



# Riverwatch Middle School Band



## Frequently Asked Questions

**1. Do I have to know how to play an instrument to join?**

Not at all! 97% of all students who join 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Band do not know how to play an instrument and have no musical experience. If you have experience, this will be considered when choosing your instrument.

**2. Do I receive a grade for band?**

Yes, at Riverwatch, band is considered an academic course.

**3. Can I participate in sports and band?**

Yes, students can participate in both band and school sports. There are Riverwatch Band students on every team at RMS, including football, track, basketball, and cheerleading.

**4. How often do we perform?**

The sixth grade band will perform concerts in September, December, and April. The calendar can be found on the band website.

After the 6<sup>th</sup> grade year, there are many more experiences available for band students, including District and All-State Band, UGA Middle School Festival, optional field trips, and even college scholarships.

**5. Do we practice after school?**

No, all 6<sup>th</sup> grade band practice takes place during class.

**6. How do I choose an instrument?**

Sixth grade students will have the chance to tryout the different instruments at the Instrument Tryout Night (held Monday, August 5<sup>th</sup>). We will have four different stations set up with professional musicians (clarinet, trumpet, trombone, and flute). After trying all four instruments, the student and parents will meet with the director, who will make recommendations based on the student's interest, the band's needs, and physical characteristics of the student.

Instrument rental company representatives will be available for your convenience in the cafeteria throughout instrument tryout night.

Near the end of the first nine weeks, students will have the opportunity to audition for oboe, bassoon, bass clarinet, saxophone, horn, euphonium, tuba, and percussion. Once this final round of instrument selection has concluded in early October, students remain on their chosen instrument for the remainder of their band experience.

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**7. Does my student have to start on flute, clarinet, trumpet, or trombone?**

Only students who start band in August will be allowed to try out for the more difficult and/or more expensive instruments at the beginning of October.

All of the local instrument rental companies will allow students to swap their instrument at that time (for the students that are selected for a new instrument).

At the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> nine weeks in October, all instrument switches have concluded.

**8. Should we rent or purchase an instrument?**

Most families choose to rent an instrument at the beginning of the band experience. We will have different companies available for your convenience at Instrument Tryout Night on August 5<sup>th</sup> in the cafeteria. Families are encouraged to visit both companies to decide which one you prefer.

Neither Riverwatch Middle School nor Mr. Patterson receive any compensation or benefits from any music company. The music companies in the cafeteria are allowed to participate because they offer quality instrument brands on a consistent basis. With a subpar instrument, students will likely struggle to sound as good as their peers. Poor quality instruments also break more frequently and are often unable to be repaired.

Both of the instrument companies in the cafeteria on August 5<sup>th</sup> offer an introductory rate of a few dollars per month for the first few months of rental. Prices and plans vary after that point (including rent-to-own credit), so parents are encouraged to “shop around.”

**9. Can we obtain an instrument through an online retailer?**

Please consult with the band directors when considering alternative options. In our experience, obtaining an instrument through an online retailer may result with an unreliable instrument.

**10. What if I didn't sign up for band?**

If you would like to sign up for band, contact Mr. Patterson at [dpatterson99@forsyth.k12.ga.us](mailto:dpatterson99@forsyth.k12.ga.us)