



Riverwatch Middle School Band



6th Grade Frequently Asked Questions – Updated 6/24/2024

1. Do I have to know how to play an instrument to join?

Not at all! 97% of all students who join 6th Grade Band do not know how to play an instrument and have no musical experience. If you have experience, this will be considered when choosing your instrument.

2. Do I receive a grade for band?

Yes, at Riverwatch, band is considered an academic course.

3. Can I participate in sports and band?

Yes, students can participate in both band and school sports. There are Riverwatch Band students on every team at RMS, including football, track, basketball, golf, soccer, and cheerleading.

4. How often do we perform?

The sixth grade band will perform concerts in October, December, and May. The calendar can be found on the band website.

After the 6th grade year, there are many more experiences available for band students, including District and All-State Band, UGA Middle School Festival, optional field trips, and even college scholarships.

5. Do we practice after school?

No, all 6th grade band practice takes place during class.

6. How do I choose an instrument?

Sixth grade students will have the chance to tryout the different instruments at the Instrument Tryout Night (held Monday, August 5th). We will have four different stations set up with professional musicians (flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone). After trying all four instruments, the student and parents will meet with the director, who will make recommendations based on the student's interest, the band's needs, and physical characteristics of the student.

Instrument rental company representatives will be available for your convenience in the cafeteria throughout instrument tryout night.

After the first concert, students will have the opportunity to audition for oboe, bassoon, bass clarinet, saxophone, French horn, euphonium, tuba, and percussion. Once this final round of instrument selection has concluded after the first concert, we hope students remain on their chosen instrument for the remainder of their band experience.

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7. Does my student have to start on flute, clarinet, trumpet, or trombone?

Only students who start band in August will be allowed to try out for the expanded instruments after the first concert.

All the local instrument rental companies will allow students to swap their instrument at that time (for the students that are selected for a new instrument).

After the second round of instrument tryouts, all instrument switches have concluded.

8. Should we rent or purchase an instrument?

Most families choose to rent an instrument at the beginning of the band experience. We will have a rental company available for your convenience at Instrument Tryout Night on August 5th in the cafeteria.

Neither Riverwatch Middle School nor Mr. McGee receives any compensation or benefits from any music company. The music company in the cafeteria is allowed to participate because they offer quality instrument brands on a consistent basis. With a subpar instrument, students will likely struggle to sound as good as their peers. Poor quality instruments also break more frequently and are often unable to be repaired.

Most instrument companies offer an introductory rate of a few dollars per month for the first few months of rental. Prices and plans vary after that point (including rent-to-own credit), so parents are encouraged to “shop around.”

9. What if I didn't sign up for band?

If you would like to sign up for band, contact Mr. McGee at hmcgee42@forsyth.k12.ga.us. Please feel free to encourage any friends to sign up for band if they want to be a part of the fun and rewarding experiences to come this year! It's not too late! 😊