



## **2025-2026 Handbook**

The McGill-Toolen Prep Band program has a long and very successful history. The Prep Band program encompasses 5th grade beginners, 6th, 7th and 8th grade instrumental musicians. Each band member is part of a class at their school that meets and rehearses during the school day at least twice a week. The band rehearses outside of school numerous days each school year depending on which group(s) the student is involved.

**Teachers:** Ricky Treloar - [treloarr@mccgill-toolen.org](mailto:treloarr@mccgill-toolen.org) - St. Dominic, St. Mary, Little Flower

Ryan England - [englandr@mccgill-toolen.org](mailto:englandr@mccgill-toolen.org) - CorpusChristi, St. Ignatius, St. Pius X

**The most reliable form of communication with any director is email. It is extremely important that we have your correct email address and that it is one that you check regularly. We do our best to reply within 24 hours of receiving an email.**

### **WHY SHOULD MY CHILD BE IN THE BAND?**

Most of all, band is fun!!! Also, research made between music and intelligence concluded that formal music training is tops in benefitting student intelligence and abstract reasoning skills. Students with coursework/experience in music performance scored higher on the SAT: students in music performance scored 57 points higher on the verbal and 41 points higher on the math, and students in music appreciation scored 63 points higher on verbal and 44 points higher on the math, than did students with no arts participation in middle and through high school.

### **WHAT IF I WANT TO BE IN THE BAND AND PLAY A SPORT OR CHEERLEAD?**

The McGill-Toolen Prep Band and Directors understand the importance of a well-rounded education. Participation in one or multiple extra curricular activities can be a part of that education. This is why the band program works closely with our CYO and other organizations to ensure students can participate in other activities along with our band program.

### **6th - 8th Grade Band**

This group includes all band students in 6th through 8th grade who have completed their beginning band year in the program or have worked to meet the standards set by the directors. All of the basic techniques that were introduced in Beginning Band are further developed in Prep Band. Greater emphasis is placed upon performing band music of an intermediate level. Private lessons are a great help at this level since class size and performance commitments limit the amount of individual instruction a student receives. This group will meet for one hour after school on Thursdays mainly. Please see above should any conflict occur for any rehearsal. Always share all other activities any student may be involved in with your director.

### **Tour Band**

This group is made up of the entire 6-8 Grade Band that has attended and participated in a sufficient number of after school rehearsals. This group travels and performs during school twice each school year. The student will need to work hard to play their music if they want to be a part of this group. The Tour Band will have two additional rehearsals each school year. The December Tour will end at Surge of Mobile. The May Tour will end at Dave and Busters.

### **Beginner Band**

All students in their first year with the McGill- Toolen Prep Band Program are considered beginners unless they have come from a different school with a sufficient amount of experience in band. The Beginner Band performs no more than three times each school year, and has only two mandatory after school rehearsals. Regular practice of at least four days each week is expected of all students in the Beginning Band.

### **Percussion**

This group consists of all percussionists in grades 5(beginner)through 8. All 6-8 Band percussion students are required to attend after school rehearsals as stated above. All beginner percussion students are invited to participate in the after school rehearsals with the 6-8 Band.

### **White Shirt/Black Shirt**

Band members can distinguish themselves by earning their White Shirt and Black Shirt. In order to earn the white shirt, students must pass off the 12 major scales and chromatic scale from sight as well as pass off the Book 1 method book we use in class. These students must be in Tour Band, and adhere to the attendance policy for Tour Band participation. White Shirt students will surrender their white shirt should they no longer be allowed to participate in the Tour Band. White Shirt students are granted privileges while on tour and are exempt from having to submit practice logs.

In order to achieve the black shirt, students must already possess a white shirt, be able to play their scales two octaves from memory with the chromatic scale from memory, and successfully play the prepared etudes for the All-State Band audition. Black shirt students will be granted the same privileges as the white shirts, and will include greater privileges while on tour, additional recognition at concerts, and leadership opportunities during after school rehearsals. No student that loses white shirt status may maintain the black shirt.

### **Honor/ All- State Band**

6-8 Band students will have an opportunity to distinguish themselves aside from earning the white/ black shirt by applying for/ auditioning for any number of Honor Bands the Prep Band program participates in. Those events are held in various places throughout the state. Students must be Tour Band eligible in

order to participate. In addition to Tour Band eligibility, they must be in good academic standing with a clean record of behavior at their respective school. Each student that participates in these events must have a parent travel with them.

### Practice Logs

Practice logs are required for all members of the 6-8 Band that have not earned the White Shirt. Beginning Band members are also exempt. Logs are to be submitted weekly starting after the first due date is announced. They are to be detailed with dates, minutes practiced, **specific** practice topics, with a parent signature. Practice logs can be submitted electronically from the band website or submitted using the physical form. Any practice log that does not have sufficient details is considered invalid. **No student that is required to submit practice logs may participate with the Tour Band if they fail to submit more than four logs per semester.** Students can be required to play topics from their practice log to determine validity.

### Attendance Policy

All rehearsals and performances should be considered required, so that the Prep Band may not just perform, but perform well. In the event of conflicts with CYO events the student is excused from **rehearsals** in order to attend CYO **games**. Students are not excused from **performances** to attend CYO **practices**. In the event a CYO practice conflicts with a band rehearsal the **band directors and coaches** determine which event to attend. Not students and parents.

**All conflicts not related to CYO must be brought to the attention of the band director no later than August 22 (1st Semester) and January 30 (2nd Semester).** At that point the conflict is brought to the band directing team and voted upon to see if attendance may be excused.

No student may miss more than four after school rehearsals and participate in the Tour Band unless excused by the band director. If a student misses band class at school unexcused then it also counts as an unexcused after school rehearsal absence.

**All rehearsal and performance dates can be found in the Prep Band Calendar at our website.**  
[mccgill-toolenprepband.weebly.com](http://mccgill-toolenprepband.weebly.com)

### SMOJ/ Parties

“Spontaneous” Moments Of Joy will all be held at the McGill- Toolen Band Room this year. 6-8 Band members that maintain Tour eligibility are invited to all 4 of them this year. Beginners that attend dress rehearsals and participate in their performances are invited to the December and May SMOJ. Please see the Prep Band Calendar from the band website for specific dates.

### Enrollment

The enrollment form can be found at our website above. Students may be enrolled without paying the fee initially. **The deadline for enrolling is Sept. 1, 2025.** After that date no student that isn't enrolled may come to any band

class or rehearsal. Should a student engage in any behavior or pattern of behavior unbecoming of a member of the Prep Band in good standing they may be dismissed from the program at any point.

### **Band Fees**

**The fee for participating in band this school year for all students in grades 5-8 is \$300.** It does not have to be paid all at once. It can be split into semesters (\$150 each semester). All families are welcome to pay the fee all at once if they wish. Families may pay band fees online using the band website (there is a transaction fee) or by check. **All checks must be made payable to McGill-Toolen Prep Band.** If paying the fee online and at a different time the student enrolls for band you will have to fill out the enrollment form again. It is not recommended that students bring this much cash with them to school. **Fees are due no later than Oct. 1 and Feb. 4 (if paying by semester).** The band fee covers an array of expenses the band program incurs throughout the school year. Things like buses, awards, instruments, medals, etc.. It all adds up pretty quick. **Should any student not have their fees paid at least in part by Oct. 15 they will be dismissed from the Prep Band Program.**

### **Supplies**

All students must have a good working instrument. All students must have a pencil during every band class and rehearsal.

5th and 6th grade band students must have the Standard of Excellence Vol. 1 method book for their corresponding instrument. 7th and 8th grade band students must have the Tradition of Excellence Vol. 2 for their corresponding instrument. All of these books can be found at Andy's Music on Hillcrest Rd.

Flute players all need to make sure they have a cleaning rod and polish cloth in their cases at all times. Most flutes come with this. These items can be found at Andy's Music.

Clarinet players should have cork grease, cleaning swab, and at least three clarinet reeds at all times. Reed strength should be 2 ½ for 5th and 6th grade, and 3 for 7th and 8th grade. These items can be found at Andy's Music.

Saxophones should have the same as clarinets from above, but for saxophones. Their items can be found at Andy's Music.

Brass (Trumpet, Horn, Trombone, Baritone, Tuba) players should all have the appropriate valve/slide/rotor oil for their instrument, tuning slide grease, cleaning cloth, polish cloth, and cleaning snake. These items can be found at Andy's Music.

Percussion students need to make sure they have sticks and mallets along with a drum key. The key comes with most percussion kits. These items can be found at Andy's Music.

### **SECRETS TO A GREAT BAND EXPERIENCE!!!**

1. Parents are responsible for damages caused by student's neglect or abuse of school instruments. Please keep the instrument in good working order. Broken instruments aren't fun to play on.
2. Students need to have an instrument and music at every school practice and rehearsal.
3. Reed players should have THREE good reeds at ALL times and a proper reed holder.
4. Each student should learn to LISTEN: to his own playing, to others around him/her, and to the director's instructions.
5. Communication - Please communicate with us if there are any problems or concerns. We will also communicate with you or your student if need be. Email is our primary communication.
6. Practice
7. Early is on time. On time is late.

We know some of this may seem daunting at first. The McT Prep Band Program is the most successful and longest running school program of The Archdiocese of Mobile. Learning to make and perform music is the most rewarding endeavor you will ever be a part of. We are so very happy you have decided to join the McT Prep Band Program!