

Ockerman Middle School Beginning Band (COVID-19 ADDITION)

Dear Band Parent,

Welcome to Ockerman Middle School and welcome to BAND! Fine Arts education is not only a creative activity; it is a cultural experience for the child. 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.”

Please be sure to visit our website for the most up to date information.

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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Picking a Band Instrument

At this point your child should have already picked an instrument family. The goal here was to have students divided into classes of like instruments to strengthen instruction during the day. Students would have also been able to take time to try out various instruments to see which one might fit the best. With the current state of the country and the needed changes to the schedule, we are unable to achieve that goal. Given that this course of action is not an option this year, students will simply pick the instrument that they are the most interested in and we will work together virtually to learn how to play them.

The first two weeks will focus on two things:

- 1) Reviewing note and rhythm reading
- 2) Choosing a specific instrument
 - a) Students will have their choice of the following (I have taken out the option of French Horn and Baritone to be able to focus instruction)
 - Flute
 - Clarinet
 - Saxophone
 - Trumpet
 - Trombone
 - Percussion (Bell Kit/Drum Pad)

From there it will take two weeks for everyone to work out how they are going to get an instrument. Which brings up the next point.

How To Get An Instrument?

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.

Renting a Band Instrument

There are two music companies in the area that I have worked with for years:

- **Wert Music** (<https://willismusic.com/musical-instrument-rentals/>)
- **Willis Music** (<https://www.wertmusic.com/pages/rentals>)

Both of these companies are very reputable and have been servicing schools for many years. They both have field reps that make weekly visits to Ockerman to check and see if anything is needed. Typically students would rent the instrument and the instrument would be delivered to school where I would show them how to put them together and take care of them. Since that is not a possibility at this point, both companies have agreed to do whatever they need to do to get instruments in students' hands. Both companies will do home delivery or pickup.

Renting an instrument is an extra cost and if that cost stands in the way of a student participating in band class this year, please reach out to me. We will do everything we can to make sure that every student has what they need regardless of their financial situation.

Virtual Instruction: The Plan

All of the middle school band directors in Boone County have come together to develop video instruction to supplement each lesson. We are fortunate to have band directors that specialize in each of the instruments our students are learning which allows for us to develop content and not have to take it all on by ourselves. That work is currently being done and will be available to the students once we have instruments in the kids hands.

Students will have live online (Google Meet) as well as supplemental videos for each lesson. Each lesson will have an assignment that goes along with it that students will be responsible for. These assignments will be in the form of video submission and will receive

feedback weekly from Mr. Proctor. Once Mr. Proctor has passed them on a lesson they may move on to the next lesson. Most all of these lessons will be based out of the “Essential Elements for Band” book so it will be imperative that students have that book. The music stores are aware of what book they will need so they can help you out with that as well.

Students will have access to instructional materials including live instruction from me regardless of the option chosen for this semester. I will be teaching via “Google Meet” every work day on the schedule that the students will be following.

Option 1 (Hybrid):

Mandatory for students to be present in “Google Meet” on their day (A or B) and may be present on Wednesdays (WINSdays) for added instruction when needed.

Option 2 (Virtual):

Available for students via “Google Meets” each day but showing up is not mandatory.

All Students:

Each “Google Meet” is available for all students regardless of their option choice or their particular day (A or B). I will be available during class times for all students and I am hopeful to see everyone often.

Virtual Assessment: The Plan

I will grade each of the video assignments as a pass or fail. Students will be able to resubmit their videos until they pass, so there is no reason that a student should ever have a poor grade in band class. As long as they are practicing and submitting assignments they will be GREAT!

6th Grade Band Supplies List for 2020-2021

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. (This will be important for in person instruction if/when that happens)
- Your Instrument
 - **Flute** - Cleaning Rod and Cloth
 - **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
- **Trombone** - Slide Oil, Mouthpiece Brush, Soft Cloth
- **Percussion** - Bell Kit, Snare Pad, Snare Sticks, Bell Mallets

Hopefully this is enough information to get us started. I have no doubt that you will have plenty of questions along the way. Please do not hesitate to reach out via email to let me know. I will give you any and all information that I have at that time. Regardless of our instructional challenges that may be in that way this year, we are going to work hard to insure that students get the best experience that we can give them.

Adam Proctor
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