

J.W. Mitchell HS Music & Colorguard Course Info

Josh Hobbs, Band Director

Drake Middlebrook, Orchestra Director & Assoc. Band Director

Deanna Cheyne, Chorus Director



Band Students: Current 8th graders should sign up for Band 1 on their course sheet. Percussionists will all be placed into the Percussion class by signing up for Band 1. Any 8th graders wanting to audition for our advanced ensembles can audition in May. The music will go out through the SSMS band directors. All band students participate in the marching band and the concert bands through their band class. There are camps over the summer for everyone to jump start the marching band season.

Colorguard Students: New colorguard members should sign up for the colorguard 1 class (Eurhythmics 1). We have an outstanding colorguard program that meets during the day as a class. Prior dance training IS encouraged but not required. We accept all members but placements within the ensemble happen during an audition over the summer. This is excellent for anyone wanting a fun yet competitive performing arts experience.

Jazz Ensemble: This is a co-curricular course and students must also be enrolled in a band class. We place students in the bands based on their auditions during the first week of school. This is for students that play saxophone, trumpet, trombone, percussion, bass or guitar. You can start jazz on a secondary instrument but we prefer that you start that instrument over the summer.

Orchestra: Our music program supports one of the only orchestra programs in Pasco County. Violins and violas are rented from a local music shop but cellos and basses will be provided in limited quantities. 8th graders should sign up for "Orchestra 1" on their course cards. Auditions for the advanced ensemble will take place in May, with music distributed through the SSMS music teachers.

Chorus: Our chorus has grown significantly in number and quality in the past 3 years. Mrs. Deanna Cheyne teaches this course. The ensemble explores a wide range of repertoire and is intended for students with little or no experience all the way up through well experienced vocalists. Direct any questions to dcheyne@pasco.k12.fl.us

Keyboard Classes: These classes are offered to for those who want to begin or continue learning piano. Piano keyboards are be provided and students do not need previous experience to enter these classes. Band, orchestra and chorus students pursuing a music track for college are encouraged to take piano before graduation.

AP Music Theory: This is highly recommended for anyone who may pursue music past high school. This is an AP course so it requires excellent study skills. It can be taken as a Sophomore if you have AP experience and good grades but we prefer that it is taken in the Junior year. This is the analysis of written music and the science of music. The pass rate for this class at Mitchell is above the state and national average. Band, orchestra and chorus students pursuing a music track for college are encouraged to take AP Theory during their time with us.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Can I take band and be in AP classes? ABSOLUTELY! As with anything, good time management is necessary, but many of Mitchell's highest achievers in academics are in band.

Can I be in ROTC or play school sports, be in clubs and be in band? OF COURSE! We have had band students in every single activity on campus. We have great relationships with our coaches and instructors. Good communication and planning ahead makes this 100% possible. There are only a few things (varsity football and cheer) that conflict with our main marching band schedule, but those students can conference with the band directors and still easily participate in band.

Do I have to sign up for marching band separately? No, all students participate with the marching band as part of our class. If you are medically unable to participate please talk with us privately or email us and we'd be happy to find a solution that allows you to be in band.

I don't play an instrument, can I be in band? Yes, but we would require that you begin private lessons and study independently for a year. Otherwise we encourage you to join our colorguard, chorus or piano classes.

Is band hard? Just like anything you want to be successful at, it does take practice, but the experiences we share are extremely rewarding. So many of our students go on to be better students, musicians and people because of their time here. If you participated in middle school band you can be successful in high school band!

Does the school provide instruments? Yes, we provide larger horns like tubas, french horns, euphoniums, bari and tenor saxes, bass clarinets, bassoons, oboes, mellophones, baritones, sousaphones, cellos, double basses and percussion equipment. Flutes, clarinets, alto saxes, violins, violas, and trumpets are rented or owned by students.

Do Music Electives cost money? There is a flat Fairshare fee paid by all members in the high school band, colorguard and orchestra. The amount is very achievable and we hold dozens of fundraising opportunities. We have never excluded someone from band or guard for financial reasons. Piano classes do not have fees outside of the school registration fees. Jazz ensemble and AP music theory do not require any additional fees.

I played in beginning/intermediate band/orchestra/chorus last year, am I ready for high school? Yes! We can work with anyone who wants to continue playing music!

If you have any other questions about our Music electives, please contact us!

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