VISTA MURRIETA

Instrumental Music Department



Questions & Answers

Information Packet for 8th Graders

Building People through Performance

Passion • Respect • Integrity • Discipline • Excellence

MARCHING BAND

Are you an 8th grader trying to decide which path you will take in high school?

Are you a parent of an 8th grader that wants your child to have a place of belonging and success at Vista Murrieta?

There is no better place to feel like part of a family, with unprecedented success in performance and academics, all while having the time of your life, than in the Vista Murrieta HS Marching Band!

MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS

OF MARCHING BAND

The VMHS Band practices too much and I won't have enough time...

The VMHS Band schedule is similar to other sports and club activities on campus. Generally, we limit after school rehearsals to just eight hours a week.

I want to take AP/Dual Enrollment classes. Band is not going to give me enough time...

Almost every upperclassman in the VMHS Band is enrolled in at least one Advanced Placement or Dual Enrollment class. Some of our students even take up to six AP and Dual Enrollment classes while also being a member of the marching band. Our expectation is that our students are "student performers" and expect our students to maintain the highest academic standing. Many of our students find themselves ranked toward the top of their class. One of the advantages of being in the program is that you have access to other band students who can tutor you in all academic subjects.

Marching band takes up every weekend in the fall...

This is not true. We limit Saturday rehearsals to just 3 or 4 for the entire semester. We do 4 to 5 competitions on Saturdays from early October to late November. There are also approximately 6 Friday night home football games that all members are required to attend.

I want to join other clubs/organizations/athletics so I can't do band...

We have students in almost every sport, club, and activity on campus. That doesn't mean we don't occasionally encounter an unavoidable conflict. The important thing is to communicate with us early so we can help find a solution.

Marching band is WAY too hard. There is no way I can do it...

Just like anything that is new to you, marching band gets easier as you gain more experience. The staff, student leaders, and your personally assigned mentor are all excellent teachers and are here to help you. Every year we have a huge number of freshmen join the band and every year we have been great! You can do it!

THE BENEFITS

OF MARCHING BAND

Physical Health

The marching band is a physical activity that allows every student the opportunity to become physically fit while also teaching lifelong proactive health strategies.

Mental Health

Marching band is a positive and uplifting activity that encourages the growth of every student's self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-worth. It allows students to feel part of something bigger than themselves and contribute to a team. It allows for the opportunity to meet new people, make new friends, and build positive relationships with teachers and other adult mentors.

Academic Success

The VMHS Band Directors have high academic expectations and standards for their students. Directors conduct regular grade checks and help students develop strategies that will help lead to their success.

Social Health

Students develop relationships, meet other students they can recognize in their core classes, and are regularly put in positions where they have to communicate and advocate for themselves. These are important life skills that our program helps students to develop.

FAQ

Are freshmen required to be in marching band?

No. However, students who do not participate in the marching band not only miss out on an important part of the overall high school experience, but also miss out on hours of additional instruction. Participation in marching band helps music students connect with their peers and our program's culture.

Can I get PE credit for marching band?

All 9th graders must take PE 9 or ROTC to fulfill their freshman year PE requirement. After your freshmen year, students will receive PE credit for each semester of participation in Marching Band and therefore will not have to enroll in PE. This allows students to take an extra elective class that they want to take. It is just one of the many benefits to being a member of the marching band.

Band is too expensive; we can't afford it...

Our program is mostly funded through donations from participating families and fundraising opportunities our booster club provides. No child should choose to not be a part of band due to a lack of finances. We ALWAYS find a way to help families make it work.

I'm an oboe/bassoon player. What instrument should I play for marching band?

All double reed students get to pick what instrument they want to play during marching season. Front Ensemble Percussion is a common choice. However, we ask that you reach out to us or talk with your middle school director for advice.

I play French horn/mellophone, trombone, euphonium, or tuba and I don't own a marching instrument...

Don't worry! We rent marching instruments to you at the start of the summer so you can begin practicing on those new instruments. If anyone needs to rent any instrument, we have plenty available. Contact Mr. Wade for details: dwade@murrieta.k12.ca.us

Will I be a participating member regardless of my ability level?

Yes. Everyone participates based on their skill set and readiness. There is a range of earned positions and responsibilities. At the discretion of the directors and staff, some may be required to start the season as an "Alternate". See the next FAQ below for more details.

What are "Alternates"?

Known as "understudies" in the theatrical world, alternates are those that need more time and experience in order to physically march and play on the field. However, alternates perform at all PreGame, Pep Band, and Parade performances. In order to increase participation, alternates may be asked to try another instrument or help with props/sound equipment. As the season progresses, an alternate may receive a permanent position if another member is injured, academically ineligible, or otherwise unable to continue. It is quite common that we end the season with no alternates and all members possessing a performance spot. However, it remains situational and somewhat unpredictable.

Do I have to attend marching band summer camps?

Yes. Summer marching band camps are required for all marching band members.

During these camps, students, especially incoming freshmen, learn and develop the fundamental skills, techniques, and teamwork necessary to be successful throughout the marching band season. Just as importantly, summer camps establish our band's culture, expectations, and traditions. Students build meaningful relationships with their fellow section members, student leadership, and staff, creating the bonds and sense of community that are vital not only to a successful season but also to a positive and rewarding band experience.

There are two required summer camp sessions: the first two weeks immediately after school gets out and the two weeks immediately before school starts. Please review the summer camp schedule and plan family vacations and other summer activities around these required dates. Students who do not attend summer camps will automatically start the season as alternates.

Do concert only or jazz band members need to attend summer camp?

No. There are no summer camps required for concert or jazz members.

PERCUSSION

MARCHING BAND & INDOOR: A YEAR-ROUND SUBSET

SUMMER & FALL (OUTDOOR): Percussion is part of the marching band. Please see the marching band description page.

WINTER & SPRING (INDOOR): Our Indoor Percussion Ensemble is a subset of the music program and has its own competitive performance schedule.
Visit: vistamurrieta.org

All students in the marching percussion section participate in one of two areas:

BATTERY - Instruments that are worn on the body: Snare, Tenors, Bass, and Tom. Selection is by audition and the audition process includes playing as well as movement/marching.

FRONT ENSEMBLE - Also called "The Pit" (termed from an orchestra pit), are instruments that are stationary: Marimba, Vibraphone, Xylophone, Synthesizer (Piano), Timpani, Glockenspiel, Crotales, etc.

Membership for both battery and front ensemble is earned through an annual audition during late April/early May. Positions are held for a full year. Any changing of positions midyear will be at the discretion of the percussion staff. There are no "challenges" or re-auditions.

If you have any questions, please contact our percussion director:
Mike Jackson
mike@jacksonpercussion.com

CONCERT BAND PERCUSSION: All percussionists must be enrolled in a concert band class. Please see the concert band description page.

COLOR GUARD

MARCHING BAND & INDOOR: A YEAR-ROUND SUBSET

SUMMER & FALL (OUTDOOR): The color guard is part of the marching band. Please see the marching band description page.

WINTER & SPRING (INDOOR): We typically have two separate indoor color guards (Varsity & JV) that compete in local and national level competitions. Our indoor color guards are a subset of the music program and have their own competitive performance schedule.
Visit: vistamurrietasapphires.org

Membership is earned through an annual audition during late April/early May. Positions are held for a full year. A second audition is held in November to determine which Winter team (Varsity or JV) students will find the most success with. Any changing of positions midyear will be at the discretion of the color guard staff.

If you have any questions, please contact:
Sergio Marquez Johnson
smarquez@murrieta.k12.ca.us

TENTATIVE 2027 CALENDAR

MARCHING BAND

February

18 Incoming 9th Grade Band Student/Parent Information Meeting
@ Warm Springs Middle School MPR (only attend one meeting)

22 Incoming 9th Grade Band Student/Parent Information Meeting
@ Dorothy McElhinney Middle School MPR (only attend one meeting)

24 Current 9th-11th Grade Member Student/Parent Information Meeting or Make-up Meeting for Incoming 9th Grade Members @ VMHS Band Room 7pm

APRIL

13-15 Marching Band Marching Auditions 6pm – 8:30pm @ VMHS Basketball Courts
19-21 Concert Band Placement Auditions (Sign-Up for a Day/Time)
20-22 Color Guard Auditions @ VMHS 5-9pm
26-27 Marching Percussion Auditions @ VMHS Band Room 5-9pm
28 Jazz Band Auditions @ VMHS (Sign-Up for a Time)

MAY

4-6 Marching Band Kick-Off Camp 6pm – 9pm
6 *Required Parent Meeting 5/6 @ 7:00pm Followed by Student Performance
22 Band Registration (a parent/guardian must attend) 10am – 2pm

JUNE

7 Woodwind Night 6-8pm
7-11 Percussion Pre-Camp 6-9pm
8 Brass Night 6-8pm
8-11 Color Guard Leadership & New Members 5-9pm
9-11 Color Guard Weapons Camp 7-9pm
9-11 PreCamp for Winds - Hours TBA
14-18 June Camp 12pm – 9pm
19 June Camp Family Day 8am – 4pm Pancake Breakfast, Volunteer Sign-ups, Uniform Fittings, Merchandise Booth

JULY

26-30 SPA XXII Camp 12pm – 9pm

AUGUST

2-6 SPA XXII Camp 12pm – 9pm
7 SPA XXII Family Day 12pm-9pm (Food Truck Event W/Student Performance)
9 FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

FIRST SEMESTER WEEKLY ROUTINE*

Monday 4pm – 6pm
Tuesday 6pm – 9pm
Thursday 6pm – 9pm

* Certain weeks can be affected by holidays, football game anomalies, weather, etc. We will release an accurate schedule, giving you plenty of time plan for these minor shifts in routine, as soon as football and school dates have been finalized.

CONCERT BAND

THERE ARE 4 CONCERT ENSEMBLES & 1 CONCERT PERCUSSION CLASS ORGANIZED BY ABILITY LEVEL

WIND ENSEMBLE I - This is our top ensemble and is comprised of students with the highest musical ability in the organization. Wind Ensemble I is dedicated to the performance of the finest wind literature, without regard to era or difficulty. Membership in this ensemble is determined by audition.
Conductor: Mr. Wade

WIND ENSEMBLE II - This ensemble performs grade 4 and 5 literature. Membership in this ensemble is determined by audition.
Conductor: Mr. Wade

CONCERT BAND I - Comprised of mostly freshmen and sophomores, this ensemble explores traditional band literature, transcriptions, and contemporary works with a focus on skill development.
Conductor: Mr. Idell

CONCERT BAND II - Comprised of developing musicians of all levels, this ensemble explores traditional band literature with an emphasis on skill development in the areas of tone, intonation, and music literacy.
Conductor: Mr. Idell

Concert Percussion - Comprised of Concert Band I and Concert Band II percussionists as well as other instrumentalists interested in learning percussion, this ensemble explores fundamental percussion performance techniques through solo and ensemble percussion literature.

YEARLY PERFORMANCES

WINTER CONCERT - Features all four concert ensembles performing holiday and seasonal music. This concert is in the Vista Murrieta Performing Arts Center and is held in December the weekend before finals.

SOLO AND SMALL ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL - This is a judged festival experience for students performing a solo or chamber music as a member of a small ensemble. All members participate in this festival. This festival is held at VMHS, usually at the end of January or beginning of February.

PRE-FESTIVAL CLINIC CONCERT - Features all four concert groups working with guest conductors in preparation for festival. This clinic/concert is held at VMHS and is held at the end of February or early March.

CONCERT BAND FESTIVAL - This is a judged festival experience featuring all four concert groups. This festival is held at VMHS, usually in mid-March.

BLUE TEAM DISTRICT CONCERT - This concert is held in the VMHS gym and typically features Wind Ensemble I along with all the "Blue Team" elementary and middle school band programs. This concert is usually in April.

SPRING CONCERT - This is our final concert of the year and is held in mid or late May where we feature all four concert ensembles. This concert is held in the VMHS Performing Arts Center.

JAZZ BAND

THERE ARE 2 JAZZ ENSEMBLES ORGANIZED BY ABILITY LEVEL

BEGINNING/INTERMEDIATE JAZZ BAND
ADVANCED JAZZ BAND

All 3 of these ensembles meet during the regular instructional day throughout the whole school year. Students in the jazz program are required to be enrolled in concert band.

Each band participates in several jazz festivals, community events, and school events throughout the year.

Freshmen CAN take jazz band, concert band, and marching band all at the same time. As a matter of fact, many of our freshmen do!

If you have any questions, please contact our jazz director:
Mr. Regier
dregier@murrieta.k12.ca.us