



Autrey Mill Middle School Band

Wendy Wilson, Director of Bands

6th Grade

August 12, 2021

WELCOME to the 2021-2022 edition of the Autrey Mill Middle School Band!

We have had a GREAT start to the school year and I'm excited to be working with your students this year. I am looking forward to helping your child start his/her journey in music and learn to play an instrument so we can begin making music together. As we start the year we will be learning about our new classroom and emergency procedures, take time to know our classmates, practice class procedures, learn about behavior expectations for the culture of our school, and get an overview of how the Band works and what next steps we need to take.

There are always lots of questions to get started because everyone is anxious to learn an instrument. The information provided below and/or distributed in class to your child over the next few weeks will be helpful in beginning to answer those questions.



To save some paper and provide you with information that is easy to access, much of our beginning of the year paperwork and information will be posted on our band website.

To access the band website, go to ammsband.org or scan the QR code on this page.

Once on the site, click on the **AMMS Program Information** tab to access files for the First Steps Welcome Letter, Band Handbook, Course Syllabus, Music Store List and additional information about our program needed throughout the year.

The band handbook serves as the operating guidelines for our band program. Please make sure you and your student have read through it completely as it contains important information, policies, and procedures, grading information, assignment information, supply lists, helpful tips, and suggestions for parents of musicians, and more.

The **Band Calendar** tab contains all our Concert dates, events, Fine Arts Activities, and important due dates.

The **Events** tab will house information about the GMEA Solo and Ensemble Event, GMEA All-State/District Honor Band Auditions, 6th Grade "Trunk or Treat" with the JCHS Band, 8th Grade Night at the JCHS Football game and more!

The **Band Online Payments** tab has links to all OSP (online school payments) needs for Band supplies/events. Other than instruments and instrument supplies, we do most of our fees upfront that would be collected throughout the year. **The fee is \$100 total and covers uniforms, band binder system, start-up clinic fees, clinicians/instructors, and method books.**

Students should have created a shortcut on their iPad home screen to the Band website. They will use this site for event updates and for some of our band resources. Please bookmark this site and refer to it often for information assistance.

What Do I Do Now?

- Read through ALL AMMS Band Program documents on the band website.
 - ♪ First Steps-6th Grade Welcome Letter
 - ♪ Beginning Band FAQ
 - ♪ Course Syllabus
 - ♪ AMMS Band Handbook
 - ♪ Operations Letter
- Put all AMMS Band Calendar dates on your family calendar.
- Fill out the digital **Student Information Sheet/Band Operations Form** DUE: August 20, 2021
- Pay yearly \$100 - Band Operations Fee.** Credit Card only – no cash/checks (OSP Credit Card Payments can be made through links located on the band website.) ammsband.org
DUE: August 20, 2021
- Read about the GMEA Solo and Ensemble event and the GMEA All-State/District Honor Band Auditions. These two honor/competitive events. **While the majority of our 6th grade students are not eligible for this event, as they do not yet play an instrument, I want everyone to learn about opportunities available in the future.** This is good information to read now as something to look forward to for next year. Students will learn about these events during this school year.

***If your 6th grade student has previous experience on an instrument and has been taking lessons, he/she may be eligible for one or both of these events. It is rare but please let me know.

Solo & Ensemble Registration: DUE: September 14, 2021

All-State / District Honor Band Audition Registration: DUE: September 30, 2021

*Our district has two District Honor Bands for middle school. This doubles the opportunities in each instrument section for this event. To tryout you must register for the All-State auditions as the District Band is chosen from this audition. Etudes and scales are posted on the GMEA website and will be distributed in class.

- Help your child additional obtain classroom supplies and/or donations if possible:
Kleenex, sheet protectors, pencils, etc.

Donations: (\$\$\$, band aids, Clorox wipes, Hand Sanitizer w/ Aloe, 9 volt/AA batteries, puppy pads, ping pong balls)

Important Upcoming Events and Items to Note:

1. Band Supplies should be brought to class every day: Band Binder (provided with operations fee), Class assignments, notes/worksheets, iPad, Pencils, and Agenda.
2. Over the next couple of weeks, we will begin daily routines, warm-up exercises, learn music fundamentals such as notes/rests/reading music, and begin learning about instrument families and instruments in preparation of our instrument testing night. Students will have a classroom procedures quiz (read the band handbook and use as a study guide) and music theory pre-test.
3. Students can expect more written homework/worksheets during the first 9 weeks as we learn to read music. Establishing strong fundamentals makes learning to physically play an instrument easier as students are not having to learn multiple concepts at one time.
4. Please make arrangements for your student to attend the required Instrument Fitting Night Event on Wednesday, August 25th 5:30 – 8:30PM.

Introduction to 6th Grade Beginning Band

What to Expect!

Beginning Band breaks down into 4 basic steps:

1. Signing up for Band **COMPLETE**
2. Learning about instruments and learning to read music - [Begins Monday, August 16th in class](#)
3. Instrument "Fitting"(part of instrument selection) Night: [Wednesday, August 25th, 5:30PM – 8:30PM](#)
4. Learning to play! - [Monday, Start Up Clinic, September 13, 2021, 2:15 – 5:30PM](#)



Learn more about Band &
← Instruments Here

First few weeks of band:

Once we know who is who and how to find the band room, we'll start learning to read music!! We'll also start learning about the instruments offered in band. All instruments offered in 6th grade band are listed below.

6th Grade Band Instruments Include:

Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Baritone, Tuba, and Percussion (not just drums – we are on mallet instruments for most of 6th Grade)

Instrument Fitting

Once students have a grasp on the basics of music reading and traits of instruments, they'll go through the "fitting" process. Getting fitted for an instrument is much like the "Sorting Hat" from Harry Potter or like trying on clothes!!! Sometimes a shirt looks AWESOME on the hanger...but when you put it on it looks terrible! Other times a shirt might just seem OK on the rack, but man...you put it on, and *you so rock it!!* Instruments are the same way. They each have their own traits and demands, and different personalities and physical characteristics fit better with different instruments.

[The instrument fitting night is on Wednesday, August 25th from 5:30PM – 8:30PM. During this time students will try out a minimum of 4 instruments which will provide data to assist in finding an instrument fit for your student.](#)

Please make sure this very IMPORTANT DATE is on your calendar and that your student attends, as this is our only opportunity for instrument testing. We bring in professional musicians and instructors to assist us. This event is for ALL 6th Grade Band students even those coming in with prior experience from another school system or state.

Students will "try on" their top 4 instrument choices or maybe more depending on time and availability of instructors. Results from the fitting (tone production, etc.), student characteristics analysis, and rhythm/pitch/coordination assessments combined with student preference and other factors, are used to determine the best instrument fit for your child. Once instruments are selected, they are rarely changed. We take our time to be certain the right choices are made from the beginning for more optimal success on beginning fundamentals.

More information about instruments and instrument characteristics will be shared in the upcoming weeks with students but you as a parent may want to learn too. Videos and presentations will be made available for you. While these presentations may not be able to cover all characteristics, personalities, and information about each instrument, it will help to give you some context as to why the instrument fitting process is done. Each instrument and each student are different. My goal is to put your student on an instrument they will be successful at for a good foundational start which will allow them to enjoy playing!

Examples of Upcoming Student Assignments / Grades:

- ♪ All students will take a music **pre-test** for this year. This test will be graded but it does not count towards their class average. It is simply to help me understand where your student is in the learning process.
- ♪ All students will take a **Classroom Procedures Quiz**. This will be done through a Microsoft Form. Students should read the band handbook and use it as a study guide in addition to information discussed in class.
- ♪ **Homework** – Eventually, students will be asked to log their practice minutes when practicing on an instrument. For now, students are working on various handouts to practice and learn basic music theory which is necessary in order to read music. We generally try to start these in class, but students should complete and review them at home to ensure mastery of the content.
- ♪ **TESTS:** Our first test on music theory concepts will be towards the end of August/beginning of September. This test will cover the staff, treble clef, bass clef, notes and values, and rests and values. Homework packets as well as notes/activities in class will serve as the study guide.
- ♪ **Fine Arts Activity Logs** – These are due each quarter. Students may attend any fine arts event (music, art, dance, theatre, marching band performances – HS or College, etc.) to complete this assignment. Students may use events from the summer to complete the Q1 assignment. More explanation is on the Fine Arts Activity Log worksheet. This assignment will be distributed in class in the upcoming weeks.
- ♪ **Practice & Minor Grades** – Students receive a practice and/or minor grade for coming to class with all supplies, participating in class, engaging in the activities, and preparing their music before coming to class. Individual practice time should take place at home and each student should come to class with their individual part prepared so we can work on the ensemble aspects of the music during class. In order for the TEAM to be Superior, every student must contribute their individual part. We are counting on each person.
- ♪ **Additional Assignments** – These can take on many forms such as discussions, worksheets, blogs, forms, listening exercises, digital exercises/games, etc. These are often used as warm-ups or classwork. They can involve working as groups or as individuals and are generally interactive topics.

I am looking forward to getting to know your students and helping them develop into outstanding musicians at AMMS. Thank you for allowing me to teach your students and I wish you a great year!

Musically yours,

Wendy Wilson

Wendy Wilson

