

BRMS INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC HANDBOOK
Ms. Frank, Instrumental Music Director

2024 - 2025



BROWNS RIVER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Jericho, Vermont

Kevin Hamilton, Principal

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Why learn an instrument?

Middle school is a perfect time to begin playing a musical instrument! The Browns River Middle School (BRMS) instrumental program usually includes WINDS: flute, oboe, clarinet, alto & tenor saxophone, bassoon BRASS: trumpet, French horn, trombone, baritone horn, tuba), PERCUSSION: (snare, bass drum, bells and timpani). Students can begin playing in Band in 6th grade
STRINGS are available to 5th graders this year - violin, viola, and cello.

Learning a musical instrument is a great way to learn about the world while strengthening your brain. It certainly doesn't hurt! Here are 10 scientifically proven benefits to playing a musical instrument:

1. Better mathematical ability
2. Refines time management and organizational skills
3. Boosts your team skills
4. Teaches perseverance
5. Enhances physical and mental coordination
6. Teaches discipline
7. Fosters self-expression and relieves stress
8. Promotes social skills
9. Sharpens concentration
10. Enhances your respiratory system

Visit this site for a TED TALK about how playing an instrument benefits the brain:

<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-playing-an-instrument-benefits-your-brain-anita-collins>

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Getting Started!!

SELECTING AN INSTRUMENT

Many students already have an idea of what instrument they would like to learn before coming to middle school, and some already play instruments. For those students who are unsure of what to play, BRMS offers instrument demonstrations for students where they are given the opportunity to see, hear, and learn about various instruments. Most demonstrations happen during 5th grade General Music and students are encouraged to stop by the STAGE room for one-on-one opportunities during recess or after school to try out an instrument. Once a student decides to participate in BAND or STRING ENSEMBLE they are expected to fully read this Instrumental Handbook which will contain a contract to sign and a list of performances at the end.

INSTRUMENT RENTALS

Renting an instrument is often a good choice since it provides:

- the opportunity to access quality instrument without a large initial investment
- flexibility to switch instruments or stop renting if the student's needs change
- a "rent to own" arrangement, with a portion of each month's rental fee applied to the purchase cost of the instrument

String Rental - Vermont Violins is the instrument rental company that BRMS recommends for STRING instrument rentals. Be sure to get a method book, music stand and other accessories they recommend for your instrument. Ask for the "BRMS Package"

STRINGS - Browns River School Rental link - <https://www.vermontviolins.com/browns-river>

WINDS & PERCUSSION - Both of these Music Stores service BRMS through instrumental rental and come directly to the school. Be sure to purchase the "BRMS packages" with your rental for approved accessories and METHOD BOOKS! These rental companies are familiar with what we use:

(in Bristol) [ELLIS MUSIC](#) & [Music & Arts](#) (in downtown Burlington)

We have LIMITED String & Band instruments available for Loans through BRMS - please contact Ms. Frank for more information about availability, contract and fees. Scholarship students and baritone players are encouraged to use school instruments which are \$150 - \$200 to rent for the year. Please contact Berta Frank for assistance with rentals. No one at BRMS is turned away from Band or Strings for financial reasons so let us know if you are a scholarship student.

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Participating in Music at BRMS

There are five essential components to successfully participating in any instrumental ensemble. Here they are:

1. REHEARSALS

All 5 & 6 grade groups meet once per week during the school day and have lessons once per week during the school day. Jazz band is a “club” that meets 2x a week: once before and once after school for grades 6 -8 or 5th graders with musical experience. This year Jazz Band will meet: Mon AM & Wed after school

2. HOME PRACTICING

Practicing an instrument is the key to success in music and possibly the single most important part of playing an instrument (in school.) Practicing develops discipline which is a necessary skill for success in almost any field. The skill level achieved through consistent practice creates a great sense of accomplishment for not only the student but for the audience as well. Students are expected to practice 10 - 20 minutes per day, 4 days a week at home for a total of **1 hour per week**. Obviously, the more the better!! 1 hour outside of school is the minimum needed to build muscles that are used to play an instrument. Parents are asked to provide a quiet, comfortable spot for their child to practice in their home and are encouraged to contact Ms. Frank if they have any questions about what their student should be practicing. Students are expected to keep track of their practicing in their Band Books and parents are asked to initial these records weekly. Students who successfully practice for 4 weeks (as recorded in the incentive chart for grades 5 & 6 in the music office) will receive incentives at school.

TOOLS FOR SUCCESSFUL PRACTICING include: Straight-backed chair, Metronome, Music stand, Pencil, substantial light, tuner (for grades 7 & 8). A selected spot in the home is recommended along with an established time for regular practicing. An encouraging, positive parent and family is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** for success in music. This is important since motivation and encouragement are contagious.

3. Lessons

Grades 5 & 6 instrumental students who do not take private lessons are provided with lessons during the school day. Students receive one lesson per week in small groups of students during General music, by Team. Instrumental group lessons are free for all students participating in band and string ensembles. It is the student's responsibility to remember their instrument and attend their lessons and practice sessions. Families are encouraged to help students remember these details.

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3. Instrument Care

This is a very important part of being a successful musician. If your instrument is not in good shape it will discourage young musicians. Proper maintenance helps in preserving the life of your instrument and it can also prevent necessary repairs. When a student properly maintains their instruments they will be able to learn more consistently and enjoy practicing for longer lengths of time. Becoming familiar with how to properly assemble, clean, and disassemble instruments is a part of the BRMS instrumental program. Wind students will learn how to apply lubricants and care for reeds. In general, students must establish good habits in the early years of instrument training. Parents can help a great deal with this too.

5. Concerts & School Performances

All chorus, band, and orchestra groups have two evening concerts during the year. Some groups perform in assemblies. **Students are required to attend all CONCERTS and performances.**

6. Festivals & Field Trips

Festivals usually have requirements or auditions and are limited to certain grades. Grades 7 & 8 have festival opportunities every year. *Participation in music festivals is optional.* They are highly recommended as music is something that is joyfully shared in our local and greater community. It is also a wonderful way to connect with other musicians outside of BRMS and be exposed to different players and genres. Hopefully students will take advantage of this opportunity!

Field trips often include performances in another school in our district. The BRMS Jazz Band performs annually at the Discover Jazz Festival in Burlington which is an honor and highlight for many jazz musicians in our community. We will also participate in a Middle School Music Festival hosted by the VYOA plus a Fundraiser with Green Mtn Swing!



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BRMS MUSIC CALENDAR 2024 - 25

BRMS All-School Music Assemblies

December 17, 2024 - Seasonal Assembly for 5 & 6 grade

December 18, 2024 - Seasonal Assembly for 7 & 8 grade

EVENING CONCERTS @ 7pm

5 & 6 grade Winter CONCERT 7pm - Thurs, January 16th

7 & 8 Grade Winter CONCERT 7pm - Wed, January 22th

5 & 6 grade CONCERT 7pm - Wed, May 7th

7 & 8 Grade Spring CONCERT 7pm - Thurs, May 15th

MUSIC DEPT FUNDRAISER

Date TBA - Green Mountain Swing Plays at BRMS February 2025 TBA

District Festival Auditions:

7 & 8 Grade Band & Strings: Wed Nov 6 after school BRMS

MUSIC FESTIVALS

Chorus, Band & Strings - District III Music Festival - Grades 7 & 8

Friday Jan 31 & Saturday Feb 1, 2025

7 & 8 STRINGS VYOA Middle School Music Festival

Adjudicated Performance: Friday May 30, 2025

BRMS Jazz Band - Discover Jazz Festival

Burlington June 2025 Perform at Church Street

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Browns River Middle School Music Dept - Band & String Ensemble Contract

I, _____ (please print student name here) would like to join the BRMS (please fill grade in here) _____ GRADE BAND or STRINGS (circle one) I have read the BRMS Instrumental Music Handbook and understand that by signing this CONTRACT I agree to play an instrument for 2 semesters (until June). I also understand that in order to participate in band I need to fulfill the following four expectations:

1 I will need to PRACTICE outside of band rehearsals for a total of 1 hour minimum per week in order to be successful in music. The ideal schedule is to practice 4 days a week for 20 minutes each day.

2. PROPER CARE AND MAINTENANCE is required of my own instrument at school and at home. I will also be mindful of other student's instruments at school.

3. I agree to PARTICIPATE in and ATTEND all lessons, rehearsals, and school performances (BRMS School Performance Calendar is attached to the confirmation email)

4. I agree to RESPECT and COOPERATE with the other band or string students, plus the conductor or coach. This would include following directions in rehearsals, lessons and performances.

I understand that if I do not fulfill these expectations I may be asked to leave BAND or STRINGS until a later time when I might be more ready to participate.

Student Name _____ Signature _____

Instrument: _____ Rental Company _____

Guardian/Parent signature & Date _____

Please return this signed CONTRACT to Ms. Frank by Oct 1, 2024

EVENING CONCERTS @ 7pm 2025

Winter $\frac{5}{6}$ Thursday January 16th

Winter $\frac{7}{8}$ Wednesday January 22nd

Spring 7/8 Wednesday May 7th

Spring 5/6 Thursday May 15th