

# Ockerman Middle School Beginning Band

Dear Parent,

Welcome to Ockerman Middle School! We would like to invite your child to take part in the Ockerman Band Program. We encourage all students who are interested in music to enroll in the beginning band during their 6th grade year. This is a time for students to try band out for a year and see what level of interest they might have, ensuring that they don't miss out on something they may love. Fine Arts education is not only a creative activity; it is a cultural experience for the child. Other benefits of being in the band include: responsibility, hard work, dedication, teamwork, self-confidence and pride.

*“The mission of the Ockerman Band program is to achieve the highest standards of music education and music performance; facilitate the musical enrichment of the student membership; and to make a positive difference in the lives of its students by providing opportunities to grow as learners, performers and leaders as they develop confidence, cooperation, responsibility and high standards of excellence and character.”*

If your child wishes to take band in the 6th grade, he/she must choose “Beginning Band” as their FIRST CHOICE for their elective when enrolling in middle school for the Fall. **A parent or guardian must complete the online form for the beginning band that should have been sent to you as a link. You can also find the link at [WWW.OMSBANDS.COM](http://WWW.OMSBANDS.COM).** Thank you for taking the time to read this information. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions not covered in this packet. We are sure that your child will have a positive and rewarding band experience!

Sincerely,

Adam Proctor  
Band Director  
Ockerman Middle School  
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# FAQ

## **Q: Can my child be involved in athletics, cheerleading, etc. and also be in band?**

A: Yes! Band meets during the school day, while athletics meet after school. You should not have to choose between being involved in a sport or being involved in band, we support you doing both! The only conflicts could possibly be the two concerts we have a year after school but we try to schedule those so that they do not conflict.

## **Q: What is the after school commitment?**

A: 6th Grade band will put on two concerts that take place after school, one in December and one in May. There may be other opportunities outside of that but they are separate and apart from the band class expectations.

## **Q: How much knowledge of music or talent does my child need in order to be in band?**

A: Different students will come in with varying levels of knowledge and skill. Lacking in either of these areas is no reason not to sign up for band. Supplying knowledge and developing skill is my job. All we ask is that students come in prepared to learn.

## **Q: How do we get an instrument?**

A: There are basically three ways to get an instrument:

- 1) Usually the best option is to rent an instrument. This allows a student to get a high quality instrument without the commitment to purchasing for several hundred dollars. Also, when you rent there is insurance that comes with it that covers any repairs that may be needed during the time of the rental. As you make payments to rent, that low cost monthly payment goes toward the purchasing of the instrument and if while you are renting, your child wants to switch, it is a simple switch and money rolls over to the new instrument. Because of those benefits, it is highly suggested that beginners rent rather than purchase.
- 2) Purchasing a quality instrument will cost a large amount of money, while beginners don't even know if they will stick with it. You will find instruments for cheap online and at stores, but dramatically lower priced instruments are not a good choice. Most repair shops won't even service them because they cannot get the parts and the materials are such poor quality that they often break when trying to fix them. Purchasing a new instrument for a beginner is simply not a great idea.
- 3) You may have family members that own old instruments that they do not play anymore and you have access to them. Many times this can be the best option. Many of the older instruments are better than what they make now so you might be able to find a gem that works great. If an instrument has not been used in years, just like a car, it will need a tune up. This should not be terribly expensive and depending on the quality of the instrument, would likely be worth the cost.

## **Picking a Band Instrument**

Students will be picking their specific instruments during the first two weeks of the school year. I will bring in instruments and extra teachers to let students try the different instruments so that they can make an informed and guided choice. Students will be choosing an instrument family (Woodwinds, Brass, or Percussion) before school begins so we can group the classes by instrument family, making the teaching and learning process much more efficient. This also takes some of the stress of picking an instrument without the guidance of a teacher. Within the first two weeks of school we will be bringing helpers in to give instrument demonstrations and help with “fitting” students to instruments that they would be most successful on.

Again, all you will need to do is pick a FAMILY of instruments that has an instrument or two that you would like to try and we will worry about getting the specifics figured out once school starts.

On the next page you will find a list of available instruments for 6th Grade Band and the instrument family that they belong to.

# Beginning Band Instruments

## **FLUTE** (Woodwind Family)

The flute plays the highest notes in the woodwind family and is the only one played by blowing across a hole. Today's flute is made of silver or nickel. The best flute players have a rather flat upper lip with no "tear drop" in the center. Must be rented from a music company.

## **OBOE** (Woodwind Family)

The oboe has two thin flat pieces of wood sewn together (double reed) that goes on the instrument. The body is made of either wood or plastic. It has a unique sound and is one of the more challenging instruments in the band. Players must have a good "ear" for music. Must be rented or purchased from a music company.

## **CLARINET** (Woodwind Family)

The clarinet has a single, flat piece of wood (single reed) clamped onto a hollow mouthpiece. The instrument itself is made of plastic or wood. It has a remarkable range from low to high and from soft to loud. Must be rented or purchased from a music company.

## **SAXOPHONE** (Woodwind Family)

A relatively recent invention (1840) compared to the other instruments, the saxophone combines the single reed of the clarinet and the metal (brass) of the brass instruments. Its mellow sounds blend well with both woodwinds or brass. The saxophone is an important member of the jazz band. Enrollment is limited. Must be rented or purchased from a music company.

## **TRUMPET** (Brass Family)

The trumpet, with its high-pitched brilliant tone, is the leader of the brass family. A trumpet player can produce all the notes of the scale by pressing the valves and changing the lip vibration speed. The best trumpet players tend to have smaller sized lips, but this is not a rule. The trumpet is an important member of the jazz band. Must be rented or purchased from a music company.

## **FRENCH HORN** (Brass Family)

The French Horn is made from 12-16 feet of brass tubing circled around and around. The tone is very mellow and smooth. In addition to using the lips and valves to change the pitch, the player places a hand in the bell to sometimes give a “muted” effect. Instruments can be provided by the school, but are limited availability. Must have a good “ear” for music.

## **TROMBONE** (Brass Family)

This instrument sounds very brassy like the trumpet, but it makes a lower sound. The player changes tones by sliding one tube in and out of the other, rather than by pressing valves. The trombone is an important member of the jazz band. Must be rented or purchased from a music company.

## **BARITONE** (Brass Family)

Like a mini-tuba, the baritone plays the same notes as the trombone, but has a rounder, smoother sound. Due to its valves, it can play technical passages of music with more smoothness and ease. Instruments are provided by the school, but limited availability.

## **TUBA** (Brass Family)

The tuba is the largest and the lowest of the band instruments. Its bass voice gives the deep low tones that are the foundation of the band sound. When unwound, a tuba is 20 feet long. You do not have to “hold it”, it sits on the seat of the musician’s chair. Instruments are provided by the school, but are limited in availability.

## **PERCUSSION**

The Percussion section of the band keeps the beat, builds excitement and adds color to the band sound. A percussionist does not just play drums; he/she plays bells, xylophone, timpani, cymbals, triangle and many other instruments (all school owned). Each member of the percussion section must work together to create the aural illusion of one giant percussion instrument. A 6th grade Percussion Kit must be rented or purchased from a music company. It consists of a practice pad, bells, snare drum sticks and bell mallets. Enrollment is limited.

# 6th Grade Band Supplies List for 2019-2020

All Students will need to have the following materials AFTER they have chosen an instrument in the first two weeks of school: (Both Wert Music Inc. & Willis Music are local reputable music stores that stock these items)

- **Essential Elements for Band Method Book 1 (Yellow)**
- 1 ½" or 1" 3-ring binder with 5-10 plastic sheet protectors for concert music & handouts.
- Your Instrument (Ockerman has a great relationship with **Wert Music** and this is where we suggest you rent your instrument from. Wert Music sends a rep every week to school to make sure everything is being taken care of)
  - **Flute** - Cleaning Rod and Cloth
  - **Oboe** - At least 2 reeds. Cleaning Swab
  - **Clarinet** - At least 3 reeds (strength 2 or 2 ½ ), Cleaning Swab, Cork Grease
  - **Saxophone** - At least 3 reeds (strength 2 or 2 ½ ), Cleaning Swab, Cork Grease, Neck Strap
  - **Trumpet** - Valve Oil, Mouthpiece Brush, Soft Cloth
  - **French Horn** - Valve Oil, Mouthpiece Brush, Soft Cloth
  - **Baritone** - Valve Oil, Mouthpiece Brush, Soft Cloth
  - **Trombone** - Slide Oil, Mouthpiece Brush, Soft Cloth
  - **Tuba** - Valve Oil, Mouthpiece Brush, Soft Cloth
  - **Percussion** - Snare Sticks, Bell Mallets (comes with rental)