



Dear Parents/Guardians of Fourth Graders,

We began our study of recorder last quarter, and will continue throughout the year. We are taking our time to be sure we are all playing with a beautiful tone and know how to tongue (say "doo" quietly into the instrument, with warm, slow air--no voice). We are also working on our treble staff note reading skills. We will gradually add pitches from the treble staff to the ones we currently know on the recorder.


Look for recorders to come home with your student soon. With them will come homework assignments! These will be short, but will require a few minutes of daily practice. As with any subject, some students need more practice time than others. I am available to give extra help before/after school for students who are struggling—they simply need to set up an appointment with me.

This added responsibility will be assessed as part of the music grade. Some assignments will be written and played; and in those cases, the written assignment needs to be in class on the due date. Students have recorders at school, so the home recorder stays at home.

Parents/students can find the assignments posted on my web site: www.blakesleemusic.info. There are also links to my page from the Broadwater and Boulder web pages. Music/assignments will be handed out in class. If misplaced, a student can download and print a replacement from the website, or practice directly from a device. There are also some note reading and other fun music activities on the site. Check it out! ☺

Late assignments: If a student fails to turn in or play an assignment on the day it is due, they are welcome to play it before/after school or make an appointment with me during a recess. **It must be made up by the following music day in order to receive credit.** Late assignments are graded one point lower than on-time assignments (5 points total available). 50% credit is given if the assignment is not made up by the next music day. If a student is absent on the day an assignment is due, they can make it up during the next music time without penalty. If absent on the day an assignment is GIVEN, the student should check the assignment board in their classroom when they return, so they can have the assignment ready if possible on the day it is due. They can also check the website or check with a trusted friend. One music day will be allowed for make-ups, but it's better if they can keep up with the rest of the class as much as possible.

(over)



You can help your child by asking your child to play for you; encouraging them to use warm, slow air; discouraging purposeful “ugly” sounds; and setting aside a little time each day for homework practice so that assignments are prepared (Broadwater M/Th, Boulder T/W/F). Assignments are graded on a rubric with the following criteria:

- Position
- Beautiful tone
- Tonguing
- Correct pitches & fingering
- Correct rhythm

I use a “karate belt” system for added motivation. Different colored belts can be earned for songs progressing in difficulty. Belts must be earned in order. After we’ve practiced a belt song sufficiently for most of the class, we will have a “belt day” when students can choose to play for that belt if they wish. If they play it with a beautiful tone and two or less errors, they earn the belt. If not, they can keep practicing and make an appointment with me to play for their belt later. We won’t take class time for previous belts. Students are also welcome to video their belt songs and email them to me.

Please contact me at school with any concerns or questions. Thank you for your support in helping our 4th graders become responsible musicians and citizens!

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