

DGS Instrumental Band Program 2024/2025

Hello Families,

At Dr. George Stanley School, we are lucky enough to have a very high amount of interest in Band at DGS. As a result, we do have to **limit the number of students** who are able to enroll. Please take a look at the below information, and sign the **contract** acknowledging that your child/family are committed to the requirements to participate in the band program.

Choosing An instrument:

**** please note that the instrument assignment process will occur in September**

When assigning instruments to students, a variety of elements are taken into consideration. These include “balancing the band” (making sure that we have the appropriate number of required instruments), student interest, and compatibility with instrument. Ultimately, the band teacher works with students and makes the final decisions. Below are the instrument choices per grade:

Beginner Band (Grade 7): flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, trombone, euphonium/tuba, percussion. Sections that are too highly “in demand” may require an interview process to select students for the section. Please remember that “percussion” does not necessarily include the drumkit.

***Our interest in the Grade 7 Band program this year is so high that we do not have enough school instruments for the whole program. Because many instruments are already spoken for in our senior bands, we will be **asking that some Grade 7 families rent through a third party (St. John’s Music or Long and McQuade)**. We will be able to provide all the necessary support for this process when the time arrives.

Grade 8-9 Band: students can continue with their instruments or in special circumstances, change to something new. For example, a student playing the alto saxophone in Grade 7 may want to change to tenor or baritone saxophone. This is a decision that is made between the student and band teacher. We do not have space for students who were not previously in band to enroll this year.

*****Please understand that although I try my best to take student requests into consideration, I cannot guarantee that each student will get to play their first choice of instrument.***

Program Expectations

Concert Band/Instrumental Music is a unique program as it requires some extra commitments from students and families. It is important to have the commitment of **all** band members for our program to “rock”. Below I have outlined these expectations so that your family can make an informed decision about joining our program!

1. **Financial Commitments:** due to the nature of the artform, band/instrumental music does come with financial commitments. These include instrument rentals, program fees, and the potential for exciting trips such as Band Camp!
 - a. **Instrument Rentals:** once your child has been assigned an instrument, they will be given an opportunity to either rent a school-owned instrument (**\$100 yearly fee**), or they can choose to rent through a third-party such as St. John’s Music or Long and McQuade. These rentals are typically done month to month and **the prices vary between \$20-50 per month**.
Students are of course welcome to provide their own instrument if they already own them, and they have been approved by the band director.
The instrument rental process will be handled in the fall.
Please see my notes above for information about “choosing an instrument”.
 - b. **Program Fees:** this fee covers many of the additional costs of the band including materials such as sheet music, reeds, oils, folders, etc. This fee also helps cover the costs of working with professional clinicians. This fee is **\$50**.
 - c. **Band Camp:** *** an optional trip for band students in Grades 8 and 9. Band Camp is a wonderful opportunity for bands to travel together with the goal of further developing skills and building community. The price for this trip is dependent on the specific booking circumstances but it is anticipated to be approximately **\$300**.

***AS ALWAYS, Ms. Thomas and Ms. Malette **do not want finances to be a restricting element** for students who are very keen about being in band. If financial restrictions are the only hesitation for your child to participate, please reach out to Ms. Thomas or Ms. Malette, as we can look into bursaries.

2. **Independent Practice Time:** as you can imagine, learning to play a concert instrument is a large undertaking. It can be one of the most rewarding experiences, but it does come with some hard work. It is an expectation that if your child is enrolled in the band program, they are finding regular time at home, or in the band room outside of school hours, to independently practice the skills they are working on in class. Class time is primarily used for our wonderful musicians to come together and practice playing as an ensemble (group). **The expectation is 15 dedicated minutes, 2-3 times per week.**
3. **Participation in Clinics:** at specific points during the year, professional musicians, known as Clinicians, are brought in to work with specific instrument groups. This is an incredibly valuable opportunity for students as they are “experts”. These clinics are

sometimes run after school, and are **mandatory** for students. The cost of these clinics are covered through your fees.

4. **Additional Rehearsals:** Near the time of concerts, "Full Band Rehearsals" may be called during school hours, lunch time, after school, or before school. These rehearsals are **mandatory** for all band students. These are very rare and only happen a couple of times per year.
5. **Concerts:** we have two large concerts per year, and they are a mandatory part of the program.
6. **Playing Test Videos:** one of the ways that students demonstrate their technical skills is through video. A couple times a year, students will be assigned an excerpt to be tested on with their instrument. They are expected to find time outside of class to record themselves playing and submit the video by the due date. This system is beneficial in that it provides a stress-free environment for the player, and allows class time to be used more efficiently.
7. **Commitment to the Team:** it is important for students to remember that we have a large amount of interest in band, and therefore they are expected to be committed to their team by practicing and being responsible for their role. If students do not choose to uphold their commitment to the team, they may be asked to offer their spot to another student who is waiting to join the program.

Additional Information About The Program:

For those of you who are familiar with myself and our program at DGS, you may know that we approach the music curriculum with a progressive attitude. With my personal background as a drummer, I often choose contemporary pieces for our bands to play while also focusing on providing balanced learning experiences with "tried and true" concert band material. During class, we also often take time to put our instruments away and engage in learning about music theory (reading music, understanding music) as well as exploring the ways that music is a powerful art form.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read all of this information - I know it is a lot! I hope that this helps you make an informed decision to join our program next year!

As always, if you have any specific questions about the program, you may reach me directly at ekthomas@cbe.ab.ca

If you are hoping for your child to participate in Band/Instrumental Music next year, please sign the contract on the next page, identifying that your child is committed to the program:

I, _____, agree to meet the above expectations of my conduct and commitment both during class time as well as outside of class time. I understand that if I do not uphold the terms of this contract, my band director may have a discussion with me to reconsider my position in the band, as there are many students on a waitlist.

Date: _____

Student Name (Print): _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Names (Print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Parent Emails for easiest contact: _____

