



South Hall Middle School Band

Kelsey Brunson, Director of Bands
4335 Falcon Parkway, Flowery Branch, GA 30542
kelsey.brunson@hallco.org (770) 532-4416, Ext. 2070

So My Child is in 6th Grade Band...Now What?!

Dear 6th grade band families,

Welcome to the 2015-2016 school year! I am delighted that you and your child have chosen to participate in the South Hall band program.

Music Education is a valuable part of any child's schooling. A multitude of research has been done by the National Association of Music Education to link Music Education to quicker brain development, higher academic achievement, higher test scores, higher graduation rates, and higher college acceptance rates. All of these outcomes are important, but I believe music does even more!

Music Education shapes the way our students view themselves and the world around them, and allows for a deeper engagement with learning. Music Education teaches more than notes and rhythms on a page—it can provide life skills and strong foundations for your child during formative years in their education.

With that being said, I am thrilled your child has shown an interest in music! And I am excited to begin the musical process with them. Parents of new band students often have several questions about the beginning band process. Please read the Frequently Asked Questions below, and do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. I look forward to working with you and your child this year!

Respectfully,

Kelsey Brunson
Director of Bands

6th Grade Band FAQ's

My child has no previous music experience. Is that ok?

Absolutely! Students are taught everything they need to know about reading music, putting together an instrument, caring for their equipment, and so much more. Any prior music experience is valuable, but it is in no way required.

Does my child receive a grade in band class?

Yes! Grades are given to evaluate their musicianship and ability on their instrument, as well as other classroom responsibilities such as bringing their instrument to class every day, learning music, completing written assignments, attending performances, etc.

What are the commitments outside of the school day?

In 6th grade, there are 3 or 4 performances in the evening per year. Other than time spent practicing at home, that is the extent of time needed outside of band class during the 6th grade year.

Can my child do band AND sports/other activities?

Definitely! As stated above, the time commitment in 6th grade band is minimal outside the school day. While before and after school help is offered throughout the year, very rarely will a child HAVE to be involved in a band activity outside their own band class period during the 6th grade year.

When do I need to get an instrument?

For the first 7-9 weeks of school, 6th grade band members will be learning how to read music and play on songflutes (similar to recorders). During these weeks, they will be tested on all the instruments to determine what they will play. Only after this songflute/instrument testing period is complete will students need to acquire an instrument.

How do I get an instrument?

Many ways. Several music stores in the area offer instrument rental programs and rent-to-own programs (on average, anywhere from \$30-\$40 a month). Large and specialty instruments (bassoon, bari sax, euphonium, tuba, percussion) are owned by the band program and are loaned out to students. This loan process is included in the yearly band fee. Some students may already have an instrument; this is fine too. Ebay, Craigslist, and pawn shops can be useful and often have good used instruments. But please be careful and contact Mrs. Brunson before you purchase any used instrument. If a deal on an instrument is too good to be true, then it usually is. As with anything you purchase, you get what you pay for. This entire process will be covered in more detail once your child is placed on a specific instrument.

As a band parent, how can I get involved?

There are numerous opportunities to volunteer throughout the year: fundraisers, football game concessions, helping out at concerts with equipment, chaperoning band trips, etc. Information will be sent out soon about our first SHMS Band Boosters meeting. There will be volunteer sign-up sheets at the meeting.

How much does band cost?

While Hall County provides a budget for the South Hall bands, band programs as a whole are very expensive! Student Band Fees will enable each student to reap the benefits provided by the band such as performance opportunities, rewards for hard work, and trips. Students in the SHMS band will be charged a \$40 yearly band fee. This fee covers the cost of music purchases, provides all students with a band t-shirt, provides 6th graders with their songflute and method books, covers festival entry fees, pays for end of the year awards, and goes toward travel expenses. **Under NO circumstance will a student be removed from band because of lack of funds.** Money should never be the reason for not participating in band! If needed, please contact Mrs. Brunson to discuss a payment plan or installment plan.