



September 2024

Dear McKenna Band Parents,

Welcome to the McKenna Band program! I am excited to have such a wonderful group of young musicians begin the journey of learning a musical instrument. In this packet, you will find information regarding the McKenna Band program, obtaining an instrument, practicing, and the supply list.

I would like you to know that I am always open for questions, comments, or just to say hello. Please feel free to email me at any time should you have questions or concerns at nboyle@msd.k12.ny.us or call the school at (516) 308-5500.

I look forward to getting to know each of you and your children this school year!

Sincerely,

Ms. Nicki Boyle

Band Director



How to go about getting an instrument for your child...

A few words of advice:

- ♪ **RENT** during the first year of instruction. Don't buy. If you invest in an instrument and your child decides not to stick with it, you are essentially throwing that money away. Many music stores will allow you to participate in a rent-to-own program so that your first year's rental fee can actually go towards the purchase of the instrument at a later date.
- ♪ There are many places to rent an instrument... call around to get prices and talk to your friends who have already gone through the process of renting. I would stay away from places like Amazon, Ebay and large Warehouse stores, as their instruments are often of questionable quality.
- ♪ Instruments that are rented should be in good working order. If you would like me to take a look at the instrument prior to the start of lessons to check it out, please don't hesitate to ask!



SUPPLY LIST FOR MCKENNA BAND STUDENTS



The following items are **mandatory** for all students and must be supplied by you prior to the first lesson:

Lesson Book –

Standard of Excellence, Book 1 – Written by Bruce Pearson – Published by Neil A. Kjos Music Company

*This book is instrument specific so if your child is playing trombone, you must buy the trombone book, if your child is playing flute, then you must buy the flute book, etc.

Pencil and Binder – These must be with you during every lesson and band rehearsal. Extremely important! Many students find that using a binder with sheet protectors is the best way to organize their music and keep it nice and neat! Sheet protectors are optional, however.

Name Tag – It is imperative that each instrument has the student's name, address, and phone number on it. Luggage tags work really well.

Folding Music Stand – This way you are able to set up good practice habits at home. The music stand does not need to be brought to school!

INSTRUMENT SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Flutes - A cotton handkerchief to be used for cleaning

Oboes - 3 medium/soft wood reeds. This will be enough to get you started with reeds, but it will be necessary to purchase more reeds over time.

Clarinets & Saxophones – a box of ten reeds that are strength #2 1/2 and cork grease (stick type). You may also want to purchase a reed guard to protect your reeds when you are not using them and a thumb saver to make holding your instrument a little more comfortable. For saxophone players, it is highly recommended that you purchase a padded neck strap. The neck strap that comes with the instrument is very uncomfortable to wear.

Trumpets, Baritone Horns & Tubas – Valve oil

French Horns – Rotor Oil

Trombones – Slide Oil

Percussion – Pearl snare drum kit ... (see attached)

You will find that throughout the course of the school year, there may be other items you wish to purchase. You will find these items at most music stores. I suggest you always call ahead to be sure that what you want is in stock. Please feel free to contact me at any time with any questions you may have.



Good Practice Habits

As your child develops their musical talent, there are many ways in which you as parents can assist in their success. These are especially important as the novelty of a new instrument begins to wear off. The early weeks are often frustrating for your child, but young children need your encouragement.

You do not need to know how to play an instrument in order to help your child. You will most likely be a deciding factor in determining whether your child will succeed with a musical instrument and your support and patience will make a world of difference.

Suggestions for students:

Developing good musical skills requires daily practice. Just like an athlete training their muscles, a musician too must train on a consistent basis!

- ♪ Find a quiet place in your house where you can practice without interruption.
- ♪ Try to practice at the same time each day.
- ♪ Each practice session should include warming up (this is when you would play scales, simple exercises from the book, etc.) and practicing the lesson book assignments.
- ♪ Have a pencil handy so that you can mark any reminders as you go.
- ♪ Focus your practice on the difficult sections of your music. Going over things you can already do well is not always necessary.
- ♪ Practice slowly at first and make sure you are playing it correctly the first time. Then, gradually speed up your tempo until it is performance ready.
- ♪ Remember that practicing is a gradual process and what you work on one day will continue to get easier each time you practice it!