



# Music Department

*COLD SPRING HARBOR CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT*

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## **JUNIOR HIGH MUSIC PROGRAM FAQ**

### **1. Are students required to study music in Junior High School?**

Yes. New York State Education Department regulations require that all Junior High School students study music in grade 7. In grade 8 students may choose between art and music.

To play an instrument in one of the High School performing ensembles (Band, Orchestra, Chorus), a student must participate in the respective Junior High School program.

### **2. What music courses are available at the Junior High School?**

Students may register for Band, Orchestra, Chorus or General Music. Band, Orchestra and Chorus are ensemble rehearsal classes during which students prepare repertoire for performance. General Music is an academic class with a focus on music literacy and history.

### **3. When do small group lessons occur for instrumentalists and vocalists to learn technique that is applied in the rehearsal classes?**

Similar to our elementary music programs, students will be scheduled for small group instruction (SGI) once every 6 day cycle. These lessons will rotate over 6 periods, with make-up times readily available if students are unable to make their scheduled lesson. As a result, students who make every scheduled lesson would only miss each class once a quarter.

### **4. Is small group instruction (SGI) required of all students enrolled in ensemble classes?**

Yes. The purpose of the small group instruction is to provide an opportunity for students to learn the instrumental and vocal techniques necessary for successful performance in an ensemble rehearsal. Rehearsal classes range from 40 to 120 students making it impossible for the music teacher to focus on individual student technique that is crucial to the ensemble's success as a performance group. The small group instruction period is organized by instrument/voice part and proficiency level to allow the teacher to focus directly on individual student need. Students will be required to make a percentage of lessons offered throughout each quarter in order to receive full credit.

### **5. How are music classes assigned to students?**

Students who participated in Band or Orchestra in elementary school are registered for the same instrumental ensemble for 7th Grade. It is important that parents support their

children in continuing to study their instrument through the 7th Grade. Students who join ensemble groups benefit from the sense of community fostered through performance opportunities.

Students who did not study an instrument but were enthusiastic members of the chorus have been recommended for Chorus by their elementary music teacher. The 7th Grade Chorus is an ensemble group that includes students from 8th Grade and contributes to the sense of community essential to the Junior High environment.

Students who did not study an instrument and did not demonstrate interest in the choral experience in elementary school have been recommended to General Music 7 by their elementary music teacher.

**6. How is the 7th Grade Band and Orchestra experience different from elementary school?**

Band and orchestra rehearsals are scheduled during the school day at the Junior High School. Students attend in-school rehearsals every other day and are scheduled for SGI once every 6 day cycle.

**7. How is the 7th Grade Choral experience different from elementary school?**

The seventh grade choral experience is now identical to the instrumental ensembles. Rehearsals are scheduled during the school day at the Junior High School. Students attend in-school rehearsals every other day and are scheduled for SGI once every 6 day cycle.

**8. Can students study both instrumental and choral music?**

Yes! Students who play an instrument may also join the Chorus. They will rehearse once a week on the last day of each cycle. Chorus and instrumental lessons will also be part of the required curriculum, however students will attend these on an every-other-cycle basis (ie. Week 1, Day 1 – Band Lesson; Week 2, Day 1 – Chorus Lesson).

**9. Can students begin the study of an instrument, or switch music ensembles, when entering 7th Grade?**

Due to staffing constraints, there are no beginning instrumental lessons at the Junior High School. Generally speaking, if a student has not studied an instrument in elementary school, they cannot register for an instrumental ensemble. Exceptions to this can occur only if a child studies privately and performs a successful audition at the appropriate NYSSMA Level. Contact the ensemble teacher in advance to provide you with guidance on preparing your child for such an audition.

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Band – [bchiarello@csh.k12.ny.us](mailto:bchiarello@csh.k12.ny.us); [gfelker@csh.k12.ny.us](mailto:gfelker@csh.k12.ny.us)

Orchestra – [tjenks@csh.k12.ny.us](mailto:tjenks@csh.k12.ny.us)

**10. If a student discontinues ensemble instruction in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade to join General Music, can this student rejoin an ensemble group in the future?**

No. The ensemble groups (band, orchestra, chorus) are incorporated in a larger program of study. Students who miss even one year of instruction will be significantly behind their peers. Experience tells us that most students do not re-enter an ensemble once leaving. However, if a student performs a successful audition for the instrumental ensemble teacher, that student may register for the ensemble.

**11. How do students get instruments?**

Parents are required to rent or purchase smaller instruments from a local music store. A list of stores will be provided by the music faculty who can also provide parents with information regarding what to look for in a quality instrument. Consult a member of the music faculty prior to purchasing an instrument online or from a local store.

**12. How do students purchase an instrument?**

Most importantly, do not purchase an instrument without first contacting the student's current music teacher. The instrument market is flooded with inexpensive and inadequate instruments of very poor quality. For example, one company uses a cheap alloy that renders the valves on trumpets and euphoniums unplayable because they tarnish, leak, and get stuck. Instrumental teachers are an invaluable resource for providing input on purchasing an instrument. Our music teachers are more than happy to be part of the process of this important decision.

**13. What opportunities exist for auditioned, more advanced instrumental and vocal ensembles?**

There are 2 auditioned ensemble groups in the Junior High School:

Junior High Jazz band (7,8) Pit Orchestra (7,8)

Information regarding the audition dates can be obtained by our Junior High music staff.

Other performing opportunities for vocal students include the Junior High Musical.

**14. How many performances can students expect to participate in?**

Students must perform in the two major concert seasons, Winter and Spring. All concerts take place in the Junior/Senior High School PAC.

If your child's ensemble teacher participates in NYSSMA Majors Festival at Hofstra University in May, your child is required to attend. The performance takes place during the school day and transportation is provided by the District.

The junior high ensembles also perform each Spring at the Trills and Thrills Music Festival, where the students will get performance feedback from highly qualified adjudicators, and enjoy an afternoon at Six Flags Great Adventure following the performance.

To allow as many performance opportunities as possible for students, teachers have the discretion of scheduling additional performances, as appropriate. Your child's teacher will inform you in advance when these additional performances are required.

**15. Should students continue to practice over the summer?**

Yes! An entire year of gains on an instrument is erased within two months of not touching an instrument. Practicing on one's own, tutoring with a private teacher, involvement in a summer program and reviewing the year's work over the summer is highly recommended.

**16. Do music teachers provide extra help to students?**

Yes! Outside of SGI, music teachers will provide information on their extra help hours at the beginning of the school year and post these hours on their teacher web page. Music teachers will also provide some input and small group instruction during extra help hours to students who participate in NYSSMA Solo Festival.

**17. What can parents do to help students succeed in music?**

Continually encourage your child to practice and play for you-every musician loves an audience! You can give positive feedback. You don't even have to know how to play an instrument to provide this strong motivation for practice.

Set up a convenient place and consistent time to practice.

Remind him/her to bring his/her instrument and music to school on rehearsal days.

If finances allow, consider providing private instruction. The school music faculty can provide a list of local area teachers and businesses that provide this service.