

# Elementary Instrumental Music Handbook

Kirkwood Schools 2025-'26



**KIRKWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT PERFORMING ARTS OFFICE**

**Kirkwood High School**

**800 Dougherty Ferry Road,**

**Kirkwood, MO 63122**

**(314) 213-6100 ext. 1425**

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Kirkwood Instrumental Music Program. This program is an integral part of Kirkwood's elementary school curriculum. Over 350 students participate yearly in the instrumental music program on the elementary level, and district-wide, over 1,000 participate.

The instrumental music program has made an excellent contribution to the cultural life of our community and can be a source of accomplishment and satisfaction to a student for years to come. For many students, learning an instrument becomes a lifetime activity.

Please read this handbook carefully.

A brief parent information meeting will be held on **Tuesday, September 9, 2025** at 6:30pm at Kirkwood High School. Orchestra will meet in the cafeteria and band will meet in Keating auditorium. Please join us so that you can learn more about the instrumental program and meet the instrumental teaching staff. Nottelman's Music and Top Notch Violin will be on site if you would like to rent an instrument at that time. Strings students should plan to attend this meeting with their instruments so we can tune them. Band students are welcome but not required to attend.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. There is additional information on the KHS website under Performing Arts, Elementary Instrumental Music.

Elizabeth Wright

Performing Arts Secretary

(314) 213-6100 ext. 1425

KIRKWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ELEMENTARY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAM

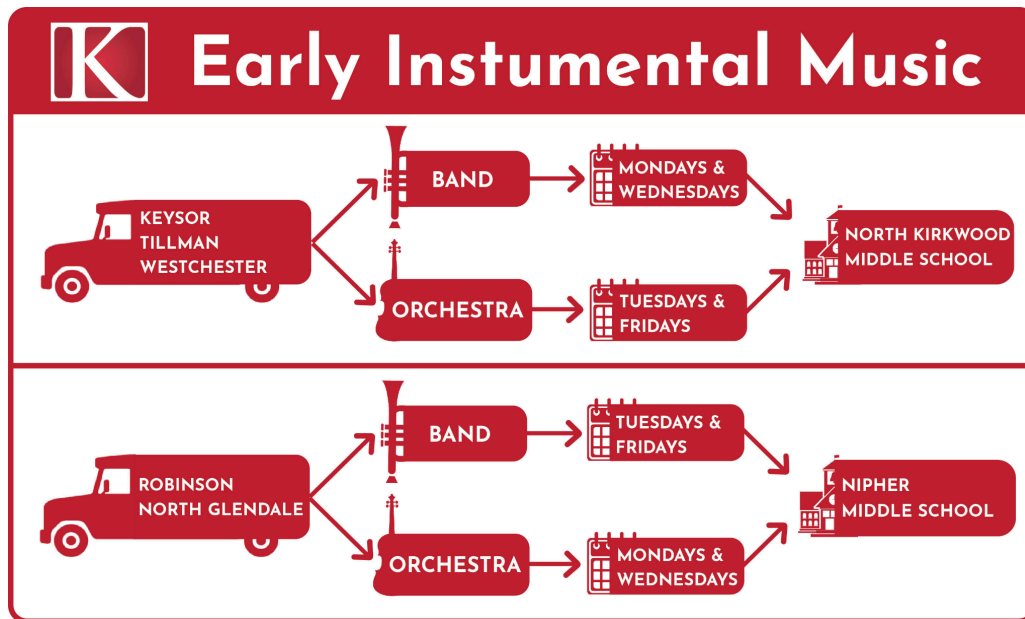
**1. CLASS LOCATIONS/TIMES**

Fourth and fifth grade orchestra students who attend Robinson and North Glendale will have classes Mondays and Wednesdays at Nipher.

Fourth and fifth grade orchestra students who attend Keysor, Tillman and Westchester will have classes Tuesdays and Fridays at North Kirkwood Middle School.

Fifth grade band students who attend Robinson and North Glendale will have classes Tuesdays and Fridays at Nipher.

Fifth grade band students who attend Keysor, Tillman and Westchester will have classes Mondays and Wednesdays at North Kirkwood Middle School.



ALL STUDENTS will ride buses from the middle school to the elementary schools after class. **Registration not required.**

Bus transportation is available to the middle schools before class. **Registration is required.**

Classes are from 7:25am - 8:15am. **Do not** drop students off earlier than 7:15am. The school is locked and there is no supervision before 7:15am.

## **2. IMPORTANT DATES**

**Tuesday, September 9, 6:30pm - Elementary Instrumental Parent Meeting**, Kirkwood High School Keating Auditorium (band), Cafeteria (orchestra). This meeting covers logistics, expectations, grading, instruments, and offers an opportunity to meet the instrumental teaching staff.

Strings students should attend this meeting and bring their instruments so we can tune them and confirm they are the correct size. Band students are welcome but not required to attend.

**Monday, September 15, 7:30am - Classes Begin** for Monday/Wednesday students **Tuesday,**

**Tuesday, September 16, 7:30am - Classes Begin** for Tuesday/Friday students.

**December 8, 9, 10, 12, 7:30am - Open Houses** this week during your student's regular class.

**Wednesday, February 4, 7:30pm - Festival of Bands Concert**, Holley Gym, KHS

**Sunday, March 1, 7:30pm - Festival of Strings Concert**, Holley Gym, KHS

**Wednesday May 6, 7:30pm - All-District Elementary Instrumental Concert**, Holley Gym, Kirkwood High School

**Monday, May 11 - Last day for Elementary Instrumental Music classes**

## **3. TRANSPORTATION**

Buses are available to pick students up and take them to the middle schools for classes. Registration is required.

All students will ride buses from the middle school to the elementary schools after music class. Registration not required.

#### **4. GRADE REPORTS**

An instrumental music rubric will be included with your child's regular report card. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's instrumental music teacher should you have any questions.

#### **5. PERFORMANCES**

Public performances are part of the curriculum taught during class. We have two required performances and one open house during the school year:

1. PARENT OPEN HOUSE – Parents are invited to attend their child's class.
2. FESTIVALS OF BANDS AND STRINGS – String and band students in all grades will present concerts. These concerts are held in the Kirkwood High School Holley Gymnasium.
3. SPRING CONCERT – The final event of the year combines all elementary band and orchestra students.

#### **6. WHAT INSTRUMENTS ARE OFFERED?**

**STRINGS:** Violin, Viola, Cello, and String Bass

Students who will be fourth or fifth graders next school year are eligible to sign up as beginners on these instruments.

**BAND:** Flute, Clarinet, French Horn, Trumpet, Trombone Baritone, and Percussion.

Students who will be fifth or sixth graders next school year are eligible to sign up as beginners on these instruments.

#### **7. WHAT INSTRUMENT SHOULD I PLAY?**

This can be one of the most difficult questions to answer, and the options available should be discussed thoroughly with your child, and, if necessary, with a music teacher. The results from the spring instrument evaluation can assist you in making a decision. Also, consider the physical make-up of your child and the size of the instrument he/she is considering. Students need to play an instrument that they are comfortable with and one that they want to play.

Contact the music department if you would like help making this decision.

## **8. ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT**

### **BEGINNING STUDENTS**

**Orchestra:** Beginning level classes are open to fourth, fifth and sixth graders for stringed (orchestra) instruments. Some class sizes are limited.

**Band:** Beginning level classes are open to fifth and sixth graders for band (winds and percussion) instruments. Some class sizes are limited.

### **ORCHESTRA SECOND YEAR STRING STUDENTS**

Fifth grade students who have played a stringed instrument for one year are encouraged to enroll in the second year Orchestra class: Fifth Grade Orchestra.

### **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE**

To register your child for elementary instrumental music classes, please complete the online enrollment form by the last day of school. You will receive email confirmation of your child's enrollment.

Enroll for Orchestra (strings) [here](#).

Enroll for Band (winds and percussion) [here](#).

## **INSTRUMENT RENTAL**

**BAND:** FLUTE, CLARINET, SAXOPHONE, TRUMPET, HORN, TROMBONE, PERCUSSION

**ORCHESTRA:** VIOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO, BASS

Students are expected to provide the instruments listed above. You may rent or purchase from a music instrument dealer. If your child wishes to play saxophone, he/she must successfully complete one full school year in the Kirkwood School District beginning clarinet class.

### **INSTRUMENT GUIDELINES**

1. You and your child decide on what instrument he/she will play. Talk it over with an instrumental music teacher, if you wish.
2. Please put a name tag on your child's instrument so we can return it if it gets lost.
3. Be sure that the instrument is in good working order and has all of the correct parts. If you are planning to use an instrument that has been in the family, borrow one from a neighbor, pick one up from a garage sale, Craig's List ebay, etc., it is imperative that you have the instrument serviced prior to the start of classes. Many of these instruments need minor adjustments, new pads or strings to be in working order. It is very frustrating for the student to begin learning to play an instrument that doesn't work properly or to realize after the first day of class that the instrument needs to spend time in the shop. Check with your child's instrumental teacher to be sure that the instrument is one your child should use. Often a full-sized stringed instrument is too large for a fourth grader. If this is the case, you will probably need to rent a smaller instrument until the child grows into the instrument you own.

FLUTE: Cleaning rod is to be included.

CLARINET: Purchase a minimum of 6 reeds (medium soft or 2 1/2 strength) and a cotton or silk swab (do not use the 'felt' swab that comes with the rental clarinets), each student will also need a neck strap, reed guard and Rovner ligature.

TRUMPET/HORN/TROMBONE – Be sure all slides and valves are in good working condition.

**Trumpet:** Purchase one bottle of valve oil, and one container of tuning slide grease (a small container of petroleum jelly from the drug store is also fine). Trumpets are to have a 7C mouthpiece or the equivalent (almost all beginner trumpets come with this in the case).

Horn: purchase one bottle of horn rotor oil, one bottle of bearing and linkage oil, and one container of tuning slide grease. Horns can use whichever mouthpiece comes with their instrument, but a Faux/Conn2 or Bach/Blessing 11 mouthpiece is preferred. Students need a Korg TM60 Tuner and Metronome Combo with Clip on Microphone (or comparable product) to aid in at home practice.

**Trombone:** Yamaha Trombone Slide Lubricant(Trombone) and a small container of tuning slide grease. Trombones need to have a Bach 6.5AL mouthpiece or equivalent.

**Percussion:** Students selected for beginning percussion class will need to rent or purchase one of these options:

**Option 1** Ludwig 2.5 Xylophone Kit (comes with xylo, pad, stand, sticks & mallets)

**Option 2** Adams 3.0 Marimba (comes with marimba & stand), Vic Firth Practice Pad, Vic Firth SD1 General drum sticks & Mike Balter BB8 Xylo mallets

**Option 3** Musser M-41 Xylophone. Students will also need to purchase Vic Firth Practice Pad, Vic Firth SD1 General drum sticks and Mike Balter BB8 xylo mallets.

**In addition, each percussionist will need** a stick bag for carrying sticks and mallets to/from school. A “luggage” name tag should be secured to the bag. Please label every stick and mallet with the student’s name.

Details of this equipment will be sent to those students who have been selected for the percussion class. Factors that will lead to participation in the percussion class include a recommendation from the elementary school music teacher and previous piano experience.



4. Stringed Instrument Rental: Be sure your child goes with you when renting a stringed instrument as instruments are sized to the student. As a child grows, he/she will usually need to move to a larger instrument. For this reason, renting is usually better than buying at first.
5. Rosin usually comes with the rental. If not, please purchase one box of rosin to use on the bow.
6. Your child's success and your investment are best assured by renting or purchasing/providing a quality instrument. Feel free to call if you have questions.
7. At the end of the rental period, many dealers apply some or all of the rental fee toward the purchase price of an instrument.
8. Check on the availability of a repair person on site or the availability of a loaner instrument in the event the rented instrument needs repair. Repairs that need to be sent out may take 1-3 weeks.
9. To be assured of obtaining the instrument that your child wants to play, we recommend renting an instrument in early August.
10. Personal Instruments – If you are planning to use an instrument that has been in the family, borrow one from a neighbor, pick one up from a garage sale, Craig's List, Ebay, etc., it is imperative that you have the instrument serviced prior to the start of classes. Many instruments will need minor repairs and/or replacement of small parts such as pads or strings to be in working order. It is very frustrating for the student to begin learning to play an instrument that doesn't work properly or to realize after the first day of class that the instrument needs to spend time in the shop. Check with your child's instrumental teacher to be sure that the instrument is one your child should use. Often a full-sized stringed instrument is too large for a fourth grader. If this is the case, you will probably need to rent a smaller instrument until the child grows into the instrument you own. Please make sure this is the instrument your student wants to play.
11. Band Instrument Scholarship – If circumstances do not allow a family to afford the cost of a rental or purchase, there may be an instrument available in our inventory, or you may qualify for a scholarship to assist in the rental of an instrument. Please contact Matthew Banks at [matthew.banks@kirkwoodschoools.org](mailto:matthew.banks@kirkwoodschoools.org) or by phone at (314) 213-6100, ext. 1402 for further information.

12. We recommend the following instrument dealers:

**Strings: (Violin, Viola, Cello):** Top Notch Violins, 3109 Sutton Blvd, Maplewood, MO 63143 314-696-2172

**(Double Bass)** St. Louis Strings 6331 Clayton Avenue, St. Louis, MO. 63139 314-644-6999

**Band (Winds and Percussion):** Nottelmann Music Co. 1590 Lemay Ferry Rd St. Louis, MO 63125 (314) 631-1486

## **KIRKWOOD MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAM**

Following the elementary instrumental music program, most children continue their participation in the instrumental music program through the 12th grade.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

The following classes are offered as part of the regular school day curriculum:

6th Grade Band

6th Grade Orchestra

7th and 8th Grade Bands

The following ensembles meet on an extracurricular basis:

7th and 8th Grade Orchestras Jazz Band

Percussion Ensemble

### **HIGH SCHOOL**

The following classes are offered as part of the regular school day curriculum:

Band

Orchestra

The following ensembles meet on an extracurricular basis:

Jazz Band

Musical Pit Orchestra

Woodwind Chamber Ensemble

Brass Choir

## **OTHER ITEMS:**

**PRACTICING** is as important as daily school homework. In order to be successful, a student must practice. Help your child set aside a time and place for practicing. Begin with 5-10 minute sessions, 4-5 times per week and gradually progress to 15-20 minute sessions. Be patient and encouraging. Remember your child is just a beginner. The most important piece is to get in the habit of practicing. The number of minutes is not as important as getting into a practice routine.

**EQUIPMENT** – Consider purchasing a **wire music stand** (approximately \$15.00) to use while practicing. Using a music stand is important for proper playing posture.

**PRIVATE LESSONS** are an excellent way to develop your child's talents. We recommend waiting to start private lessons until after your child has had one year's experience with our program and after consulting with your child's instrumental teacher. We would like to teach your child the techniques and habits we have tested and found to work best for our program without confusing them with information from other sources.

**BRACES** – A child may continue playing on a brass or woodwind instrument with braces on his or her teeth, or may continue playing on an instrument after having braces. Information is also available from your orthodontist about “covers” that can make playing a brass instrument with braces more comfortable.

**METHOD BOOKS AND MUSIC** are provided by the school district.

**COMMUNICATION** – Information about elementary instrumental music program activities will be sent home with your child or directly to you via email.

**THE ROLE OF THE PARENT** - Your encouragement is of utmost importance. Learning a new skill can be challenging. Your support and understanding will contribute to your child's confidence and ability to develop proficiency. You are helping when you:

1. Provide an instrument that is in good playing condition.
2. Provide a music stand for home practice.
3. Arrange/organize a regular practice time and a quiet place to practice.
4. Show continuous enthusiasm toward your child's progress.
5. Insist on regular attendance with the instrument and all materials needed for class.
6. Are responsible for perfect attendance at concerts/evening performances.
7. Attend your child's performances.

**COMMITMENT** – Make every effort to make this instrumental experience a lifelong commitment for you and your child. There will be ups and downs throughout the years, but we encourage you to try to work through them. The music staff will assist you in any way that they can. Should you decide that your child finds it necessary to drop from the program, or if your child is out of school for an extended period of time, please notify the teacher.

## **Kirkwood Instrumental Music Staff**

Email is usually the best way to contact a staff member. You may leave a voicemail message for any of the instrumental music staff at (314) 213-6100, followed by their extension.

**Matthew Banks:** Beginning trombone, KHS band, Nipher band, NKMS band  
Matthew.banks@kirkwoodschoools.org, ext.1402

**Chris Bartz:** Beginning clarinet, KHS band, Nipher band  
Chris.bartz@kirkwoodschoools.org, ext. 8237

**Nick Calza:** Beginning trumpet, KHS Band, NKMS band  
Nick.calza@kirkwoodschoools.org, ext. 7237

**Eric Chrostoski:** Beginning horn, KHS band, NKMS band  
Eric.chrostoski@kirkwoodschoools.org, ext. 7235

**Sarah Dane:** Beginning violin, beginning viola, KHS orchestra, NKMS orchestra  
Sarah.klevorn@kirkwoodschoools.org, ext. 7256

**Fariga Drayton-Conway:** Fifth grade orchestra, KHS orchestra, Nipher orchestra  
Fariga.drayton@kirkwoodschoools.org, ext. 8203

**Carl Hoff:** Fifth grade orchestra  
Carl.hoff@kirkwoodschoools.org

**Henry Myers:** Beginning cello  
Henry.myers@kirkwoodschoools.org

**Jeff Panhorst:** Beginning flute, KHS band, Nipher band, NKMS band  
Jeff.panhorst@kirkwoodschoools.org, ext. 7256

**Jessica Platt:** Beginning violin  
Jessica.platt@kirkwoodschoools.org, ext. 7256

**Monet Royal:** Beginning violin, beginning viola, KHS orchestra, Nipher orchestra  
Monet.royal@kirkwoodschoools.org

**Merrick Schnider:** Beginning double bass  
Merrick.schnider@kirkwoodschoools.org

**Alison Smith:** Beginning percussion, KHS band, NKMS band, Nipher band  
Alison.smith@kirkwoodschoools.org

**McKayla Talasek:** Beginning violin, beginning viola  
McKayla.Talasek@kirkwoodschoools.org, ext. 7256

**Elizabeth Wright:** KSD Performing Arts Secretary  
Elizabeth.wright@kirkwoodschoools.org, ext. 1425