

Information for Beginners

SSMS BAND

Pride • Excellence • Tradition



CONTACT INFORMATION

Website

www.ssmsband.com

Parents and Students,

Thank you for your interest in the bands at SSMS. Please enjoy looking through this information booklet and be sure to visit our band website. Most importantly, please talk to your friends who have been involved with our band programs. The best recommendations we could possibly receive will be from members of our community who have experienced what our bands can offer.

Thank You,

The Band Directors

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FAQ's About Band

Q: My child does not know how to play an instrument. Can he or she still be in the band?

A: YES! Students are not expected to have any previous musical experience before entering band class. We will teach them all of the basics and then begin instruction on the instrument selected.

Q: How much does it cost to be in band?

A: Cost will vary depending on the instrument selected. The school provides the larger, more expensive instruments (Tuba, Baritone, Horn, Oboe and Bassoon). Instrument rental will vary depending on the instrument and brands and whether it is new or used. After instrument selection, we will have a meeting where music vendors will be available to discuss options for rental or purchase. You may also purchase instruments on your own, however.

Q: What other costs can we expect throughout the year?

A: Students will be required to purchase their band book and proper accessories to maintain their instrument. Private lessons, which are not required but are extremely helpful to all students, are strongly recommended.

Q: How much should my child practice during the school year?

A: We recommend that each student practice 30 minutes a day. In the beginning, this time will be much less. As they progress, 30 minutes a day is necessary in order to continue to develop their musical skills.

Q: If my child does not sign up for band in 6th grade, can he or she sign up in 7th grade?

A: Beginning band classes are offered at the 6th grade level so that students have adequate time to develop. However, there are options for 7-8th graders who are willing to work hard to achieve the same level as their peers.

Q: Can my child change instruments in the middle of the year?

A: No. Changing instruments is not recommended. If a student is really having difficulty, the director will address this situation with the family and help make a decision that is best for that child's musical development.

Q: How are students graded in beginning band?

A: Students will be graded based on individual assessment. They receive a participation grade and must complete a series of benchmarks which are listed at the beginning of each grading period.

Q: When do band classes meet?

A: Beginning Band classes meet daily. 7-8th grade bands meet every other day.

Q: Will my child have after school or before school obligations?

A: Beginning band students will meet before or after school no more than 5 times the entire school year. These rehearsals are to prepare for concerts of band festivals and are very limited.

Q: If my child continues with band after 6th grade, will there be any conflicts with athletics or other activities?

A: No. Students are able to participate in many activities throughout their 7th and 8th grade years. In fact, we encourage students to be active and explore other opportunities. We also know that the band gets some of the best and brightest students at our school so it makes sense that we must all share their talents with each other.

Q: My child will be getting braces. Can he or she still be in band?

A: Yes. Braces, while sometimes challenging, will not prohibit students from being successful.

Q: Why can't my child just pick their own instrument?

A: Our job is to help match up your student's natural physical characteristics with their musical interests. Each person has different facial and body structures that can help or hinder, depending on what instrument they want to play. We have years of experience with helping students find this match.

Albert Einstein



If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music.

Process of Instrument Selection

- 1** TRY OUT THESE INSTRUMENTS: FLUTE, CLARINET, TRUMPET, HORN, TROMBONE, EUPHONIUM AND TUBA. A letter will be sent home via your elementary school announcing this date and time. All students must try out on these instruments and then choose and rank their favorite choices. Clinicians will also be rating the student's natural ability on each instrument based on the criteria listed in the next section of this booklet.
- 2** IF INTERESTED, MAKE ANOTHER APPOINTMENT ON AN ANNOUNCED DATE TO TRY OUT THESE INSTRUMENTS: OBOE, BASSOON, SAXOPHONE AND PERCUSSION. These instruments are by far the most popular and selective choices, so they are very limited. As a result, each student must have completed STEP 1 above and chosen other instruments which they would like to play. *NOTE: STUDENTS MUST HAVE COMPLETED STEP 1 TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR STEP 2*
- 3** RECEIVE LETTER VIA EMAIL REGARDING INSTRUMENT SELECTION AND RECOMMENDED SUPPLIES. We will send an email to the address you will list on the form filled out when you visit during Step 1.
- 4** PURCHASE INSTRUMENT AND SUPPLIES. Information and recommendations for what and how to purchase or rent instruments will be included in the email sent regarding instrument selection.

Woodwinds

Woodwind instruments are actually made out of many different materials. They are called woodwinds because they make sounds by blowing air across wood reeds, or in the case of the flute, air that blows across a hole.



Flute is a very unique instrument because it is the only band instrument that produces its sound by blowing air across a hole. The flute plays higher sounds and requires fast, coordinated fingers on both hands.

Choose flute if you have:

- ✔ medium or full lips
- ✔ relatively straight teeth with no gaps
- ✔ fast, coordinated fingers that move independently on both hands

Do not choose flute if you have:

- ✘ lips with a “teardrop” in the middle
- ✘ extreme underbite or overbite
- ✘ fingers that do not move well independently on both hands



Clarinet is an instrument that makes a sound when air is blown across a single reed. The clarinet plays higher sounds and requires fast, coordinated fingers.

Choose clarinet if you have:

- ✔ thin to medium lips
- ✔ strong lip corners and ability to make chin flat
- ✔ fast, coordinated fingers that move independently on both hands

Do not choose clarinet if you have:

- ✘ extremely full lips
- ✘ underbite
- ✘ fingers that do not move well independently on both hands

Saxophone is an instrument that makes a sound when air is blown across a single reed. It plays higher sounds and requires fast, coordinated fingers.

Choose saxophone if you have:

- ✔ medium to large lips
- ✔ hands large enough to hold the instrument
- ✔ fast, coordinated fingers that move independently on both hands

Do not choose saxophone if you have:

- ✘ extremely thin or full lips
- ✘ extreme underbite or overbite
- ✘ fingers that do not move well independently on both hands



Oboe is a great choice for students who enjoy independence and are intelligent, confident, and dedicated. There are usually only 1-2 oboes in each band. The sound is created by blowing air into a double reed. The oboe plays higher sounds and requires extremely coordinated fingers.



Choose oboe if you have:

- ✔ thin to medium lips
- ✔ a good sense of pitch
- ✔ extremely fast, coordinated fingers that move independently on both hands

Do not choose oboe if you have:

- ✘ extremely full lips
- ✘ extreme underbite or overbite
- ✘ fingers that do not move well independently

Bassoon is also a great choice for students who enjoy independence and are intelligent, confident, and dedicated. There are usually only 1-2 bassoons in each band. The sound is created by blowing air into a double reed. The bassoon plays very low and high notes and requires extremely coordinated fingers.



Choose bassoon if you have:

- ✔ thin to medium lips (overbite is acceptable)
- ✔ a good sense of pitch
- ✔ large hands that can hold the instrument
- ✔ extremely fast, coordinated fingers that move independently on both hands

Do not choose bassoon if you have:

- ✘ extremely full lips
- ✘ any underbite
- ✘ small hands
- ✘ fingers that do not move well independently on both hands

Oboes and bassoons can be rented directly from SSMS.

Flutes, clarinets and saxophones must be purchased or rented from a music instrument vendor of your choice.

Why choose SSMS Band?

Music is academic. Studies consistently show that students involved in music achieve higher test scores than students who are not receiving music education. The skills needed to read music are similar to those used in mathematics and sciences.

Music is physical. All band instruments require physical coordination and control. Fine and gross motor skills are needed throughout a student's experience in band. In fact, students in high school band do not have to take PE class.

Music is emotional. Band provides a creative outlet that allows students to express their emotions through music. Band also provides a social experience with like-minded students who value both individual creativity and group cohesion.

Music is for life. Learning to play a musical instrument can provide a lifetime of adventure and enjoyment. Music, like any art, is something that can be continuously refined. This means musicians learn to strive for constant improvement over a long period of time. Many employers enjoy hiring musicians because they know they will be gaining someone who understands long term goals.

Brass

Brass instruments are made out of different metals. They all make sounds when a player makes their lips buzz into the mouthpiece. The notes are changed when the player makes the buzz sound higher or lower in combination with changes of the valves or slides.

Trumpet is an instrument that plays the highest sounds in the brass section. The trumpet has the smallest mouthpiece of all the brass. Because of this, players must have a muscle structure that allows them to produce a higher sounding buzz.

Choose trumpet if you have:

- ✔ thin to medium lips
- ✔ even upper and lower jaw
- ✔ mostly flat front teeth

Do not choose trumpet if you have:

- ✘ large “teardrop” on top lip
- ✘ underbite or predominate overbite
- ✘ teeth that aren’t flat in front



Horn is a great choice for students who are intelligent, confident, and dedicated. Since the horn plays the most notes of any brass instrument, it requires that players have extremely good pitch recognition. Players must be able to produce a medium to low buzz.



Choose horn if you have:

- 👍 thin to medium lips
- 👍 even upper and lower jaw
- 👍 mostly flat front teeth
- 👍 good pitch recognition

Do not choose horn if you have:

- 👎 large “teardrop” on top lip
- 👎 underbite or predominate overbite
- 👎 teeth that aren’t flat in front
- 👎 trouble recognizing pitches

Trombone is a very unique instrument because it uses a slide to change notes. The trombone plays lower notes and uses the same mouthpiece as the euphonium. Players must be able to produce a lower sounding buzz.

Choose trombone if you have:

- 👍 medium to large lips
- 👍 even upper and lower jaw
- 👍 good pitch recognition

Do not choose trombone if you have:

- 👎 teeth that protrude significantly in or out
- 👎 underbite or predominate overbite
- 👎 trouble recognizing pitches



Euphonium is very similar to the trombone because it plays the same notes and uses the same mouthpiece. Instead of a slide, though, the euphonium has three or four valves. Players must be able to produce a lower sounding buzz.

Choose euphonium if you have:

- 👍 medium to large lips
- 👍 even upper and lower jaw
- 👍 minimum to no overbite

Do not choose euphonium if you have:

- 👎 teeth that protrude significantly in or out
- 👎 recessed lower jaw
- 👎 underbite or predominate overbite



Tuba plays the lowest notes of any band instrument. Even though it is also the largest instrument, it is the easiest to hold since it rests on the chair when played. Players must be able to produce a lower sounding buzz.

Choose tuba if you have:

- 👍 medium to large lips
- 👍 even upper and lower jaw
- 👍 minimum to no overbite

Do not choose tuba if you have:

- 👎 teeth that protrude significantly in or out
- 👎 recessed lower jaw
- 👎 underbite or predominate overbite



Percussion

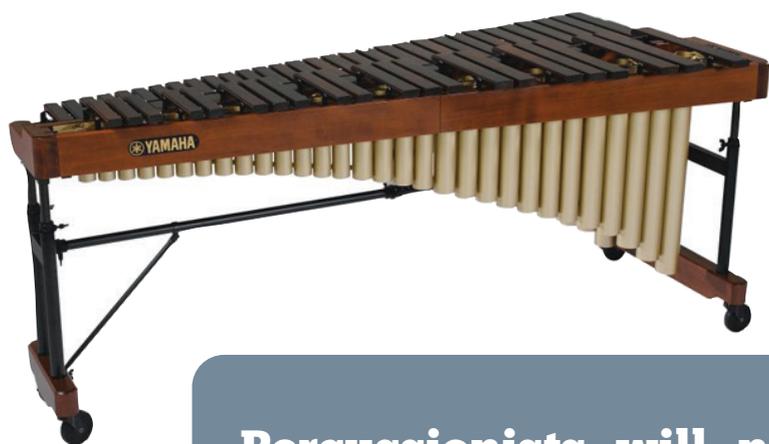
Percussion is a group of extremely varied instruments, including marimba, xylophone, bells, snare drum, bass drum, and cymbals. There are many percussion instruments and students will need to learn to play them all.

Choose percussion if you have:

- ✔ exceptional rhythm
- ✔ exceptional hand coordination
- ✔ piano skills are helpful, but not required
- ✔ desire to learn all the percussion instruments

Do not choose percussion if you have:

- ✘ trouble keeping a steady beat or rhythm
- ✘ difficulty with hand-eye coordination
- ✘ desire to only play drumset or snare drum



Percussionists will need to rent a practice marimba for home use. The percussion instructor will coordinate this rental.

Horns, euphoniums and tubas can be rented directly from SSMS.

Trumpets and trombones must be purchased or rented from a music instrument vendor of your choice.

“Ah, music,”

he said, wiping his eyes.

“ A magic beyond all we do here!”

J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone



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