



Blanchard Bands

In order to protect the money invested and to help insure the highest level of practice and performance standards, it is necessary to know how to regularly maintain and care for a musical instrument. The guidelines below have been developed in order to help the student remember and apply routine care and maintenance, thus insuring as best as possible an instrument that will work properly throughout the year.

Students in grades 5-7 will have a weekly check called Maintenance Monday to make sure they are caring correctly for their instruments.

HS students are expected to take care of their instruments and spot checks will be conducted.

Anyone failing to properly care for their instrument will have their daily grade lowered until the instrument has been maintained correctly.

General Guidelines for proper care and maintenance for woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments.

Do not place any items (including band books, music, cloth or material) on top of instruments inside a case. This will result in the slight bending of slides, keys, rods, etc. and causes the instrument to work improperly and prevents the case from properly protecting the instrument.

The condition of slides and corks should be regularly checked and maintained. If corks or slides are dry and crusty, then the proper type of grease should be applied. Woodwinds should also be careful not to apply cork grease too often as it will make the cork become soft, tear prematurely, or come unglued from the instrument/mouthpiece.

Swabs should be made out of cotton or silk material. Do not use felt or paper towels to clean out the inside of a woodwind instrument.

Tools such as pliers, crescent wrenches, or vice grips should never be used to attempt to loosen stuck slides or mouthpieces.

Listed below are some specific details of proper care and maintenance for each instrument.

Flute

Daily: Swab with a tuning rod and soft handkerchief after you play.

Weekly: Polish the outside of the flute with a soft cleaning rag. Wipe down the area where the head joint meets the body. This will prevent the head joint from getting stuck in the future. Do NOT apply any grease to your flute. Be on the lookout for loose screws. Your band director can show you how to tighten screws that have gotten too loose. Screws cannot be too tight either, so make sure you consult a director first.

Yearly: Take the flute to the instrument shop for cleaning, adjustments, alignments, etc.

Oboe

Daily: Swab after every use.

Weekly: Be on the lookout for loose screws. Your band director can show you how to tighten screws that have gotten too loose. Screws cannot be too tight either, so make sure you consult a director first.

Yearly: Take the oboe to the instrument shop for cleaning, adjustments, alignments, etc.

Bassoon

Daily: Swab all joints with a cotton or silk swab after every use. Bocal should also be swabbed or cleaned after every use with silk swab or gentle brush. Make sure reeds are stored carefully and properly so as to extend their life as long as possible. Your instrument should be taken completely apart after every use as well. Store it in a place that has a good, controlled temperature. Extremes in heat or cold are very bad and can warp your instrument.

Weekly: Be on the lookout for loose screws. Your band director can show you how to tighten screws that have gotten too loose. Screws cannot be too tight either, so make sure you consult a director first.

Monthly: Check to make sure all corks are still intact and slightly lubricated. Add cork grease to the cork if needed.

Yearly: Take the instrument to the instrument shop for cleaning, adjustments, alignments, etc.

Clarinets

Daily: Swab using a cloth or silk swab after every use. Make sure reeds are stored carefully and properly so as to extend their life as long as possible. Your instrument should be taken completely apart after every use as well. Store it in a place that has a good, controlled temperature. Extremes in heat or cold are very bad and can warp your instrument. It is also important to hold the instrument correctly during assembly and disassembly. Improper grip will bend keys and rods.

Weekly: Be on the lookout for loose screws. Your band director can show you how to tighten screws that have gotten too loose. Screws cannot be too tight either, so make sure you consult a director first.

Monthly: Check to make sure all corks are still intact and slightly lubricated. Add cork grease to the cork if needed.

Yearly: Take the instrument to the instrument shop for cleaning, adjustments, alignments, etc.

Saxophones

Daily: Insert pad saver (referred to as a shove-it) after every use. Make sure reeds are stored carefully and properly so as to extend their life as long as possible. Your instrument should be taken completely apart after every use as well. Store it in a place that has a good, controlled temperature. Extremes in heat or cold are very bad and can warp your instrument. Care should be taken not to bend the octave key on the neck during assembly and disassembly.

Weekly: Be on the lookout for loose screws. Your band director can show you how to tighten screws that have gotten too loose. Screws cannot be too tight either, so make sure you consult a director first.

Monthly: Check to make sure all corks are still intact and slightly lubricated. Add cork grease to the cork if needed.

Yearly: Take the instrument to the shop for cleaning, adjustments, alignments, etc.

Trumpet/ Baritone/ Tuba (piston valve)

Daily: Oil valves, preferably before playing. Valves should move up and down without any resistance.

Weekly: Trumpets should check 1st and/or 3rd valve slides to make sure they move in and out without effort. Residue from the outside and inside of slide should be wiped away with a cotton cloth and/or Q-tip swab. Apply a thin layer of slide cream and a drop of valve oil.

Monthly: Check to make sure that all slides are lubricated properly (trumpets – all other slides). Slides should go in and out without resistance. Slides should be greased with lanolin or tuning slide grease. Mouthpiece should be cleaned with warm water and a Q-tip cotton swab to remove any grime or dirt on its insides.

Yearly: Take the instrument to the shop for cleaning, adjustments, etc.

French Horn/ Tuba (rotary valve)

Weekly: Check valves to make sure that they go up and down without resistance. Add valve oil if needed. Valves may be oiled by applying oil down the valve slides

Monthly: Check to make sure that all slides are lubricated properly. Slides should go in and out without resistance. Valve slides should be greased with lanolin. Your mouthpiece should be cleaned with warm water and a Q-tip cotton swab to remove any grime or dirt on its insides.

Yearly: Take the instrument to the shop for cleaning, adjustments, etc.

Trombone

Daily: Spray inner slide with a water bottle. Slide should move effortlessly without any friction or hindrance.

Weekly: Wipe away old, dried up residue from inner slide and apply a very thin film of slide cream to the larger, bottom portion of the inner slide.

Monthly: Check to make sure that all other slides are lubricated properly. Trombone tuning slides should be greased with lanolin or tuning slide grease.

Yearly: Take the instrument to the shop for cleaning, adjustments, etc.

Percussion

Monthly: Check batter and snare heads for equal tension and proper tuning. Check for proper tension of snare and snare release lever.