

McHenry Elementary School District 15

Fifth Grade Band Program FAQ's

Do I have to know how to play an instrument to join?

For all woodwind and brass instruments the answer is No. If you have experience, this will be a plus as you learn your band instrument but most students who join beginning band do not know how to play an instrument and have little to no musical experience.

How often does the Beginning Band perform?

The beginning band will perform at least once per term. A schedule will be sent home to inform students and band students about upcoming concerts.

When do we practice?

The Beginning Band will practice after school. Classes are divided by instrument groups: The times of those practices vary from school to school in District 15. Please check the schedule to find out the practice times for your student's school. Consistent attendance is very important to the success of each child playing an instrument. **Please be sure that your child attends class twice each week for him or her to have the best chance of success!**

Please know that your child needs to be picked up IMMEDIATELY after band classes. This must be strictly observed for your child to be a part of the 5th Grade Band program.

How do I join?

There is **no audition necessary for Beginning Band classes**. All you have to do to join Beginning Band is to turn in your registration form and \$25 fee.

- **The Brass and Percussion Class** is for students choosing to learn the Trombone, Tuba, Horn, Euphonium, and Trumpet/Cornet while Percussion students will learn all of the Percussion instruments. Students will start on bells and then learn Snare Drum after the first concert.
- **The Woodwind Class** is for students learning the Clarinet, Oboe, Saxophone, and Flute.

How do I choose an instrument?

Instrument choices need be made based on the student's interest, the band's needs, and physical characteristics of the student. We must have a certain number of each instrument for the band to be successful. Once an instrument choice is made, the student should not change without the director's approval.

What if my student has chosen percussion?

Students who choose to learn Percussion will need to rent or purchase a Percussion Kit. This kit will include a Bell Set, Drum Pad, Snare Drum, Drum/Bell Stand, Sticks and Mallets.

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How do I get an instrument?

The best way to acquire your instrument is the rent-to-own plan. With this plan, all the money that is paid towards the rent is applied towards the purchase of that instrument. If the director and student decide to change instruments, the instrument can be swapped and no money is lost. Parents should check with the instrument dealer of their choice to find a rental plan that will work for them.

May I use or purchase a used instrument?

Sometimes you may find good deals on used instruments or have one available through a family member or friend. If you are going to use an instrument that has not been played in a while make sure you have either a band director or music store look at, there is a good possibility it may need repairs in order for it to be playable again. It is definitely worth the repair expense if it is a quality instrument. Just remember that your child will become more motivated to work hard in band if they have a quality instrument.

Please feel free to contact your child's band teacher if you have any questions about a musical instrument for your child.

What if I want to switch instruments?

This is a big undertaking and will take more work than continuing on your original instrument. If you are approved by the band director to switch instruments, you must practice even more and work from behind. Please don't think of switching if you think your instrument is too hard, switching will only increase your frustration!

Where can I get my instrument repaired?

If you are renting an instrument, please take your instrument to the store you are renting from. These stores will properly repair the instrument and get it back to you in a timely manner. If you already own an instrument, several local music stores can also offer repair services. You can visit their websites for more information as well as speak to your school's director.

What method book should I get for my student?

If you rent or purchase an instrument, you should make sure to purchase the correct method book at the same time. All students will be using the same book and will buy: ***Essential Elements Book One (Yellow) Plus DVD***. Make sure you get "Plus DVD" this purchase comes with DVD and CD-ROM Discs.

How much time should be spent practicing?

The best way to ensure success on an instrument is to practice regularly! The recommendation in the District 15 Beginning Band is to get 100 minutes per week. The most effective way to balance practice time is to spread it over 5 days at 20 minutes each day. Practicing regularly reinforces the classroom instruction and helps develop good fundamentals and habits.