

F.M.S. Band Frequently Asked Questions

1. *My child cannot play an instrument or read music; can he still join the band?*

Yes! This class is for the absolute beginner. No experience is necessary. Students will be taught how to play an instrument and how to read music. Your child will be placed in a class with other 6th grade beginners.

2. *Does the band meet during school or after school? Is there a summer class?*

The band class meets every day, all year long, during the regular school day. There is no summer class; we will all start together on the first day of school in August.

3. *If my child is in band, will he be able to take other exploratory courses?*

Yes. Although band is a year-long course, students enrolled in the class will have the opportunity to take 3 other exploratory courses during the year besides band. (Most other exploratory classes meet for only 1 or 2 Nine Weeks.)

4. *If my child is in band, will he be able to also be in the chorus or orchestra?*

No. Due to scheduling issues, students may participate in only one music performance group.

5. *If my child is in band, will he be able to participate in extra-curricular activities at FMS?*

Yes. Since the band class meets during the regular school day, students are free to participate in after-school activities at FMS such as cheerleading, football, basketball, baseball, Mock Trial, etc.

6. *May a student join the band in the 7th or 8th grade?*

No. Students wishing to enter the band program at FMS must begin in the 1st semester of their 6th grade year.

7. *Are there any after-school attendance requirements for beginning band students?*

No. All 6th grade band activities, classes, and performances are during the regular school day.

8. *What instrument can my child learn to play in beginning band?*

Beginning band students may choose one of the four following instruments: flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone.

9. *What about the saxophone or the drums? Can my child begin on either of these instruments?*

Both the sax and the drums are extremely popular and, for the band's sake, have to be limited in number. To give an equal chance to all interested students, 6th grade beginners will have to audition for a place in these sections. All students begin the year on flute, clarinet, trumpet, or trombone; auditions for the sax and the drums will be held at the end of the 2nd Nine Weeks. Those scoring highest on the audition will be allowed to switch. The number of students allowed to switch will be based on the overall size and needs of the band.

If your child has his sights set on the sax or the drums, I recommend that you participate in an instrument rental program. Most programs will allow you to switch out the old instrument for the new one and will give you credit for the rent you have already paid on the first instrument.

10. *Are parents responsible for providing their child with an instrument? How do I do this? How much will this cost?*

Yes, parents are responsible for providing their child with an instrument. Most of my current students rent their instruments through a "rent to own" program with our chosen instrument dealer, Music and Arts Company. This dealer provides reliable, high-quality instruments for a monthly rental fee. Representatives from their company will be present on Registration Night to explain the plan to you. Music and Arts Company rents instruments for approximately \$34 a month.

11. *May I rent from another company, use an instrument I already own, or purchase an instrument outright?*

Yes, you may rent an instrument from another company. You may also use a flute, clarinet, trumpet or trombone that you already own or that belongs to someone you know, as long as the instrument is in good condition. If you would like, you may bring the instrument to the Registration Night and have one of the Music and Arts reps. check it out for you. As for purchasing an instrument right away, I don't recommend it. The middle school student is notorious for changing his mind and for "running hot" for something one minute and then "running cold" the next. Most rental programs offer a chance to purchase the instrument at a reduced cash price within 90 days of the school year's start. A musical instrument is an investment; the instrument my parents purchased for me through a "rent to own" program lasted from my 6th grade year until college graduation and beyond when I placed it in the hands of one of my very first students. You should provide your child with a reputable, high-quality instrument that will give him a good start and a better chance at being successful. A faulty or poor-quality instrument may help your wallet initially, but it won't help your child in the long run and will often times cost you even more in expensive repairs or even replacing it.

12. *What if my child begins band and later decides that it isn't for him? Will he be able to change to another class?*

What do I do with the instrument I am renting?

Students who find that band isn't for them may petition the principal and guidance counselor for a schedule change.

No schedule changes will be made during a nine-weeks grading period; any approved changes will be made at the end of the current grading period. Instruments that are being rented may be returned to the company with no further financial obligation.