

CITADEL MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Dear Parents/Guardians;

I am very pleased that your child has decided to join the Citadel Middle School music enrichment program. Practice times are at 7:45am Wednesday and Thursday for beginner band. Our first practice with instruments will be Wednesday Sept 23rdth. Thursday Sept 17th will be intro to basic note reading for new musicians.

Because of the high number of beginners this year, students are asked to come once a week in Sept. Wednesdays are for students with last names starting with A to Li, and Thursdays are for last names Lo to Z. You should ideally be available on both days, but If that day does not work, please let me know by e-mail. I may have to swap a few members if band balance is an issue.

All musicians must have their own instruments. If you want to rent an instrument, I suggest visiting Long & McQuade [Musical Instruments & Equipment Rentals | Long & McQuade \(long-mcquade.com\)](https://www.long-mcquade.com) You may also visit the store to pick up the instrument and an [Essential Elements Book 1](#).

I have a few pieces of advice that should make your year with a beginning musician run smoothly and more productively.

A well-maintained instrument will last longer and sound better than one that is mistreated. Please familiarize yourself with the care and maintenance of your child's instrument. There are plenty of You-tube videos out there to assist. Work with your child to assemble the instrument and put it back in the case carefully and familiarize yourself with any parts that may need replacing such as reeds or strings, and where to purchase them. Trumpet valves are tricky, be sure to only do one at a time. Guitar tuners are also a great purchase for beginning bass players.

Essential Elements has an interactive website where students and parents can get help with practicing and staying motivated. Information about band, practices, concerts etc. will be posted on Microsoft Teams.

Books and cases must be clearly labeled, as well as patch cords or straps. A fun luggage tag will also make your investment stand out in the crowd (every case is black) and be sure to have a phone number and address on the tag in case the instrument is recovered in some unexpected location.

Books need first and last name in big bold letters on the outside jacket, and the school name (Citadel Middle or École Citadel). **Please make sure everything is labeled before it comes to school.**

Practice is essential to making progress with a musical instrument. My suggestion is to start out slow, perhaps only 5-10 minutes a day for the first week each day to get the instrument assembled and make a note. Gradually build stamina to 20 minutes a day, 3-4 days a week. This process differs from child to child, but students should be practicing regularly if they want to improve. Practices should be fun as well, not a chore, so pick a time when the student can play freely and perhaps share what they have learned with an appreciative audience.

It is a difficult thing to play a new instrument, especially with woodwind and brass instruments. They may not sound quite like they do in the video at first. My Mom always went shopping between 4 and 4:30 PM when I was learning the tuba. The cat wasn't so lucky. Be encouraging through the "Squeak and Squawk" stage, remember it's only for a short period and it will get better. Be patient, have fun and don't give up!

I wish I had the time to teach every student privately for 30-45 minutes a week, but I don't have that luxury. It is expected that the students will do what they can to figure out the basics on their own or get some help outside of class. Some of our advanced band members will help, and I will be offering general tutorials to sections at lunch time as much as possible, but it will seem overwhelming at first. There are many great how-to videos online to get started. Take time to experiment with the instrument, mess around and have fun. When extra sectional practices are offered, be sure to attend. Private lessons are a great idea, but are not required, and there are too many great teachers out there for me to make any fair recommendation. Check out bulletin boards at music stores if you want to go this route.

Band practices are held twice a week starting at 7:45 AM. This year I will be grading students, so as a class it is expected that students attend all practices unless illness or emergency prevent it, and assignments be completed on time. Assessments will be on Teams to help keep track of progress. If your child cannot make practice, it is appreciated if you can send a quick e-mail to me as the office doesn't do attendance until 9am.

The course is year-round, so students should be prepared to be committed to the band until June. If a student wishes to withdraw from the course, please have this discussion sooner rather than later so accommodations can be made. Languishing with an instrument that isn't played or wanted is a difficult pattern to break once it becomes a habit.

Concert dates will be announced in class, on Teams and will be posted on the school website. I look forward to seeing everyone at our first concert and as always, I can be reached by e-mail at rgoring@sd43.bc.ca if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely yours,

R. Goring

Mr. Ralph Goring

Music and Band Instructor, Citadel Middle School.