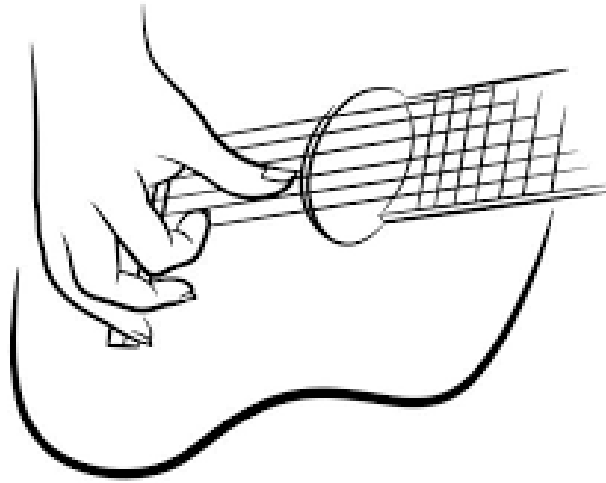


2025-2026
R.J. Murray Middle School
Guitar Handbook
“One Team, No Limits”



Introduction:

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the R.J. Murray Middle School Classical Guitar program!

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you information regarding the class guitar at R.J. Murray Middle School.

I look forward to having a wonderful year working with all of you and continuing to build the R.J. Murray Middle School Guitar Program. One Team, No Limits!

Sincerely,

Christina Shore

Christina.Shore@stjohns.k12.fl.us

SJCCA Choral Music Director/Guitar Instructor

R.J. Murray Middle School

General Information:

M/J Guitar 1

Course Number: 1301060

Credit: 0.00

Weight: Standard 0.0

Term: Yearlong

Prerequisite: None

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to enable students with little or no experience to develop basic guitar skills and knowledge, including simple and full-strum chords, strumming patterns, playing/singing simple melodies, foundational music theory, parts of the guitar, and ensemble skills. Public performances may serve as a culmination of specific instructional goals. Students may be required to attend and/or participate in rehearsals and performances outside the school day to support, extend, and assess learning in the classroom. Term: Yearlong

M/J Guitar 2

Course Number: 1301070

Credit: 0.00

Weight: Standard 0.0

Term: Yearlong

Prerequisite: None

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to enable students with previous experience to expand basic guitar skills and knowledge, adding simple and full-strum chords, barre and power chords, and strumming patterns, adding more complex lead sheets and 1st-position chromatics, and building ensemble skills. Guitarists transfer between tablature and standard notation, study the work of significant musicians, and explore electric guitars, basses, and amplifiers. Public performances may serve as a culmination of specific instructional goals. Students may be required to attend and/or participate in rehearsals and performances outside the school day to support, extend, and assess learning in the classroom. This course may also require students to obtain a musical instrument (e.g., borrow, rent, purchase) from an outside source.

In this course, your child will be learning how to play classical guitar. They will learn how to read music in the treble clef as well as how to read and play various rhythms on their instrument. Students will also learn chords; however, classical guitar is more of a finger picking style. Students will be playing melodies in an ensemble-based setting.

Guitar class is a privilege. To assist each student's individual needs, students will be held to high behavior and work ethic standards. Students will be playing in class for 40 minutes each day and are expected to participate and put forth their best effort. Students must follow the school's code of conduct. Failure to follow the code of conduct will result in disciplinary actions and can lead to a change of schedule. Playing an instrument takes a lot of focus and dedication, so if your child is not up to the challenge, you may want to request a change in schedule.

**** Learning goals are derived from the Florida Standards for Middle School Guitar as well as the St. Johns County curriculum maps for MS Guitar and CPALMS.****

Why Guitar?

I could give a dissertation on this topic, but to spare you the time, here are some of the top reasons why guitar is a great choice for any student!

- To build and expand upon one's creative capacity. The study of music entails the acquisition of skills followed by their application in many different styles/genres. This develops creative problem-solving skills which are applicable in many different subjects/situations. Children who study music are proven to have better test scores/grades in ALL subject areas!
- Music is a universal language! Music is part of what makes us human. Music communicates ideas, feelings, and emotions where words fail. Students will learn how to understand and converse using this language by listening and playing a vast array of different styles and genres during their year in guitar.

- The pursuit of any craft/vocation develops vital character virtues. To progress in the study of music, one must learn perseverance and to be disciplined, coachable, patient, and genuine.
- Guitar is a group effort! The values of cooperation, communication, accountability, and time management are present during every practice, rehearsal, and performance. These are valuable life skills for any career!
- It's just downright fun! You will make lifelong friends and create memories you will never forget!

Does My Child Need to Know How to Read Music to Join?

Not at all! All music literacy skills will be taught throughout the year. Even students who have a hard time reading can learn music! Students will be learning how to read notes in the treble clef and learn how to play melodies and various rhythms on their instrument.

Sheet Music, Folder & Guitar:

Guitar has no required books for the year. I will be using a vast variety of resources throughout the school year to teach your child the fundamentals of classical guitar. **You child will be required to bring in one 3 ring binder to hold their music. This folder must be exactly 1 inch. Your child will also need a 3-ring pencil pouch and pencils for class.** Please be prepared to provide supplies for your child no later than August 16th. If you have financial difficulties providing this folder, please make me aware and I will be able to assist you.

Concert:

It is my goal this year to have a concert at the end of the school year to showcase the student's hard work. Save the date for April 14th, but more information will be sent home as the year progresses.

Fundraising:

Students will be participating in a fundraising event beginning in Fall. **Participation is highly encouraged, but not required.** If your child is auditioning for All-State, they should consider fundraising to help with expenses. The department will always need new instruments, strings, tuners, and resources. More information will be sent home to notify you of when fundraising begins. Thank you, in advance, for helping me to grow our guitar program here at Murray.

Donations:

Our guitar program operates almost entirely on donations. Any donations will help cover the costs of purchasing new sheet music, instruments, strings, music stands, tuners and other resources beyond what funds are provided by the school/district.

We are asking for a suggested donation of \$30.

Grading Overview:

- 80% - Summative Assessments
 - Playing Tests
 - Written Assessments
- 20%- Formative Assessments
 - Informal Assessments of Student Understanding
 - Performing in Daily Class Rehearsals (This includes behavior).

For playing tests, students will play in front of me and be graded on a rubric. Students are required to participate daily so that they will be prepared for these assessments.

Class Behavior:

At the beginning of each semester, students will be given 5 bathroom pass cards that will be housed in their black folders. These are their bathroom passes for each nine weeks. If your child needs to use the restroom during class, they may hand in one of their cards that has their name on it and proceed to the restroom in the A hallway. Once their 5 passes are utilized, they may no longer be excused during my class time.

At the beginning of each week, students will have 5 performance cards in their black folders. Students will be required to turn in a card if they are:

- Disrupting the learning environment
- Not participating in classroom activities
- Chewing gum or eating in class
- Have their cell phones out during class (Cell phones will be turned into the office)

- Not following classroom rituals and routines; example: not getting music folders/instruments at the beginning of class or not putting away music folders/instruments after class
- Not being respectful to their classmates
- Not adhering to teacher attention getting signals and cues
- Talking over teacher instruction (I am one voice over classes as big as 33 students. Active listening is crucial to my vocal health as well as the concentration of all learners).

Every Friday, I will be putting a performance etiquette grade in the gradebook. For every performance card that your child turns into me, 5 performance points will be deducted from their weekly grade. If a student refuses to turn in a card when asked, an e-mail will be sent home to notify the parents of this behavior. A history of poor etiquette grades can result in referrals and dismissal from class guitar.

Positive behavior interventions will also be in place in the guitar classroom. Students will be rewarded with DOJO points to use for the school store for exemplary behavior and kindness.

Homework:

Due to this being a performance class, written assignments are seldom assigned and are often not used in this class as homework.

Students will be playing for 40 minutes in class each day. Since not everyone has a guitar at home, practice is not required after school. Students are always more than welcome to bring home what we have been working on in class if they would like additional time to practice.

Classwork:

If, in the event a substitute teacher is required, students will be asked to do a written assignment. Failure to complete the assignment will result in a 0% in the gradebook, as well as an e-mail home.

Fingernails:

To play guitar, students must have the appropriate fingernails. Nails on the left hand should be cut short and filed. At the beginning of the school year, students must also keep nails short on the right hand as well; however, the finger-picking style requires students to grow nails on the right hand once they advance in their playing. Under no circumstances are students allowed to play with press-on nails or acrylic nails. (It is just not physically possible). I want your child to be successful, so please follow this expectation.

Schoology:

Each week, I will post our weekly class agenda on Schoology. The calendar will always notify you of any class assessments. Schoology will also be a place where students can access practice tracks and resources to rehearse at home. Be sure to check in once a week so that you can keep in the loop of what your child is learning in class.

Does My Child Need A Guitar?

Your child is NOT required to have their own guitar for class. I have a class set of classical guitars that the students will use every day. If you decide to purchase your child a guitar for home practice, please reach out to me for assistance. Classical and acoustic guitars are very different, and I will be able to lead you in the right direction. Here is a link with a suggestion of guitars that would be suitable if your child desires to progress more on their own:

Suggested for smaller bodied students:

<https://www.sweetwater.com/store/detail/CGS103A--yamaha-cgs103aii-3-4-scale-classical-natural>

Suggested for full-sized students:

<https://www.sweetwater.com/store/detail/C40--yamaha-c40ii-full-scale-classical-natural>

Acknowledgement Form:

Please complete the following form to acknowledge that you read the guitar handbook and understand the intensity and efforts that it will take to be successful in this class.

Guitar Handbook Acknowledgement Form:

Please complete this form and return to Mrs. Shore by August 29, 2025.

We have read the R.J. Murray Middle School Guitar Handbook and understand the requirements and responsibilities of participating in the program.

We understand that it is the parent's responsibility to provide their student with a 1 inch 3 ring binder (any color or design), 3 ring pencil pouch and pencils.

We understand that this is a performance-based class, and students will be required to participate daily in class to prepare them for Summative Assessments.

Parent/Guardian Signature(s): _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student/Parent/Guardian Information:

Student Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian #2 Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Email: _____

Parent/Guardian #2 Email: _____

Phone Number #1 _____ Phone Number #2 _____

Concerns/Questions:

Please use the back of this form to express any concerns or questions that you may have for me at this time. I am excited to begin making music and inspiring young lives!

~Mrs. Shore 😊