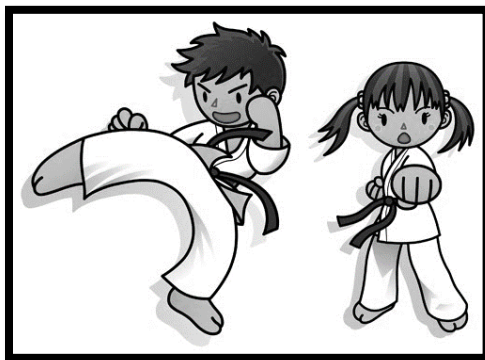


Conway Middle School Band Karate



The Karate belt system is used in martial arts training to mark the progress a student has made in their study. Similarly, to display your proficiency on your instrument by earning belts for Band Karate. A completed Band Karate Requirement includes demonstrating:

1. You know the material, inside and out.
2. You understand the material and all concepts introduced prior to the material.
3. You can perform the material with 100% accuracy.

Playing grades (40% of term grade) will be based on how many requirements have been completed each term.

Here are a few common questions:

What is Band Karate? A playing assessment system used to measure a student's progress as a musician. It is also a good way to put grades into Progressbook that are based on the students' success.

What do students have to play? There are 10 "Belts". Each "Belt" has 4-7 requirements (BKR's) 90% of the BKR's are lines in the method books. The other 10% are made up of scales, tuning, terms tests, and rhythm lines. 95% of the students are playing 3-4 pages ahead of where the BKR's are in the books. Ex: most of the White & Yellow belt lines are performed by the beginners during the Winter Concert. A full list of the BKR's is on the Borc webpage and posted in the Borc Room

How are students graded? BKR's are not graded individually (that would be a playing test). Students are graded based on the number of BKR's that they complete. The number of BKR's, as well as the grading scale, will vary throughout the year. Exact numbers of BKR's need and the grading scale is always listed in the Borc room and on the Borc webpage.

How will I be graded? In an effort to make it easier for parents and students to track their Band Karate progress, we will have 2-4 separate grading points for Band Karate, depending on school & class schedules. If you look in Progressbook, you will see several items related to Band Karate. First is the "Band Karate Grade #2", and its counter parts "Band Karate Grade # 2, #3, & #4. This is where the actual grades will be placed. The second item is the "Band Karate Progress". This item will let you know how many BKR's your child has completed each term.

After testing the new system last year, I was able to determine that the math portion of the grading work. Each term the students will need to complete 6-8 Band Karate Requirements (BKR's). Each grading point (Band Karate Grade #...) has a specific due date with a specific number of BKR's due at that time, meaning that students will have 4 separate grades for Band Karate. For example: if a student completes 2 BKR's by the 1st grade point, and not the 4 required for the second grade point, their grade will balance out as long as they complete the requirements for grading points 3 & 4. On the surface this will seem more complicated. However, after thinking this through all summer and testing it out last year, I think this will be better for the students in the long run. The short and simple version is this: Get your Band Karate completed on time and you are fine!

Some students will choose to get their BKR's completed early. It is possible for a student to get ahead and complete all of their BKR's (and do more beyond the 8) well before the final deadline. I will, of course, encourage this and award bonus points for completing more than the required 8 BKR's before the deadlines. 7th & 8th grade students will also earn "freebies" for doing Solo & Ensemble MPA, All County Auditions, and scheduled after school rehearsals. Students who finish Black Belt early will have grades of 100 placed into the BK grades.

How Do I play them for Mr. N? Every year this is our biggest stumbling block. The “go around the room and everyone plays during class once per week” is not an effective system. Students will be able to play BKR’s any morning the Borc room is open. Most days I am open at 8:45. I am open after school a few days each month from 4-5. I will set up a before class schedule a few days each week. There may be a few days at the end of the term where we will have a full class Band Karate day during our regular rehearsal time. The ultimate answer is that students are responsible for completing their BKR’s on time. I will offer up what free time I have available, however, students are ultimately responsible for showing up to play them.

Updates for Band Karate 2017-2018

As we move into our 3rd year of Band Karate; I think we have completed the largest of the adjustments needed to be made to our playing assessment system. Please remember that the goal of ANY playing assessment system is for me to assist the students to improve their playing. Grades are attached to the system to encourage all students to participate. It is critical that I hear each student individually on a regular basis; **THAT** is the most important part of the system for me. Starting in the 2017-2018 school year the Band Karate System is designed to be completed by the end of the 1st semester in the 8th grade. For current 6th grade students, this will be the only version they will ever know. Current 7th grade students should be on track to complete by 8th grade. Current 8th graders, as well as students who start playing in 7th grade or who move into our program from other schools, will have a slight modification to the process. Each of those scenarios will be addressed on an individual basis.

I have completely eliminated the Level 2 set of BKR’s (Band Karate Requirements) The new system is designed so 6th graders (as well as 7th & 8th grade beginners) will begin Band Karate in the 2nd or 3rd term of their 1st year of playing. Students will be finished with Band Karate in two ways: A. They have finished all of the BKR’s & earned their Black Belts. B. We have reached the 2nd semester of their 3rd year of playing.

A few things to ponder

1. Students can proceed at their own pace. The grading scales will be set up so the average student doing the required lines each term will finish Black Belt by December of their 3rd year of playing. Students who push ahead can finish as early as the 3rd term of their 2nd year of playing. (It would be VERY difficult to finish Black Belt much sooner than that. The music that needs to be performed is at a higher level than even the above average student to complete before March of their 2nd year.)
2. Bonuses for participating in Solo & Ensemble, All County & All State Bands can speed the completion of the belts.
3. We will modify the grade scales for the 3rd year players in the 2nd semester by eliminating Band Karate and replacing it with MPA preparation exercises, scale tests, etc. (details to follow).
4. As the updated system is designed to be completed in 2.5 years: students who begin playing in the 7th or 8th grade will need to work extra diligently to reach Black Belt. As Mentioned above: I will set goal for the current 8th graders, as well as those who join our program from other schools. I have also eliminated the musical terms tests (except for the Black-Belt test)
5. I am looking into awards/rewards for those students who complete Black Belt. Especially for those who finish early.