

# Frequently Asked Questions About

## The North Ridge Middle School Band

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### Who may join band?

Band is offered to **all students** in the 6th grade. The only requirement is that the students obtain a band instrument and accessories. **Students interested in joining the band should indicate band as their first elective choice on their enrollment form.**

### How do I join band? It's EASY!

1. Select band as your first elective choice on your enrollment form.
2. Get fitted for & select your instrument at the Instrument Selection Events
3. Reserve your instrument and supplies at the North Ridge Middle School Cafeteria at our "Instrument Rental Information Night." (Divided by Alphabet)

### What are the benefits of playing in the band?

The greatest benefits of learning to play an instrument are the **life skills** that a player develops through being a member of a musical organization. These benefits include **self-discipline, self-confidence, commitment, persistence, pride, social development, cooperation and team work**, surviving the **pressures** of performance, healthy **competition**, coping with **success and failure**, a **strong work ethic**, and an **appreciation of the arts**.

### Do I have to know anything about music?

NO!! There is no requirement for previous knowledge of music. Of course, any background or training you have in music will certainly be helpful. Beginning band is taught in small classes so that each student may achieve their maximum performing potential as quickly as possible. In addition, supplemental private lessons are available to students who desire them.

### How do you decide which instrument my child will play?

The following instruments are taught in 6<sup>th</sup> grade: Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Euphonium/Tuba and Percussion.

Today students will have an opportunity to make a sound on the various mouthpieces to determine which instrument is the most suitable for them. Various factors such as **lips, teeth, facial bone structure, pitch recognition, rhythm**, etc. make a difference in the **most desirable choice**. Certain characteristics are more important for particular instruments. Oboe, Bassoon and Percussion students need an excellent sense of rhythm/coordination, pitch recognition and a history of a strong academic work ethic. **Students interested in Percussion will be placed on a woodwind or brass instrument first and then contacted once percussion assignments are finalized.**

**Instrumentation of the band is important, so limiting the numbers of some instruments is necessary.**

Visit the Band Webpage: [www.richlandareabands.org](http://www.richlandareabands.org)  
Click the Wildcat for NRMS Band Info!

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### Do I have to practice?

Band is an **academic elective** that is taught during school hours. As with most school subjects, students must do some study at home for proper improvement. Generally, **20/30 minutes** of daily practice is necessary for successful results. A portion of their band grade is determined by daily practice time.

### Are instruments provided by the school?

Most instruments are provided by the parents. These include: Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone and Percussion.

In order to balance the instrumentation of the band, the **school does provide some of the more expensive instruments** including Tuba, Euphonium, French Horn, Oboe, Bassoon. These instruments are normally assigned to students who have **ideal physical characteristics** for that instrument. If cost is a concern, please let us know!

### How do I get an instrument?

**Please DO NOT purchase an instrument until the Instrument Rental Information Night.** At this event you will be provided information about the recommended instruments and the list of accessories. **The recommended instruments all have a proven history of quality and dependability.** A **quality instrument** is absolutely essential for student success. A local music company will display the recommended instruments at **North Ridge Middle School on Thursday, May 2nd** between **6:00 and 9:00p.m in the Cafeteria.** They will present a **rental/purchase** plan to you.

If a **school owned** instrument is selected, it will be provided by the school district for a **yearly \$100.00** maintenance fee. (School-Owned instrument fees will be paid at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year).

### How much does it cost?

The main cost will be your instrument. Instruments may be **rented** for a monthly fee or purchased through several music companies in our area. Depending on the instrument and the brand selected, rental prices range from about **\$40.00-\$60.00** per month. Most companies offer a **rental purchase plan** where the rental payments apply toward the purchase price of the instrument (recommended by the NRMS Band Directors). This helps ensure that the student is well suited for a particular instrument before a larger investment is made. Local music stores have a list of **recommended instruments and accessories** that we have chosen through careful evaluation and feel is the best combination of **quality and price.** Always rent your instrument from a music store that has a **qualified repair shop.** **If cost is a concern, please let us know.**

**Additional costs besides rental fees may include reeds for Clarinet/Saxophone (\$25 a month) & Oboe/Bassoon (about \$30 a month).**

**Each instrument also requires an initial supply kit purchase for around \$100.**

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### Why do you invite a music company to the school?

We invite reputable music companies to display the instruments that we recommend and explain the different **options** available to you. You are not required to rent or purchase through these companies...they are merely here for your **convenience**. These music stores do **service** the customers' instruments on a regular basis and convenient arrangements can be made for future service of your instrumental needs. The invitation to display instruments at the school is based on the companies' **availability of the recommended instruments, service to the school, repair capability, warranty, rental plan and competitive pricing**. A listing of the local music stores will be made available for you at the instrument drive.

### Can we buy a used instrument?

Many fine instruments are available from former band students, local music stores and the Internet. **Please do not buy a used instrument until you have had it evaluated by your band director!** There is a wide variation in the value and quality of all musical instruments and it is to your advantage to get your **money's worth**. We have found that an old instrument sometimes will **deter the student's progress**. In other words, do not buy a used instrument that is not in **top playing condition**. Musical instruments do require maintenance, and some used instruments will **cost more to repair than purchasing a new one**.

### When is a GOOD deal NOT a GOOD deal?

Recently, many national discount retailers have begun selling instruments that are of **inferior quality**. At first glance, they look like a quality instrument; the case is attractive; and they have a small accessory kit. **Often they are offered at prices so low that it is too good to be true**. Upon closer inspection, you will find that the quality and workmanship is **substandard**; the tone quality is poor; the **tuning is not true to pitch**; and it is virtually impossible to have them repaired or maintained. **These inferior quality instruments have been very frustrating to students, parents, and directors**. Beware of purchasing instruments from outlets that are not primarily known as a reputable MUSIC store. A good rule to keep in mind is: You get what you pay for!

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### What is the supplemental private lesson program?

Supplemental lessons are available through the band program to **all** band students. Individual instruction is extremely beneficial due to the one-on-one teaching environment. The BISD Private Lesson Teachers are specialists on their instrument, graduating from distinguished music programs from around the country, many with advanced degrees. Most of our Private teachers also play professionally in the metroplex. The Private teacher is able to design a program that meets each individual's needs and each student is able to progress at his/her own rate of ability.

Teachers on each instrument will be available to teach these lessons during band class, before school or after school. Lessons will be scheduled at your convenience on a first come basis. Students will be taught once a week during the school day. The cost of these lessons is \$18.00 per 30-minute lesson. It is to your student's advantage to start private lessons from the very beginning of their 6<sup>th</sup> grade year. It is not recommended to start lessons before school starts (summer or spring).

**Although we cannot "require" private lessons for band students, it is almost impossible to be successful on certain instruments without weekly individual support from a private lesson teacher: Oboe, Bassoon and Percussion.**

**You will have the opportunity to sign up for Private Lessons during the first week of school by returning an enrollment form that will be sent home.**

### Can Band Students participate in sports and other school activities?

**YES! Most of our band students are involved in athletics including football, volleyball, basketball, tennis, gymnastics and track. We have many students who also participate in choir, theater, NJHS, Student council and advanced placement classes.** Even throughout high school, band students participate in all areas of school activities. The most important consideration is that the student is interested in and **makes time for each additional activity.** The administration, directors, coaches and staff will make every effort to accommodate students who wish to participate in other activities.

### What about after-school rehearsals?

In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, there are two after-school rehearsals prior to each concert performance. They allow the students to do their best on the Winter Concert in December and the Spring Concerts and Contests in April and in May.

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## What if I want to be a drummer?

While we don't teach **drum set** in the band program, we do offer a percussion class at North Ridge where students can learn a variety of instruments in the percussion family. Prior knowledge in piano is a plus.

Every student who wants to try out for percussion class will also be placed on a brass or woodwind instrument because every year there are basically 10-12 spots for percussion that are sought after by more than 50 students.

**Percussion class at North Ridge IS NOT:** just "drumming," playing drum set, snare drum, garage band, pop music, etc.

**Percussion class at North Ridge IS:** Concert percussion instruments such as snare drum, timpani, crash cymbals, tambourine, triangle, and bass drum. Keyboard Percussion instruments such as: marimba, xylophone, bells, vibraphone, and chimes.

## How does playing in the band affect other grades?

The **self-discipline** and **motivation** acquired by learning to play an instrument have proven to be tremendous aids in maintaining good academic records. **Academic standards are required** for all students to participate in band contests. Many band students attain membership in the **National Junior Honor Society** at North Ridge Middle School and the **National Honor Society** at High School. Band members comprise a large percentage of the High School Honor Graduates each year and many **college academic and music scholarships** are awarded to band students.

**Most of our students are enrolled in pre-AP classes and earn straight A's on their report cards!**

## What can we do to get a head start?

**Please do not allow your child to assemble or play their instrument before instruction from a band director in Beginning Band Class!**

We do not recommend starting to practice or even handle your instrument before the school year begins. Instruments are very sensitive and can easily be damaged by being put together or handled incorrectly. Bad habits are also easy to acquire without regular professional supervision – we do not want our students to have bad habits before we even get started!

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**Regarding private lessons:** It is best to begin these at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade year instead of over the summer. We have found that students who start lessons the summer before beginning band get just ahead enough to be bored at the start of the year, but not ahead enough to move up a grade or band class placement.

**Note Reading Flashcards/Apps or Online Games are GREAT!** Note reading fluency is a critical part of learning to play an instrument and being “ahead” in this area will make the rest of the learning process much easier! Visit the Band Webpage and find “online learning” for tools to get started!

**Listen to professional recordings of your child’s chosen instrument!** Take them to see a performance at Bass Hall or a local University so they can see what their future playing an instrument can be!

## What if I have more questions?

Feel free to e-mail Ms. Shadman, with any questions or concerns.  
jessica.shadman@birdvilleschools.net

**Join the NRMS Beginning Band “Remind” NOW for updates!**  
**Text the code @nrmsband20 to the number 81010**