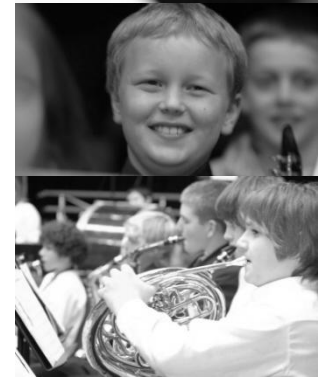




Starting Beginning Band

Seaside Middle School



Dear Parents:

A brand new school year is upon us once again and we are pleased to give your child the opportunity to take part in the band program at Seaside Middle School.

For those of you that have had children participate in our wonderful program in the past, we will be approaching starting the band differently this year due to our remote start to school. Rest assured that I have spent an enormous amount of time over the summer gathering the best advice and information from as many of my music education colleagues as possible to successfully handle this situation.

In previous years, during the first weeks of school, I would be interviewing students individually and trying different instrument options to find the best instrument to suit them. Without the ability to do that in-person, I will be utilizing an intermediate step before starting a regular band instrument that will enable us to transition to a band instrument even if we continue to be remote for the foreseeable future. For this year, all students registered for Beginning Band will first learn to read music with me in the beginning of the year at a much higher level than previously expected. In addition, all beginning band students will begin their music reading instruction by playing and learning recorder with me. In addition to reading music, the recorder will allow me to teach several concepts that are directly related to playing a regular band instrument. After significant progress is made I will then begin the process of transferring your child to a regular band instrument. The recorder and music book will be provided at no cost. I anticipate this process lasting anywhere from four weeks to a term depending on how quickly the class moves. This time will also allow me to get to know the students much better and make better instrument choices with them when it's time to transition to regular band instruments.

When we are ready to transition to a band instrument, I will provide you with details on how to attain the right instrument for your child. The process will look different this year. The music company that we have used in the past is Beacock Music located in Vancouver, Washington. They have been providing service to our district for many years and will help us again this year when the time comes. More details will follow in the coming weeks on this. If you want to visit their website for more info for when the time comes it's here: [Beacock Music Rental Information](#). Please do not initiate a rental before I have recommended an instrument for your child.

The Seaside School District has a well respected and award winning band program. Participating in our program does however require a very manageable time commitment. I will be giving short playing assignments for your child to perform on the recorder in the first weeks of school. They will need to practice these assignments. Once your child has a regular band instrument, he/she will be expected to practice a minimum of 100 minutes per week. The next page of this letter is a brief outline of our band program. If you have any questions, please give me a call at Seaside Middle/High School at 738-5586 or email me at the address below. You can also visit seasidebands.com for updates.

Sincerely,

Terry L. Dahlgren
Director of Bands
tdahlgren@seasidek12.org

Music In Our Schools

Our band program in Seaside covers grades six through twelve. Last year we had approximately 240 students participating in our band program. The bands are divided up as follows: Beginning Band, Seaside Middle School Sharks Band, Seaside Middle School Concert Band, and Senior High Symphonic Band. Senior High students also have the opportunity to participate in Jazz Ensemble and Pep Band. It is our intent to prepare your child to perform in each of these groups and graduate high school as a member of the band!

Instruments that are rented for band include: Flute, Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, French Horn, Baritone and Percussion Kits (practice pad & bells). These are all instruments that you will need to personally rent for your student. There are a limited number of instruments that can be rented through Seaside School District for \$50.00 per school year. Please contact me for availability of any Seaside School District instruments well before the instrument is needed as they are very limited. Tubas are generally rented through the school district. Instruments like the bassoon, oboe, tenor or bari saxophone, and english horn are not usually appropriate for beginners. However, if there is justification and a strong desire to learn one of these instruments, please contact me. Guitar and piano are not used in middle school bands as a main instrument. Instrument brands that have a proven track record are: Conn, Selmer, LeBlanc, Vito, Yamaha, Holton, Jupiter, Buffet, Bach, Pearl, Emerson, Gemeinhardt, Getzen, Besson, Benge, and Blessing. There are other brands available, but they are either not the appropriate quality or too new for me to have evaluated them. Beware of advertised inexpensive instruments online. There are some extremely poor quality instruments being marketed over the past 10 years. Please email me before you purchase **anything** online. For percussion players, you will rent a percussion kit to keep at home for practice. Percussionists will use school owned percussion equipment while at school at no additional cost. If you already own your own instrument, please have its playing condition evaluated by Beacock's Music before the instrument is required in class. Generally, older instruments are not suitable for beginners without repair/refurbishing work before hand. We also ask that you purchase the instruction book, *Tradition of Excellence Book I*, when you rent the instrument. This book sells for approximately \$10.95 and we will be using this book in class. Owning your instruction book will allow your child to write in the book for better learning retention. Please also consider purchasing a music stand. Although not required, a music stand allows for better instrument playing posture, which is critical to producing a good sound on the instrument.

When you receive your band instrument, please do not attempt to put it together or play it until I have had the opportunity to walk your child through assembly and care procedure. Special guidance on care will be necessary to avoid damage to the instrument. A damaged instrument would put your student behind in the class while repairs are being made. Once instruction begins on the instrument, students will be expected to practice at home a minimum of 20 minutes a day, five days a week for success in band.

I hope that this answers most of your questions. I am really looking forward to a successful year with our Beginning Band!



Other Tips for Starting a Band Instrument:

- Avoid gender stereotypes with regard to choosing an instrument. There are no boy or girl instruments.
- Don't select an instrument based solely on what your child's friends have chosen or what brothers and sisters have played. Students need to find their own unique identity.
- If your child has an interest in french horn or trombone, they will need excellent pitch-related skills (the ability to sing melodies or pick out a song on the piano by hearing it on another source, such as a CD or radio).
- Instruments such as the tuba or oboe are owned by the district, and are rented for \$50.00 a year. Tuba can be rented from Beacock Music if desired. Please contact them if you are interested in this option. Tuba players will not have to bring their instrument to and from school.
- Percussionists will need to learn drums and mallets (bells) simultaneously. Be sure your young musician understands that percussion is not just drums. It is a Seaside Middle School band policy that beginning percussionists have previous piano experience. If not, they will need to let me know and be willing to work hard to develop music reading skills.
- Frequently band students are also very involved with other school activities. There is the perception that band may interfere with sports or homework. This is generally not the case. During my teaching career, I've had captains of the football and volleyball teams in band, as well as many valedictorians and salutatorians. If athletes were not in band, Seaside High School would not have a band program. If anything, playing a musical instrument helps students develop discipline and organization in other academic areas.
- It is the expectation that band students practice a minimum of 20 minutes a day, 5 days a week. Try to set aside a specific time of day for practice at home. This should be a time that is free of distractions and occurs as part of regular homework study. Even if you have to cut your practice time short on a particular day, it's the repetition that is important. Students should spread out their practice time throughout the week and avoid loading all practice into just a couple of days unless there are no other options.
- Please visit seasidebands.com for concert announcements, practice card downloads, extra practice materials, and information for all bands in the Seaside School District.