

6th Grade Band FAQ

Q: How does my child get and instrument?

A: In the fall we will host an instrument rental night where parents and students can come to the school and talk with our music store representatives from The Tune Shop. Parents will be able to get pricing breakdowns and students can take their instruments home that evening. You are also welcome to do this prior to that night but we ask that students not touch their instruments prior to us helping them in school to prevent damage to the instrument, unless they are taking private lessons with a qualified teacher.

Q: How much does an instrument cost?

A: This is a tough question to answer because each instrument is different and stores have different payment options available. Our suggestion is that you shop around at different reputable music stores and compare prices and pricing plans. Most good stores will offer you a “rent-to-own” type option that will significantly lower payments and make it more manageable for your family budget. We deal directly with the Tune Shop because they are local and they have always been great proponents of our music programs here at LMS.

Q: My child knows nothing about music or playing an instrument. Can they still join band?

A: ABSOLUTELY! 90% of our kids start out having no knowledge of their instrument at all. We start from square one with reviewing note names, rhythms, and other basic music theory. From there we start on the instruments with “how to open your case” 😊 Everyone will progress at different speeds but we will do our best to accommodate the needs of all of our students.

Q: Can my student be in band as well as other activities both in school and out of school like sports, scouts or other clubs?

A: Again, ABSOLUTELY! We have many students from 6th- 12th grade who participate in a wide range of activities both in and out of school including: football, basketball, volleyball, soccer, track, cross country, wrestling, scouts, drama, debate, forensics, choir, leadership, etc. It’s all about time management and making sure that your family plans ahead for the dates that we do ask for time outside of the school day.

Q: Will my student have to spend a lot of time outside of school practicing?

A: We ask that 6th grade students spend 3-4 days per week practicing for at least 15-25 minutes, 7th grade students spend 3-4 days per week practicing for at least 20-30 minutes, and 8th grade students spend 4-5 days per week practicing for at least 30 minutes. In our experience and based on our professional opinion these practice times are what will give your student the best opportunity for success on their instrument. We do not track their practice but we do assign homework assignments on a semi-weekly basis and expect students to perform for us in person so we can evaluate their progress. Between those assignments and their concert music they should have plenty to practice.

Q: Will my student have to spend a lot of time outside of school in concerts?

A: 6th graders have 4 evening concerts: November, December, March and May and one daytime concert in May; 7th graders have 4 performances: December, February (KVL Festival), March and May. 8th graders have 5 performances: October, December, February (KVL Festival), March and May. 8th graders also make up our pep rally pep band as well but those performances are during the school day.

Q: Can my student be in the percussion section even if they weren't chosen?

A: We ask that only the students who were chosen for percussion be a part of that section. For educational reasons we have to limit the number of students we allow in that section. If you would like to discuss this further please let us know and we'll be happy to conference with you.

Q: What if my child doesn't like band and wants to quit?

A: All students who sign up for band in 6th grade will be required to stay in the class for 1 full year. At the end of their 6th grade year they will be able to evaluate their place in band and decide to stay or choose another course. This is simply because we have a firm belief that students cannot make a good, educated decision about playing until they have worked through the "hard stuff" that first year.

Q: Can my student play saxophone in 6th grade band?

A: We do not start students on saxophone in 6th grade. If a student wants to play saxophone we recommend they play clarinet in 6th grade as those students will be given first choice when switching in 7th grade. They will have the opportunity to switch instruments at the end of 6th grade at which time they will be given recommendations from us and permission from parents will be required before any switches are made.

Q: What if my child wants to take a year off and come back to band later?

A: We generally do not allow this to happen as the learning process is greatly disrupted when a student takes a year off and tries to come back. While they are still at a 7th grade level their peers have moved on to the 8th grade level. Band needs to be a commitment made from the beginning both by the student and the parents.

Q: I know nothing about playing a musical instrument. How do I help my child with this class?

A: This is a very valid question. The best things you can do as a parent are: 1) hold your student accountable for their practice time, 2) motivate them to practice by showing interest in their progress (even when it's painful to listen to), 3) ask questions when you need help. We are more than happy to help you in any way, with any questions you might have. There is also a great guide for new music parents called *The Music Parent's Guide: A Survival Kit for the New Music Parent* by Anthony Mazzocchi. This book is \$6.99 on Amazon and is a great resource for new music parents.