Band Program Placement Guidelines

Our Music School bands are designed to give musicians the experience of playing, learning, and growing as part of an ensemble. We welcome developing musicians, but students need a basic level of proficiency on their instrument before joining a band.

These guidelines are intended to help us place each student in an ensemble where they can participate successfully, continue developing their skills, and contribute positively to the group.

Minimum Expectations for All Band Members

To participate in a Music School band, students must:

- Have basic proficiency on their instrument.
- Be able to maintain their part while playing with other musicians.
- Listen and respond to the ensemble around them.
- Be willing to learn new material and practice between rehearsals when needed.
- Be able and willing to take direction from the instructor.
- Be willing to make musical choices that support the ensemble as a whole.
- Attend rehearsals consistently and arrive prepared to participate.

Our bands are instructional, so students are not expected to have mastered every skill before joining. However, rehearsals are designed for ensemble learning rather than beginning instrumental instruction.

Guitar and Bass

Guitar and bass players must be able to:

- Read a basic chord chart, tablature, or standard notation, or have enough familiarity with one of these systems to learn material with guidance.
- Follow basic song structure and chord changes.
- Maintain a steady tempo while playing with an ensemble.

Drums

Drummers must be able to:

- Play a basic 4/4 rock beat.
- Maintain a steady tempo while playing with other musicians.
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of tempo and dynamics.

- Learn and perform different basic drum beats and rhythms with instruction.

Other Instruments and Vocals

Requirements for keyboards, horns, reeds, vocals, and other instruments may vary depending on the style, level, and needs of the individual ensemble.

Students should have enough familiarity with their instrument or voice to learn and perform their part within a group setting.

Finding the Right Band

Before joining a band, a prospective student may be asked to speak with the instructor or play briefly so that we can determine whether the ensemble is an appropriate fit.

Placement is based on several factors, including:

- Current playing ability
- Musical experience
- Instrumentation needs
- The level and style of the ensemble
- The student's ability to work successfully within the group

In some cases, an instructor may recommend additional lessons or skill development before a student joins a band.

Ongoing Placement

Band placement is an ongoing process. New members may have an introductory period that allows both the student and instructor to make sure the ensemble is a good fit.

Because successful bands depend on consistent participation and cooperation from every member, students are expected to continue meeting the musical and attendance expectations of the group.

An instructor may recommend a different placement or ask a student to step away from an ensemble if the student is not making sufficient progress for the level of the group, is frequently absent or unprepared, has difficulty following direction, or is disrupting the ability of the ensemble to rehearse and learn effectively.

Whenever possible, the instructor will communicate concerns with the student and provide an opportunity for improvement before making a change in placement.

Our goal is never to discourage a musician from participating. When a particular ensemble is not the right fit, we will make every reasonable effort to recommend another class, lesson format, or opportunity that better supports the student's development.

Our goal is to help every musician find an environment where they can be successful, challenged, and supported while also maintaining a productive experience for the ensemble as a whole.

If you are interested in joining one of our bands and are unsure which group is right for you, please contact the Music School. We are happy to help you find the best place to begin.