BEGINNING BAND
PARENT NIGHT

THE CLARINET / PRESENTED BY MR. FORLENZA / NOVEMBER 4, 2026

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I INSTRUMENT ASSEMBLY, CARE AND MAINTENANCE

A Cleaning the mouthpiece

1. The mouthpiece should be cleaned once a week preferably with a swab or a clarinet mouthpiece brush. This brush can be purchased anywhere band instruments are sold.
2. When brushing out the mouthpiece, use only warm water and mild soap. Do not use any type of abrasive cleaners or brushes. DO NOT BOIL!!!

B Greasing the Corks

1. It is not necessary to grease the corks everyday. Apply cork grease to corks when they feel like they are drying out.

C Cleaning the inside of the clarinet

1. NEVER, EVER, NEVER, EVER, NEVER SUBMERGE YOUR CLARINET IN WATER!!!!
2. The clarinet should be swabbed out each and every time you play it. Pull the swab through the instrument 2-3 times. This will prevent the pads from getting damp and moldy.
3. Those of you who are renting your instrument from Quinlan and Fabish are covered for cleanings. Simply notify the store that you will be sending the instrument in for a cleaning and they will provide a loaner for your students to use in the interim.

D Cleaning the outside of the clarinet

1. Keep a clean, lint free towel or rag in your case. Simply wipe down the outside of the clarinet when you are done playing to eliminate any damage to the finish.
2. Polishing cloths and supplies are available at reputable band instrument dealers like Quinlan and Fabish.

E Reeds

1. Only quality reeds should be used. We highly recommend Vandoren reeds.
2. The number of a reed corresponds to its strength or stiffness. We typically start beginners on a 2 or 2-1/2. As the student's embouchure becomes stronger, it is necessary to move to a higher number reed. The student will find more resistance but the tone will also improve.
3. You should always keep 4 reeds in your reed guard. Use each reed daily on a rotational basis. Depending on how much you are playing, a cycle of reeds should last about a month or so.

4. Soak the reed in your mouth before playing. The reed must be thoroughly saturated in order to vibrate properly.
5. The reed must be placed correctly on the mouthpiece. If the placement is too high or too low or if it is not centered, it will greatly affect the player's ability to make a sound and the tone itself.

II PRODUCING A QUALITY SOUND

A Posture-Sit as you stand

B Deep Breath

C Embouchure-The muscles used in producing a tone

1. Top teeth on the mouthpiece, bottom lip over bottom teeth, lips tight around the mouthpiece. Corners firm. The clarinet should not move or wiggle around in your mouth as you play.

D Attack-Using the tongue to release the air (whisper TOO or TOE). Tip of the tongue to the tip of the reed.

E Sustain the Air as long as you can-Blow OUT of the instrument

F Maintain a steady, clear tone

III DAILY PRACTICE PROCEDURES

A Breathing Exercises

B Fingering Exercises

C Long Tones

D Book Assignments

1. Count and Clap
2. Sing and Finger (Chin Singing)
3. Play!

> Students should aim for 20-30 minutes of daily practice. We realize that some days this will not be possible but the only way to strengthen the muscles of the embouchure is by actually playing the instrument. Remember, some practice is always better than no practice.

IV PRIVATE INSTRUCTION

Regardless of whether your child is having a difficult time or is progressing well, private instruction is the most ideal way to maximize your child's musical development. You should always consult your band director when seeking a private teacher. Be sure to ask questions. Where did the teacher go to music school? How long have they been teaching? What age levels do they currently teach? Does the teacher currently perform professionally? What organizations do they perform with?

These are all valid questions and will be welcomed by any teacher that is worth his or her salt.

V LISTENING

It is very important for students to listen to great players. By listening to professional players, young musicians will develop a solid concept of what their instrument should sound like when they play. YouTube is an invaluable resource. Watch and listen to players like Larry Combs, Stanley Drucker, Julian Bliss, Martin Fröst, Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Pete Fountain, and Eddie Daniels. There are many, many more. Find what you like and listen often!

We hope we have shed some light on the process of what your student is going through during these first steps of their musical journey. Remember, learning to play a musical instrument really is a lifelong endeavor. We never stop growing. Throughout middle school, high school, college and beyond, playing a musical instrument gives your child many unique advantages both academically, socially and emotionally. Students who learn to play a musical instrument achieve higher test scores than those who don't. Music is truly an international language. It breaks all barriers and expresses that which words cannot. We thank you for supporting your child's music education and look forward to your continued participation in the band program.

-Mr. Forlenza

PLEASE SEE THE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO LOG INTO ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS INTERACTIVE.

EXTRA NOTES

A All updates and important information can always be found on our website, www.ksd140.org/band.

1. We also have practice tools and music games linked on our website to help students along the way. https://www.ksd140.org/band/music-resources

B Background music for all of the exercises in the Essential Elements book is available at www.myeelibrary.com

There is also an app for the book.

1. **Essential Elements Interactive (EEi) app for iOS or Android devices:**

   1) https://www.essentialelementsinteractive.com
   2) Click on “Don’t have an account yet? Sign Up”
   3) Select Account Type → Click on "Student”
   4) Your EEi School Code is: District140Band
   5) Select “I do not have a student ID. Click on "I don't have an ID" Fill out the information
   6) Enter your Activation Code from the front of your band book.