# CIS Intermediate School Bands

*Mrs. Jennifer McCutchan, CIS Band Director, can be reached at 659-4512 or via e-mail at: Jennifer.McCutchan@smyrna.k12.de.us*

September 13, 2023

Dear Parents:

Your son or daughter attended an assembly today in which we talked about getting started in the fifth-grade band. Mrs.McCutchan and the Advanced Band Members demonstrated the instruments and then answered questions from students. If your child would like to participate in the band, please read the rest of this letter and return the form on page three*. This form must be returned by Tuesday, September 20th.* The evening of **Tuesday, September 19th, we will have a meeting for the parents of all beginners.** **The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. in the CIS Cafeteria.** At that time Mrs. McCutchan, the CIS Band Director, will discuss the band program in detail and answer all of your questions. *Lessons begin the week of October 2nd!*

Lessons are offered on trumpet, trombone, clarinet, flute, saxophone and drum. The lessons are free and given during the school day every Friday. Students leave their classrooms at the assigned time and come to the band room for their lessons. (These lessons are given on a rotating schedule so that the students do not miss the same class every week.) Each student will receive one (1) half hour lesson every week. When making your instrument selection, we ask that you list your first and second choices. Please keep in mind that we ***always*** have an over-abundance of people who want to play the drums. Students choosing the drum as their first choice will be auditioned early next week for the purpose of determining their suitability as a drummer. While we want everyone to be happy, a band with 35 drummers would not necessarily be a good idea… (And with many busses overcrowded, drums are difficult to transport as well)

**Parents of students wishing to be drummers should *carefully read the next page of this letter.***

***Music and Arts Center and Zeswitz Music will be our representative for instrumental rentals and materials.***  The rental process is completely online, and instruments will be delivered to CIS from the stores a week before lessons begin. Mrs. McCutchan (The CIS Band Director) and also the representatives from both music companies will review the rental process at the parent meeting. If you have ever made an online purchase this process will be very familiar and easy. In fact, you might want to come to the meeting the night of Sept 19th prepared to order your instrument right from your phone during the meeting.

EVEN IF YOU PLAN TO GET AN INSTRUMENT FROM ANOTHER SOURCE, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU ATTEND THIS MEETING!

Music and Arts Center and Zeswitz are both companies committed to supporting local school band programs, and their sales representatives will visit our school weekly in case repairs or materials are needed. Their rental instruments are of top quality, and I feel confident in recommending their services to the students and parents of our community.

**When renting an instrument,** the initial trial period is for two months. The rental fee for those two months is payable in advance, and is non-refundable. After the trial period, payments are made on a monthly basis until the balance is paid (for around 33 months) at which time you own the instrument. All rental fees are applied toward the purchase price of the instrument. If you and your child decide to not continue in band, the instrument may be returned at any time with no further obligation. Instruments may also be returned to school, but parents must make arrangements thru either company to come and pick them up. Please note that the **TWO Month Trial Period Rental Fee** is the *total* for the first two months. Following the trial period, that amount becomes the monthly rental fee**. In addition to an instrument, you will need to get the *Essential Elements* Band Method Book, ($10.99 or $17.99 for drums included with Zeswitz). The book should be ordered when completing the online rental.** Music stands (included with Zeswitz), care kits and reeds are also offered at the time of the online rental application.

Mrs. McCutchan will also have a supply of band books, reeds and other supplies for purchase at school!

**A word about your child’s instrument choice:** Students who choose the flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone and saxophone, **will be allowed to start on their first instrument choice.** The instrument that we have too many of *every year* is the **drum.**

**Drummers!** ***Do not order your drum*** until your child has been auditioned by Mrs. McCutchan your child has been given the “Approved Drummer” letter from Mrs. McCutchan!

**Please discuss this issue** ahead of time with your child and advise him or her that Mrs. McCutchan will audition all prospective drummers to determine their suitability as a drummer. **Some students will be advised to play another instrument based on the audition.**

*Drum Spots are limited!*

**Parents of all prospective band members**: Please fill out the next page of this letter and have your son or daughter return **only that page** by Monday, September 18th. The classroom teacher will send the form to Mrs. McCutchan.

**The Guaranteed First Lesson Instrument Delivery Deadline is** **Friday, September 22nd**. Order your instrument online on or before Sept 22nd, will guarantee that it will be delivered **TO OUR SCHOOL** in time for **our first lessons the week of October 2nd.** Orders placed after September 25th cannot be guaranteed for delivery by October 2nd. Please make sure you have your order placed by no later than September 25th.

Band Instrument Interest Form

Please list your first and second choices **by placing a 1 or a 2 beside the instruments you would like to play**. If you already have an instrument (older brother or sister, neighbors, etc.) please *indicate so in a note at the bottom of the page***. Return this to your classroom teacher by Wednesday, September 27th.**  Planning to rent an instrument? Turn the page for a little more info!

\_\_\_\_\_ Flute \_\_\_\_\_ Trumpet

\_\_\_\_\_ Clarinet \_\_\_\_\_ Trombone (We want lots of trombone players!!!)

\_\_\_\_\_ Saxophone \_\_\_\_\_ Drums (What is your second instrument choice?)

Student's Name (Print Clearly) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Best Contact Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Best Contact Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom teacher (Please include!)

**Parent's signature** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

p Check if you are ordering instrument on line and having it deliver it to school

p Check here if you are going to visit Music and Arts in Camden to pick up your instrument

Mrs. McCutchan, The CIS Band Director, can be reached at 659-4512 or via e-mail at: [Jennifer.McCutchan@smyrna.k12.de.us](mailto:Jennifer.McCutchan@smyrna.k12.de.us)

*Please sign up for Beginning Band REMIND Text Messages from Mrs. McCutchan*

Text the message @cisbband to the number 81010

Remind is the primary way that Mrs. McCutchan communicates with Band Parents!

Please use this space if you wish to write Mrs, McCutchan a note:

**BEGINNING BAND FAQ’s**

***(Frequently Asked Questions)***

Q: What is the best instrument for my child? Flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet trombone or drums?

A: The instrument that s/he likes the sound of is the best choice!

Q: Which instrument is the easiest instrument to play?

A: The instrument that is practiced regularly!

Q: Which instrument is the most difficult to play?

A: The instrument that is never practiced is very difficult to master!

Q: Should I allow my child to assemble and blow her/his instrument prior to the first lesson?

A: *NO!!!!!!*

Q: I have no music background. How am I supposed to help my child at home?

* *Encourage your child;* let them know that you are listening as they practice, and that you hear improvement in their playing!
* *Insure* that they have a practice area and practice time that fits your family’s needs.
* *Support their right* to practice without interference from a brother or sister.
* *Know the day* of your child’s lesson and **make sure** that they leave for school with their instrument, and band book in hand!

Q: How often should my child practice?

A: Your goal (knowing that on some days, due to other commitments, a child will be unable to practice) should be to *practice every day* for at least 15 minutes. Make it a part of your after school/evening routine. ***How much*** screen time does a kid *need*? *NOT MUCH*!

Q: My child gets frustrated during home practice, how should we handle this?

A: Learning to play an instrument is a challenging, difficult *and rewarding* task! **Perseverance** pays dividends. Encourage your child to work past the frustration. Mrs. McCutchan *guarantees* that if you practice, you will experience success at your lesson. Even if you feel that you are making no progress at home, when you come to a lesson with a hundred minutes of practice time under your belt *you will succeed*! She also guarantees that if you surrender to frustration, you will feel defeated at your lesson!

Q: My child complains that his/her instrument does not seem to work properly, how do I get it repaired?

A: Mrs. McCutchan can take care of most problems right at school. If it needs more work, Mrs. McCutchan will send it your chosen music company for repair.(Free repairs on rental instruments)

Q: My child’s saxophone (or clarinet) uses a reed, how do we get a supply?

A: Mrs. McCutchan keeps a supply right at school. Sax reeds are $2.00, clarinet reeds are $2.00 and it’s always good to send money for two reeds so that you don’t get caught short.

Q: My child’s trumpet (or trombone) **mouthpiece got stuck** and will not come out. Should I use pliers to remove it?

A: No!! Mrs. McCutchan has a **special tool** that safely removes a stuck mouthpiece, just carefully transport the instrument to school (it may not fit in the case with a stuck mouthpiece) and she will *gladly* remove it for you!

Q: How do I get up-to-date information about weekly schedules, special rehearsals, band concerts and other band info?

***A: Sign up for REMIND Text Messages or REMIND Email from Mrs. McCutchan! See the information on last page!***

**Text the message @cisbband to the number 81010** or go to rmd.at/cisbband on a desktop computer to sign up for email notifications.

**Planning to Rent an Instrument from Music and Arts?**

Go to their web site by searching for “Music and Arts” and click on the “Rentals” tab in the upper right hand corner. Next, enter your zip code; in the “Student Grade” select “5” and then click on the “Continue” button. Next, select our school from the list, and then “Continue”. Now you select the instrument you wish to rent and “Continue” again. Now confirm that the proper instrument is selected and click “Continue”. **You now have some choices:** The folding music stand is extremely beneficial for home practice! **The band book is required,** the care kit is nice to have but optional, your call. If your child is playing clarinet or sax, a box of reeds is a smart selection! Next hit “Continue” and begin filling in information. Complete this page and “Continue” to “Shopping Cart” page. First, review your selections. Next, have you missed the **September 22nd order deadline?** If it is after Sept 22nd please select “Pickup in Store” and choose the Camden location. If it is Sept 22nd or before, move on to checkout and select “Ship to School”. Ship to School *guarantees that your instrument and supplies will be waiting for your child at the first lesson.* **Pickup in store** means that within 24 hours of placing your order, you will be able to visit their store and pick up your awaiting order.

DO NOT- DO NOT- *DO NOT* ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO ASSEMBLE OR PLAY THE INSTRUMENT BEFORE THE FIRST LESSON!!!!!

**The Music and Arts Representative** will attend our parent night meeting to answer questions regarding online rentals. We will have a screen set up to walkthrough the very easy ordering system. *Please return your band instrument request form to school at or before the parent meeting.*

**How will I know what instrument to rent?** If your child’s first choice is flute, clarinet, sax, trumpet, or trombone then you are safe to go rent that instrument. **If your child’s *second instrument choice* is the Trombone,** *then that is the instrument that Mrs. McCutchan would LOVE FOR you to choose.* It is lots of fun to play the trombone and a *really important* instrument in a band!

**If your child wants to play the drum,** *please hold off on renting a drum* ***but send in your “Instrument Selection Form” asap!*** Mrs. McCutchan will audition those children to make sure that they are suitable to be drummers and will send home the “Approved Drummer” letter asap.

**Can’t make it to the evening Parent Meeting?** **Place your order on or before Friday, Sept 22nd** to guarantee school delivery for our first lessons or after September 22nd, request Pickup In-Store and visit their store for the instrument.

**Music and Arts** is located on Rt. 13, just south of the Rt. 10 intersection on the north bound lane, in Camden DE (3443 S. DuPont Hwy). If you get to the Camden Wal-Mart, *you’ve gone too far!* They are open 10am-9pm every day and 10am-6pm on Saturday. Their phone # is 302-697-2155

Beginning Band Video Lessons

With Mr. Walls!

Mr. Walls has created a Youtube channel just for his band students and it is very easy to find! Just Google “Beginning Band lessons with Mr. Walls” and you will be brought right to his Youtube channel. He has created *lots* of lessons for his students to play along with at home, and they are proving to be very effective!

There is *soooooo* much to learn at the very beginning of playing a band instrument and *soooooo* much to remember! In the video lessons, Mr. Walls will show you once again how to hold and finger your instrument, with the notes and music appearing on the screen as he explains things. Then as he plays you will be able to see the notes, and his fingers, as you play along with him, which will make your practicing very productive and enjoyable!

The video lessons range in length anywhere from ten to twenty-four minutes. You may pause a video at any time to stop and play a song additional times or just to take a break but most importantly, *use the videos!* It’s not required that you use them every time you practice, but if you need additional help, they are there for your use *and they work!*

Mrs. McCutchan was amazed last year as students returned for their second, third, fourth and fifth lessons and beyond, with kids playing as if they had someone at home who was giving them extra lessons! The difference in progress from previous years was astounding and he is now creating additional videos for our sixth grade musicians.

There are few guarantees in life, but if your child utilizes these video lessons, s/he will progress faster, have more fun, and experience ***far less frustration*** as s/he becomes a young performing band musician and if your child happens to say *“I don’t understand what I’m supposed to do or practice”* the parent/guardians can now respond *“Go to his video lessons and play along with him!”*

**Helpful tip:** Use a tablet sized screen or larger, such as a desktop computer or better yet, ***a big screen TV!***