

Redmond Middle School Music FAQ for Incoming 6th Graders

Class Expectations Question:

Are band, choir and orchestra during the 6-period day?

- *YES! Band, choir and orchestra are all class options that would be one of the six classes your child would attend during school every day.*

Can students be beginners or are they expected to have prior experience?

- *YES! We LOVE beginners and experienced players alike. 6th grade is a GREAT time to begin learning and instrument or to join a student's first choir! We will even help beginners choose which orchestra or band instrument is the best choice for them when they begin in the fall.*

Is the class graded? And if so, how?

- *YES! Band, choir and orchestra are graded classes just like any other class in the middle school day. As these are performance-based classes, participation in performances is an important part of that grade. Other elements of their grade will include progress on techniques learned during class and ensemble skills like being focused and ready for class with all needed materials.*

Are students expected to practice at home?

- *Well, yes, at least kind of. The more a student practices the faster they will improve. That being said, we have some students with very busy lives, or that live in apartments and can't disturb neighbors that find ways to practice during the school day utilizing our daily "homeroom" time.*

How many performances are there a year? And are they outside of the school day?

- *You can expect three to four evening performances throughout the school year. They are typically on Tuesday nights as those are considered "middle school days" for LWSD.*

When will performance dates be published?

- *Performance dates are published in the first two weeks of September via a class syllabus and curriculum night.*

What time of day are the band, choir and orchestra classes?

- *This varies from year to year and is based on enrollment and a very comprehensive overall plan for the building master schedule.*

Is it possible to be in more than one music ensemble class?

- *Unfortunately, due to the 6-period day, students can only be in one music ensemble during their school day. The unique exception is that there are sometimes students in choir and orchestra that might also participate in our before-school jazz band class that takes place during "0-period."*

Is piano/keyboard an option for the music program?

- *We do not teach piano in any of our ensembles. However, for students that already play piano, they can audition for jazz band to learn that style and choir will have student accompanists play for some rehearsals or pieces depending on the students' ability level. Additionally, piano players make great overall musicians, and we love having them in any of our ensembles on a secondary instrument to grow their overall musicianship.*

Instrument Questions:

Can students choose a particular instrument?

- *Right now, you would choose orchestra if you want to pursue a string instrument or band if you want to pursue a woodwind, brass or percussion instrument. In the fall, we walk new students through the process of selecting the instrument that is best for both them and the overall ensemble.*

What happens if a student signs up to play an instrument and later in the school year realizes it's not for them?

- *Students are committing a full year in whichever ensemble/class they select. That being said, if they are truly struggling on their first instrument teachers will have a conversation with them to determine a more suitable choice within that ensemble.*

Are students required to carry their instrument to school every day?

- *Most instrument students do bring back and forth between home and school. During the school day, all instruments can be stored safely in the music classrooms.*
- *The exception is for large instruments (cello, bass, tuba, baritone saxophone, baritones) which we have school instruments to be played at school and students are expected to have an instrument at home for practice.*

If a student already plays a particular instrument, do they continue that instrument?

- *Yes! We try to keep students on the instrument that they already play, unless they express interest in exploring another instrument in our ensemble.*

Will the school provide the instruments?

- *Most students rent their instrument from one of our local music vendors or play an instrument that their family owns. We do have a limited number of school instruments that can be rented from the school, but these are generally reserved for students with financial need.*

For students that already have experience on their instrument, will they be learning the same techniques again in 6th grade?

- *For students that already play an instrument, they will review techniques at an accelerated speed due to class meeting daily. We also excel at differentiating to meet all levels of learners in our 6th grade ensembles and provide advanced extension opportunities for students as they are ready for them.*

Beyond 6th Grade

Are these offerings available in 7th grade for students who didn't opt in 6th grade?

- *After 6th grade, we have advanced band, choir and orchestra classes for 7th and 8th graders to continue their music education journey. There are ensemble classes in all three disciplines throughout high school as well. We simply only talk about the 6th grade ensembles with incoming families because those are the ensembles to register for currently.*

If you do not take a music ensemble class in 6th grade, can you still take it in 7th grade?

- *Technically yes. However, we do recommend starting in 6th grade. Students that begin in 7th or 8th grade still start in the beginning level of that ensemble and have a lot of work to do to catch up to their grade level peers.*

Can you take a music ensemble class AND a cooking class?

- *Unfortunately, in 6th grade it is not possible to be in a music ensemble class and another elective. However, it is possible to explore other electives AND be in a music ensemble in future years of school. Additionally, there are some afterschool clubs (like art, cooking, technology) that music students can be a part of to help explore some of those interests.*

Where do I learn about jazz band and its' audition?

- *There will be more communication about auditions and signing up for jazz band in the second week of September.*