

## Common Questions for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band

Q: How often does band meet?

A: Band meets every day for 50 minutes. We rehearse as a whole, unlike in 6<sup>th</sup> grade where it was broken down into smaller groups.

Q: If I am new to band in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade and I don't have an instrument, what should I do?

A: There are several options here. 1. You can Rent To Own through Herter Music Center or Marshall Music and they will set you up with an instrument you will rent through them. 2. You can purchase a new or used instrument, just be careful about purchasing an instrument. Cheaper doesn't always mean high quality. Have it checked over by a knowledgeable music person before you purchase it. 3. If you are not financially able to purchase or rent an instrument, you may be able to use a school owned instrument as long as you are responsible for the instrument and use it the way it is intended to be used.

Q: What should my child bring to class?

A: Their instrument, their music book, a pencil, and a good attitude. It is very difficult to learn an instrument if they don't have the necessary materials. Band is a participation class, so sitting there doing nothing is not going to help them learn.

Q: How much should my child practice?

A: A minimum of 1-2 hours a week, depending on the difficulty of the music, but the more you practice, the better you become, so there is no cap on how much you can practice. Generally, students who do minimal practice will struggle as the year goes on and it becomes frustrating to them. Please encourage your child to practice. Playing an instrument takes time and practice to develop. It is something that you will not learn overnight.

Q: Does my child need to practice every day?

A: Ideally yes for building up endurance and muscle strength for their mouth, also learning fingering patterns and rhythms for the music. Also, the more they can practice and make it "routine" the easier it gets. There are some times when other activities get in the way which makes practicing difficult, but please do not wait until Sunday to cram in all your practice time.

Q: Are there any costs associated with band?

A: Once you have your instrument, the only costs associated with band are for supplies, such as a new reed, valve oil, cork or slide grease, and/or any other instrument/music supplies you may need. Woodwind instruments are responsible for the maintenance of their reed. Students will be shown what good and bad reeds look like. Generally, a new reed is needed about every 2-3 weeks, depending on how much playing is done.

Q: Are there any performances for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade band?

A: There are 3 concert performances during the year for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The first concert is in December, the second concert is in March, and the third concert is in May. These concerts are required unless there is an extenuating circumstance that is outlined in the handbook. There is also another opportunity for students to perform at a festival called Solo and Ensemble. This is where students can perform a solo or in small groups for a judge and earn a rating for their performance. Students will need to rehearse their music outside of class and get together more than a few times. This festival really allows students to grow musically as it puts the ownership on them to really learn their parts. Mr. Lull will have more information if you need it.

Q: What should my child wear to the concert?

A: Students need to look nice and professional. Students will be issued a long sleeved blue polo. They are only to wear the band shirt to band functions. Students will also need to wear tan or khaki colored bottoms with the polo. Students also need to have dark colored shoes that are preferably all dark color. No jeans, no tennis shoes, no sandals, no shorts. If there is an issue, please contact Mr. Lull ASAP. Don't wait until the day of the concert to inform Mr. Lull about a wardrobe issue.

Q: Can my child keep their instrument at school if they can't practice that night?

A: Yes. Please make sure your child has their name on their instrument case. A lot of cases look familiar and it is important to have your child's instrument labelled with their name. Names should be on a tag that is usually provided. Also, please have their names in their method book too. If the student doesn't take their instrument home, they can keep it in their locker or in the band room, which is locked every night at 3pm. Do not leave the instrument in the hallway during the night. Please keep tabs on your instrument. It is a very expensive item to lose.

Q: Will the music become too difficult?

A: As the students progress from year to year, their abilities and knowledge should allow them to play more challenging music. If the music was too easy, they would become bored. Music is selected based on the ability of the group in whole. Some students will find the music easy, some will find it difficult. Students are also placed within their section based on chair tests, so students who practice regularly will generally be placed in the top part of their section, which usually gets the more difficult music. In all honesty, if you practice through your music, you should not have any difficulty at all.

Q: Will I have fun playing an instrument?

A: You should have fun because you are learning to do something that not everyone can do. Sure, it will take some time and energy to learn how to play it, but playing music is something you can do for the rest of your life. The music we play is generally more exciting and is more involved than in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Sure you may not like every piece, but you will learn from every piece. Playing music is something that not everyone is able to do, so enjoy it. You could potentially get paid to play your instrument. Have fun and enjoy it.