

2025-2026

RJ Murray Middle School

“One Team, No Limits”

SJCCA



Introduction:

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the R.J. Murray Middle School Band! The purpose of this handbook is to provide you information regarding the band program at R.J. Murray Middle School. In this handbook you will find information regarding:

- General Information
- Grading Overview
- Fair Share Fees
- Instrument Rentals
- Performances
- Rehearsals
- Concert Attire
- Required Books/Music
- Instrument Supply Lists
- Rehearsal Etiquette
- Chair Tests/Challenges
- Open Practice
- Practice Logs/Homework
- Full Band Calendar
- Sign/Return Acknowledgment of Handbook – Photo/Media Release – Fair Share/Instrument Rental Fee

I look forward to having a wonderful year working with all of you at the SJCCA R.J. Murray Middle School Band Program. One Team, No Limits!

Sincerely,

Christina Kromhout

Christina.Kromhout@stjohns.k12.fl.us

SJCCA Director of Bands

R.J. Murray Middle School

General Information:

Band is a performance-based instrumental class at Murray MS. The band program is designed to allow the students an opportunity to play a vast array of different styles of music at varying difficulties. The content is meant to challenge the students' skill levels and promote the development of musicianship.

“One Team, No Limits!” Band is the best example of student's individual parts coming together to create something amazing! We are all part of the same team, working toward the goal of becoming better musicians.

Band is a privilege. We are representing R.J. Murray MS both at school and in the community. Students are held to high standards and must follow the school's code of conduct. **Failure to follow the code of conduct will result in disciplinary actions and can lead to expulsion from the band program.**

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

Grading Overview:

- 70% - Summative Assessments
 - Formal Written Tests
 - Required Rehearsals (Before Concerts, Jazz Bands, MPA Season)
 - Required Performances (Make-up assignment for emergency cases)
 - Scale Tests
 - Rehearsal Etiquette (Quarterly)
- 30%
 - Prepared/performing in Class - Daily Rehearsal Etiquette (Weekly)
 - Weekly Practice/Listening Logs – Signed and Turned In

Fair Share:

Our band program operates almost entirely on a budget which is supported by the Band “Fair Share” Fee. This Fair Share fee helps cover the costs of purchasing new sheet music, instruments, accessories, tools, supplies, uniform items, awards, transportation, and staff/student professional development beyond what funds are provided by the school/district – which is none.

The Fair Share fee is \$125 for each child in band per year.

No student will be denied the opportunity to participate in Band due to inability to pay the fair share fee. Please do not hesitate to contact the SJCCA Band Boosters (SJCCABand@gmail.com) for support!!

Does My Child Need an Instrument? – YES!!!

YES!!! Band is a performing arts elective, without an instrument they will not be able to participate in class, thus not being able to receive a passing grade. This is non-negotiable – students without an instrument will need to have their schedule change to a different elective.

What Instrument Will My Child Play? - How Does Instrument Fitting Work?

At RJMMS, we work with the student to find the instrument that they will be most successful on, while ensuring the band’s instrumentation is balanced. Students will attend an instrument fitting night (or will need to find time during the first week ½ of school to make this up) where they will try ALL the instruments. Not all instruments will be the BEST fit for your child – there are a lot of different factors when finding the instrument that feels most natural – but EVERYONE will find an instrument that they are good at!

After students test ALL the instruments, they will have a score from 0-5 based on ability on that instrument. Students will indicate their top 3 choices and Ms. Kromhout will make the final decision of that they will be playing in band. Students/Parents will be notified of the choice and then will need to acquire that instrument.

Acquiring an Instrument – What NOT To Do!!!

Buying an instrument is like buying a car – just because I can probably find/buy a car for \$500 bucks doesn't mean it will drive (or last very long if it does). Then you end up paying more just to repair it than you did to buy it in the first place – or even worse - it's just not repairable at all and you wasted your money. RJMMS has partnered with Music and Arts for instrument rentals for a reason – Quality!! Ms. Kromhout has worked with Music and Arts to make sure that the instruments students rent are from top quality brands which are built to last (and sound/work the best)!!

1. DO NOT BUY ANY INSTRUMENTS FROM AMAZON!!

I repeat – DO NOT BUY AN AMAZON INSTRUMENT!!!!!! Every year we have students who come in with instruments parents have bought from Amazon (or knock-off brands) – and every year those instruments break within the first few days/weeks. **Music and Arts/other repair shops CANNOT fix these instruments!!** (Specific screws/parts, metal is too thin to work with, the instrument literally falls apart in pieces, etc... - I have seen some crazy things).

2. DO NOT BUY ANY PLASTIC and or COLORFUL INSTRUMENTS!!

All instruments made by good quality brands (Yamaha, Bach, Conn, etc..) will be made of metal (brass/silver/gold). Beginning clarinets will be the ONLY instrument these brands will make out of High-quality plastic. Please don't buy your child a pink plastic trumpet from Amazon! (yes it happened – yes it broke – no it was not repairable – yes the student did have to drop band because the parents refused to purchase/rent a real instrument)

3. Can I buy an instrument I see online via Facebook Marketplace, eBay, 3rd party instrument supplier? Yes, BUT... please send Ms. Kromhout the link to the instrument before you purchase it! Sometimes you can find good deals on quality/brands of pre-owned instruments at a discount still in fantastic condition! Sometimes the price is too good to be true (because the seller knows it's in bad condition and needs A LOT of repairs – or is unplayable). **PLEASE just email the link and we can discuss if that instrument is worth the price.**

Instrument Rentals – Music and Arts:

Most instruments will be rented through Music and Arts. These include

**Flute – Clarinet - Alto Sax – Tenor Sax
French Horn – Trumpet – Trombone - Euphonium**

Music and Arts will be the MAIN PROVIDER of instruments. We will set up an instrument **Rent-to-Own** Virtual night with Music and Arts. During this time parents will go online to set up the rental paperwork. **Instrument prices are broken down into manageable monthly payments. This should be your FIRST option!**

When renting your instrument - PLEASE make sure to include the extra “insurance.” This extra cost allows you to send the rented instrument to the repair shop for most damages – **FREE OF CHARGE!!** (I cannot stress enough – it is worth EVERY PENNY). This also allows Music and Arts to send out a loaner instrument so the student can still participate in class while their instrument is being repaired.

School Owned Instrument Rentals:

Music and Arts does not rent the following instruments. These will be rented through RJMMS
Baritone Saxophone – Tuba - Percussion

The School-Owned Instrument Rental Fee is \$200 per year.

**** This fee covers cleaning, maintenance, and accidental damage repairs of the instrument. If this instrument is lost, stolen, or damaged where repairs cost are over \$500/unrepairable, parents will be responsible to pay a portion of the replacement instrument cost.****

Students who use a school instrument must pay a school-owned instrument fee. This goes directly to the maintenance/repairs of these instruments. These instruments will be issued at the beginning of the school year and will be turned in before the year ends. (There will be additional forms for Summer Instrument Rentals).

Students WILL NOT be allowed to take home school rented instruments until all paperwork/rental fee payments are completed and turned in.

Parents/Students are still responsible to buy the accessories needed to play their instrument (i.e., reeds, lubricants, drumsticks, mallets, practice pads). Students playing certain instruments or in different ensembles are also recommended to buy their own mouthpiece.

*****No student will be denied the opportunity to participate in Band due to inability to pay the instrument rental fee. Please do not hesitate to contact the SJCCA Band Boosters (SJCCABand@gmail.com) for support!!****

Concert Attire/Uniforms:

Beginning Band – Students will need to purchase the SJCCA WHITE long-sleeved dress shirt from the band store. They also will need black dress pants, and black dress shoes, flats, or heels (no higher than 2in). Ladies may wear a black skirt, but it must come down to the knee both while standing and sitting.

Concert Band – Students will need to purchase the SJCCA BLACK long-sleeved dress shirt from the band store. black dress pants, and black dress shoes, flats, or heels (no higher than 2in). Ladies may wear an all-black skirt, but it must come down to the knee both while standing and sitting.

Symphonic Band – Students will need to purchase the SJCCA BLACK long-sleeved dress shirt from the band store. black dress pants, and black dress shoes, flats, or heels (no higher than 2in). Ladies may wear an all-black skirt, but it must come down to the knee both while standing and sitting.

JE1 - Please see above for any joint home concerts with Concert/Symphonic Band. **JE1** students will need to purchase the JAZZ POLO on the band store for gigs/festivals. IF a gig requires a different dress code – you will be provided that information far in advance. (ex. ugly X-mas sweaters for Holly Jolly Trolley)

JE2 – Students will need to purchase the JAZZ POLO on the band store for joint home concerts with Beginning Band. These may also be worn for festivals and gigs. IF a gig requires a different dress code – you will be provided that information far in advance. (ex. ugly X-mas sweaters for Holly Jolly Trolley)

*****CROCS are NOT dress shoes, Tennis shoes (vans, converse, etc...) are NOT dress shoes – Thank you!*****

Required Instrument Equipment/Supplies:

Please ensure your child has these items **AT ALL TIME!** Most of these should live in the instrument case or are to be kept in their lockers.

Ms. Kromhout has these items for emergencies but is NOT to be the sole provider of Reeds, Valve Oil, or Slide Grease! Students will lose points off their grade if they are consistently not prepared for class with a working instrument.

ALL Students – **MasterLock** for their locker (normal size – the lockers are old and do not fit the smaller ones)
- **3 ring BLACK Binder with Sheet Protectors** – There will be graded binder checks!

Flute – Cleaning rod/towel and Superslick Tuning Slide Grease

Clarinet/Saxophone – Reeds (Beginning Band - Rico Orange Box 3) (Concert/Symphonic Band - Vandoren Blue Box 3), Cork Grease, and Cleaning rod/towel

Trumpet/Tuba/Euphonium – Blue Juice Valve Oil and Superslick Tuning Slide Grease

French Horn – Superslick Tuning Slide Grease and Rotary Oil

Trombone – Yamaha Slide Lubricant, Superslick Tuning Slide Grease, 2oz Plastic Mist Spray Bottle

Percussion – Students will be required to purchase and maintain their own sticks and mallets. Ms. Kromhout will provide Bass Drum, Gong, and other specific mallets when necessary. You will have a locker to store your sticks/mallets in. You are responsible for replacing these items if they break (take care of them and they will last for MANY YEARS!) **Best bang for your buck option I could find was the “Liberty One Xavier University Stick Pack” on steveweissmusic.com.** If you would like to purchase materials separately here are the required items.

*1 Pair of Vic Firth American SD1 Drumsticks – General

*1 Pair of Rubber Xylophone Mallets

*1 Snare Drum Practice Pad (to keep at home/locker)

*1 Pair of Medium Yarn Marimba Mallets

*1 Pair of Medium Timpani Mallets

*1 Mallet Carrying Case

Required Books/Sheet Music:

Beginning band students are required to purchase the “Essential Elements Book 1” book for their instrument at Music and Arts. If students are not renting/buying their instrument from Music and Arts, please purchase the “Essential Elements Book 1” that aligns with the instrument they play.

Concert/Symphonic band students are required to purchase the “Foundations for Superior Performance” book for their instrument. This can be found on Amazon – just make sure it’s the right book for their instrument.

ALL students should PLAN to prepare a piece for Solo and Ensemble. Depending on the song, they may be required to buy the sheet music for their solo and/or ensemble with the piano part (Judges require an original score). We begin preparing for this event December/January and it takes place first week in April.

Performances:

Band is a performance-based class. Students are required to attend and participate in concerts throughout the year. These concerts are graded as a Summative Assessment. Students should arrive no later than call time and **are required to stay through the entire concert** (even if they are done playing).

Ms. Kromhout will provide advance notice of any concert coming up with multiple reminders. If for any reason a student/family has an emergency and will not be able to attend, a make-up assignment will be provided. It will be due 1 week after the concert date. *Please give Ms. Kromhout advance notice if you know you will not be able to attend*

Rehearsals:

All Bands will have 1 afterschool rehearsal before every semester concert (Fall, Spring, End of Year). This will be a summative assessment. Ms. Kromhout will provide advance notice of when they will take place and will provide multiple reminders.

Symphonic Band and Concert Bands - January-March will have a weekly after school rehearsal with breakout sessions in preparations for MPA (Music Performance Assessment). **These will be required and graded.**

JE1 will have regular after school rehearsals throughout the year. **JE2** will have after school rehearsals based on when we have gigs/concerts. **These will be formative grades.**

All afterschool rehearsals are subject to change. Ms. Kromhout will provide advance notice. **If your student is not able to attend an afterschool rehearsal Ms. Kromhout will need an email/letter from the parent**, not word of mouth. **Students that do not attend required rehearsals may not be allowed to participate in concerts (including concerts during field studies for UNF, MPAs, Festivals)** in which case, they will be given the Concert Make-Up assignment. Thank you for your understanding.

What is Rehearsal Etiquette/Classroom Behavior Expectations?

Students are graded during class time based on their Rehearsal Etiquette. This grade is made up of 2 points every day, which students can earn up to 10 points a week. **THIS GRADE CANNOT BE MADE UP.** Our limited time during class and rehearsals is extremely valuable. If a student is taking away this time from the entire band due to not being ready, and/or behavior, we cannot get it back.

Every week this grade is entered as a formative, then averaged as a summative at the end of the quarter. **This should be an easy 100%!** If you ever see that your student's rehearsal etiquette grade is dropping, PLEASE reach out! I will be more than happy to discuss what part of the expectations they are not meeting in class and how we can fix it moving forward.

Point 1 – Being Ready On Time

Students need their instrument every day. They will have 3 minutes from when the late bell rings to set up their instruments, make sure it is in playing condition (reed, lubed, working, etc...), get their music and a stand, and be in their seat ready to play. If a student comes in late, with a pass, it does not affect this grade.

Point 2 – Behavior During Rehearsal Time

Students are expected to be ready to play when Ms. K has horns up and counts off. Students are expected to be participating in band, sitting doing nothing is unacceptable. If Ms. K is working with another student or section, you are to be practicing your own part ie - fingerings, rhythms, note names. Students should not be on their phones, talking, walking around the room, creating distractions. When Ms. K cuts the band off, students are expected to stop playing. Students are expected NOT to play while Ms. K is talking or outside of the band room/in the hallways. There is no horseplaying in band, running around, screaming out, taking other belongings, going in other lockers, playing with instruments that are not yours.

Besides these actions resulting in a poor grade, they can and will escalate to referrals and possible expulsion from band if behavior continues. Students who have consistently low Rehearsal Etiquette Grades may not be allowed to come to “Open Practice”, “Band Lunch”, or get a pass to band during other class periods. They also may be asked not to participate in concerts, events, or other “fun” activities throughout the year! SO, check these grades often and hold your child accountable for their behavior! I am only an email away if you have ANY questions about why this portion of their grade is low and how we can work together to fix it for the betterment of the band program ☺

Practice/Listening Logs = Homework:

Practicing at home is required of all band students. It is the band students' homework. Students must start the assignment by thinking of and writing down a meaningful learning goal for their practicing. **Students should then practice for a minimum of 30 minutes a week outside of class time.** Practice can be scheduled at any point during the week that fits the student's schedule. Each week, students will complete the weekly “practice log” showing how much time they spent practicing and what they practiced each day. **Parents must sign off on the practice log for the student to earn points.**

Private lessons can count for practice log time! Time spent at open practice, diligently practicing, can also count towards this time, BUT Ms. K must be the one to sign off on time spent practicing during school hours.

Students will also need to fill out a Listening Log (on the weekly Practice Log document) for 30 minutes of listening to instrumental music a week. Listening to professional musicians is a great example for the students and helps them aim/focus on musical qualities they would like to work towards/incorporate into their own playing.

This can be ANY professional concert band, orchestra, instrumental soloist, jazz band, etc...

BUT they will need to include WHO/WHAT they listened to – the pieces/songs they played – AND their overall takeaway from listening.

Live Performances Also Count (and are worth extra credit if a program is attached to the homework)!!!

- Not Practicing/Listening at all will count as a 0 for the week.
- Continuous low levels of practice or failure to turn in practice records will result in additional contact with parents.
- Un-signed practice records will be returned to students as incomplete but will be graded once signed. **Students will have 1 week from the missing log date to have it signed and returned before it is counted as a 0 and will not be accepted.**

****If you are unable to practice due to illness, instrument is in the repair shop, family vacation/emergency, etc... you must indicate the reason AND turn in the weekly log with a parent signature. Failure to do such will result in a 0 for the week.****

Open Practice:

Practice is the best (and only) way to become a better musician. With varying circumstances around the logistics of bringing instruments home and practicing at home, Ms. Kromhout will have allotted Open Practice time. Open Practice time will be on specific days after school. Students/parents will need to arrange transportation home if they plan to attend these days.

This is open to all band students who maintain a good Rehearsal Etiquette grade and want to stay after school, practice, and get help from Ms. Kromhout. This is not a place or time to come after school and goof off/distract other students. Students will be provided 2 warnings before they are no longer welcome to attend for the remainder of the quarter. If this progresses after 2 quarters (4 warnings) students will no longer be welcomed to Open Practice for the remainder of the year (even if they “in class” behavior is fantastic).

****Ms. Kromhout is not responsible for your child during open practice time if they are not in the band room. I am happy to let you know though if they actually did come and practiced or not ☺****

BAND CALENDAR 2025-2026 School Year

**** All Dates Are Subject to Change – Ms. Kromhout WILL provide reminders of all dates and if changes occur ****

BB – Beginning Band CB – Concert Band SB – Symphonic Band JE1 -3rd Jazz Band JE2 – 6th Jazz Band

August 13th Booster Meeting and BB Instrument Fitting Night

August 21stBB Virtual Instrument Rental Night

September TBD ALL - Biannual Band Fundraiser

September 13thAll State Auditions @ Matanzas HS (Select Students Only)

October 17thBB/CB 8th Grade Band Night @ SAHS

November 20thBB/JE2 Fall Band Concert

November 21stCB/SB/JE1 Fall Band Concert

November/December TBDJE1 and JE2 Holly Jolly Trolly Gig

January 14th-17thAll-State/FMEA Convention (Select Students Only)

January TBDJE1 SJCCA Info Night (In Person)

January/February/MarchSB After School MPA Rehearsals

January 13th, 20th, 27th February 10th, 17th March 3rd

January/February TBDSJCSO MS Honor Band (Select Students Only)

February 4th or 5thJE1 Jazz MPA @ Creekside HS

February TBDSB/CB Pre-MPA Performance Field Trip @ UNF

February 26th.....BB/JE2 Fall Band Concert

February 27stCB/SB/JE1 Fall Band Concert

March 5th, 6th, or 7thSB/CB Concert MPA @ Beachside HS

March TBDJE1 Seafood Festival Gig

April 10th.....Band Solo and Ensemble Festival @ SAHS

April 11th.....JE1 Orange Blossom Jazz Festival

April 25th.....JE1 Lakeside Jazz Festival

April/May TBDJE1 Rehearsals with Jazz Alumni

May 14th.....BB/JE2 Fall Band Concert

May 15th.....CB/SB/JE1 Fall Band Concert

May TBDJE1 RJMMS Graduation Gig

Band Member and Parent/Guardian Handbook Acknowledgement:

Please complete/return this form to Ms. Kromhout and pay the Fair Share contribution by September 1st 2025

Families with more than one student in Band must complete and submit a SEPARATE form for each student.

We have read the R.J. Murray Middle School Band 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 working instrument or pay the instrument rental fee if they play an instrument the school rents out. (See handbook for lists)

We understand that there are a handful of performances and rehearsals outside the school day, and attendance at these performances and rehearsals will be required and are a Summative Assessment grade.

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

_____ 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 _____

Photos/Videos/Social Media – SJCCA uses social media to share some of the happenings in our programs with the parents and community. Please check here if you DO NOT want your child in SJCCA posts: _____

Band “Fair Share” Fee and School Owned Instrumental Rental Fee

The Band Fair Share Fee is \$125

****Parents who have multiple students in band need to submit multiple fair share payments. These parents will also need to sign and return multiple copies of this document.**

Please circle shirt size of band student. If you do not see your size, please write it to the side.

Youth Small Youth Medium Youth Large Youth XL Youth XXL

Adult Small Adult Medium Adult Large Adult XL Adult XXL

Women’s Small Women’s Medium Women’s Large Women’s XL Women’s XXL

No student will be denied the opportunity to participate in Band due to inability to pay the fair share fee. Please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Kromhout if you need to make a payment plan or are unable to pay.

School Owned Instrument Rental Fee is \$200

If your child is renting a school owned instrument, or plays percussion, there is a fee for maintenance/cleaning and minor repairs of the instruments.

****Instruments rented from the school includes: Tuba, Euphonium/Baritone, Bass Clarinet, Tenor Saxophone, Bari Saxophone, and Percussion (French Horns if there are extras)****

We understand students are still responsible for purchasing their instrument accessories – reeds, lubricants, drumsticks, mallets, practice pads, etc.

We understand the Instrument Rental Fee pays for routine and accidental damage to the instrument. If the instrument is lost, stolen, damaged over \$1000, or is unrepairable, the parent will be charged for the replacement/repair of the instrument.

Please Indicate Below:

My child is renting of the above instruments from Murray MS, and I need to pay the Instrument Rental Fee:

Yes: _____ No: _____ Instrument Needed: _____

Parent Signature(s): _____ #2: _____

One Fair Share Payment for every child in band + One School Owned Instrument Rental Fee for each instrument being rented (if applicable) = Total Amount Due

****Remember – Don’t allow ANY cost to scare you away from participating in our band program! Talk to Ms. Kromhout and we will ALWAYS work something out! “One Team, No Limits”****