**Recorder “How to” for Parents**

*Note*: This is all information that your child has learned or will be learning in music class this year. I am presenting it here at the request of parents for your information and to help you practice with your child at home if you wish. –Mrs. Johnson

Why is my student learning the Recorder?

The recorder is part of an ancient family of instruments dating back to the 12th century, so it is an important instrument in music history. It is an early relative of the modern side-blown flute. Also, it makes a great pre-band instrument because of its simplicity and durability. It will help your child to prepare for any band instrument they may choose to play next year. We will also use the recorder unit to practice reading rhythms and pitches.

How to Hold the Recorder

**Left Hand**: The left hand is placed at the top of the recorder, closest to the mouthpiece. The left thumb is used to cover the single hole on the back of the recorder. The first three fingers of the left hand are used to cover the top three holes on the front of the recorder. The left pinky finger is never used.

**Right Hand**: The right hand fingers are used to cover the four holes at the bottom of the recorder. The left thumb is used to support the recorder on the back.

**Mouth**: Only the tip of the mouthpiece goes into the mouth. Hum “mmm” softly and your mouth will be in the correct position. No teeth should be touching the recorder.

How to Play the Recorder

**Blowing**: The key to playing the recorder is to blow very softly. It is a small instrument and doesn’t require much air at all. If your child is making a squeak, it is most likely because they are blowing too hard. Remind them to blow as though they are trying to fog up a window on a cold day.

**Fingering**: It is very important to cover the assigned holes for each note completely. If there is air escaping out of a hold that should be covered, a squeaking sound will most likely come out. Remind them “leaks make squeaks”. I have included a fingering chart with all of the notes we will learn this year.

**Tonguing**: The separation of notes is called tonguing. To tongue properly on the recorder, the player should think “tu” and flip their tongue quickly.

How to Take Care of the Recorder

1. Keep the recorder in its bag when not playing, in order to minimize the chance of damaging it.
2. Do not let anyone else play your recorder, to avoid germ sharing.
3. These recorders are plastic and can be washed with soap and water once in a while to keep them clean.
4. Use the cleaning rod and a small piece of fabric or sturdy tissue to wipe out moisture after you play.