

Incoming Sixth Grade Frequently Asked Questions



Does my student have to already know how to play an instrument?

No - we teach your student how to play with no prior experience required!

How do I get an instrument?

Students are strongly encouraged to participate in a rent-to-own program through a music store to acquire their instrument.

Stores that offer these programs in our area are [Sweetwater](#), Flesher Hinton, and Music and Arts.

Does my instrument have to go between home and school?

Yes! All instruments (and percussion stick packs) will travel between home and school. Please work as a family to create a plan that allows for this transportation. Keep in mind that some instruments are small enough to fit in backpacks while others require more creative solutions (shoulder straps, back pack cases, bungee chords, certain adult drop off/pick up days).

How much should my student practice?

We strongly encourage 3 practice sessions for 10-15 minutes each in sixth grade.

Can I start in one music class and switch to another?

Students are encouraged to stick with the music class they are in throughout the year. Learning to persevere is one of the biggest lessons we learn in music classes!

Can I switch instruments?

Students are strongly recommended to pick an instrument that they are excited about and stick with it for the first semester.

Switching instruments early in the learning process can negatively impact learning. Switching instruments occurs in the second semester for specialty instruments (see below).

I want to play an instrument that wasn't offered in beginning classes.

During second semester kids will have the opportunity to test on and audition for other instruments not started in the beginning such as bass clarinet, alto, tenor and bari sax, oboe and bassoon, horn, and tuba. Specifics will be communicated to parents and kids throughout the year.

Is band a year-long class?

Yes! In sixth grade your student will have band and PE on a rotating basis every other day. As such, we cover about a semester of music in a full year. In seventh and eighth grade students will meet in band every day.

What if my sixth grader has previous playing experience?

Because we have graded and not leveled groups (kids are in electives by grade level, and not by ability level as in "beginning" and "advanced") 6th grade band is where all 6th graders land, regardless of previous playing experience. Anytime we have students who have played their instrument before in band class I work to provide them with extra challenges and extension opportunities within class time. The extension opportunities look like leadership positions in class, small ensemble playing opportunities, extra coaching with our sectional teachers, and the opportunity to audition up to perform occasionally with the 7th grade band.