**Mozart Middle School**

**WELCOME TO BAND!**

**Dear Parents,**

Welcome to the exciting world of Mozart Middle School Beginning Band! You and your son or daughter are about to start what will be a long and rewarding experience in music making. We are as excited to get the students started on this journey as they are! Below, please find some information to consider that will help guide your child along the way.

* All children naturally want to create something that is all their own. When your child plays a musical instrument, he/she will be creating something that reflects his/her individual personality and style. This creativity will also strengthen independent thinking in many areas other than music. National research shows that students in school music programs, on average, earn higher grades in all subjects and develop faster academically than other students.
* No previous musical experience is necessary. Beginning band starts from the very beginning: how to open a case, assemble the instrument, breathe properly, make sounds as well as read notes and rhythms. All of a sudden your child will be playing music!!!
* Instruments can be rented/purchased from any music store. Most students rent an instrument on a rental-purchase plan at a fairly low monthly cost. The school district provides a limited number of the larger more expensive instruments to the students as assigned and we have a very limited number of smaller instruments reserved for those with significant financial need.
* A head start with a private tutor is not mandatory, however, private lessons are strongly encouraged throughout a student’s participation in band. Generally, students who are able to take advantage of this opportunity excel well past their peers and set themselves up for tremendous success now and in the future.
* An extremely vital part of band is regular home practice. This is especially important at the beginning band level as this is a crucial time in development. Weekly grades are based on achievement, performance, and practice.

* We have found that most students enjoy practicing but almost all of them will need gentle reminders from time to time. While home practice requires time, it also teaches students responsibility and commitment—two very important life skills. Practice results in success which in turn promotes self-esteem and good character. This carries over into other subject areas as well.

We encourage you to remain engaged in the learning process. Students will be encouraged if they can see live musicians performing the instrument they have chosen to study so take advantage of free concerts provided at local libraries, parks and other venues. Also, be sure to take you child backstage after the concert to meet the artists. They were all beginners at one time as well and will enjoy speaking to your budding musician. Encourage your child to play for you and make videos to send to family members. It’s surprising how a few encouraging words from “grandma” can generate an enthusiasm for practicing.

**Choosing an Instrument**

**Students must have an instrument by Monday, August 24**. Please make every effort to have an instrument by this date. Hopefully, the following information will be helpful in securing a rental or making a purchase. When you receive your instrument, please do not allow your child to take the instrument out of the case before instructed to do so by a trained instructor.

**Selecting a music store**

It is very important that you select a music store that can provide you with the best ***value*** (not always just the best price) as well as service after the sale. Based on our experience, here are services to look for in selecting a music store:

* Able to supply the equipment recommended by your school directors
* A good supply of instruments in stock at the store
* Two on-site repair specialists - one for brass and one for woodwinds
* Knowledgeable staff that will be able to answer your specific questions
* A company that will satisfy your child’s needs
* A company that is service orientated

We encourage you to shop around. There are a number of music stores throughout \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Which brand of instrument and what supplies?**

In your packet is a list of the recommended instruments and supplies. The band staff has spent a great deal of time researching instruments that will not only play well, but also have a low frequency of repair. Just like automobiles, some instruments will have a tendency to require repair more frequently than others. Also, do not play as well in tune. The supplies (brushes, swabs, oil, grease, etc.) allow the instrument to perform for the student at the optimum level. Please encourage your child to use these supplies daily. This helps keep the repair of the instrument to a minimum. The music stand and tuner enhance the child’s ability to maintain correct posture and improve intonation (pitch).

When selecting an instrument at a music store, explain that you have specific needs that are recommended by your band director. Please DO NOT allow them to substitute something else without the approval of your director. The substitute product may be inferior, require additional expense, and place your child with an instrument or supplies which will not perform well.

**Should I buy or rent?**

A musical instrument is just like any other major purchase. Not all rental plans are the same. The more freedom your purchase plan offers, the more you may have to pay in the long run. Here are some questions you should ask if you are considering a rental instrument.

* Does all rent apply to purchase?
* If I rent it until I own it, how much will I have paid for the instrument?
* Can I apply rent toward a step-up instrument?
* Am I tied to a contract or can I return the instrument at any time?
* What supplies are included?
* If the included supplies are not those on the recommended list, may I substitute?

**What about used instruments?**

There are used instruments available from various sources: pawn shops, individuals, some music stores, etc. In many cases these instruments are in need of major repair however, there are some good deals to be found. If you run across a used instrument, we STRONGLY suggest that you allow a band director or other music professional to take a look at that instrument for you. Sometimes this is a good way to get an advanced, higher quality instrument for about the same as a new, entry-level instrument.

**Mozart Middle School Band**

**Accessories List for Beginners**

**WOODWINDS**

**Flute**

Accessories-Silk swab and tuning rod

**Oboe**

Instrument Make/Model-from the school

Reeds - Bocal Majority Intermediate - Available from Kessler and Sons (Green Valley location), or from the Bocal Majority Website. Minimum of 4 reeds at all times

Accessories-reed case, pad saver, cork grease

**Bassoon**

Instrument Make/Model from the school

Reeds - Bocal Majority Soft – Available from Kessler and Sons (Green Valley Location), or from the Bocal Majority Website. Minimum of 4 reeds at all times

Accessories-reed case, silk swab, cork grease

**Clarinet**

Mouthpiece-Vandoren M30 or 5RV lyre w/Rovner Versa ligature

Reeds-Vandoren #2 1/2, D’Addario Reserve Classic #2 1/2-one box

Accessories- reed case, cork grease, mouthpiece cap, clarinet silk swab

**Saxophone**

Mouthpiece-Selmer C Star or Larry Teal with a Rovner inverted ligature

Reeds-Vandoren #2 1/2 or D’Addario Reserve Classic #2 1/2-one box

Accessories- reed case (4), pad saver, cork grease, mouthpiece cap, instrument care kit

**BRASS**

**Trumpet**

Mouthpiece-Bach 7C OR 5C

Accessories-Instrument care kit and valve oil

**French Horn**

Instrument Make/Model-from the school

Mouthpiece-Holton Farkas Medium Cup (MC) or Medium Deep Cup (MDC)

Accessories-Instrument care kit and rotary oil

**Baritone/Euphonium**

Instrument Make/Model-from the school

Mouthpiece-Bach 6 ½ AL (Small Shank)

Accessories-Instrument care kit and valve oil

**Trombone**

Mouthpiece-Bach 6 ½ AL (Small Shank)

Accessories-Instrument care kit w/trombone cream and

Miniature water spray bottle

**Tuba**

Instrument Make/Model-from the school

Mouthpiece-Bach 18 or Conn Hellberg (with pouch)

Accessories-Instrument care kit and valve oil

**PERCUSSION**

Percussion Kit- (practice pad and bells with appropriate mallets)

Accessories- black stick bag

\*All beginners need a folding music stand for home practice. Additionally, students should own a combination tuner/metronome with instrument clip such as the Cherub WMT 555C.

**HOW YOU, AS THE PARENT, FIT IN**

Your support is an essential element in your child’s success in learning to play an instrument.

**Schedule Practice Times:**

Music achievement requires effort over a period of time. You can help by:

* Providing a quiet place in which to practice each day
* Remaining nearby during practice times as often as possible.
* Scheduling a consistent, daily time for practice.
* Praising your child’s efforts and achievement.

**What to do:**

To give your child the best possible support, consider:

**Giving** **your child the advantage of taking private lessons with a music professional**. This one step will help ensure that the investment that is being made in the purchase or rental of the instrument will “pay off” for years to come, not to mention the enjoyment that will also come with learning to play an instrument at an accomplished level.

* Encourage your child to play for family and friends.
* Offer compliments and encouragement regularly.
* Expose your child to a wide variety of music, including concerts and recitals.
* Make sure that your child’s instrument is in good working condition.
* Allow your child to play many types of music, not just study pieces.
* Try to get your child to make a minimum, two-year commitment.

**What not to do:**

Each student learns at a difference pace so to enhance your child’s progress:

* Don’t use practice as a punishment.
* Don’t insist your child play for others when they don’t want to.
* Don’t ridicule or make fun of mistakes or less-than-perfect playing.
* Don’t apologize to others for your child’s weak performance.
* Don’t expect rapid progress and development in the beginning.

**If your child loses interest:**

* In the event that your child loses interest in his or her music studies, don’t panic.
* Discuss the situation with your child to determine why their interest is declining.
* Talk to your child’s music teacher to see what might be done to rekindle their enthusiasm.
* Encourage your child to stick with lessons for an agreed to period of time.
* Offer increased enthusiasm and support.
* Often, a student will lose interest in practicing because it can become tedious, lonely, and boring.
* Again, sitting with the student while he or she practices and encouraging the growth you hear will do wonders!

**Selecting a private music teacher:**

Formal private or small group music instruction will significantly help your child’s progress. In fact, MOST MUSIC TEACHERS HAVE THEIR OWN CHILDREN TAKING PRIVATE LESSONS. These professionals know that private instruction is often the key to ensuring that a student will excel in music and also understand the value of that achievement.

In choosing a teacher, consider these points:

* Background and experience.
* Comment from other parents and students.
* Provisions for sharing music through performance.

As your child’s band directors, Mr. X, can recommend excellent private lesson teachers in our community.