



Dear IHM Students and Families,

August 2025

Are you looking for an activity that is rewarding and fun? Or do you want to be more well-rounded and part of a team? We invite you to join our beloved IHM BAND under the direction of Mrs. Ashlee Bickraj.

This is “Mrs. B’s” 25th year teaching music, and her 12th year here at IHM. Mrs. B. graduated from Penn State University with a B.S. in Music Education and an emphasis in Instrumental Music. She has a Masters Degree in Teaching with an emphasis in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment from Marygrove College in Michigan, as well as PreK-12 Certification in Music for the state of Maryland.

Mrs. B. loves our Band, and she is always eager to share her enthusiasm to help bring out the musical potential in every student!!

We have 3 bands at IHM. Students in Grades 4-8 are eligible to participate:

- ★ Eaglet Beginner Band (1st year players with no prior experience, any grade level)
- ★ Eagle 5-6 Concert Band (for grades 5-6 with at least one year experience in band or lessons)
- ★ Eagle 7-8 Concert Band (for grades 7-8 with at least one year experience in band or lessons)

Please choose from the following Instruments:

Flute, Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, Euphonium, 4-string Electric Bass Guitar*, Glockenspiel, Keyboard (limited spots, prior experience required), and Drums (will play both Snare Drum & Bass Drum, and occasional Auxiliary Percussion)

* must be purchased, cannot be rented

Need an Instrument? Instruments can be borrowed from a friend/family member, or purchased/rented from a local music store (Menchey, Music & Arts, Guitar Center, etc.) and many offer low-cost or free trial periods, with a rent-to-own option, and free maintenance/repair. If purchasing online or at a music vendor, please be sure it is a reputable vendor that sells good quality instruments. Children will undoubtedly struggle if their instrument is broken, has leaks, bent keys, old pads, bent valves, or lacks overall good playing condition. A music store can look it over and offer advice or make the needed repairs to ensure a positive musical experience.

IMPORTANT CALENDAR DATES:

Friday, August 22 - Meet & Greet - Mrs. B will have a table - BAND SIGN-UPS (online)

Saturday, Sept. 13 at 11:59 PM - LAST DAY to SIGN-UP for Band!! (please submit the Cognito Form on Mrs. Bickraj's teacher website, located under the "Band" tab)

Monday, September 15 - BAND SCHEDULE POSTED in Homerooms and on Mrs. B's website. Band Days will be **Tuesday or Thursday** (depending on child's grade level), and will operate during the school day on a rotating 30 minute pull-out time schedule. Students will have Band every week for 30 mins during the day (not the same time every week - so please check the Band Schedule).

Band Schedule info: On *Monday, September 15*, Mrs. B. will post the first Band Schedule indicating which day/time your band rehearsal will be. The Band Schedule will change/rotate weekly – it will be **posted on Mrs. B's teacher website every Tuesday morning** (parents can look under the "Band" tab) and it will also be posted **on every homeroom bulletin board** Tuesday mornings (students can look when they get to school), as well as outside the Main Office, near the 7th grade homerooms, and upstairs on the Band Closet door.

Tuesday, Sept. 16 - BRING INSTRUMENTS - Rehearsals begin this week! **Please bring your Instrument AND Folding Music Stand** to the Band Storage Closet (located upstairs) during morning Homeroom upon arrival to school. Instruments can remain upstairs, or the student can pick them up during afternoon Homeroom to take home for practice. Please check the Band Schedule each week for your rehearsal time since it will rotate throughout the day.

Thursday, May 20, 2026 - SPRING BAND CONCERT - 1:30 PM (for the school) and 6:30 PM (for family/friends) **PLEASE Save this Date.. it is our most exciting event of the year!!!**

Band members will wear: Navy-blue Band T-Shirt with School Uniform Bottoms.

If you need a Band T-shirt, you can order it via the Cognito Sign-up Form.

**** PLEASE NOTE:** All 1st-year Band members are required to order the Navy-blue Band Shirt ******

BAND FEE AND SUPPLIES NEEDED:

IHM Band Fee: The Band lesson/rehearsal fee will remain at \$590 for the year (\$60 per month). This includes a \$50 non-refundable deposit paid with the registration, with the remaining \$540 added to your FACTS account. Payments can be set up monthly, quarterly, or pay in full. The online Sign-Up Form/Contract will serve as your Band Contract detailing which payment plan you have selected (the Cognito Form can be found on Mrs. Bickraj's website, under the Band tab).

Instrument Fee: The cost to rent/purchase an instrument, as well as personal supplies (reeds, cork grease, etc.) is **NOT** included in this price. Instruments must be acquired outside of school (rental, borrow, purchase from store, etc.). All sheet music, scales, and music folders will be provided by IHM.

Please be sure to have: (bring to school on **Sept. 16** and put everything upstairs)

- Your Instrument - must be in a case (labeled with your name)
- Folding Lightweight Portable Music Stand (can be any color, labeled with your name)
- Required Personal Items (see below)

Band Personal Items: In addition to your instrument, these items are available for purchase at a music store or online vendor:

Flute - purchase/rent a Flute, buy Cork Grease, a Cleaning Cloth and Metal Cleaning Rod (to swab moisture inside the Flute), Folding Music Stand, and optional Polishing Cloth (to shine)

Clarinet - purchase/rent a Clarinet, buy a Clarinet Mouthpiece Brush (to wash at home), Silk Yamaha Cleaning Swab, Cork Grease, Folding Music Stand, and Bb Clarinet Reeds – Eaglets need Rico (brand) with 2 strength; and Eagles need Rico or Vandoren (brand) with 2.5 or 3 strength. Please be sure to always have extra reeds in your case, as they can easily break/split. Be sure to purchase reeds for the “Bb (B-flat) Clarinet” (not the Eb).

Alto Saxophone - purchase/rent a Saxophone, buy a Sax Mouthpiece Brush (to wash at home), a Fuzzy Pad-Saver Swab for moisture (looks like a fuzzy stick), Cork Grease, Folding Music Stand, and Alto Sax Reeds – Eaglets need Rico (brand) with 2 strength; and Eagles need Rico or Vandoren with 2.5 strength. Please be sure to have extra reeds in your case, as they can easily break/split. Be sure to purchase reeds for the “Alto” Saxophone. Also, make sure your saxophone has a neck strap.

Trumpet - purchase/rent a Trumpet, buy a Bottle of Valve Oil (not Blue Juice), Folding Music Stand, and a very small Trumpet Mouthpiece Brush (to wash at home).

Trombone - purchase/rent a Trombone, buy a Low Brass Mouthpiece Brush (to wash at home), Trombone Slide Cream (the cream, not the oil), a Travel-size Spray Bottle (at Target, Walmart, grocery store - this is for spraying the Slide with water), and a Folding Music Stand

Euphonium - purchase/rent a Euphonium, buy a Bottle of Valve Oil (not Blue Juice), a Low Brass Mouthpiece Brush (to wash at home), and a Folding Music Stand,

Bass Guitar - purchase a 4-string Electric Bass Guitar (preferably Fender or Squire - not Ibanez brand), a Fender Frontman 10G Amp (small, works well), 10-ft Guitar Cable ¼" (to plug guitar into the amp), a Bass Guitar Shoulder Strap (any color) with 2-piece "Strap Locks" (to lock the shoulder strap into the guitar), a Snark (brand) Digital Clip-On Guitar Tuner (must say 'for Guitar'), a Soft Carrying Bag for easy transport (with shoulder strap), and a Folding Music Stand.

Glockenspiel (sometimes called Bells) - purchase/rent a Glockenspiel from "All About Music" store (has labeled notes) or rent/buy from a music store or online vendor. Also needed: Vic Firth M14 Mallets (plastic - these often come with the Bell Kit), and a Folding Music Stand

Percussion - purchase/rent a Snare Drum, a Folding Music Stand, and size 5A Drum Sticks. Please note: Music Stores sometimes sell/rent a combination "Snare Drum & Bell Kit Bag." This is not needed unless you decide to play BOTH the Snare Drum *and* the Glockenspiel – otherwise just ask for the single Snare Drum or single Glockenspiel. Please remember that Percussionists are well-rounded and will be expected to learn the Snare Drum and Bass Drum (Bass Drum is provided at school), as well as other school-provided instruments such as Cymbals, Congas, Tambourine, Triangle, Gong, etc., on a rotating schedule for each piece of music (we wear many hats!).

OTHER INFORMATION:

Performance Attire: For the Daytime/Evening Concerts, Band members wear our navy-blue IHM Band T-shirt with school uniform bottoms. Subtle jewelry and hair accessories are permitted for the concert. We want our musicians to look nice and act like young professionals!

Band T-shirts: In the Spring, we will place an order for the navy-blue IHM Band T-shirt. The cost is \$11.00 and will be collected with the Band Deposit/Contract on the Cognito Form. These shirts can be worn on IHM Spirit Days and will be worn for our concert performances. If you still have your T-shirt from last year and it's acceptable in size and condition, you do not need to order again. All students who are new to the Band are required to order a shirt on the Cognito form during sign-up.

Participation/Communication: Because Band is a team effort, we rely on each and every person!! We do not have a "bench" or "second string" to cover for a missing member. Everyone plays, all the time. Therefore, attendance at rehearsals and concerts is expected.

Please know that Mrs. B is eager to problem-solve and make things better for everyone – do not hesitate to reach out with a question or concern! Adherence to school rules and best

behavior are expected at ALL times. Additionally, instruments must be in good working order for rehearsal each week. Students are not allowed to play anyone else's instrument or borrow someone else's music or supplies. Band members are representing IHM, and therefore, must act respectfully, responsibly, and be supportive towards others!

Schedule Conflicts? Students are responsible for coming to their assigned Band time each week. Mrs. B will try to assist to make sure the student gets to Band. Students are expected to check with their classroom teacher before coming to Band so they can get any announcements or required assignments. Importantly, if there is a conflict with your band time (i.e. important project/test/review, etc.), the student is **required** to come check with Mrs. B during **morning homeroom of their Band Day** (come to the Gym lobby) so that Mrs. B. can arrange an alternate time to attend Band that day. If an extenuating circumstance arises, parents can email Mrs. Bickraj right away and we will try to accommodate or find an alternative time/solution. Please note, there are NO after-school or weekend rehearsals.

Practice at Home: Students are expected to practice at home and make progress on their instrument using the techniques and suggestions learned at school. Please do not leave your instrument at school all year and expect to get better! Music is a skill that takes patience and practice. We are all very busy, but even 5 or 10 minutes a day can help! :)

BAND SIGN-UPS:


*** Ready to Sign Up? *** Congratulations! Please submit the Cognito Form on Mrs. B's website to let us know that you would like to join our Band. **To access Mrs. B's website, go to:** ihmschoolmd.org → About Us → Faculty & Staff → Click Ashlee Bickraj → Click the "Band" tab → fill out the Cognito Form)

Click here: [Cognito Band Sign-Up Form](#)

Questions? Mrs. B. will be available at Meet & Greet in August, and also via e-mail: abickraj@ihmschoolmd.org

Thank you for your interest and support of the IHM Band Program!!

Ashlee L. Bickraj
Band Director & Music Teacher

 MUSIC IS A LIFELONG AND ENRICHING ACTIVITY. WE CAN'T WAIT TO HAVE YOU JOIN OUR MUSICAL TEAM!! LET'S GO BAND!!! 