

## January 2021 - KiMS Music Elective FAQ



Dear 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and families,

As a follow up to the information that you have received regarding your elective choices for the 2021, we wanted to not only clarify what it means to be involved in a yearlong music class, but also the criteria for joining and to share the KiMS music teachers' contact information, in case you have questions.

In a typical year, the Kirkland Middle School band, choir and orchestra would have liked to visit your elementary school in January and performed for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students during a musical assembly. We would have had a chance to talk to students about being in music and showed you what music classes will look like and what it sounds like to be involved in our music program through a performance. Instead, we hope this FAQ will help give you all of the information that you need to make an educated choice!

**[\\*\\*CLICK HERE to watch a video about music in middle school and meet your KiMS music teachers!\\*\\*](#)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions about music in middle school:**

**1. Students are *not* automatically in music:**

In elementary school, students automatically get to be in a “general music” class. For middle school this is *not* the case and if you want to be in music, you have to sign up for it.

**2. ANYONE can join – no experience needed:**

You **do not** need previous experience to join any of these groups. In a typical year, there are some students with no experience, some with 1 year, and even some people with up to 8 years of experience! Instruction is given in a way in which all students will be challenged, regardless of what they can already do and know.

Due to the challenges of the last year+, we expect to see more beginners in our classes than ever, so new musicians will fit right in! If you have already been involved in your school band, orchestra or choir that is great and we hope you'll continue your musical journey with us!

**3. Are band, choir, and orchestra only for people who want to be professional musicians? Is there any benefit or reason to join if you don't have those aspirations?**

Our goal is to teach students how to become confident and successful at something through dedication, commitment, perseverance and resolve. We hope to teach musical leadership to advanced students while allowing them to refresh and progress their own technical and group skills. Our music rehearsals/classes are constantly focused on “taking it to the next level”. So no, you don't need to have “professional musician” as your career goal, because this class will offer skills that everybody can benefit from outside of music.

**4. You can use the school instruments:**

It **does not** cost money to register. Once we begin classes in September, we will help you choose and obtain an instrument. Some students own or rent their own from a local music store and some students will borrow from the school for a rental fee, depending on their instrument choice. Any fees can be confidentially be covered by the school if a family has financial need.

**5. There are 3 different groups to choose from:**

**Cadet Band:** In this ensemble, students will learn to play woodwind, brass or percussion instruments. This includes instruments like flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, bass clarinet, alto/tenor/baritone

saxophone, drums/percussion, trumpet, french horn, trombone, baritone, or tuba. After serving a year in Cadet band, students graduate to playing in our top level group, our **Concert Band**, which plays harder music!

**Concert Orchestra:** In this ensemble students will learn to play string instruments such as violin, viola, cello or string bass.

*\*\*Note that there is a separate Chamber Orchestra class for advanced musicians who already play violin, viola, cello, bass. Students who wish to be in that should still sign up for Concert Orchestra on their registration. You can email Mr. Atkins about auditioning.*

**Concert Choir:** In this ensemble, students will learn to use their own personal instrument (their voice!) to sing.

**6. You are only committing to a music class for one year:**

By signing up for band, choir, or orchestra, you are committing to a yearlong class. If being in a musical ensemble ends up being “not for you” after your 6<sup>th</sup>-grade year, you’ll have the opportunity to register for something new in 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

**7. This might be your LAST opportunity to join band or orchestra with your grade-level peers and...we are not just a class, but a program:**

While you can always choose to leave music in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, we are a continuous class that is intended for students to be involved from 6<sup>th</sup> grade (or earlier) through their final years in high school, if they choose. Each music class will remain as a “cohort” of students and continue as a team throughout the years.

By joining choir, band or orchestra, you are joining a music community of dedicated students with music as their similar focus of interest.

**8. Can I skip a year and join again the following year?**

Yes and no. It is best to continue with your classmates so that you don’t fall behind. A year of learning is a lot and it’s often difficult for students to catch up. For example, if you skip 6<sup>th</sup> grade band, you’ll likely be put back into 6<sup>th</sup> grade band as a 7<sup>th</sup> grader, if you haven’t learned the proper skills to be placed with 7<sup>th</sup> graders. So, while it is possible to “take a year off”, we would highly encourage for students to *not* skip a year.

**9. What else do band, choir and orchestra do besides learn and rehearse during class?**

Music groups get to participate in various performance opportunities, such as: mall performances, Town Square performances, evening concerts for the community (4+ per year), musical festivals, and even optional solo performance events. As students progress in their musical skills through middle school and potentially onto high school, the musical performance opportunities begin to open up, including district and state-wide groups. We even play at assemblies during school and go on field trips!

**10. What if I take private lessons outside of school for the year instead of the school course?** A private lesson is typically 1 day a week for 30-40 minutes. A band class is 5 days a week for 35min (W) to 50 minutes (MTThF). The amount that you learn in a school course is more than 5X as much as you learn in private lessons. Also, in lessons, you are learning how to play alone, not how to play with others, which is a different set of skills entirely.

**11. What is Jazz Band?**

Jazz Band is a 0 period, before school class that is available to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> graders with at least 1 year of musical experience on a traditional jazz instrument. Students must be in Cadet Band or Concert Band in order to qualify for Jazz Band, except by permission of the director. Jazz Band students will register in September, one week after the new school year begins. So, if you want to be in Jazz Band, just be sure to enroll in Cadet Band for now.

## **Next steps:**

The big decision that you need to make now is which instrument you want to play because it will determine which music class you will enroll in. Then you’ll just need to fill out your registration by clicking Music, and then selecting which type of music class you would like best.

Please note that if you don't turn in your registration before **January 24<sup>th</sup>** you *will not* be enrolled in music and will be automatically placed in the *Panther Academy* (study skills, computer literacy, digital media, and intro to Spanish). So, with that in mind, it is very important that you spread the word to your friends to ensure they get their form in and on-time!

If you would like help deciding which instrument to play, I would encourage you to sit down and watch some YouTube videos of different professional or collegiate musicians and musical groups. Then, choose your instrument based on your favorite sound! Your elementary music teacher might be able to help you with making this decision as well. Pick an instrument based on what YOU love.

**Videos to see more about the classes and to hear past performance examples:**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Class Overview</b>	<b>Performance Ex. 1</b>	<b>Performance Ex. 2</b>	<b>Performance Ex. 3</b>
Band	<a href="#">LINK</a>	<a href="#">LINK</a>	<a href="#">LINK</a>	<a href="#">LINK</a>
Orchestra	<a href="#">LINK</a>	<a href="#">LINK</a>	<a href="#">LINK</a>	<a href="#">LINK</a>
Choir	<a href="#">LINK</a>	<a href="#">LINK</a>	<a href="#">LINK</a>	<a href="#">LINK</a>

If you've made it this far down this long newsletter, thank you for taking the time! If you have any questions about signing up for music, please reach out to your counselors or to one of our music teachers here at Kirkland Middle School.

We look forward to seeing all of your new faces in class in September 2021. Go Panthers!

Play on,  
The KiMS Music Team:

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