

Parents of Fifth Grade Band Members:

Greetings! We are really excited to get this year started with our **NEW** Beginning Band at Meridian. It will be amazing to watch how much progress the learners make in this first year of band. Parents, we hope you enjoy this as much as your child.

We want to inform you of some of the services offered ***at cost*** to you. We purchase reeds directly from local music stores at a school discount, and would like to offer that discount to you as well. We also purchase equipment such as valve oil, mouthpieces, neck straps, cork grease for your child. The prices for reeds are as follows:

5th Grade Band	6th Grade Band
Clarinet Reeds: \$2 per	Clarinet Reeds: \$3 per (upgraded reed)
Saxophone Reeds: \$3 per	Saxophone Reeds: \$4 per (upgraded reed)

We ask that the learners who play clarinet and saxophone have **2** working reeds at all times. This allows your child to continue playing in class should a reed break during rehearsal. If one breaks, another should be purchased to replace the previous reed. We provide quality reeds for resting the best possible tone on the instrument. Not all reed brands are created equal, and with the player in mind! If you wish to purchase a box of reeds at a time (10 reeds), clarinet/alto sax boxes are \$32.50.

Please take the time to listen to your child play - it is a very rewarding experience. Remember, the goal is 10-15 minutes per day at the start of the year. By the end of the year your child should have built up enough endurance to play 20-25 minutes comfortably. Daily practice is essential to musical growth!

There will be many questions you will have this year. Please feel free to call or contact us by email. You may also use this number or our email to notify us if your child will be absent from class on a given day. Thank you for your support of our beginning program. We look forward to getting to know you over the next year and years to come.

Musically Yours,

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Curriculum for 5th Grade Band

Purpose: The purpose of this course is to expose learners to the skills and merits of participation in an instrumental music ensemble at a beginning level through large and small group instruction.

Objectives: Below are the objectives that the learners will be expected to meet during the first year of instruction:

1. An understanding of proper care, assembly and respect of his/her instrument
2. The ability to produce a characteristic tone across at least an 8 note range
3. Comprehension of rhythmic patterns visually and aurally and the skills to translate these patterns on his/her instrument and/or to count back orally
4. Basic sight reading skills of whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes.
5. Development of musical vocabulary and the ability to speak, read and write using correct musical terminology
6. Strengthening of team and group work concepts and the ability to function and contribute in a large group setting

Materials: Learners use the *Essential Elements Book 1* and sheet music to supplement instruction.

Instruction time: Learners at the fifth grade level meet on **GO** Weeks (every other week).

Grading: Each learner is assessed based on improvement towards completion of the objectives. The assessments include, but are not limited to written, listening and playing tests and completion of a weekly practice journal. Necessary components of grading in a band class include attendance and participation. Learners will receive a letter grade and an individual assessment sheet at the end of each semester.

Attendance: Regular attendance is critical. Missing several days of band will result in the learner falling behind, therefore causing the entire band to slow down as the absent child plays “catch-up”.

Homework: Daily practice is the assigned homework for band class. At the 5th grade level, it is necessary to practice 10-15 minutes daily. Practice can exceed this time frame, but does not need to. The most important factor is regularity, not time.

Enrollment in band: If a learner is struggling to achieve in the class, the teacher will discuss options with the child and the parent(s). If the child decides they no longer would like to be in band, a note from the parent(s) explaining why is needed. *It is vital that he or she remains in the class the entire first year, giving the child the opportunity to fully experience all that we do in band. Often frustration is relieved after a few months of playing an instrument.*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT JOINING BAND:

· HOW DOES MY CHILD SELECT AN INSTRUMENT?

Your child was fitted during school to an instrument by a representative from Port Huron Music. Things considered in fitting a child to an instrument are:

- 1) Physical characteristics (i.e. a student with very small fingers might struggle with clarinet)
- 2) Student interest
- 3) Initial success on an instrument at the fitting time
- 4) Instrumentation needs (a band with 24 saxes & 18 percussionists wouldn't sound balanced)

· WHAT IF I HAVE AN INSTRUMENT AT HOME, OR FIND ONE ON THE INTERNET?

If you have an instrument at home and your child wishes to play it, it needs to be in good working condition. If it has not been played for several years, it should probably be cleaned and checked out (The directors can send them into Port Huron Music to do this). We **strongly** recommend waiting to buy an instrument off of the Internet until you are sure that particular instrument will work for your child. Many websites carry I.L.O.'s ("Instrument-Like-Objects). These instruments are made of parts and pieces that often cannot be repaired or replaced and result in purchasing another instrument rather than having it fixed. This short-term savings often results in paying nearly double what a modestly-priced quality instrument would cost. Many parents have opted to try the rental program through Port Huron Music for an instrument (this is standard) and then found a "like new" QUALITY instrument on the internet at a later date. (Please let us know if you are looking for an instrument on the web. We are happy to offer input regarding brand names that are good investments vs. an instrument that cannot be repaired if it were to stop working. This is just something to consider...)

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT "BARGAIN" INSTRUMENTS PURCHASED ONLINE OFTEN BREAK WITHIN WEEKS OF PLAYING, AND CANNOT BE REPAIRED BY MUSIC COMPANIES! OFTEN THE GREAT PRICE CANNOT OVERCOME THE POOR QUALITY OF THE INSTRUMENT. MANY PARENTS HAVE STARTED THIS ROUTE, AND REALIZED THAT THEY WERE ACTUALLY SPENDING MORE ON THE INSTRUMENT THAN IF THEY HAD SPENT A LITTLE BIT MORE ON A QUALITY INSTRUMENT. PLEASE CONTACT US WITH QUESTIONS!