplies

Flute

Cleaning Rod (should be included with the instrument) and swab; Cleaning Cloth

Oboe & Bassoon - non-beginners only

Swab (silk is recommended)

Cork Grease: any brand is fine; the “chapstick” tube style is easier to use

Reeds (usually costs about \$25/reed): Handmade reeds from local performers are best (Medium strength)

Bocal Majority, Midwest Musical Imports, Forrests (all reputable manufacturers)

Clarinet & Saxophone

Swab (silk is recommended)

Cork Grease (any brand is fine; the “Chapstick” tube style is easier to use)

Neck Strap (optional for clarinet, required for sax)

Reeds (3 of them!) – Rico or Vandoren for beginners – strength 2.5 to start out.

Rico Royal: upgrade for second year players – strength 3 or 3.5.

Trumpet, French Horn, Euphonium*, & Tuba

Mouthpiece: (trumpets usually come with one; all others must purchase their own mouthpiece)

French Horn: Yamaha 29C4

Euphonium: - Bach 6 ½ AL small shank

Tuba: standard Conn Helleberg

Cleaning Cloth (for polishing) and grease cloth (ie an old sock, etc for after oiling/greasing instrument)

Valve Oil – Trumpet, Euphonium & Tuba (Al Cass “Fast” is recommended)

Rotor Oil – Horn (Superslick is recommended)

Tuning Slide Grease

* “Baritone BC” book

Trombone

Cleaning Cloth

Slide Cream (Yamaha YAC1021P Slide Lubricant is recommended, but slide oil is okay)

Small water mister bottle

Tuning Slide Grease

Percussion - (sticks/mallets will come to school)

Vic Firth SD1 General Snare Sticks

Practice pad and/or snare drum for home practice

Bells for with hard plastic bell mallets for home practice (a keyboard/piano are an okay substitute)

Area Music Stores

Rocky Mountain Music Repair – Instrument Repair Shop and supplier
2150 W 6th Ave Suite E
Broomfield, CO 80020
303-955-8064

Will handle repair of school owned inventory and make regular supply deliveries.
Does instrument rental and repair work in-house.

Music & Arts - Music Store
7350 W 88th Ave Unit B
Westminster, CO 80021
303-427-0601

Rental & repairs in-house.

Will do regular pickup & delivery of rental instruments needing repair.

Flesher-Hinton
5890 W 44th Ave, Wheat Ridge, CO 80212
303-443-8891
Rental & repairs in-house.

Sweetwater
No physical store - web/virtual only
onlinerentals@Sweetwater.com
(888) 890-3365

You are welcome to rent/purchase an instrument and supplies from any music store of your choosing. Avoid renting/buying instruments from shops/sites that don't specialize in music and will likely offer a product that *looks* like a new instrument but *sounds* like leaky plumbing. If you have questions about purchasing a specific instrument, whether it's from a store, a friend, or a pawn shop, check with a local instrument **repair technician** (see above), a skilled player of that instrument, or Mr. Roach to see if it will meet your needs. If you purchase a high-quality instrument, you can often sell it later for the same price if you keep it in great condition - good instruments hold their value!

Those listed here are reputable businesses that should provide you with good service and equipment. Many of them can also recommend great private lesson teachers to help you learn!

Practice

The idea is simple: playing your instrument (practicing) MORE OFTEN makes it MORE FUN. Research shows that practicing OFTEN (more days per week) for shorter periods of time IS BETTER than practicing only once or twice a week for a longer period of time. When does practice stop working? When it's not a part of your routine. It's fun though, so that should help. If you can't practice at home, please talk with Mr. Roach about setting up a time to practice at school (outside of class time).

The difference between playing a bunch of sounds on an instrument (making noise) and practicing is being intentional. The most effective way to practice uses three steps:

- 1: Define a specific/measurable goal
- 2: Attempt the goal
- 3: Monitor (try recording yourself to listen back) and give feedback (to set a new goal)
- 4: Continue until almost all your attempts are successful! A 90% success in practice means you have a 90% chance you'll get it right during performance.

Parents/guardians should help students monitor their practice and give feedback. You don't really have to "know" anything about music to know when things don't sound right. Help your child identify a few notes or a few measures of music to practice (set a specific goal) instead of playing an entire piece of music from start to finish. One or two very specific compliments every few days will do wonders for your student's confidence and musicianship. Ask them to explain something to you to help them cement their learning. You, as the parent/guardian, are an integral part of your child's musical future!

20-30 minutes of focused practice time 5-6 days a week is better than 150 minutes of playing once a week. Even a few minutes of focused practice is better than nothing. The more routine is involved, the more success will come. Another thing to keep in mind is that all of the "answers" are in the books or on the sites we use. If you don't know the answer, look it up and/or email your question to broach@sd27j.net . Each beginner book comes with a log-in for the play-along tracks from their website.

One of the best ways to help your child be successful is to help them identify a regular time and place to practice their instrument. If they already have 20-30 minutes scheduled for practicing, they are more likely to follow through. Where they practice is just as important. In order for practice to be focused, they need to have a space that will be free from interruptions and distractions. A quiet room with a door that closes is best. Try to minimize outside noises, and keep friends and other family members from interrupting.

Private lessons are strongly encouraged to help your student get the most out of their musical experience. Local music stores often keep a list of private lesson teachers or you can ask Mr. Roach for recommendations.

Band Participation Agreement Stuart Middle School 2025-2026

Student Name_____

Parent Name(s)_____

- We read the Stuart Middle School Band handbook (it's on stuartraptorband.com).

Student Initials_____ Parent Initials_____

- We agree to make a full-year commitment to stay in band (6th grade: full-semester).

Student Initials_____ Parent Initials_____

- We agree to work *together* on practicing at home regularly (parents - remind them daily, please).

Student Initials_____ Parent Initials_____

- We agree to purchase and have on hand all necessary supplies at the beginning of the year and whenever replacements are needed. (See "supplies" page for details)

Student Initials_____ Parent Initials_____

- We agree to have our child attend all regularly scheduled concerts.

Student Initials_____ Parent Initials_____

- We agree that kindness and effort are essential to success and we will do our best to build an environment of respect and positivity in the Stuart Band!

Student Initials_____ Parent Initials_____

Student Signature_____

Parent Signature(s)_____

250902 - FULL HANDBOOK AVAILABLE ON STUARTRAPTORBAND.COM