

RECOMMENDED INSTRUMENTS

The instruments listed on your child's recommended instrument and supplies sheet will meet all of your child's needs at least for the first three years of his/her band career. They have been selected based on their value, quality, and durability. Again, we suggest the purchase of a new instrument as resale value will be much greater than that of a used one. Several music companies in our area carry these in stock, and even have some used instruments that have been through a re-conditioning process. Instrument care kits are also available from most music stores and contain items which are needed for basic care and maintenance. Other helpful items are a metronome (a time-keeping device) - there are free metronome apps on smart phones, and a folding wire music stand, which aid in holding books and sheet music to ensure proper posture and playing position.

MOUTHPIECES, REEDS, & OTHER SUPPLIES

All band students must provide their own reeds, mouthpieces, and accessories. The next section will list these various daily supplies that your child will need to purchase for their band instrument.

Mouthpieces

Probably the most important part of any band instrument is the mouthpiece. The mouthpiece is the starting point for a good tone on all wind instruments. Mouthpieces that were standard in instruments over 10 years old will be inferior in quality to a new one. It is very important that you purchase the recommended mouthpiece for your instrument. A bad mouthpiece will only make a poor sound, no matter who is playing it.

Reeds

We will always request that you purchase a specific brand of reed for your particular instrument. Please refer to the Recommended Instrument and Supplies Sheet for details.

INSTRUMENT CARE KITS

All students are required to purchase an instrument care kit that contains several items for cleaning and caring for the instruments.

Charms

Charms is a web-based suite created exclusively for band programs. Band Calendar, Emails, Uniforms, Instrument Rentals, Student Accounts. A Charms account is **FREE** to Parents and Students. Specific instructions are on our website under the "Charms" tab. <https://williamsburgbands.wordpress.com/> Please visit and update your account ASAP.

SmartMusic

All members of the Williamsburg Bands are required to use Smart Music for assignments. Smart Music is an extraordinary practice tool, and it is highly recommended that students purchase this software for the ease and convenience of practicing at home. However, there is a computer available at school for students to use if they are unable to have a version at home. Please visit <https://williamsburgbands.wordpress.com/> for more information.

Private Lessons

Private lessons play a very important role in the musical development of our band students. Students receive valuable one on one instruction that enhances their skills and playing abilities. The private instructors of the current WMS band students are professional musicians and have lots of experience in educating young people. Private lessons are not required, but are strongly encouraged. Occasionally a parent chooses to wait to see if there is a *need* for private lessons. It is at the very beginning of your child's band career that private lessons can most benefit. ALL students become better when they receive one on one teaching early. We encourage you to consider starting your child off with a great beginning.

Thank you!

Williamsburg MS bands would like to welcome you to the program, and thank you for supporting your child in this endeavor. We are sold on the benefits of music education, not only for that which is gained from exposure to fine arts, but also for the gains our students make in all areas of education. Research has shown a correlation between academic success and music. U.S. Department of Education data on more than 25,000 secondary school students found that students who report consistent high levels of involvement in instrumental music over the middle and high school years show "significantly higher levels of mathematics proficiency by grade 12." When you consider all of the aspects of being a part of such a fine organization, success is inevitable!

For more information about us, please visit <https://williamsburgbands.wordpress.com/>

If you have additional questions, please feel free to email joel.woodson@apsva.us

Follow us on Twitter!
@WburgMSBands



Williamsburg MS Bands

Orientation Packet for 6th graders and New Students

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About APS Music:

Each day, thousands of APS students enjoy the musical experience provided in their instrumental classes and bands. These young instrumentalists not only learn a greater knowledge of all aspects of music, they also develop discipline, responsibility, and the ability to cooperate with others toward a common goal. When you add to this the discovery of a lifelong means of self-expression and pleasure, you can see why so many students benefit from and enjoy being a part of the Williamsburg Band Program.

About the 6th Grade Band Program:

The 6th grade instrumental music classes meet as part of each student's regular schedule. Students are expected to practice, at home, the skills that are introduced in class, and are then graded on their progress and performance. Sixth grade band students (collectively, the Concert Band) participate in several performances, including winter and spring concerts, the APS Band Assessment and the annual Spring Trip competition. The instruments taught include flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, saxophone, trumpet, horn, trombone, euphonium, tuba, and percussion. Students are expected to provide their own instrument and accessories, except those larger instruments owned by the school.

Goals for beginning band include:

1. Understanding music notation
2. Learning basic music rhythms through counting
3. Memorization of scales and rhythm patterns
4. Acquisition of good practice habits
5. Self-discipline through participation in large and small groups
6. Participation in a contest for a rating, and
7. Evaluation of performances

Instrument Selection:

Each *beginning* and *instrument switcher* 6th grader in the WMS band program will be tested and assessed in the area of musical aptitude. Although we always begin by asking each student what instrument they might want to play, the band staff will make an appropriate instrument recommendation for your child based on their physical traits and their assessed musical abilities. The next step is to secure a quality instrument. This should be done ASAP, as instrument selection decreases at the music stores and instrument instruction is commencing. Once an instrument has been secured, DO NOT allow your child to play on it until we have given instructions to do so. Bad habits are formed quickly and are difficult to break. *Sign up for an instrument testing time by visiting <https://williamsburgbands.wordpress.com/> and clicking the "New Students" tab and following instructions under "WMS Bands Instrument Selection Event".

All incoming 6th grade percussionists

All incoming 6th grade percussionists are required to be instrument tested in an effort to ensure every student has the most appropriate instrument for them. *See above asterisk (*) for direction on how to sign up for an instrument test.*

Purchasing a Band Instrument:

There are as many different makes and models of band instruments as there are automobile manufacturers and options available. Instruments will fall into three distinct categories: beginner, step-up (or intermediate), and professional. The main differences between models are (1) quality of materials and (2) quality of craftsmanship. The beginner models are typically made on an assembly line, with little care taken to accuracy. They are all checked to ensure that they will play, but little more than that is done for them. The professional models are usually hand crafted, and meticulous care is taken on each and every part. The intermediate models are hand tested, and the quality of materials is very similar to that of the professional models, so that it lies

somewhere between the beginner and professional models. We strongly recommend starting your child on one of the instruments listed on the recommended instrument sheet. These instruments will serve most players very well through their years in school band. We find that, since they are better constructed, they last longer and need repairs less frequently. Most students will "outgrow" the playing abilities of a beginner instrument within the first year or two of band. Certainly, by the time your child enters high school, they will have found that a beginner instrument limits their progress on an individual basis. The difference in cost that you might pay now for the better instrument could save you hundreds a couple of years down the road. With instrument prices going higher and higher each year, it makes good sense to think of the purchase of an instrument as an investment, not as a burden.

Renting vs. Buying:

Many parents, while they are strongly supportive of their children's desires, are skeptical about big outlays of money for something they are not familiar. Further, the vast majority of parents would prefer to "wait and see" whether their child is going to stick with it before buying an instrument outright. Again, we suggest you think of your child's instrument as an investment. If you have the resources available and are absolutely convinced that your child is going to stick with band, we encourage straight purchase, as this can save you hundreds of dollars on financing. Music companies may offer substantial discounts for "cash" purchases. On the other hand, if you want to "ease" into it, most music companies offer convenient rental plans. Straight rental, rent-with-purchase option, and rent-with-buyback option are popular options available. One of the good points of these programs is that they offer trade-in options during the duration of the contract. This allows you to trade in that intermediate instrument for an advanced instrument once you see that your child is going to stay with it and is progressing satisfactorily. Whatever your choice – renting

or buying, we encourage you to make certain that your child begins on a quality instrument. Even the finest professionals can't make a bad or cheaply made instrument sound and perform well...certainly we shouldn't expect a beginner to do so either.

The "hand-me-down" or the Garage Sale Special:

Each year we find a few musical instruments in our classes that have come from the closets of moms, dads, aunts, uncles, etc. However, most used instruments, particularly flutes, clarinets, and saxophones, need a considerable amount of repairs if they have been sitting unused for some time. The pads and corks get dried and brittle, and the instrument will just not play correctly. It is so important that your child be given every opportunity to succeed. We have seen many students who had trouble from the start because that old horn in the attic was more problems than it was worth. Also, the expense of getting that instrument into good condition may easily cost much more than the instrument is actually worth. Be skeptical if you are thinking about a used instrument. Remember, it's like buying a used car...you don't know what you have unless you happen to be a mechanic. If your child will be using an instrument that has been unused for some time, please let a music repairman or a private teacher look it over before you commit your child to using it. If repairs are necessary, plan to get them done immediately, preferably before the start of the school year.

SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS

Some of the larger and more expensive instruments are owned by the school. This typically includes bassoons, oboes, horns, tubas, and baritones. Students who play these instruments will be issued an instrument from the school, if one is available. An APS instrument contract must be completed by the parent and student prior to the instrument being taken home. Repairs will be the responsibility of the student and his/her parents.