

JOINING BAND FAQS

Q: What instruments are offered in beginning band?

A: Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba, and Percussion.

Q: How will we choose the right instrument for my child?

A: During our instrument drive (March 14 & 15), your student will try out every instrument that he/she is interested in with help from a director. We will document each 'mini-audition' looking for finger dexterity, lip shape, lip size, hand size, and teeth. Our goal is to match your student's natural physical attributes with the right instrument to ensure success, limiting frustration as much as possible.

Q: Are there limits to how many students can play each instrument?

A: Yes. In order to ensure a good experience for all students, a certain number of each instrument must be present in the band. A band works as a team and we need players at every position to be successful. In order to make sure that the band is balanced, there will be a limit placed on several of the most popular instruments.

We do try to accommodate student interest as much as possible. We believe that a student that is interested in their instrument will be happier, more motivated, and keep involved longer than a student that does not like their instrument. Keep in mind, however, that students are often set on playing instruments that are not as well suited to their personality or interests as they might think. Please be open minded during instrument fittings and during instrument descriptions/demonstrations.

Q: How do I get an instrument for my student?

A: Once your student has been matched up with the right instrument for them, you will either rent an instrument through the music company or through the school. School owned instruments include oboe, bassoon, French horn, euphonium, and tuba. These instruments are provided by the school in August and cost \$185 per school year (payment can be made in installments throughout the school year). Instruments rented through Music and Arts (flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, trombone, and percussion) vary in price (around \$30/month). You will sign up at the instrument drive and your student's instrument will be delivered to school in August.

Q: Where can we rent or buy instruments, books, and supplies?

A: MMS uses Music and Arts as our main supplier of instruments, books, and equipment. They will be present at our instrument drive for you to order instruments and supplies. You can also rent or purchase instruments and instrument supplies from other retailers. Please keep in mind, however, that price with instruments is almost always tied to their quality. If you would not buy a car at Walmart, it is probably not wise to purchase an instrument there either. Low quality instruments will require more repairs, usually do not come with a warranty, and often produce an unpleasant sound.

Always be wary of purchasing used instruments as well. You cannot tell anything useful about an instrument through pictures alone. If you have any questions at all, please contact Ms. Becker and she will be happy to help you.

Q: Can band students also play sports and participate in other activities?

A: Absolutely, YES! It is the philosophy of the band program that every student deserves a well-rounded education that includes curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities. The positive relationship between the fine arts programs and the athletic department is something that we value greatly. There has never been a situation that we have not been able to work out between the programs. Our philosophy in the band program is to provide as many opportunities as possible for students.

Q: My student has been recommended to take a curriculum enrichment class. Is it still possible to do band?

A: Yes, there are several options for your student. MMS students are only required to take two years of PE/athletics. Therefore, in sixth grade they may take curriculum enrichment AND band. Or if you choose, you may decline the curriculum enrichment and your student will be able to actively participate in both band and their PE class.

Q: When does band meet and how do I enroll my student?

A: Band is a year-long class that meets every day for 50 minutes. We will perform three concerts throughout the year. Once your student is enrolled, he/she will be in band the entire year. Your student will report to band on the first day of school next year.

Q: Does my student need to know how to play an instrument before I enroll him/her in band?

A: No, that's what we are here for!