

# Welcome to the Alston Ridge Elementary School Band!



It is our pleasure to welcome you to the Alston Ridge Elementary School band! We thank you for choosing to be a part of our band, and look forward to making music with you this year.

As a member of the Alston Ridge Band, you have chosen to embark on a rewarding journey with a fine group of people. Our band isn't just something to do after school; it's a team and a family. Students, band is a place where you can have fun, meet new friends, and build musical skills that you can enjoy for the rest of your life. Parents, band will give you the experience of a lifetime, too--the joy of enriching children's lives with music (whether you're musically inclined or not!)

You may find band to be very different from other music classes you've taken in the past. Since band is a team, it functions best when everyone--students, parents, and director--brings forth their best effort. In the Alston Ridge Band, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of behavior, and are committed to doing our very best every time we play.

This handbook is designed as a resource to answer your band-related questions throughout the school year. Please read and keep this handbook, and feel free to contact us if you need any help or advice. Best wishes, and we look forward to sharing a year of wonderful musical experiences with you!

Your Band Directors,

Christina Thompson and Andrew Munger

## **our philosophy**

We believe that music is a powerful medium that can help students discover their unique capabilities, build positive relationships with their peers, and foster meaningful connections with the larger community. As directors, our job isn't just waving the baton--it's conducting ourselves and our band in a way that brings the benefits of music into the lives of our bandmembers and community neighbors.

### **As band directors, we are committed to:**

- Providing a safe place for students to grow musically
- Helping students develop a feeling of musical competency
- Guiding students toward establishing individual practice skills and self-discipline
- Fostering students' love of music and an appreciation for fellow musicians
- Helping students begin to discover their place in the global community of musicians
- Giving back to the community through music
- Cultivating meaningful partnerships among students, teachers, families, and community members

## what parents need to do

Parents are a vital part of children's music education. A child's success in music often depends on the level of support the parent gives. An encouraging comment about your child's practice, cheerful attendance at band concerts, and a positive attitude about your child's efforts can give your child the confidence to excel musically. Here are four things I ask of all Alston Ridge Band parents:

- 1. Be informed.** Please read this handbook and all band correspondence. You'll not only know what's going on, but you'll also model responsibility and commitment to your child.
- 2. Support your child.** Make practice part of your daily routine by setting up a special place and time for your child to play at home. Ask your child to play for you often, and show an interest in what your child is learning in band. Attend your child's concerts and let your encouragement flow freely!
- 3. Realize that greatness takes time.** Beginning musicians are not going to sound like the pros you hear on the radio. When listening to your child practice or perform, train yourself to focus on growth and progress. And please, NEVER joke about your child's sound--it hurts more than you'd think.
- 4. Support your directors.** Your band directors have made it their life's work to uplift young people through music. They are on your side, and are here to support and nurture your child's musical growth. Please keep this in mind in your interactions with the directors, and treat them with respect and kindness. Also, please follow the directors' policies and encourage your child to do the same. They are the result of decades of successful teaching, and are in place to give you an excellent band experience.

## how a band kid should act

Although our band meets after school, the expectations for behavior are the same as they are during the school day. Band students are expected to practice good character traits at all rehearsals and performances.

Band students are typically some of the finest young people in the school. At all times, you should be able to say these things about yourself:

### **I Respect Myself.**

If I make a mistake in my music, I laugh it off and try again.  
I practice daily so I'm prepared for band rehearsal.  
I am a good example to those around me.

### **I Respect Others.**

I don't laugh at or make fun of other people's playing.  
I have kind words to say to my fellow band members at all times.  
I allow my band teacher to teach without interruptions.

### **I Respect Property.**

I take good care of my instrument and respect my bandmates' instruments.  
I put my instrument together the way Ms. Thompson showed me.  
If I am not a percussionist, I don't touch the percussion equipment.

## **YOU HAVE A CHOICE!**

You are an important member of our band, and your actions will affect everyone else in our group. Your behavior will determine how much we learn and how well we play, and will also show the community what the Alston Ridge Band is all about. **When you choose your actions in band, remember that you are choosing your consequences as well.** When you do your best, class becomes a fun, energized place! However, poor behavior can turn band class into a boring experience, and make learning music difficult.

## **HOW MS. THOMPSON AND MR. MUNGER WILL HELP**

One of our most vital jobs is to foster character traits that will help students excel both in the band room and beyond. Throughout the year, your directors will model productive behavior, establish helpful routines, and provide boundaries and guidance to help students learn to make good behavior choices. Through group reflection and teacher-student meetings, behavior issues will be used as opportunities for growth.

## **a typical band rehearsal**

Our band rehearses on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 4-5pm in the Music Room.

You will be dismissed to band at 3:45pm. Your first job when you arrive is to set up your instrument and music stand. Then, you're welcome to eat your snack in the hall, get water, and use the restroom.

If you have a question before class, please feel free to come up and ask Ms. Thompson or Mr. Munger. During class, please raise your hand if you have a question.

In class, we'll warm up, count rhythms, work on pieces of music, and learn new things. This is a great time to listen, ask questions, and be a good example to your fellow students.

Sometimes, your teacher may ask you or your section to play alone in class. This isn't to torture you; it's a way to make our music sound better. When we ask you to play solo, it helps other kids understand specific musical techniques--but it makes you a better musician, too!

When class ends, we will pack up and line up in the hall. Then, we will walk to the bus loop together.

## **financial, attendance, and weather policies**

Because our band does not receive funding from WCPSS, we cover our operating expenses by charging a nonrefundable tuition fee for each band student. Tuition includes Virtual Band Camp, performances, sheet music, and twice-weekly rehearsals with a caring, professional music educator.

### **FULL-YEAR MEMBERSHIP POLICY**

Students are required to commit to band for an entire school year (July-May). If you terminate your child's band membership early, you will be responsible for paying the remainder of the year's band tuition fees. The directors may make exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis.

Instrument rental fees will be refunded/prorated based on the date the instrument is returned. If a rental instrument is returned with damage exceeding that of regular wear and tear, a repair fee will be charged.

### **INITIAL PAYMENT REFUNDS**

If you must withdraw from band prior to June 16, 2024, you are eligible for a 100% refund of your initial tuition payment. If you withdraw between June 16-30, 2024, you will receive a 50% refund of your initial tuition payment. No refunds will be issued after July 1, 2024.

## **BAND TUITION PAYMENT OPTIONS**

- 1. Pay for the Year** - One payment of \$550 covers the entire year's tuition.
- 2. Pay by the Quarter** - Pay four installments of \$143 each.
- 3. Pay by the Month** - Pay 11 monthly installments of \$53 each

Band Tuition is figured based on rehearsals during which your child is tracked in. While a tuition payment may come due during trackout, you are still only paying for your child's tracked-in rehearsals.

Students are welcome to attend rehearsals during trackout free of charge.

Band Tuition does not cover the cost of purchasing an instrument or supplies for your child.

No portion of the Band Tuition will be refunded if your child is tardy or absent from a rehearsal or concert, or if your family decides to withdraw from band before the year is over.

## **INVOICING**

An invoice will be e-mailed to you on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. Payment is due on the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month. After the due date has passed, a 1% late fee will be charged. Payments are accepted via PayPal, Venmo, Zelle, check (payable to Summer Glen Music), or cash. You can also set up automatic payments at <http://www.summerglen-music.com/alstontuition24.html>

## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

For families facing economic hardship, scholarships are available to defray the costs associated with participating in band. Scholarships are flexible, and can range from discounted tuition to a full scholarship including a loaner instrument depending on level of financial need. Please contact Ms. Thompson at [christina@summerglen-music.com](mailto:christina@summerglen-music.com) for more information.

## **CLASS CANCELLATIONS**

If WCPSS is closed for inclement weather on a rehearsal or concert day, our band will not meet. If the schools operate on a delay, we will meet as scheduled. We are unable to offer make-up rehearsals due to inclement weather; however, you may create your own make-up day by attending rehearsal during trackout.

If your directors must cancel rehearsal, they will offer a make-up time before the end of the academic year.

## **all about instruments**

### **Choosing an Instrument:**

Our band offers two avenues to help students choose their instrument for the year: an online instrument showcase, and an optional in-person Meet the Instruments event available to new members in May. After utilizing these resources, each student should have an idea which instrument they want to play in band. We ask students to stay with the same instrument during their time in the Alston Ridge Band.

### **Options for Getting Your Instrument:**

#### **1. RENT OR PURCHASE THROUGH THE BAND.**

Our band offers name brand, precision-refurbished used instruments for rental or purchase. The rental fee is \$25 per month, and includes any maintenance needed due to regular wear and tear. You can rent for any duration of time, and you can also choose our Rent-to-Own option, which will apply 100% of your payments toward the payoff price of the instrument (\$350)

If you would rather purchase an instrument outright, you can do so for a reduced price (\$250). If you start out renting, and pay the balance of the purchase price when your second rental payment is due, you will be eligible for the lower purchase price. All instruments purchased through the band come with a 1-year repair warranty.

## 2. BORROW IT.

If you know a friend or family member who has a band instrument they don't use, ask if your child can borrow it to use in our band. This can be an easy, low-cost way to obtain an instrument for your child. Make sure, though, to make an agreement with your friend and put all the details in writing; for example, who will pay for repairs, and when the instrument needs to be returned.

## 3. RENT OR PURCHASE FROM AN APPROVED MUSIC STORE

If you'd prefer a new instrument, we require that it be purchased/rented from one of our approved vendors (listed below). This is for your protection, as these vendors deal in quality instruments that will withstand the demands of a beginning musician. **New instruments procured from sources outside our approved store list are NOT permitted in the Alston Ridge Band.**

### Approved Music Stores:

#### Music and Arts

426 Crossroads Blvd, Cary, NC 27518

<http://www.musicandarts.com>

(919) 854-0024

#### Guitar Center

7123 O'Kelly Chapel Rd, Cary, NC 27519

<http://www.guitarcenter.com/cary>

(919) 286-5600

#### Sweetwater

<https://www.sweetwater.com>

1 (800) 222-4700 ext.3768 (Ask for Lexie)

## Required Band Supplies:

The following supplies are needed to keep the instrument clean and functional, and to allow your child to learn to read music. All students should have their supplies by the first day of band.

<p><b>For flutes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handkerchief (to clean flute)</li> <li>• Cleaning rod</li> <li>• <i>Standard of Excellence</i>, Book 1 for Flute</li> <li>• Folding music stand</li> </ul>	<p><b>For clarinets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FOUR reeds: Vandoren or Rico, strength 2 or 2.5</li> <li>• Swab</li> <li>• Cork Grease</li> <li>• <i>Standard of Excellence</i>, Book 1 for clarinet</li> <li>• Folding music stand</li> </ul>
<p><b>For trumpets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valve oil</li> <li>• Mouthpiece brush</li> <li>• <i>Standard of Excellence</i>, Book 1 for Bb trumpet</li> <li>• Folding music stand</li> </ul>	<p><b>For percussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Standard of Excellence</i>, Book 1 for Drums &amp; Mallet Percussion</li> <li>• Folding music stand</li> </ul>

### **For trombones:**

- Slide oil or cream
- Mouthpiece brush
- *Standard of Excellence*, Book 1 for trombone (not T.C.)
- Folding music stand

### **A NOTE ON PERCUSSION**

Percussion is a popular instrument family, but often for the wrong reasons. Many students mistakenly think percussion is "easy" or that it's all about "rocking out" on drums. Many are sorely disappointed when they discover that percussion is challenging, and requires that they learn more instruments than anyone else in the band. I strongly encourage parents of future percussionists to discuss the following with their children:

- 1. Percussion is more than just drums. You will start on bells, and learn to read music like everyone else. You will only play drums if you become good at bells first.**
- 2. Percussion instruments are as difficult as every other instrument in the band.**
- 3. You must build a strong foundation to "rock out" successfully.**

### **Changing instruments:**

Switching instruments early in one's musical career makes learning music more difficult and more time-consuming. Every band instrument is equally difficult, and each has its own set of problems for the player to solve. You will not be able to conquer these problems overnight—just like with a friend, you have to spend many years with your instrument to really know it. So, I ask students to commit to learning only ONE instrument while at Alston Ridge Elementary.

### **Instruments at School:**

Students will need to bring their instruments and band supplies to school every Tuesday and Thursday, and bring them home after band classes to practice.

Most students will store their instruments in their homeroom. However, students who play trombone and percussion may store their instruments neatly in the music room.

### **NO INSTRUMENTS IN OFFICE POLICY**

**Instruments dropped off in the front office will be subject to a \$10 fee per occurrence.** The office staff have a heavy workload and limited space. When we leave an instrument in their care, we add to their workload, take up valuable space, and deprive our band students of an opportunity to be responsible.

## **all about concerts**

Alston Ridge Band students will have many chances to perform throughout the year. We will perform at several school functions at Alston Ridge; plus, we'll play some exciting "gigs" around town. Our concert dates are listed online at <http://www.alstonridgebands.com>

## CONCERT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Performances are an integral part of every student's band experience. Performances give students chances to celebrate their hard-earned musical skills and give back to the community with their talents. Therefore, attendance at concerts is **mandatory** for all members of the Alston Ridge Band.

## FAQs

### Why does Ms. Thompson keep telling me I need to practice?

**Daily practice is vital to musical success, and is REQUIRED of all band students!** Just as doing your math homework will make you better at math, practicing your instrument will make you a better musician. Each week, you will receive a chart with material to practice at home. It's your job to practice learning your fingerings, counting your rhythms, and making your assignment sound a little better every day. Don't worry if you don't sound perfect! If you practice thoughtfully and do your best, you've done your job. Sitting in band class will make you an OK musician. But practicing on your own is what makes you EXCELLENT, and is what makes band so fun. **Practice for 15 minutes a day--it works!**

### What if I forget my instrument at home?

If you forget your instrument (or necessities required to play your instrument, like reeds), it means you have to work even harder than normal in class that day. You're still responsible for participating and learning the material, even if your stuff is at home. Remember, it's not your director's or your parents' responsibility to bring your instrument to class--it's yours.

### What if I can't make it to a concert?

Please tell Ms. Thompson or Mr. Munger as soon as possible! The more advance notice you can give, the better. We work hard to prepare for our concerts. Band members who don't show up or cancel at the last minute let their band--and themselves--down.

### What if my instrument breaks?

In many cases, Ms. T can fix minor problems on the spot; just show them to her **before or after class**. If she is unable to fix your instrument right away, she will take it to her shop and fix it there. Depending on the severity of the problem, a repair can take from one day to over a week, and may incur a cost.

## in closing...

Students, in joining band, you have taken your first step onto the path that every great musician has walked. Band will be fun, but be aware that there will be some spots on your path that are difficult to pass. When things get tough, remember that you have the ability to keep practicing and beat any challenges that come your way. Also, your teachers and parents are here to help you become the best musician you can be.

To Parents: Young people need positive direction in their lives, and our community is in constant need of good music and happy news. Let's make the Alston Ridge Band a positive force that provides both! Working together, we can design a band that not only influences our students' lives for the better, but also allows them to influence the *world* for the better. I invite you to become active in our program. Get to know your director, encourage your children to practice, and come hear us play. This is your band, too.

Many thanks for your support and best wishes for a safe, happy, and successful school year!

Ms. Thompson: [christina@summerglen-music.com](mailto:christina@summerglen-music.com)

Mr. Munger: [andrew@summerglen-music.com](mailto:andrew@summerglen-music.com)