

Dear Band Families,

September 10, 2021

Welcome to the new school year – and to your “Band Parent / Guardian” role at Chaffey-Burke! I am very excited your child is joining Grade 7 Band – I look forward to our musical learning journey! 😊

On Friday, I met with students and explained and demonstrated several of the instruments to give students a better idea of sound, size, and shapes of instruments. This week, I will meet with students again to finalize instrument choices.

I know that students (*and families*) are anxious to know what instrument they will play. Thank you for your patience as we figure out all Band details within updated safety guideline requirements.

Instrument Selection

A balanced sound within the band ensemble is very important – meaning we won’t have 15 saxophones, 30 flutes, and 1-2 of the other instruments. If we have too many students interested in one instrument type, I may ask them to switch to their second choice for the year. Larger instruments such as bass clarinet, baritone or French horn may be available from our district instrument pool.

I would normally give students opportunity to try playing sounds on all the instruments to find their most natural fit. I am adjusting the plan again this year to match students and instruments as safely as possible while we continue to navigate pandemic safety.

Here are a few things I look for as instrument decisions are made:

- Saxophone = must have large enough hands to reach the keys properly without opening any of the side keys at the same time.
- Brass instruments = must be able to create a buzz sound with their lips and air. *
- Flute = must be able form the correct embouchure (mouth shape) to aim their air properly. *

NOTE → for students interested in playing flute or brass instruments

- Having the proper embouchure is essential for creating proper sound. To ensure success, I may ask students to try buzzing the brass mouthpiece / blowing the flute head-joint (mouthpiece).
- Mouthpieces are cleaned with Sterisol, which is recommended by professional music organizations worldwide for cleaning of wind instrument mouthpieces.
- Our Burnaby School District Health and Safety Officer has approved the use of Sterisol for cleaning mouthpieces / headjoints and other musical equipment.
- Proper cleaning protocols were reviewed during our September District Band meeting.

I will finalize and publish the list of instrument choices as quickly as possible. To make the process of instrument choices fair and equitable for each student in the band, please wait until you have received instrument information from me before purchasing or renting an instrument for the year.

Thank you. 😊

GETTING YOUR INSTRUMENT

Normally, Burnaby School District would host a district-wide Band Rental Night + First Lesson, where 1000+ eager Grade 7 Band students and their families would meet at one of our secondary schools, get their instruments, and attend a lesson to learn the first basics on their new instrument.

Pandemic safety orders for September 2021 will not allow this event, so once again, we are adapting our First Lesson Night to virtual instruction.

So What is next?

Once instruments are assigned, families will need rent or purchase a QUALITY instrument directly from a recognized music store. **Again, please wait until instrument selection is finalized.

MUSIC STORE INFORMATION

- Links to each company's rental / purchase information are listed on my school website blog [HERE](#).
 - Many of the companies have online rental / purchase and delivery of the instrument.
 - Read through the School Rental Brochures and decide which company suits your needs.
 - Once you have decided on a company and instrument, please remember to check each store's website information for their safety protocols.

INSTRUMENT RENTAL / PURCHASE

It is essential that students rent or purchase a quality instrument from a proper music store. The store should be able to do maintenance and repairs on the instrument when needed.

- In addition to supplying brand new inventory, music stores also offer 'used' instruments for sale or rent. All instruments are inspected, cleaned and sanitized and are completely safe to play.
- If you are using a previously played instrument from friends or family, please have it checked by a music repair person to make sure it is in great shape for the year. It is extremely frustrating to learn on an instrument that doesn't function properly.
- Please be aware that 'instrument-shaped-objects' are often available online or at big box, chain or warehouse stores. These instruments may seem less expensive, but are usually not durable or well-made, and usually cannot be repaired if damaged.

DISTRICT INSTRUMENTS

- There may be a school district instrument available for the year if your child is choosing to play a larger instrument such as bass clarinet, baritone or French horn. (NOTE – saxophones are not available).
 - User fees for district instruments are paid to the school.
 - All instruments have been checked and sanitized during summer repairs and are ready for another year of instruction.
- I will contact families directly with more details if your child will be playing a district instrument.

Reminder = ALL Grade 7 students wishing to join Band will be given the opportunity to participate.

- The pandemic has impacted employment and finances for many families over the past year. We know that there are students who worry that the cost of Band will be too high for their family.
 - Please let me know if assistance is needed – all details will be kept confidential.
- If your child really wants to be in Band, we will find a way to make it happen!

MUSIC STANDS

- A proper music stand is an important piece of equipment for home practice to ensure students are playing with proper posture and instrument position.
 - Basic wire folding music stands cost approximately \$20 and can be purchased when renting or purchasing your child's band instrument for the year.
- School music stands will be available during Band classes.
 - Please note = school stands will be shared between classes and students.
 - If this is a concern for your family, students are welcome to bring their own folding music stand to class.

Virtual FIRST LESSON = week of September 20 - 24

**date and links will be confirmed soon!*

District Band teachers will teach a specialized Virtual First Lesson for each instrument. This ~30-minute lesson will help students (and families) assemble their new instruments correctly and start playing their first sounds properly.

- Teaching First Lesson virtually has some limitations – however – it gives students a better chance of starting to play correctly at the very beginning of the year.
- Opportunities to ask questions and get specific instrument advice from a trained teacher help make our first Chaffey-Burke Band classes more efficient and effective.
 - When students already know basics of their instrument, we don't have to wait for each instrument to learn to set-up correctly before we play our first notes together.
- Please attend the VIRTUAL FIRST LESSON with your child so that you both understand how to assemble and care for the instrument properly.
 - Ideally, each student will have their instrument with them during the virtual lesson to work through the various steps. If unable to have an instrument by lesson night, please watch and listen carefully so you know what needs to happen once your instrument is available.

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- ★ **PLEASE WAIT** until the first lesson to put your instrument together the first time and create new sounds.
 - It is possible to damage the instrument if you put it together incorrectly.
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Chaffey-Burke Band classes

Class times = Tuesdays and Thursdays during school time

→ First band lesson with instruments = will happen on the first Tuesday or Thursday after the virtual lesson.

Band supplies = \$16.00 (*includes method book / pencil / miscellaneous supplies*)

→ Band books and supplies have been ordered, and I will hand them out to students once instrumentation is complete. **You do not need to purchase any other band book.**

→ The band supplies fee can be paid using SCHOOL CASH ONLINE.

- Please be patient if online payment is not available immediately – it may take a few days to get the information up and running from the office during the busy school start-up season!
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Band assessment occurs every class.

→ Students need to be prepared by completing regular home practice, bringing required materials to class (*instruments, music stands, music books, folders, pencil / eraser*), and completing and handing in all assignments (*including practice records*).

→ More information is included in the Chaffey-Burke Band Handbook (sent home on Friday, September 10.)

You've made it to the end of this very long letter ... so ... one more time – welcome to Band!

... and remember – although you may hear (*some? several?*) very strange sounds in the beginning, don't panic – those sounds will improve quickly. 😊

Sending an email is the best way to contact me if you have questions or concerns.

→ Please remember to include your child's name in any message so that I can help you more easily.

Thank you!

Ms. Lee, Band Teacher

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Please [click HERE to confirm](#) that your child is joining (or not joining) the Chaffey-Burke Grade 7 Band this year.
