

Westglen Wildcats Band Program



**Band Parent Information Guide
2022-2023**

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to all the new students and families to the Westglen School Band Program! I would like to introduce myself; my name is Kaitlyn Lummerding and I am covering the band until Mrs. Biggin returns. I am looking forward to getting to know all of the students and their families over the coming months.

During the first weeks of school, the students and I will be exploring the different instrument families in the band and making a major decision: which instrument your child will play for years to come. We will gather as much information as possible, think long and hard and will come up with what we hope is the best instrument choice for each student.

Over the next four years, students can look forward to playing great concerts, going to camps, participating in music festivals, listening to great music, achieving personal goals and most importantly, making friends and being part of a team. Your child's involvement in the band program will provide them with an amazing variety of activities that will help them grow as people. It has been clinically proven- music makes you smarter!

This guide has been designed to answer the most frequently asked questions and give you an overview of the music program at Westglen. It does look like a lot of information, but please do not be overwhelmed!

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by phone at the school or email (klummerding@cesd73.ca). I am looking forward to meeting everyone over the following few weeks.

All the best,

Kaitlyn Lummerding

Important Dates for Grade 5 Students

Friday, September 2	Instrument trials begin in class
Friday, September 9	Instrument selection sheets go home to parents
Monday, September 12	All sheets must be returned to Ms. Lummerding
Wednesday, September 14	Students will be informed of their instrument assignment
Thursday, September 15	St. John's Music Instrument rental night. More information to follow.
Monday, September 26	All students must have instruments in class

Instrument trials

During the first few weeks of school we will be spending our class time learning about the flute, clarinet, trumpet, french horn, trombone, euphonium, and tuba. Students will rate these instruments on how well they like the instrument.

At the end of this learning period, students can make their top three choices from the instruments listed above. Once the selection sheet has been signed by a parent and returned, students will be assigned to a specific instrument. **Please do not rent/purchase instruments until students have been assigned an instrument by the teacher.**

What to expect in the next few weeks/ months

1. Students will be excited to try all of the instruments and may change their mind several times before they settle on their top 3 instruments.
2. Your child may want you to rent/ buy a brand new instrument. This is certainly not necessary. A well-maintained and gently used instrument is often a good starting point.
3. Your child will make some very loud and very strange noises on their instrument in the first few weeks. This is part of the process - it will get better!
4. The novelty of playing an instrument might wear off after the first few weeks. This is normal and not an indication that your child has lost complete interest. Continue to encourage your child to practice on a regular basis.
5. Your child will learn the fundamentals of playing a band instrument such as proper position, posture, care and maintenance, how to produce a good sound, and, by Christmas, our full band will be able to play a few simple melodies together.
6. By the end of the school year, you will be amazed at what your child has accomplished in such a short amount of time.
7. Every child will experience many successes and some frustrations along the way. Each child will progress at their own pace.

How can you help your child?

1. Arrange a regular time and a quiet place for them to practice.
2. Show an interest in your child's music studies. Help with practice as much as possible by counting and learning along. Attend any concert they may be involved in.
3. Enjoy the strange sounds beginners make - think of it as a baby learning to babble and talk!
4. Help your child keep a daily account of practice minutes (monthly/ weekly practice record).
5. Make sure that your child has the necessary supplies to keep their instrument in good repair. Be very careful with instruments. Repair costs can be high.
6. Encourage your child to play for others, but don't force them.
7. See that your child's instrument and music come to school and get back home again.
8. Find some extra music for your child to play. A quick search online should bring up plenty for their instrument. Movie music, Christmas tunes, and pop songs are always favourites.
9. Discuss with me anything that will better help me understand your child.
10. **Encourage, Encourage, Encourage!**

Instrument Selection

Choosing an instrument to play in band is a big decision. **The ultimate goal is to find the instrument that is best suited for each child so that they will enjoy playing and be successful.** Many factors are taken into consideration when picking an instrument for a student including: the child's physical features, their enthusiasm for an instrument, whether or not they have studied music before, and whether or not they already own or play a band instrument.

Another big factor that a band director must consider is the balance of the ensemble. It's not enjoyable to play in a band made up of only flutes and drummers (there would be some pretty big holes in the music). So band directors have to make sure that the ensemble is well balanced with all the instruments present.

Fortunately, most students receive their first choice; however there will be some who are given their second or third choice based on all of the considerations above.

Please do not rent/ purchase instruments until students have been assigned an instrument by the band director.

Once a student has been matched with an instrument, it is the general policy of the program to not allow students to switch instruments unless there are special circumstances. Students are therefore expected to continue with the instrument through grades 6, 7, and 8. One exception, of course, is a student switching to saxophone or double reed instrument in grade 7. Students who play the flute or clarinet for the first two years are invited to audition to play these instruments in grade 7.

Each student will have great successes on their instrument and some frustrations. This is all part of the territory, and it rarely solves the problem for a student to switch instruments - in many cases it just causes more frustrations. There is only one way to improve and that is to practice and stick with it! Remember these two key words: persistence and dedication.

Percussion

The percussion section is one of the smallest sections of the concert band due to the nature of the instruments and the limited number of parts available for students to play. Percussion parts in concert band music are written to have one player on each part in order to ensure the balance of the band. Percussion students are assigned different parts to play in each piece so that they have experience on, and learn to play many different percussion instruments. **Mallet instruments (xylophone/ bells) are one of the main instruments that percussionists play in the concert band and percussionists are not "just drummers".** Previous piano experience is a **must** for students to play the mallet instruments.

Students who express interest in percussion will participate in rhythmic challenges to gauge their natural rhythmic aptitude and sense of beat. **Students will be selected for**

percussion based on interest, suitability, aptitude, and the limited number of spots that are available.

School instrument rentals (French horn, euphonium, tuba, percussion)

Students who are selected to play French horn, euphonium, tuba, or percussion, rent their instruments from Westglen School. A rental contract must be completed and returned to the school before an instrument can go home. The cost for a school rental is \$125. This fee will be assigned to your child's school fees.

Westglen School is responsible for the regular maintenance and repair to school instruments resulting from regular wear and tear. **However, instrument repairs resulting from student negligence will be the responsibility of the student/ parent.** The band director, in consultation with the repair technicians, will determine what is reasonable wear and tear. You may wish to add the instrument (rental or otherwise) to your home insurance rider in case of any unexpected accidents.

Percussion Rental

All students selected to play percussion are required to pay a \$125 rental fee, as is the case with any school rental. As a part of their user fee, students will receive a rental percussion kit that includes a set of bells with stand, mallets, drumsticks, and a snare drum practice pad. These kits are to be taken home for practice use. Students who supply their own percussion practice, for home practice (which must include a set of practice bells) are required to pay a \$50 user/ maintenance fee for the use of classroom percussion instruments.

*****There is a limited supply of instruments available for rent from the school, and families with special circumstances can apply for these instruments by contacting the band director. Please reach out to me via email if you feel you need access to one of these instruments*****

Private Instrument Rentals/ Purchases (flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone)

Students who are selected to play flute, clarinet, trumpet, or trombone must rent or purchase their instruments from a music store or through private sales. Most music stores offer several options for purchasing or renting instruments to make financing suitable to your needs.

For your convenience, St. John's Music from Calgary will be hosting an instrument rental night at the school on **Thursday September 15.**

Purchasing a Musical Instrument

Buying a musical instrument is not something that the average person has experience doing. Think of it like buying a car - often an instrument can look "new and shiny" but is not in playable condition. Before purchasing a used instrument, make sure that it has been recently serviced by a music store like the ones below.

Also, please consider the following guidelines when looking for an instrument for your child: Playability, Durability, Repairability, and Warranty-ability. **Most instruments available from department/ wholesale clubs do not have replacement parts available and therefore do not meet the “repairability” criteria.**

For your convenience, I am including the addresses and phone numbers of music stores that have been offering great service to our band program over the years. All offer instrument sales, rentals, repairs, and supplies.

53rd Street Music
#101 4902 53rd Street Red Deer
403-346-4000

St. John’s Music
700 58th Ave SE Calgary
1-800-663-3304 or 403-265-6300
www.stjohnsmusic.com/calgary/rentals

Long & McQuade
225 58th Ave SE, Calgary
403-244-5555

Or

Long & McQuade
10 Royal Vista Drive N.W.
587-794-3195
www.long-mcquade.com/rentals

Below is a list of recommended instrument brand names that have been around for decades and have a good track record.

Yamaha
Gemeinhardt
King
Buffet
Bundy
Jupiter

Vito
Holton
Getzen
Bach
Conn
Selmer

When instruments need repairs

If you are renting from a music store, you **must** take the instrument to **that store** for repairs. St. John’s offers a very convenient pick-up and delivery option for families at Westglen School. **Please note: families are responsible for the cost of any repairs.** The school is only responsible for repairs (normal wear and tear) for school owned instruments only.

Instrument Maintenance Supplies

Attached at the end of this handbook is a list of instrument maintenance supplies that students need to keep instruments in good working order. Students will be instructed how to properly maintain and care for their instrument. It is most cost-effective to purchase supplies directly through the music stores, and I encourage you to do so. I do keep a supply of essentials in my classroom, such as reeds and valve oil that can be purchased

before and after class on an individual basis. The money collected goes directly back to keeping the supplies replenished.

Practicing

Scheduling a regular home practice time is the best way you can help your child be successful when learning to play a musical instrument. In an ideal world, students at this age would practice a minimum of 15 minutes every day. Without regular practice, instructional time can be wasted and your child's progress is affected. Try to aim for a minimum of three to four times each week.

Students may be asked to keep track of their daily practice with a weekly/monthly practice record. This is designed to help encourage and develop effective and regular practice. Please sit down with your child and set up a regular practice schedule that works for your family - practice is the single most important factor that influences your child's success.

Print Music

Grade 5 students will be supplied with an instrument method book from the school. Once instruments have been assigned, students will be supplied with this book from the band teacher and this will be their band textbook until the end of grade 6.

Classroom Expectations

When students forget their instrument and/ or music at home, they miss valuable instruction, and it also limits the productivity of the whole class. Band is a team activity; every person is necessary to creating a satisfying musical experience. Students are expected to have their instrument and music for each band class. I will reach out to parents whose students have forgotten their instruments to class for more than 2 class periods. Likewise, it is an expectation that each student attend all concerts.

Concert Attire

The standard concert attire for all students in grades 6-8 consists of a black dress shirt, black pants/ skirt, black shoes, and black socks. Grade 5 students are not required to wear this, however they are asked to wear appropriate clothes for concerts. No blue jeans, t-shirts, hoodies, or shorts, please.

Parent/ Student Teacher Conference

The best way for us to discuss your child's progress in band is to have your son/ daughter demonstrate the skills and concepts they have been learning on their instrument.

Students are asked to bring their instruments and music, and attend conferences with their parents.

Instrument Maintenance Supplies

In order to keep instruments in good working condition, students should have the supplies listed below. Students are responsible for supplying these items. Some supplies are available from your band director; others are available at music stores.

Flutes

- A lint free cloth to clean the inside of the flute
- A cloth to clean the outside of the flute (optional)

Clarinets/ Saxophones

- Swab (preferably a handkerchief swab)
- Mouthpiece brush
- Reeds
- Cork grease

Trumpets

- Plastic coated snake
- Mouth piece brush
- Tuning slide grease
- Valve oil
- Cloth to clean the outside of the trumpet (optional polishing cloth)

French Horns

- Tuning slide grease
- Mouthpiece brush
- Valve oil
- A cloth to clean the outside (optional polishing cloth)

Euphoniums/ Tubas

- Tuning slide grease
- Mouthpiece brush
- Valve oil
- A cloth to clean the outside (optional polishing cloth)
- Mouthpiece guard

Trombones

- Slide cream
- Spray bottle
- Tuning slide grease
- Mouthpiece brush
- Plastic coated snake

Please detach, sign and return this sheet to Ms. Lummerding

STUDENT _____ HOMEROOM _____

1) I have received and read the information in the band handbook.

2) My child _____ does/ does not (circle one) have a band instrument available for his/ her use. If yes, please list the instrument. _____