Frequently Asked Questions About The Wilson Middle School Band

Who may join band?

Band is offered to **all students** in the 6th grade. The only requirement is that the students obtain a band instrument and accessories. **Students interested in joining the band should indicate band as their first elective choice on their enrollment form**.

How do I join band?

1. Select band as your first elective choice on your enrollment form.
2. Complete the video link that will be sent to your email after we receive acknowledgement that you have signed up for band.
3. Be on the lookout for more information on how you can reserve your instrument once selected by you and the directors.

What are the benefits of playing in the band?

The greatest benefits of learning to play an instrument are the **life skills** that a player develops through being a member of a musical organization. These benefits include **self-discipline**, **self confidence, commitment**, **persistence**, **pride**, **social** development, **cooperation** and **team work**, surviving the **pressures** of performance, healthy **competition,** coping with **success and failure**, a **strong work ethic**, and an **appreciation of the arts.** These are important qualities of adulthood.

Do I have to know anything about music?

NO!! There is no requirement for previous knowledge of music. Of course, any background or training you have in music will certainly be helpful. Beginning band is taught in small classes so that each student may achieve their maximum performing potential as quickly as possible. In addition, supplemental private lessons are available to students who desire them.

What is the supplemental private lesson program?

Supplemental lessons are available through the band program to **all** band students. Individual instruction is extremely beneficial due to the one-on-one teaching environment. The supplemental teacher is able to design a program that meets each individual's needs and each student is able to progress at his/her own rate of ability. Professional teachers on each instrument will be available to teach these lessons during band class, before school or after school. Lessons will be scheduled at your convenience on a first come basis. Students will be taught once a week during the school day. The cost of these lessons is **$25.00** per 30-minute lesson. **It is to your student's advantage to start private lessons from the very beginning of their 6th grade year. Beginner Oboe and Bassoon students are REQUIRED to take lessons.**

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Do I have to practice?

Band is an **academic elective** that is taught during school hours. As with most school subjects, students must do some study at home for proper improvement. Generally, **20/30 minutes** of daily practice is necessary for successful results. A portion of their band grade is determined by daily practice time.

How do we decide which instrument to play?

The following instruments are taught in 6th grade: Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba and Percussion. After Spring Break, students will have an opportunity to fill out a form with detailed specifics to determine which instrument is the most suitable for them. Every consideration will be made for the student to play the instrument of their choice. Various factors such as **lips, teeth, facial bone structure, pitch recognition, rhythm,** etc. make a difference in the **most desirable choice**. Certain characteristics are more important for particular instruments. Examples of this include: Percussion students need an excellent sense of rhythm and coordination, French Horn and Trombone students need a keen sense of pitch recognition, etc. Instrumentation of the band is important, so **limiting some instruments** is necessary. Once the selection process is completed, students may visit the Wilson Band Hall to try out the instrument of their choice if they so choose.

How do I get an instrument?

Please DO NOT purchase an instrument until the Beginner Band Drive. At the band drive you will be provided information about the recommended instruments and the list of accessories. **The recommended instruments all have a proven history of quality and dependability**. A quality instrument is essential for student success. A local music company will be available to assist you with the rental process at **Wilson Middle School** and they will present a **rental/purchase** plan to you. Instruments range in price from **$35.00** to **$60.00** a **month**. If a **school owned** instrument is selected, it will be provided by the school district for a **yearly $100.00** maintenance fee. (School-Owned instrument fees will be paid at the beginning of the 2026/2027school year.)

Why do you invite music companies to the school?

We invite reputable music companies to display the instruments that we recommend and explain the different **options** available to you. You are not required to rent or purchase through these companies...they are merely here for your **convenience.** These music stores do **service** the customers' instruments on a regular basis and convenient arrangements can be made for future service of your instrumental needs. The invitation to display instruments at the school is based on the companies' **availability of the recommended instruments, service to the school, repair capability, warranty, rental plan and competitive pricing.** A listing of the local music stores will be made available for you at the instrument drive.

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Can we buy a used instrument?

Many fine instruments are available from former band students, local music stores and the Internet. **Please do not buy a used instrument until you have had it evaluated by your band director!** There is a wide variation in the value and quality of all musical instruments and it is to your advantage to get your **money's worth.** We have found that an old instrument sometimes will **deter the student's progress**. In other words, do not buy a used instrument that is not in **top playing condition**. Musical instruments do require maintenance, and some used instruments will **cost more to repair than purchasing a new one.**

How much does it cost?

Fortunately, not much. The main cost will be your instrument. Instruments may be **rented** for a monthly charge or purchased through several music companies in our area. Depending on the instrument and the brand selected, rental prices range from **$35.00 to $50.00** per month. Most companies offer a **rental purchase plan** with the rental payments applying toward the purchase price of the instrument. This helps ensure that the student is well suited for a particular instrument before a larger investment is made. The local music stores have a list of **recommended instruments and accessories** that we have chosen through careful evaluation and feel is the best combination of **quality and price.** Always rent your instrument from a music store that has a **qualified repair shop.** Some **school instruments** are available for a reduced rental rate. **Please wait until the band drive before purchasing an instrument.**

Are instruments provided by the school?

Most instruments are provided by the parents. In order to balance the instrumentation of the band, the school does provide some of the more **expensive instruments** including Tuba, Euphonium, French Horn, Oboe, Bassoon, etc. These instruments are normally assigned to students who have **ideal physical characteristics** for that instrument. The fee for school instrument use is **$100.00** per year.

When is a GOOD deal NOT a GOOD deal?

Recently, many national discount retailers began selling instruments that are of **inferior quality.** At first glance, they look like a quality instrument; the case is attractive; and they have a small accessory kit. **Often they are offered at prices so low that it is too good to be true**. Upon closer inspection, you will find that the quality and workmanship is **substandard**; the tone quality is poor; the **tuning is not true to pitch**; and it is virtually impossible to have them repaired or maintained. **These inferior quality instruments have been very frustrating to students, parents, and directors.** Beware of purchasing instruments from outlets that are not primarily known as a reputable MUSIC store. A good rule to keep in mind is: You get what you pay for!

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Can Band Students participate in sports and other school activities?

YES! Even throughout high school, band students participate in all areas of school activities. They are involved in every type of sport and have been cheerleaders, staff members of newspapers and yearbooks, in drama, choir, and orchestra productions, members of the math and science club, elected to the Student Council, etc. The most important consideration is that the student is interested in and **makes time for each additional activity.** The administration, directors, coaches and staff will make every effort to accommodate students who wish to participate in other activities.

What about after-school rehearsals?

In 6th grade, there are two after-school rehearsals prior to each concert performance as well as Band Contest in April and May. They allow the students to do their best on the Winter Concert in December and the Spring Concert in May.

How does playing in the band affect other grades?

The **self-discipline** and **motivation** acquired by learning to play an instrument have proven to be tremendous aids in maintaining good academic records. **Academic standards are required** for all students to participate in band contests. Many band students attain membership in the **National Junior Honor Society** at Wilson Middle and the **National Honor Society** at High School. Band members comprise a large percentage of the High School Honor Graduates each year and many **college academic and music scholarships** are awarded to band students.

When can I start?

Your journey in band starts as soon as you receive your class schedule information packet from the counselors and select band as your first choice elective**.**

Don't forget to fill out the Google Form for your instrument once you select band on your course selection sheet.

Don't forget to reserve your instrument on Saturday, April 18th from 9:00am-12:00pm at Wilson Middle School.

All Sixth Grade Beginner Band students will start learning their instrument in August when school starts.

If we can assist with any further questions, please contact us at the Wilson Middle School Band Hall at (817) 698-7926, email me at cwaterman@nisdtx.org or check the Wilson Wildcat Band website.