

# ROYAL OAK BAND HANDBOOK

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# Royal Oak Band Handbook

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# Band Room Expectations

## Respectful

Come into the room quietly.

Set up your instrument (leave the case under your seat).

Check the board for our lesson plan and get your materials in order.

Warm-up with scales at a medium volume of sound.

Show mutual respect for people and things.

Don't touch others' equipment (including school equipment).

Listen attentively while others are speaking or performing.

Do not judge others' mistakes.

Sit quietly and wait for the teacher to dismiss the class.

## Responsible

Be ready to start (Block 1: 9:09, Block 2: 10:16, Block 3: 11:40

Block 4: 2:01, Sectionals)

Be prepared with all of your necessary materials (instrument, cleaning kit, pencil, book/music folder, extra reeds/oil, amp/cord, sticks, etc)

If you need to leave, please ask the teacher first.

Take pride in your assignments and hand in your best work, including name.

Complete and hand in your work on time.

Clean up your own materials.

Put your chair and music stand away at the end of the class.

## Resourceful

Please ask for help from 2 other students before asking the teacher.

Raise your hand if you have a comment or a question.

Be an active participant in all classroom activities.

Practice difficult musical excerpts and concepts at home.

Help one another in your instrument section.

## Evaluation

Students are evaluated on an ongoing basis and it is expected that not all students will succeed with new concepts initially. Please encourage your son or daughter to ask for help from his or her peers, parents, and the teacher when they are having difficulty. Practice tough musical passages slowly. Extra help is always available at lunch to those students whom ask. Band is comprised of the following elements:

**Attendance & Preparation:** Students should come to class on time, be prepared with all of his or her equipment (instrument, band book, sheet music, at least 2 pencils, reeds/oil, cleaning kit, and have a positive attitude towards learning.

**Theory:** Students will be learning a new language of music notation, symbols, and phrases. Daily review of these concepts will take place during class, and worksheets will be completed for students to show their level of understanding. Towards the end of the year, students will put their theory knowledge into practice by composing a piece of music for their instrument and play it for the class.

**Speed Tests:** Students will be completing bi-weekly speed tests which boost students ability to recognize note names quickly. Term 1, students will have 3 minutes; Term 2 students will have 2 minutes; and Term 3 students will have 1 minute to correctly identify 25 note names (in grade 7 students will identify 50 note names & grade 8 students will identify 100 note names). Students can take speed tests home to practice.

**History:** Students will be discovering various composers and styles of music. We will listen to musical excerpts and have class discussions.

**Playing:** Students will be required to play their instrument in class every day. Sometimes, I will ask small sections to play alone to hear their strengths and struggles in order to give feedback. As students practice, they will gradually improve their playing abilities and will gain confidence to play alone for their peers. Please encourage your son or daughter to put on a performance for you, your family, and friends so that feelings of performance anxiety lessen.

**Practicing:** Students need to practice their instrument regularly to progress musically. Generally, I suggest minimum of 30 minutes 4 times each week on their band instrument focusing on tone, scales, arpeggios, chorales, rudiments (percussion), and tough musical passages. Students will have playing tests throughout the year to monitor their progress. Please record practice times on your practice card.

**Rhythm:** Students will learn how to subdivide and count rhythms. In class, we will practice counting and clapping rhythms. Students should include clapping and counting with their at-home practice. With difficult musical passages, students should write in the counting, clap it slowly (way below tempo) over and over again, gradually building the speed to the correct tempo marking.

**Concert Etiquette:** Students are expected to participate in concerts throughout the year. We will perform for our school, family, friends, and other students at festivals. Concert etiquette is the behaviour that is considered appropriate and polite at all formal concerts. Students will learn all aspects of concert etiquette including coming on/off stage, bringing their instruments up to play, performing, listening to other performers and speakers, and applauding for performances.

## Practicing and Enrichment

Each band student is expected to spend at least enough time at home practicing to satisfactorily complete the class assignments (including theory, history, and performance pieces). I suggest a minimum of 30 minutes 4 times each week, but practice makes perfect and the more the better.

Establish a daily practice routine early, in a place which is free from interruption, well-lighted and comfortable. If possible, provide a folding music stand, and a mirror to observe posture and embouchure placement/formation. In the beginning stages when efforts often resemble noise rather than polished musical tone, encouragement and consideration are extremely important. As your son/daughter progresses, show your pride in his/her musical achievements. Encourage your son/daughter to get together with friends for practicing and rehearsing. As well, performing for audiences of family and friends during gatherings is a wonderful opportunity for your developing musician to shine!

I realize that many students have other extra-curricular commitments, and for that reason, I request that the family sets up a schedule (see contract) for weekly practice time that works around other commitments. This contract will give the teacher a guideline for assessing home practice. ***Please complete and sign this contract by September 20th so that it can be placed in the front of your band folder for easy reference.*** Also on this contract, you will find a convenient course outline that is a guideline for the activities for the band school year. You may check this periodically asking your son/daughter to share with you what they have been working on in class.

### The Elements of Effective Practice

1. **Practice Environment:** do you have all your required materials? (metronome, tuner, fingering chart, practice chart, sturdy chair, music stand, instrument, pencil, cleaning supplies, mirror, adequate light, sheet music, band book , and clock.
2. **Set Goals:** What do you hope to be able to play better after today's practice?
3. **Set Practice Duration:** How much time do you have to practice your instrument today?
4. **Warm-up:** Slowly warm-up your mouth, fingers, and lungs to get ready for the work that you are about to do with: scales, arpeggios, long tones, chorales, and rudiments.
5. **Challenging Work:** What sections of your music are you having trouble with? Write in the counting and note names. Clap the rhythms slowly until you have it correct. You may need to start at a slower tempo and gradually increase it to the right speed. Once you have the rhythms correct, try playing the tough musical passage slowly and gradually increase your speed. Use a metronome to help keep the tempo consistent.
6. **Cool Down:** Reward yourself for the hard work by playing through something you enjoy and can play well.
7. **Self-Evaluate:** Reflect upon your progress. Did you meet your goals? What went well? What should you do differently next time you practice? Do you need to ask for help from the teacher or a friend?

## **Private Lessons**

Students wishing to participate in one-on-one help with their instrument or theory can take private lessons through numerous local locations whom have highly qualified teachers that are specialists on their particular instrument. Lessons are usually 30 minutes in length. All students are encouraged to take private or small group lessons if possible. It is difficult for the band director to give each student enough individual attention, especially in classes of 30 students of mixed instrumentation and musical background/experience. Generally speaking, students who get the individual attention of regular private lessons are able to progress at a faster rate, and continue with music for several years. Please contact one of the companies listed below for more information. Should your son or daughter need extra help from the teacher during lunch or after school, please feel free to make this appointment directly.

Larsen Music:	389-1988
Long and McQuade:	384-3620
Uvic Music Dept. Education Students:	721-7903

## **Performance Opportunities and Community Involvement**

All band students participate in at least two formal concerts during the school year. Our Winter Concert in December and our Spring Concert in May. In addition, band students may be called upon to perform for various school functions such as assemblies, sports events, meetings, etc. There is also a possibility to perform for the community at retirement facilities, malls, music festivals (locally and abroad), and other community events. All band events will be included on the Royal Oak Calendar, monthly newsletters, and on the Royal Oak website ([www.romsmusic.weebly.com](http://www.romsmusic.weebly.com)). Please mark these dates on your calendar to avoid any unnecessary conflicts. I will also send home emails to band families on a regular basis to keep you informed of any performances or workshops geared towards band students.

## **Uniform**

As with all teams, it is important to present a unified appearance for all performances. Therefore, the Band Department has developed a uniform for all students to wear. The uniform for Grade 6, 7 and 8 Band students is: black pants, black socks, black shoes, blue t-shirt for Grade 6, green t-shirt for Grade 7 and a long sleeved collar black dress shirt for grade 8. Orders for the grade 6 and 7 band t-shirts will be taken during September. The cost of the t-shirt will be \$10. The remainder of the uniform will have to be purchase at local retailers.

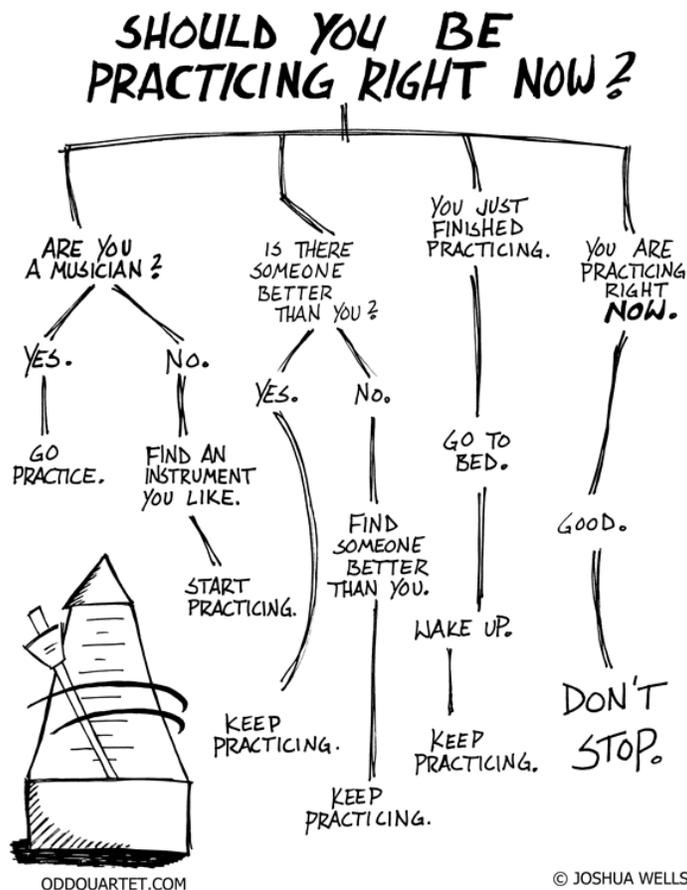
## Field Trips

Throughout the school year, band students will be invited on field trips to perform at other schools, festivals, and go to live theatrical/musical performances in the community. These trips are designed to be a reward for students who participate, behave well, and earn passing grades. We are representatives of Royal Oak Middle School and are expect to behave in a mature and respectful manner. All school rules and expectations apply during any field trip. This includes dress code and student conduct. Should a student represent Royal Oak in a poor manner, he or she may not be invited to attend other school field trips.

Local field and day trips that may be planned for individual band students, small ensembles, or classes may include: performing at retirement facilities, malls, other schools, festivals, and within community events.

Overnight and extended field trips are often reserved for the Grade 8 Band as a reward for three years of hard work and dedication towards learning a musical instrument and being a part of the Royal Oak Band Program. Trips that may be planned include: performing at city and provincial festivals within BC and Alberta or even in the US (Seattle).

Parents wishing to be involved as a volunteer chaperone with field trips must complete a criminal record check (CRC). Please see Mr. Ziegler for a letter to take to your local police department. Please note, this process can be lengthy and CRC's are current for two years.



## Royal Oak Band Parents Advisory Committee

Are you a person who loves to be involved in your son or daughters education and extra-curricular activities? Do you have a little time to volunteer with the band department events and activities? Are you a positive, organized, and energetic person? Do you have a unique talent/skill you would like to share? There are many times during the school year when the band will need the support and help of people like you. We will have a range of needs in many different areas.

We will have an hour long meeting for all members of the Royal Oak Band Parents Advisory Committee (ROBPAC) to discuss performances, trips, fundraising, advocacy, awards, and community involvement. The meeting will take place from 7-8pm in the band room on the days listed below.

September 17<sup>th</sup>

October 15<sup>th</sup>

December 3<sup>rd</sup>

February 4<sup>th</sup>

April 1<sup>st</sup>

May 6<sup>th</sup>

June 3<sup>rd</sup>

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Chair Advisors

These people will co-ordinate the volunteer positions (circle one or more):

\_\_\_ Chaperones (day trips and/or overnight trips)

\_\_\_ Fundraising (one or more parents per event)

\_\_\_ Concert tickets/programs

\_\_\_ Publicity (school newsletter and local paper) and advocacy

\_\_\_ Photographer/videographer

\_\_\_ Stage management (set-up and take down at concert)

\_\_\_ Refreshments at concerts/fundraising events

## Fundraising

The Band Department participates in many fundraising activities throughout the school year. Such efforts may include: Coffee/Tea Sales, Silent Auction, Poinsettias, Scrap Metal Drive, Magazine Sales, Winter Concert, Year End Barbeque and Concert, Car Washes and Bottle Drives. With the help of our parent volunteers the band department is able to raise funds for: music equipment (stands, chairs, instruments), field trips, concert supplies, and uniforms. Some fundraising efforts are allocated to individual students towards their Grade 8 Band trip.

Fundraising is a driving force behind the band department and the various activities we do throughout the year. Should you wish to be involved as a volunteer, please fill in the Band Parent Advisory Committee form enclosed and return it to Mr. Ziegler.



## Choosing a Musical Instrument

1. Band instruments are very sensitive to the size of the lips and bone structure of the player. Larger, fuller lips are better suited for larger mouthpieces such as those on the trombone or tuba. Students with a significant overbite will also have difficulties getting the instrument to sit properly on the lips and may be better on clarinet, sax, or flute.
2. Thinner lips are often better suited to high brass instruments or to the woodwind instruments such as the clarinet.
3. Students with severe asthma can still be in the band, but should consult a doctor before going out for the class. A student in such a situation can easily play a percussion instrument if wind instruments are not an option.
4. Students that are obviously going to require dental appliances such as braces or retainers in later years may want to consider a woodwind instrument. Braces can be a big, and sometimes painful, problem with brass instruments. This is often a minor issue however, and should never be the sole reason for moving a student away from a specific band instrument.
5. The drums and the saxophone are always the most popular instruments in the band. For this reason band directors try hard to balance things out and only place students on these instruments that they are certain will be successful. Piano skills are always in demand for percussionists (drummers) and students with piano experience will often have a leg up on their classmates when choosing to be a percussionist.
6. Remember, just because you have Uncle Bill's old flute sitting in the attic does not mean that your child should play it. Likewise, just because your child wants to play the sax does not mean that he should be allowed to do so. Personal preference is always important, and the happiness and interest of your child is probably the most important aspect contributing to his success. When given a choice always go with the suggestion of your local band director when choosing a band instrument for your child.

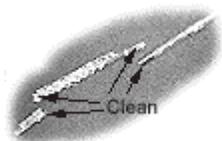
# Helpful Hints for Young Musicians

## WOODWIND CARE

### Flute / Piccolo Care

#### Daily Care

1. When removing your flute from its case never pick it up by its keys. Remove it by the ends where there are no keys.
2. Put the flute together with a slow back-and-forth twisting motion, never push or pull the flute when assembling or disassembling this can cause the instrument to become bent at the joints.



3. Each time you put the flute together a small amount of debris will build-up on the tenons (this is normal), however, this can make it difficult to assemble. Always wipe the tenons (joints) with a soft cloth before assembling. (Fig.1)

4. The use of lubricants on the tenons is not recommended - this can cause damage over time. The only exception to this rule is on some piccolos and wood flutes that have cork joints. You should apply a small amount of cork grease to these joints, as needed, to aid in assembly.



5. After you are finished playing, use a cleaning rod with an absorbent cloth to swab out the inside of all parts to remove moisture. (Fig.2) Carefully wipe off the outside of the flute to remove oils or perspiration caused by your hands.

6. Always store your flute in its case when not in use, this helps prevent damage and aids in keeping the instrument from tarnishing. Do not place anything in the case that can press on the flute, this can bend keys.

#### Monthly Care

Check all screws and pivots to see if they are coming loose. If they are, take your flute to a repair shop to have them adjusted. It is not suggested that you try and adjust them yourself because they can be over tightened or damaged.

#### Yearly Care

It is recommended that you have your instrument checked and adjusted, if needed, by a repair shop. The shop may find adjustments or worn pads that are effecting the optimal performance of your instrument.

# Helpful Hints for Young Musicians

## WOODWIND CARE

### Clarinet Care

#### Daily Care

1. When removing your clarinet from its case never pick it up by the keys. Remove it by the ends where there are no keys.



2. When putting your clarinet together, first apply a small amount of cork grease to the tenon corks. (Fig.1)

3. Put the clarinet together with a slow back-and-forth twisting motion, never push or pull the clarinet when assembling or disassembling this can damage the tenon or tear the cork.

4. When tightening the screws on the ligature, the device that holds the reed on the mouthpiece, take care not to over tighten them this can cause the screw to break.



5. After you are finished playing, pull a cleaning swab through all parts of the clarinet to remove moisture. (Fig. 2) Carefully wipe off the outside of the instrument and keys to remove oils or perspiration caused by your hands.

6. Always store your clarinet in its case when not in use, this helps prevent damage and aids in keeping the instrument clean. Do not place anything in the case that can press on the clarinet, this can bend keys.

#### Monthly Care

Check all screws and pivots to see if they are coming loose. If they are, take your clarinet to a repair shop to have them adjusted. It is not suggested that you try and adjust them yourself because they can be over tightened or damaged.

#### Yearly Care

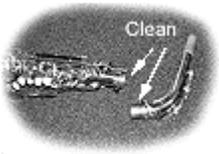
It is recommended that you have your instrument checked and adjusted, if needed, by a repair shop. The shop may find adjustments or worn pads that are effecting the optimal performance of your instrument.

# Helpful Hints for Young Musicians

## WOODWIND CARE

### Saxophone Care

#### Daily Care



1. When removing your saxophone from its case never pick it up by the keys. Remove it by picking it up by the bell.

2. When assembling your saxophone be sure to wipe the neck joint and inside of the receiver with a soft cloth (Fig.1) this will make it easier to assemble.

3. Apply a small amount of cork grease to the mouthpiece cork to help the mouthpiece move into position. (Fig.2)



4. When tightening the screws on the ligature, the device that holds the reed on the mouthpiece, take care not to over tighten them this can cause the screw to break.

5. After you are finished playing, pull a cleaning swab through the saxophone to remove moisture. (Fig.3) Carefully wipe off the outside of the instrument and keys to remove oils or perspiration caused by your hands.



6. Always store your saxophone in its case when not in use, this helps prevent damage and aids in keeping the instrument clean. Do not place books or folders in the case, this can bend keys.

#### Monthly Care

Check all screws and pivots to see if they are coming loose. If they are, take your saxophone to a repair shop to have them adjusted. It is not suggested that you try and adjust them yourself because they can be over tightened or damaged.

#### Yearly Care

It is recommended that you have your instrument checked and adjusted, if needed, by a repair shop. The shop may find adjustments or worn pads that are affecting the optimal performance of your instrument.

# Helpful Hints for Young Musicians

## BRASS CARE

### Trumpet Care (And Other Valve Instruments)

#### Daily Care

1. Valves on brass instruments need to be lubricated on a regular basis. To do this: (a) Unscrew the valve cap and pull the valve out about half way. (b) Apply a drop of valve oil to the wide part of the



valve. (Fig.1) (c) Push the valve back into position making sure that it is lined up correctly. (Note): The valve has a guide that keeps it in place. To check for correct alignment gently try to turn the valve. If it doesn't turn it is lined up. If it turns keep turning the valve till you hear a slight "click" and the valve stops turning.

2. Occasionally a mouthpiece will become stuck in the horn. If this happens **don't** try force to remove it - this can cause major damage to the instrument. Take it to a repair shop or music store to have it removed. Most shops do not charge for this service.

3. After you are finished playing make sure you remove any excess moisture from the inside of the horn by opening the water keys and blowing through the instrument. Carefully wipe off the outside of the instrument to remove oils or perspiration caused by your hands.

4. Always store your trumpet in its case when not in use, this helps prevent damage and aids in keeping the instrument clean. Do not place books or folders in the case, this can bend slides and cause valve problems.

#### Monthly Care

1. Check all slides to see that they move freely and lubricate them with slide grease if needed.



(Fig.2)

2. The inside of your instrument needs to be cleaned regularly. This may not be needed every month but should be done at least every 3 months. See the section below on Brass Cleaning for more information.

#### Yearly Care

If you clean your instrument on a regular basis you may not need any additional yearly care, however, repair shops have the ability to chemically clean your instrument which is a more thorough cleaning than can be done at home.

# Helpful Hints for Young Musicians

## BRASS CARE

### French Horn Care

A key to good horn playing is a well maintained horn. If your valves are slow or sticky, then you won't be able to play up to your potential. If slides don't move, you can't make quick tuning adjustments during a performance.

#### Maintaining the Valves

1. You should oil your valves with some sort of valve oil or rotor oil once a week. If you are unsure of what brand to buy, *Al Cass* is always a good choice. You can never use too much oil. There is such a thing as wasting oil, but never using too much.
2. You should oil under the valve caps and oil the bearing next to the valve stops with a thicker oil. Key oil works well. I have also been told that sewing machine also works well.
3. Oil the valve springs to prevent them from becoming sticky and slow with valve oil.
4. At least once a month, run some warm, soapy water through the valves. Try to use either the garden hose or put the horn directly under the tap or in the bathtub. Nothing is really going to be removed by simply pouring water into the valve slides. After rinsing out the valves with clean water, be sure to re-oil the valves. Doing this once a month, helps prevent lime deposits from forming in the horn.

#### Maintaining the Tubing

1. Plain and simple, wash out the tubing with plenty of warm, soapy water at least once a month. As with the valves, try to use the garden hose or put the horn directly under the tap or in the bathtub. This will help remove the grime.
2. After doing so, re-rinse making sure all the soap has been rinsed out. Otherwise, a soapy residue could be left inside.
3. You should, ideally, have your horn chemically cleaned once a year. This is especially so if you tend to play your horn after eating or drinking anything sugary. However, if you brush your teeth before you play, and you maintain your horn well, you may not need to chemically clean horn more than once every few years.

#### Maintaining the Slides

1. Wipe your valves clean with a rag.
2. Grease the valves with some sort of lubricant. Any standard slide grease will work. I like to use the slide grease that comes in a *Chapstick*-type container. I feel that it is easier to apply. (I'm not saying use *Chapstick*!)
3. From time to time, it may be necessary to *really* clean the slides. For that purpose, *Brasso* works well. I have also been told that carburetor cleaner works really well. However, these are chemicals, and they can remove some of the brass off of the slides. I would not suggest using any harsh chemical like mentioned above on your horn very often. If you are unsure at all, do not use them! If your slides are really dirty, I would suggest getting your horn chemically cleaned by a professional.

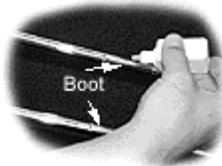
# Helpful Hints for Young Musicians

## BRASS CARE

### Trombone Care

#### Daily Care

1. Great care is needed when handling your trombone. The smallest bump or dent in the slide can cause problems with its proper movement. Due to the precision needed in adjustment of the slide, repairs are time consuming and costly so...Be Careful!
2. The slide needs to be lubricated on a regular basis. Apply a small amount of slide oil or cream to the



boot area (Fig.1) of the slide as needed. The boot is at the very end of the slide, so be careful not to allow the slide to slip off the trombone.

3. Occasionally a mouthpiece will become stuck in the trombone. If this happens **don't** try force to remove it - this can cause major damage to the instrument. Take it to a repair shop or music store to have it removed. Most shops do not charge for this service.
4. After you are finished playing make sure you remove any excess moisture from the inside of the trombone by opening the water key and blowing through the instrument. Carefully wipe off the outside of the trombone to remove oils or perspiration caused by your hands.
5. Always store your trombone in its case when not in use, this helps prevent damage and aids in keeping the instrument clean. Do not place books or folders in the case, this can bend slides and cause problems.

#### Monthly Care

1. Check the tuning slide to see that it moves freely and lubricate it with slide grease if needed.
2. The inside of your trombone needs to be cleaned regularly. This may not be needed every month but should be done at least every 3 months. See the section below on Brass Cleaning for more information.

#### Yearly Care

If you clean your instrument on a regular basis you may not need any additional yearly care, however, repair shops have the ability to chemically clean your instrument which is a more thorough cleaning than can be done at home.

## **Helpful Hints for Young Musicians**

### **Cleaning Your Brass Instrument**

No matter how experienced a brass player you are, learning to clean and care for your instrument is a necessity. Since your instrument is constantly subjected to air and debris from your mouth, over time a build up occurs inside. Regular cleaning will not only keep your instrument free of such debris, but will also increase the life of your instrument.

#### **Red Rot**

Sweat from your hands commonly causes "red rot" where your instrument is held. Red rot not only stains your instrument, but over time, begins to eat through the finish. Red rot often appears on the outer valve casings or lead pipe as discoloured spots. Wiping your instrument's outer piston or lead pipe area after playing is always a good idea. This will remove much of the oil from your instrument. Many professionals choose to play with a specially fitted covering, which wraps around the pistons to prevent such damage.

#### **Cleaning Your Valved Instrument**

1. Begin disassembling your instrument by removing all tuning slides and wiping them clean of lubricating oils and grease with a lint-free cloth. (If tuning slides are stuck, add a few drops of penetrating oil and allow them to sit for 30 minutes before retrying.) If you use slide grease as a lubricant, you may find it difficult to remove. Never scrub. Use gentle force to pull the cloth along the slide.
2. Remove pistons gently. This is a very delicate part of your instrument, so never use force. Remove the pistons by unscrewing the hubs on the outer casing. You can place valves and pistons into a plastic cup filled with lukewarm water. Make sure the felt at the top of the valve does not go into the water. Allow valves and pistons to soak while you continue. Gently unscrew the hubs at the base of the three piston valves and allow them to soak in water, as well.
3. There are two methods you can use to clean the interior portions of your instrument. Many people prefer to use a "snake," a long, springy wire with two bristled ends which is pushed through the instrument. This is an effective method, but can cause interior scratching. Others choose to clean with mild water. If you use a snake, push the snake from the mouthpiece end of the instrument gently. Never force. Rinse off debris in between snakings with water. If you use water, you can place your disassembled instrument (minus the valves) on a towel on the floor of the laundry sink or bathtub. Allow instrument to fill with water and then flip, making sure that water has reached every area of your instrument. Allow them to soak for 30-minutes to loosen dirt and debris.
4. Use a soft valve casing brush to gently brush out the valve casings, one by one. This is an extremely delicate part of your instrument, so be careful. Debris can also be loosened with lukewarm water.
5. Once your instrument has finished soaking, remove it from the water and begin to flush it out with a steady stream of clean water.
6. Carefully rinse all parts individually and dry.
7. Replace your valves first, lubricating them with several drops of oil as you go. Remember, in order for lubricating oils to work, they must be applied to dry metal. Make sure your instrument is completely dry before reassembling.

8. Use a mouthpiece brush to scrub the inside of the mouthpiece. If you don't own a special brush, your mouthpiece can be soaked overnight in mildly water. Rinse and dry thoroughly.
9. You can clean and shine the outside of your trumpet by using a polishing cloth or buffing cloth.
10. If air does not pass freely through your instrument after cleaning, you may have placed the piston in the wrong casement. Open the first piston and look for a small number printed on the spring of the casing. Valve number one should always be closest to the mouthpiece.

## Tips for Parents of Beginning Band Students

*So here you are, your child has picked a band instrument to learn to play and it's in the house. What should you as the parent do now?*

Parents worry that their child won't stick with the instrument. The answer to this worry is so what if they don't? They're kids, they may like it or they may hate it. It's allowed! A wise boss of mine once said "Education is never wasted." Therefore, don't consider it as money you threw away. I'm always amazed what kids learn, seemingly when they're paying no attention at all.

*Here are some suggestions to help your sanity and some know-how to handle situations that are perfectly normal but won't seem so to you.*

\*Encourage (okay, **STRONGLY** encourage) your child to play the instrument for at least a year. Nearly every student wants to quit after two or three months because they're not seeing the progress they wanted, which was instant brilliance, and it feels like it's just going too tough to learn. Not everything can be done like food in a microwave – a valuable lesson by itself for a child.

\*It really is nearly irresistible to most parents and children, but please **DON'T** put the instrument together "just to see" before the child has had the first lesson. Every type of instrument has been known to suffer from this very event so learn from generations of parents before you – **DON'T DO IT!** Don't risk adding a repair bill on to the cost of the instrument right at the start.

\*Okay, now your child has had the first lesson and is home to practice. Expect ugly noises to come from your child and the instrument. That's just the way it is! It takes time to learn all the techniques needed to produce a good sound. The dogs and cats may run and hide and you may want to hide with them! Do pick a time when your neighbours are not watching their favourite show, especially if you are in an apartment.

\*Do **NOT** make fun of your child and the noises. Always be supportive.

\*Do **NOT** allow younger or older children to make fun of your beginning student. This is just the worst thing that can happen.

\*You may also hear long periods of silence from your child's practice room at the beginning. If they are learning the clarinet, it takes a while to get fast putting that instrument together correctly! Sometimes, the child is afraid to make those ugly noises too. Be supportive, be patient. Do let your child practice with a classmate who is learning the same instrument. They can be lots of moral support for each other but don't let them play each other's instruments!

\*If something on the instrument gets stuck, do **NOT** take any tools to the instrument. Get help from your band director because a lot of expensive damage is done to instruments by well-meaning parents. You may have to help your child get the instrument to school since it won't fit back in the case if

something is stuck.

\*Here's a suggestion for you. If I practiced the piano or the clarinet right after dinner, my mother would wash the dishes instead of making me do them. I thought I was "getting away with something." I actually thought that for years, duh! But in reality, she was getting what she wanted for the price of doing a few dishes and no whining or pleading to practice was needed.

\*Now, if the other children in your home make fun of your beginning student, it suddenly becomes THEIR job to do the dishes that night. Whining and complaining about this simply results in more chores being added or more nights of doing dishes. On the other hand, if they say something encouraging to the practicing student, they get some of their "dish" time taken away. It can be an encouragement to ALL your children to learn an instrument!

\*Some parents decide to learn the instrument right along with their children. Not a bad idea but I'd encourage you to wait until the child feels a little more at home with the instrument himself, say three to four months or so. That way, he/she can feel as though he's/she's really "teaching" you. It's reinforcement for the child to "teach" and to get that little feeling of superiority about knowing something Mom or Dad doesn't know.

\*I do NOT recommend allowing your child to teach your other children. The instrument can be easily broken in this kind of exchange and I've just never seen it turn very well at all.