

To Parents of Prospective Band Students:

Your child has the opportunity to join the grade 7 band. This opportunity should be taken seriously, as it may be the best chance in your child's life to learn instrumental music. The expectation is that your child spends the full school year in band once he/she signs up; your child's interest and ability cannot be accurately assessed with less than a full year's effort.

Parents should encourage their children to try the band program because band students do well in school! Educational research and our own experience shows that band students become more involved in their education, obtain higher grades, and receive more scholarships than non-band students. This is because they become part of a team of students who are constantly striving for success and perfection in music and this attitude spills over to other subject areas.

A student can eventually use the acquired musical skills to play any kind of music desired, whether that is concert band, symphonic, jazz, rock, folk, bhangra, country and western or popular music. It is essential however to learn the basics of music performance first by learning to play a musical instrument and to read music. This is what is taught in the grade 7 Band Program.

#### **GRADE 7 BAND PHILOSOPHIES:**

*"The Surrey School District elementary band program is available to all Grade 7 students. A component of the Fine Arts strand, this program is offered in all schools by specialist teachers. It is a child-centered program in which most children are introduced to the challenges of a band experience for the first time."*

*"Intended learning outcomes include development of individual and group music skills, opportunities for performance and appreciation of the performing arts."*

*"The elementary band program should be viewed as an integral part of the total school experience."*

#### **OBTAINING AN INSTRUMENT**

Grade 7 Band is the first step in a 6 year consecutive band program offered by Surrey School District. As this first step sets the groundwork for your child's future in band, it is most important that a good quality instrument be obtained. Most students acquire their own instrument in one of the following manners (if acquiring an instrument presents a particular problem for your family, please contact the school and every effort will be made to find an individual solution):

1. **Rent or rent-to-own a new instrument:** Rental from a music company is the method most recommended by your band teachers. A substantial portion of the rent will be applied to the purchase price if you decide to buy the instrument at a later date. You may rent directly from the music store of your choice.
2. **Purchase a new or used instrument from a music store:** Purchasing outright is the least expensive means of buying an instrument in the long run, although it does not provide as much flexibility as renting.
3. **Purchase used instruments from private party:** Sometimes bargains can be found, but be wary; in almost every case they require servicing! Please make certain it is serviced early in September.
4. **Borrow:** Once again, be wary; a borrowed instrument almost always needs servicing. Please have it serviced early in September.
5. **Purchase from a non-music store:** Recently, non-music stores have been offering some band instruments for sale. These instruments are usually less expensive than those found at music stores, but the quality of the instrument is often inferior. Students usually find these instruments very difficult to play properly and they are often difficult, if not impossible, to repair. The school district highly recommends that you rent or purchase instruments from a reputable music store.

**It is highly recommended that you do not rent or buy any instrument until your child has consulted with the Grade 7 band director. Questions regarding which instrument your child will play should be directed to your child's band director.**

#### **MUSIC COMPANIES**

The following companies are Surrey companies that are expected to provide good quality instruments, reasonable prices and respectful service to Surrey students:

Long and McQuade	-	13785 – 104th Ave Surrey	....	604 588-9421
Long and McQuade	-	207-6339-200th St Langley	....	604 530-8704
Long and McQuade	-	2423 King George Blvd, White Rock	....	604 591-8525

Tapestry Music	1335 Johnston Road, White Rock	....	604 538-0906
Tom Lee Music	10090 – 152 St. Surrey	....	604 588-3200
Tom Lee Music	19638 Fraser Hwy Langley	....	604 532-8303
Matterhorn Music	7788 – 132 Street, Surrey	....	604 596-7616

### Rental Prices

Due to the competitive nature of the industry, Surrey enjoys some of the lowest rental rates in the country. Rental prices vary widely depending on several factors. Saxophones are generally more expensive than other instruments. Paying the whole year in advance is cheaper than paying by the month. Some brands are more expensive than others. Generally, you can expect to pay the following price ranges if renting a new instrument. Be aware that most companies also have used instruments available at lower prices.

Flutes/Clarinets/Trumpets/Trombones - \$12.00 to \$22.50/month. Snare drum kits - \$12.00 to \$20.00/month. Saxophones - \$22.00 to \$50.00/month.

### Suggestions for Renting a Band Instrument

#### A. Prior to going to the music store:

1. Find out from your child which instrument the teacher has approved, and which Band Method Book the teacher requires.
2. Find out about insurance. Insurance for the band instrument is recommended. Most home insurance policies, for only a few dollars, can be adjusted to cover the instrument for all perils with no deductible. Or, you can purchase an insurance policy from the music store at the time when you rent the instrument. Check with both the music company and your home insurance company to find the best deal.
3. Be aware that only adults may rent an instrument. Do not send your student with an older friend or sibling. An adult with credit card and proper ID is required for most rental transactions.
4. Phone the companies listed above and ask about the following:
  - exact cost of new or used rental instrument
  - initial payment requirements, payment frequency, etc.
  - cost of optional insurance premiums, and the amount you must pay (deductible) in case of loss or severe damage
  - cost of the Band Method Book

#### B. At the music store:

1. Specify the type of instrument you want and the name of the method book(s) your band teacher requires.
2. Ask about insurance in case of theft, damage, or mysterious disappearance of the instrument. What is the monthly charge, and what is the deductible charge if lost or damaged?
3. Make certain the following are included with the instruments:
  - Clarinets: 2 or more #2 reeds, reed guard, swab, cork grease, mouth piece cap
  - Saxophone: 2 or more #2 reeds, reed guard, swab, cork grease, mouth piece cap, neck strap
  - Flutes: swab and cleaning rod
  - Trumpet: valve oil, mouthpiece brush, cleaning snake
  - Snare Kit: practice pad, sticks, and drum stand that is tall enough for stand-up drumming
4. Additional accessories you may wish to consider at this time:
  - additional reeds for clarinet and saxophone (a very good idea)
  - folding music stand
  - insurance as indicated above

### FEEDBACK ON MUSIC COMPANIES

We are always trying to improve our processes and those of the companies we work with. Please share any comments with us regarding acquiring your musical instrument. Your comments will be held in confidence.

If you encounter any problems or concerns dealing with the music store and cannot resolve it yourself, please contact your child's band teacher.

For questions regarding this communication, please contact your child's band teacher. We sincerely wish you and your musical child an enjoyable Grade 7 band experience!

Yours sincerely,

Karen Alvarez  
District Principal  
Education Services  
Surrey Schools