



## Course Descriptions

### Beginning Guitar

Course Scope: This one-year course is designed for students with no previous guitar experience. Students will receive guidance and direction in solving problems related to playing the guitar on a beginning level and will learn many of the different styles, skills, and techniques required to become a successful guitarist. Areas of concentration include: correct posture, note reading, aural skills, flat picking, singing songs, rhythmic patterns, chord study, finger picking styles, musical forms, improvisation, and performing experiences. This course may be repeated.

Course Goals:

1. To develop correct posture and hand position.
2. To identify the parts of the guitar.
3. To demonstrate proper tuning of the guitar by pitch matching.
4. To understand the history and origin of the guitar.
5. To learn basic fundamentals of musical notation.
6. To learn basic chords and single notes in first position.
7. To learn proper strumming, finger style and flat picking techniques and accompaniments.
8. To become aware of career opportunities.
9. To participate in performance and evaluation of music.
10. To demonstrate basic notating skills.

## II. Course Activities

a. In Class Performances – Tests and Quizzes (both writing *and* playing assessments)

b. Practicing at Home

*Practicing regularly is essential for students to succeed in guitar class. It's recommended that students practice about 100 minutes each week. It's also recommended that students practice for about 15-20 minutes per day rather than practicing for 100 minutes one day. This will better aid the students in developing skills concerning their posture, technique, etc. The home practice environment and schedule are very important for middle school students. The environment should be free from distractions and conducive to practicing. Students should practice in a chair that promotes excellent posture and allows them to read their music from a **music stand**. Finally, parents should expect to see and hear their student practice daily. Please assist your students by establishing a daily practice routine. If your student uses the phrase, "I have nothing to practice," it is simply not true. There will always be new material and concepts to practice or master.*

c. Performances and Dress Rehearsals

#### **Concerts**

*Concerts are a required part of guitar classes, and a large part of a student's grade. Please put the concert dates on your calendars ASAP. If a student misses a concert for an excused reason they will be given a make-up assignment to be completed for full credit. There is no make-up assignment for an unexcused absence, the performance grade will show a 0. Please inform Mr. Lopez as soon as possible when you know you will have to miss a concert. Participation in a concert is a privilege, not a right. Students are required to have a "C" or better and no "N's" or "U's" in Guitar class and **must be able to perform the concert music**. This rule is intended to allow for all the students who have met these requirements to have a concert that they have worked hard for. If a student cannot perform due to his/her grades or performance level, a written music composer report will be required to make up the points. If a student is eligible to perform, it is a required performance.*

*Students work extremely hard in preparing for these concerts, so all parents/guardians are encouraged to attend performances that their child is in. It's a wonderful opportunity to show support for your child's talent and hard work as well as the music department here at Leavitt Middle School.*

**Beginning Guitar Students are required to wear the Leavitt Guitar Polo Shirt, black pants, black shoes and black socks at all Leavitt Concerts.**

d. Daily Participation: in class playing, journal entries, having instrument and materials

#### **Daily Procedures**

1. Students must be in their seats with all materials by one minute after the bell has rung.
2. When a teacher approaches the podium, all playing and talking needs to stop immediately.
3. All directions are to be followed the first time they are given. Listening is imperative for this to happen.

4. To keep our instruments and room an appropriate place for our ensemble and instruments, no food, gum, or candy is ever permitted to be in the Guitar room.
  5. Each student needs to have respect for him/herself, his/her peers, teachers, and any equipment in the Guitar room.
  6. Proper conduct is expected of all students at all times under school and district rules.
- e. Having a good time!

### **III. Evaluation**

#### **a. Criteria for Student Grades**

Homework 5%

Performances 35%

Participation 30%

Assessment 30%

#### **Performances 35%**

All Guitar Students are required to participate in concerts. There are Winter and Spring Concert that all students are perform on and other performances that only Intermediate and or Advanced play on. At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter there will be an In-Class Performance that will take the place of the required Winter and Spring Concerts in those grading periods.

#### **Participation 30%**

*Participation is a tremendous part of any performing arts class. In order to participate, students must have the aforementioned materials in school regularly or points will be deducted from their participation grade. Students also need to follow the classroom procedures appropriately in order to get full participation credit. This includes being in the proper seat and the right time, locking lockers daily, etc. Additionally, students should be playing their instruments. If a student has an instrument, but does not play it, he or she will still lose participation points even though he or she is prepared.*

#### **30% Assessment**

*Playing tests will be given periodically along with written tests occasionally. Content of the tests will include the basic music fundamentals learned in class. Students are allowed to retake playing/written tests as many times as they would like as long as improvement is displayed each time by making arrangements with the teacher. It is the responsibility of the student to retake the test.*

#### **5% Homework**

*All students are expected to submit completed homework as required by teacher. Optimal student learning happens only if work is done in a timely fashion. If it is not turned in on time a 10% penalty will be assessed each day for the first week. Practice Records will be due every 2 weeks and count as a Homework assignment.*

#### **b. Semester Exams**

The semester exams are written exams that will include basic music fundamentals that the students have learned throughout the year. The two quarters will each make up 40% of the semester grade and the exam will be worth the remaining 20%.

#### **c. Explanation of Student Grades**

A 100-90%

B 89-80%

C 79-70%

D 69-60%

F 59% and below

### **GUITAR CITIZENSHIP RUBRIC**

**In order to receive an OUTSTANDING**

**citizenship grade, students will:**

1. ALWAYS arrive quietly, and on time to class
2. ALWAYS sit in assigned seat quickly upon arrival
3. ALWAYS contribute to the class by giving 100%
4. ALWAYS have required materials quickly when needed (pencils /pens/ paper/folder)
5. ALWAYS maintain eye contact with the director during rehearsal and instruction
6. ALWAYS remain silent when appropriate
7. NEVER chew gum, consume beverages, or eat in class
8. ALWAYS play with great posture
9. ALWAYS play with energy and enthusiasm
10. NEVER have electronic devices out when not asked by the teacher.
11. NEVER miss a concert

Below is the scale for citizenship. All reports of misconduct will be documented in the teacher's grade book so either the students and parents will be able to check Infinite Campus portal to see what his or her current citizenship grade is, and why points have been lost.

- 0-2 infractions- Outstanding
- 3-5 infractions -Satisfactory
- 6-8 infractions -Needs Improvement
- 9 or more infractions – Unsatisfactory

\*\*\*Please be advised that serious infractions may result in an automatic *Unsatisfactory* in citizenship.

All reports of misconduct will be documented in the teachers' grade book so both students and parents will be able to check the Infinite Campus Portal to see what his or her current citizenship grade is, and why points have been lost.

e. Make-up Work

Daily grades can be made up with make-up practice time after school and/or by writing a critique of an article about music. For each absence, students are to practice an extra hour (exception: if student is absent due to school activity.) *Daily Participation points cannot be given if a student was not present to participate. Students should see Mr. Lopez for appropriate make-up work.* If a student misses an assignment, written test or performance, it is his/her responsibility to make arrangements with the teacher to complete the required work within three days of returning.

f. How and when students will be advised of their grades

- i. Parents and students are urged to check the Infinite Campus Portal for grades regularly.

- g. Late Work policy – **If a student does not complete any assignment (for reasons other than an absence), they will be assigned a make-up work detention the following school day from 3:30 to 4:25 EVEN if they turn the assignment in the next school day.**

- h. Test retake policy – **A student may only retake a test if 1) all assignments have been turned in 2) the student has asked for help, clarification, or exhibited evidence of further studying and a further mastery of the subject matter.**

### **School-Wide Rules**

- a. Follow directions quickly.
- b. Raise your hand for permission to speak.
- c. Raise your hand for permission to leave your seat
- d. Make SMART Choices: Kindness, Leadership, Courage, Invincible Grit, Creativity
- e. Work hard to do your best for your teachers and parents at all times.
- f. Keep your eyes on the target.

i. **TARDY POLICY – Progressive Steps**

- a. 1st Tardy – Warning & Parent Phone Contact
- b. 2nd Tardy – Warning & Parent Phone Contact
- c. 3rd Tardy – Non-TRS RPC
- d. 4th Tardy – After School Detention
- e. 5th Tardy – In-House Suspension (IHS)
- f. 6<sup>th</sup> Tardy – Required Parent Conference – RPC/Tardy Contract
- g. 7<sup>th</sup> Tardy – IHS/parent and student meet with the principal

j. **BEHAVIOR- Progressive Discipline**

- a. 1st Incident – Verbal warning
- b. 2nd Incident - Parent contact by teacher
- c. 3rd Incident – Written contact to parent
- d. 4th Incident – Counselor referral
- e. 5th Incident – Deans' referral

## **IV. Supplies Needed for This Course**

Each student needs to have the following items each time their class meets. Grades will be influenced if students are unprepared.

1. Instrument and necessary accessories (picks, etc.)
2. Guitar Method Book
3. Sheet Music
4. Guitar Notes
5. Pencil (no pens!)
6. A Folder or binder to put all material (music, notes, etc.)

V. Utilizing technology to learn - This year, at Leavitt, we want to encourage the daily use of technology in and out of the classroom to further enhance the educational experience. As such, Leavitt will be providing students with individual devices in grades 7 and 8 to utilize in class and at home. Students will also be provided with a Google email address to correspond with their teacher and classmates on projects, as well as to turn in assignments. Students may choose to utilize their

own electronic tablets (iPads, Kindle Fire, Samsung, etc.) cell phones, laptops, and reading devices for educational purposes. Please be reminded that your student is responsible for the safety of their personal device and must utilize the district's Wi-Fi to ensure their internet safety. All use of these devices will be for educational purposes and must be approved by the individual teacher.

## **VI. Explanation of Fees**

### **Guitar Fee**

The fee for being a guitar student is \$25. This covers sheet music, methods books, theory books, classroom supplies, etc.

**Beginning Students will also receive a Leavitt Guitar Polo Shirt.**

## **VII. LMS Guitar Program Calendar**

December 2, 2019- Winter Guitar Concert- Leavitt MS Gym (All Guitar Students)

May 4, 2020- Spring Guitar Concert @ Leavitt MS Gym (All Guitar Students)

**\*If any dates change or are added to this list, all parents/guardians and students will get notification in advance.**

## **VIII. Other Important Information about Guitar Class**

### PERSONAL CARE & HYGIENE FOR PLAYING GUITAR

Guitars are rather delicate and are made of polished wood. The strings are made of tightly stretched nylon or steel. Our school guitars are used by several students each day, and they must be treated carefully by each student. A few ideas for students include:

- 1) Make sure your hands are clean before playing—no food, dirt, oil, etc.
- 2) Fingernails must be trimmed as neatly as possible, especially the left hand fingernails.
- 3) Do not wear dangling bracelets when playing guitar—be careful of watches or rings that may cause damage to strings or create scratches on the guitar.
- 4) Do not wear a shirt with metal buttons or a zipper on its front that may damage the guitar.
- 5) If you wear a shirt with extra-long or bulky sleeves make sure you roll or push up your sleeves.

### INSTRUMENTS

The students at Leavitt MS use SCHOOL INSTRUMENTS in Guitar class. There is no need for any student or parent to buy or rent a guitar. However, I highly encourage all parents to procure a nylon string Classical guitar for their student to practice at home. They can be found starting at around \$100. Since we have a “classroom” set of guitars, no student may check out a guitar to take home. There will be before and after school practice times designated in the Guitar Room where interested students may practice.

CCSD does not purchase left handed guitars. The district does not purchase left handed violins or any orchestra instrument either. If your student is left handed may I encourage them to try to play right handed. To be a guitarist, you must be ambidextrous. The left hand on a right handed guitar is the fret hand and is the most difficult to learn. Left handed students will

have an advantage because of it. However, if you purchase a left handed guitar your student may use it in class.

Acoustic/electric guitars will be played by certain students, at Mr. Lopez discretion.

### **IX. Teachers Hours of Availability**

Mr. Lopez is available before school every day and after school nearly every day for students who require extra help and/or practice time.

For the quickest response, parents can contact Mr. Lopez via email at [lopezrm1@nv.ccsd.net](mailto:lopezrm1@nv.ccsd.net).

If email is not available, he can also be contacted by telephone at (702) 799-4699 ext. 3220