

Fifth Grade Band Welcome Letter

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to fifth grade! My name is Amanda Purcell and I am the fifth grade band teacher for the Caesar Rodney School District. I am in my fourth year of teaching for CR and in my eighth year of teaching in Delaware. I am a CR graduate myself (class of '09!) and I am excited to be teaching our younger Riders all about band.

Students will be learning about being in the band and the different instrument choices over the next few weeks. I am providing "exploratory music" lessons to students once a week to introduce them to the instruments. The goal is to help students understand their different options so that they can pick an instrument they love if they do decide to join the band.

Band lessons will be starting the week of November 9th-13th. Students will receive one 30-minute lesson during the week. These lessons will take place during the school day, so there are no before or after school obligations. The schedule will be completed once students have signed up for band, and more details will be given out prior to lessons starting.

Band lessons will be given virtually once they start in November. There are studies still being completed about the potential spread of aerosols produced by instruments, so we are taking precautions at this time by not having lessons in person. Once we have more data, we can revisit the idea of having band lessons in person at school.

We will be having a virtual Fifth Grade Band Info Meeting on October 14th, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. This will take place over Zoom, and we will have a representative from Music & Arts with us that night. He will be able to explain the instrument rental or purchase process. We will also cover more details about what the band program will look like this year at this meeting, so it is **highly encouraged** that you attend if your child is interested in joining the band program.

On the following pages there are FAQs that I put together based on questions from past years. If you have any other questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I am working from home until we transition to hybrid learning, so the best way to reach me is email at amanda.purcell@cr.k12.de.us. Information can also be found on my website at <https://sites.google.com/cr.k12.de.us/ms-purcells-fifth-grade-band/home>.

Thank you for your support, and I look forward to getting started with band lessons for the school year!

Musically Yours,

Ms. Purcell

Fifth Grade Band FAQs

Q: How do I sign my child up for band?

- A. There will be **two ways** to sign up for band this year. I will have a **Google Form** to fill out online for you to sign your child up. This link can be found on my band website (<https://sites.google.com/cr.k12.de.us/ms-purcells-fifth-grade-band/home>), and I will be asking the fifth grade teachers to share it on their remote learning template as well. For anyone who would rather sign up on paper, I will have **paper copies** available at the school for you to pick up and fill out. It can be given to the front office staff once completed. The sign up form will be available **after the virtual meeting on 10/14**.

Q. Where do I get an instrument?

- A. It is **highly recommended** that you rent or purchase an instrument from **Music & Arts**, our local music store. It is located on Route 13 between Voshells Mill-Star Hill Road and Route 10. They are a reputable business and you are guaranteed to receive a high quality instrument if you purchase or rent from them. If you decide to look elsewhere, be aware that there are many “instruments” out there that are made from cheap materials and will not function properly or last long before breaking. A safe tip is “if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!”

Q. What if I already have an instrument for my child?

- A. If you have an instrument to use from an older sibling, family member, friend, etc., then I recommend taking it to Music & Arts as soon as possible. They will be able to clean it and fix anything on it prior to students starting lessons. It is important that students have a good instrument to learn on because it is very frustrating trying to play an instrument in poor shape!

Q. Does the school district provide instruments for students?

- A. Unfortunately, we do not have the ability to provide instruments for students. The rental program at Music & Arts is often an affordable option. This option allows you to pay smaller amounts each month until the instrument is paid off. Then you get to keep it! The monthly amount varies between instruments, and we will have more information on pricing at the **Fifth Grade Band Info Meeting on 10/14**.

Q. Does my child need to have any prior experience before joining the band?

- A. No prior experience is required. I will teach them how to put it together, how to hold it, how to make their first sounds, and anything else we may cover in the first year.

Q. Will my child have an opportunity to play the instruments before making a decision?

- A. If you have attended one of our instrument petting zoo nights in the past, you know we typically offer a chance for students to try the instruments to help them make a decision. Unfortunately we will not be able to hold this event this year. Although we do sanitize the instruments between students, we do not want to take any chances this year. Students will be learning about the instruments in my “exploratory music” lessons to help them make a decision.

Q. Will there be any performances this year?

- A. As of now, in-person concerts throughout the district are cancelled through February. We are looking at the possibility of providing virtual performances for the community. We will revisit the possibility of in-person spring performances in the second half of the school year.

Q. What if my child wants to switch their instrument?

- A. If your child decides they want to switch from the instrument they put on the sign up form **prior to lessons starting**, please let me know as soon as possible so I can ensure that they are placed in the correct lesson group. If your child is interested in switching to another instrument **later in the school year**, please reach out to me so we can discuss options together. It is best to stick with one instrument for the duration of the school year to really give it a try, but I am willing to discuss the possibility of switching if it doesn't seem to be working out.

Q. What if my child decides they are no longer interested in participating in band?

- A. If your child decides they no longer wish to be a part of the band, please let me know. There is no formal process to be removed from band, but I do like to know when a student plans to leave the program so I know why they are no longer attending lessons. Students are of course encouraged to finish out the first year to try and have the whole experience, but I know sometimes it does not work out for one reason or another. I am glad that students at least give it a try!