

Beginning Band Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When does band start?

A: The schedule can vary from year to year, but traditionally the instrument testing process begins the first full week of school. Following that, there will be a meeting during the day for students interested in being in band, an open house for students and parents to learn about instrument rental options, and then a band schedule will be sent home. Letters will be sent home throughout this process to keep the parents informed.

Q: How/when do we sign up for band?

A: We will be sending home various letters and forms about beginning band. On one of these sheets there will be a spot to select if your child plans to participate in band or not.

Q: How does the instrument selection process work?

A: When guiding a student to select an instrument on which they can be successful, I will be evaluating musical aptitude, ease of playing various instruments, and physical characteristics such as hand size, and mouth shape. Each student will have the opportunity to try each on the beginning band instruments. After I have evaluated each student, I will determine which instrument will best fit your child's strengths. Students will have the chance to pick their top three choices for band instruments and these will be taken into account during my selection process.

Q: Why wasn't my child selected for their first choice of instrument?

A: Though students are able to select their top three choices of instruments, it is sometimes the case that the instrument that they are selected for is not their first choice. Unfortunately, with so many different instruments available in the band, there must be a balance among them. Some instruments tend to be more popular and therefore must be limited. Just as every player on a football team can't be the quarterback, not every musician in a band can play the same instrument. The good news is that after students have played in band for a few years they may have to option to learn a secondary instrument.

Q: How much do instruments cost?

A: There are a few different options for obtaining a band instrument. Many families choose to participate in the rent-to-own program with West Music. These instruments are guaranteed to be of high quality and proper playing condition. Due to the wide variety of instrument types and brands, it is difficult to list all potential prices here. If you would like to research West Music's offerings further, I recommend visiting their website, www.westmusic.com. If rental from the music store is an issue for your family, there are a limited amount of instruments available for

rent at a lower price through the school and there are some scholarship opportunities for students who may need them.

Q: When do we need to have instruments?

A: A letter will be sent home with the students with a timeline for when students will need their instruments. Most instruments that are rented through West Music will be delivered one week after the open house.

Q: We already have the instrument that our child was selected to play. Can we use it?

A: Yes. If you already own the instrument that your child was selected to play you should bring it to the beginning band open house so that we can look it over and test it to see if it is in need of repair. If you can't make it to the open house then you should contact Mr. Morgan to schedule a time for him to look at it.

Q: Is band graded?

A: Yes. Band students do receive a letter grade for band. Some of the graded items in band are band lessons, rehearsal participation, and performances (concerts).

Q: What is the difference between band and lessons?

A: All students that participate in band receive a weekly band lesson. These are different from the full group band classes or sectionals that meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In lessons, the students receive a 15 minute individual or small group lesson on their instrument. During this time, we work on developing all of the skills needed to play in band. The full band class/sectionals is where the students all come together to receive group instruction. This is also where we prepare music to perform at concerts.