



# Helena Middle School Band 2023-24



August 8, 2023

Dear 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Band Families,

Welcome to the Band Program at Helena Middle School! I am looking forward to embarking on an exciting musical journey with your student and am very excited that they have chosen band as their middle school music class!

For beginners in band at HMS, we offer instruction on the following instruments: FLUTE, CLARINET, ALTO SAXOPHONE, TRUMPET, TROMBONE, BARITONE, TUBA and PERCUSSION.

To start in percussion, the student must complete a percussion tryout with Mr. Reiter. Piano instruction is no longer a requirement to be in the percussion section, although highly recommended, but each student will have a tryout to help assess if the student can handle the high volume of musical demand of being a percussionist. Percussion interviews will be held on August 14, 15, and 21. Set up an appointment with Mr. Reiter in the Welcome to HMS band email.

Instruments are not provided by the school (except for baritone and tuba) but there is a limited supply of school rentals available on a need basis. Instruments are available to rent or purchase from your local music store – Piccolo's Music on 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. All required equipment will be available at this location. The larger instruments – baritone and tuba – are available for rent from the school. Please call me with questions or concerns.

Percussion students need a bell kit and snare drum or practice pad for home, Vic Firth 5A sticks and hard bell mallets (most stores also carry stick bags which help with organization). In addition, there is a required \$45 equipment usage fee payable to HMS Band. This fee is used to maintain the wide range of school percussion instruments, which the students will be using including, snare drum, bass drum, bells, xylophone, timpani, and a wide variety of smaller percussion instruments.

All students will be required to have their own copy (respective to their instrument) of the beginning band method book – **Essential Elements Book 1**, which is available at Piccolo's Music. I also recommend that you invest in a folding music stand for home, so proper posture and hand position can be used when practicing.

**All students will be expected to have their instruments, book, and a pencil in band for the first day of playing on Monday or Tuesday September 11 or 12 depending on your students A/B day class. It is important that children have their instrument and book by these dates to avoid falling behind from the beginning.**

**\*\*Please be sure that your name (first and last) is clearly marked on the outside of your instrument case and on the front cover of your book.**

6<sup>th</sup> graders will be performing two concerts this year – December 7, 2023 and May 23, 2024

These dates are also listed in the school calendar and the band handbook. Attendance is **required** for all band students.

**Home practice** is as important to band students as is class time at school for it is during daily practice that muscle development, music reading skills and coordination occur which in turn leads to improved tone and technique. I recommend a minimum of 20 minutes daily for adequate development and to prepare assignments. This is band "Homework"!! If it appears that your son or daughter is not practicing on a regular basis, I will contact you for assistance in this area.

I am happy to try to answer any questions and am available at 324-1026. Please leave a message and I will return your call promptly.

Sincerely,

Tyson Reiter  
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Helena Middle School  
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324-1026