

# Vivace Bands Course Description

## Membership

Students may enroll in beginning band as they enter the 4<sup>th</sup> grade (nine years old – turning nine in September is fine in most cases). Generally, students younger than nine years old have yet to develop enough physically to handle the full sized band instruments. Unlike stringed instruments that come in  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and  $\frac{3}{4}$  sizes, band instruments are only come in full size. Older students who have never played a band instrument may also enroll in the beginner class. Intermediate and Advanced classes are entered by audition or director recommendation.

## Classes

Students are taught in a one-hour class once weekly with mixed instruments. Beginning band classes are designed for students who have never played a band instrument before. Students in this class will be taught as if they know nothing about a band instrument. The director try out your child on instrument mouthpieces (sterilized, of course) to determine the best fit according to mouth structure, ability to produce a sound and student's choice.

Intermediate classes are for students who have one year of band or private instruction. Advanced classes (Home School Band only) are for students with two or more years of band or private instruction.

## Attendance

Students are expected to attend band lessons each week. Only personal illness or a family emergency is excused. If your child is ill and not able to attend class, please email Mr. Hutcherson ahead of the class at [director@vivacebands.com](mailto:director@vivacebands.com)

Check the calendar page on our web site at [www.vivacebands.com](http://www.vivacebands.com) for band days and holidays.

## Acquiring an Instrument

Parents a list of music dealers in the metro area who rent instruments at [www.vivacebands.com](http://www.vivacebands.com) It is from many years of experience that we can advise you that the safe thing to do in the early stages is to rent, not buy. Be sure to get all the accessories listed, as they will be necessary for proper maintenance of the instrument. **Please do not buy an instrument from a department store or membership type store since the quality and design is almost always significantly inferior to the suggested brand instruments.** Most music instrument repair facilities will refuse to repair these instruments because of their tendency to break during the repair process.

Beware of auction sites such as Ebay and Craig's List. Occasionally a good bargain can be found by trained musicians. However, to the inexperienced, a used instrument may need so many repairs it could end up costing more than purchasing a certified used, or even a new instrument outright.

After approximately the second year of study, thought should be given to "stepping up" the quality of instrument. Talk to the director about recommended brands and models for your child. Further information about what is involved with acquiring a step-up or professional quality instrument can be found at [www.bandhutch.org](http://www.bandhutch.org) by clicking on the Band Parent Education courses and going to the 200 level course – BPE 202 – the Step Up Instrument.

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## Changing Instruments

Once a student has selected an instrument and begun the course, he may not switch to another instrument. In some very rare cases the director may suggest that a student change because of continued difficulty, but not without a Director/Parent conference.

## Home Practice

Students are expected to practice outside of class, since the class only meets once weekly. A blank practice record form is found in the inside front cover of the Standard of Excellence Band Method book. Students are expected to record practice times each day and the record will be checked periodically by the director. The Smart Music program has an automatic "practice time tracker" the director will use to monitor time as well. Students will have ongoing assignments in Smart Music to complete at his/her own pace and will be evaluated by the director on a weekly basis. Beginning students will start the Smart Music program after approximately four lessons. This time is needed for the band student to become accustomed to the instrument and able to produce a sound with proper tonguing technique. Practice at home is still required, but at their own pace. Students are expected to practice a minimum of 1-1/2 hours per week. The best approach is to practice for about 15 minutes per day. Some students will find they need to practice more to keep up. Practice points are earned for awards during the school year.

## Withdrawal

We strongly recommend that a student stays in the program for the entire school year. It takes that length of time to determine if your child will be successful as a beginning band student. Band is also a sequential course of study and should be continued from year to year for the greatest level of success. If a student wishes to withdraw, please communicate early to the director. In many cases a conversation with the student and parent can help with any issues that may be causing the desire to discontinue study.

## Parent Supervision

Few of us have not said, "I wish my mother had **made** me practice the piano," or other instrument. There may be times of "slump" in the child's enthusiasm and it will be necessary to be firm regarding daily practice. A daily "routine" is helpful. Some parents have said they use "Homework, Practice, Dinner, TV" as a routine and found it successful.

(Cut along line below)

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**Please sign and date below indicating that you have read and understand the Instrumental Music Course Description. Please return this bottom portion to the Band or Orchestra Director Tomorrow.**

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(Print Child's Name Here)

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Grade

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(Parent Signature & Date)