

## **Frequently Asked Questions about being in the Meigs Middle School Band**

### **Q: Do I need to have prior musical experience to join Band?**

**A.** NO!!! No prior experience or knowledge is necessary as the band director starts from the VERY beginning with the entire class. We teach the basics with lots of games, candy, and other incentives while learning the musical language together! Every student safely tries out all of the sanitized instruments to find their perfect match.

### **Q: How do I know what instrument I will play?**

**A.** Students will be invited to try making sounds on different instruments, and the band director will help each student make a final selection. This decision is based on student preference, initial aptitude, and the number of different instruments needed to get a full sound when the entire band plays together. We are usually able to accommodate each student's first or second choice. The goal is to try to put each student on an instrument where he/she will have the greatest success!

### **Q: Will I be able to fit Band into my daily schedule?**

**A:** All middle school students are able to take at least TWO electives thanks to our six-period schedule! Further, playing an instrument in a Beginning Band only requires three days of after school out of 180 total school days! Concert schedules and field trips are all scheduled before the school year begins, so you have plenty of time to opt in/out of extracurriculars and trips!

### **Q: Will Band take up too much time?**

**A:** The Meigs Middle School Band is the LARGEST student organization on campus and is known as The Sound of Shalimar! As is generally true with most things, a little bit goes a long way (salt, a smile, kindness, etc.), therefore, 8-15 minutes per day keeps the student on pace and moving quickly through new skills and exciting pieces of music. During the first year, there is minimal after school commitment for students. There will be three total performances during the school year that will take place in the evening! The predetermined calendar/schedule of rehearsals, trips, concerts, and events also make it easy to schedule around potential conflicts.

### **Q: Can I be in Band AND be on a sports team/club?**

**A.** ALL KIDS ARE BAND KIDS!!! Band students are often the most involved students on campus. Each year, the top athletes and student leaders are filled with band students. We work closely with coaches and sponsors to coordinate activities

and ensure that students are able to pursue multiple interests. Band students are encouraged to participate in EVERYTHING that they want to, and their membership is never dismissed for active participation elsewhere on campus.

**Q: I heard that Band costs a lot of money! Will I be able to afford it?**

**A.** Most instruments are supplied by the student/parents. Area music stores offer a variety of affordable rental/purchase plans that will fit each family's budget! Most instruments can be rented for less than the cost of a daily soda. The school also owns a few instruments that are available for a yearly maintenance fee - availability for beginners depends on use by upperclassmen. These instruments are Tubas, Euphoniums, French Horns, Bassoons and Oboes. Used instruments are also a possibility if they are high-quality instruments. For your protection and peace of mind, the director should always be consulted before you buy a used instrument. The band director will supply each family with helpful information in this area. At no point do we want cost to be a barrier to participation. If you have financial concerns, you can always contact Mr. Cooke and we will find a solution.

**Q: How is Band different from 5th grade music class?**

**A:** At Meigs Middle School, Band is just as much of a social unit as it is a performing one. We work together closely for three years, becoming better musicians as a team and expanding our Wildcat Band family! Although we spend the majority of our time together in class working tirelessly on perfecting the notes, rhythms and musical phrases for our concerts, we also take field trips to perform on stage, watch professional concerts, attend community music events, pep band performances, and theme parks! Good times and good vibes guaranteed!

**Q. Can I play a band instrument with braces?**

**A.** We have many students who wear braces in the band playing almost every instrument! Mr. Cooke even had braces when he was in band in middle school! There is a short period of adjustment when students first get braces, but after that, most students do not have a problem!

**Q. How do I sign up for Beginning Band?**

**A.** Students who want to be in band should mark a number 1 or 2 by Beginning Band on the registration form. We will ensure that students make it into the band if they request it. You may also find a link on our website to add your name to next year's band list.

**For any further questions, contact Mr. Cooke at [Daniel.Cooke@okaloosaschools.com](mailto:Daniel.Cooke@okaloosaschools.com)**