



B. McDaniel Intermediate School
Beginner Band
400 N Lillis Ln
Denison, TX 75020

HERE ARE THE ANSWERS TO THE MOST ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BEGINNER BAND.

1. When does the band class meet? What instruments are started?

Beginner Band meets as a regular class for 35 minutes at different times throughout the school day for the entire school year. Students are grouped into classes according to what instrument they play. The teacher-pupil ratio is kept low to facilitate individual supervision of students' progress. Skills develop slowly at first, therefore, students and parents must be patient and committed for the entire school year in order to get the full benefit of band instruction. Beginners are started on flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, euphonium (baritone), tuba, and percussion. We will help you choose the instrument that is best for you at the Instrument Drive.

2. Is any previous musical training necessary?

No. The method books used in Beginner Band are for the musically untrained student. We teach the fundamentals of reading music as well as the fundamentals of playing an instrument. As students progress, you will be able to recognize familiar tunes. Their progress culminates in a spring concert at the end of the year.

3. Are certain instruments for girls and others for boys?

Definitely NOT! Instrument choices are not based on a student's gender, but rather on their desire to play that instrument. Instrument selection is based primarily upon the facial characteristics of the student, and most importantly, their personal choice.

4. When do students need instruments?

Instruments will be needed on the first day of school. Storage for all instruments is provided in the band hall. Please make sure that the case is labeled with your child's name. Do not wait too long! Most music companies run out of stock in July AND raise their prices to take advantage of late renters / buyers! We will have a music company attend our Instrument Drive for you to reserve an instrument for the fall.

5. Should I rent or purchase an instrument?

RENT! Renting an instrument will give your child the opportunity to begin in band with only a small initial investment. Your child can have the advantages of a brand new instrument, such as pride of ownership, freedom from error due to poor equipment, and the opportunity to be the best player they can be by having the best available instrument for their age level. Your child will have the instrument and mouthpiece recommended by the band directors. The instrument can be returned to the company at any time without further obligation. *All rental money applies toward the final cost of the instrument, and can also be transferred to a step-up instrument!*

6. What about buying used instruments?

Some used instruments are good bargains. However, you could possibly end up spending more money on repairs than the instrument is worth. For this reason, we asked that if you do purchase a used instrument, try to let a Denison ISD band director examine it prior to purchase. Local music stores and former band students are excellent sources of used instruments. You might see if the music companies have used instruments available. We have found most pawn shop instruments to be of dubious quality. **WARNING:** The band instruments listed in department stores (i.e. Sears, Sam's), in our personal opinion, are JUNK! They are practically toys. *Again, we recommend that you RENT an instrument the first year from a reputable music company.*

7. Are there any school owned instruments available?

Yes. The school provides the more expensive instruments: oboe, bassoon, French horn, euphonium, and tuba. These are assigned on the basis of aptitude, suitability, and availability – NOT financial need. Parents whose child is selected to play one of these school owned instruments are required to pay a \$50 per year usage fee, and will be required to purchase necessary accessories such as a mouthpiece, books, reeds / valve oil, etc. Additionally, percussion instruments are provided and parents whose child is selected to play percussion are required to pay a \$100 per year usage fee, and will be required to purchase necessary accessories such as books, stands, pads, mallets, sticks, etc. Due to the unique nature and difficulty of the oboe, bassoon, French horn, and percussion instruments, it is **CRITICAL** that they take weekly private lessons (See #12). If you are not interested in taking private lessons, these instruments would not be a good fit for your student. Private lessons for all instrument lessons are strongly encouraged.



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8. Can my child start playing as soon as he / she gets an instrument?

In order to prevent costly repairs and the formation of bad habits, we prefer that the instrument stay in the case during the summer. Instruments will stay in the storage room of the band hall during the first week of school. After formal instruction is given on the care and assembly of the instrument during the first week of school, your child will begin taking the instrument home. This is to protect your investment! If you rent / purchase from a music company, the store will deliver the instrument and materials to our band hall before the first day of school. An additional option for eager students is to start band this SUMMER with a Private Lesson teacher (See #12). This is a chance to get one-on-one help and be set-up for success with one of the professional musicians who teach on our campus each week. The teachers understand that some lessons might have to be rescheduled due to family vacations.

9. Can my child participate in both athletics and band at the same time at Scott Middle School? Band and choir, art, or technology this year? Band and theatre arts at Scott Middle?

In 7th and 8th grade YES, but NOT in 6th grade. In 6th grade, there is only ONE elective and students must choose between Beginner Band (all year), choir (all year), or an art / technology rotation each semester. Athletics is not offered in the 6th grade. All students will be enrolled in PE. In 7th and 8th grade students may take more electives than they can in 6th grade. There are many Scott Middle School students who are in band, athletics, and other organizations such as theatre arts, choir, etc. Because of the unique nature of playing a musical instrument, we try to encourage students to be in Beginner Band in 6th grade and then take other electives along with band in the 7th and 8th grade. If you want your child to learn a band instrument, you will need to put Beginner Band as your FIRST CHOICE for an elective. Students choosing Beginner Band as their elective SECOND choice will NOT be placed in Beginner Band. In 7th and 8th grade, the school administration, coaches, classroom teachers, and band directors work together to try to avoid conflicts in scheduling. We have current Scott Middle School band members who are also in 7th and 8th grade football, volleyball, basketball, track, soccer, cross country, tennis, cheerleading, theatre arts, and much more!

10. Are there any extra rehearsals required? Concerts?

Beginners are required to attend only three (3) concert performances their first year: Our October / November Fall Showcase, our December Christmas Concert, and our April / May Spring Concert. We will also attend a Music Festival in April / May during school and all students will learn a solo and compete in a Solo Contest in April / May. There will be minimal before or after school rehearsals leading up to a performance.

11. Will my child be required to practice at home?

Yes. Beginning the second week of school, students are required as a part of their grade to practice 10 – 15 minutes every day outside of class. This time increases over the first semester as their facial muscle develop and strengthen and they can practice up to 20 – 30 minutes, several days per week (not every day). For home practice, students are to purchase a folding music stand and a metronome (electronic time keeper) / tuner. We have found that these items are important in carrying the classroom experiences over to home practice. Parents are encouraged to give positive support to the students as he / she progresses.

12. What is the cost to being in the Beginner Band?

Students will pay a \$25 Beginner Band Fee that is due at the Orientation Meeting on Monday, August 9th at 7:00 PM in the B. McDaniel Intermediate School Band Hall. This fee covers the cost of the school providing the Beginner Band t-shirt, binder, dividers, mirror, pencil pouch, pencils, and other various supplies. There will be a \$25 Solo Contest Fee due in the spring that covers the cost of judges, accompanists, and medals used at the annual Texoma Solo & Ensemble Contest that all students participate in. Finally, there will be a \$28 all-inclusive Trip Fee due in the spring for the optional Music Festival that the Beginner Band attends.

13. Are private Lessons available? Are they required?

Private lessons are **strongly encouraged** for all students, but are **not required** (unless your child picks oboe, bassoon, French horn, or percussion due to the challenging nature of these instruments). If your child takes private lessons, he / she will receive one-on-one instruction from a professional musician (many of which have graduate degrees). Lessons are held once a week at B. McDaniel Intermediate School or Scott Middle School at a cost of \$20 per half hour lesson. Private lessons help challenge faster-paced students and strengthen slower paced students. **Above average results are almost guaranteed! It is better to RENT to OWN a less expensive instrument and participate in the private lesson program than to purchase.** There is a limited amount of Financial Aid readily available to families in need.