

Brandon East Side Band 2026 - 2027 Handbook

Ms. Erin Dodds and Ms. Brooklyn Friesen
East Side Band Directors



To: Brandon East Side Band Parents and Students

Welcome to a new school year! Please take a few minutes to **read this information.**

If you have any questions or comments, please contact:

Ms. Dodds by email: dodds.erin@bsd.ca

Ms. Friesen by email: Friesen.brooklyn@bsd.ca

Band room phone number: 204-729-3277

(Please retain for future reference)

All East-Side band parents are strongly encouraged to attend the

East Side Band Parent Meeting / BSIMA AGM

Wednesday, September 23rd at 7:00pm in the Earl Oxford School Gym

This meeting is our opportunity to meet many of you and explain how the middle school band programs work. BSIMA will also be hosting their annual AGM at this time. This is a very important meeting, and we strongly recommend all families new to the band program attend.

WELCOME!

We are happy to have you join the East Side Band Program. We hope this association will result in a musically rewarding experience for both you and your child. I, Ms. Dodds, am pleased to be returning to the Middle Years Band program in Brandon for my eleventh year. Ms. Friesen will be at Earl Oxford School on Days 1, 3, and 5 of the school cycle to work with our grade 7 students. The days when Ms. Friesen is not here, she is at Waverly Park School teaching band for the Brandon West Middle School Bands.

Participation in band is a team effort ... the students, directors, and parents each have a part to play in creating the best possible music program. I hope this handbook will clarify opportunities and expectations.

What is the East Side Band Program?

The East Side Band program is offered to interested students in grades seven and eight from various schools in the Brandon School Division. All band classes are taught at Earl Oxford School with the school division responsible for transporting students from the other schools.

Periodically throughout the year, students from grade 7 and 8 may be combined for full band rehearsals and performances. Since music is a performance art that relies on the combined efforts of many musicians, student attendance at all rehearsals and concerts is vital to the success of the group as a whole.

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Choosing a Band Instrument (First Year Band Students)

It is important that students choose a band instrument that is not only suited to their musical interests, but also to their physical and musical capacities. In order to best match students with appropriate instruments and to allow parents and students to make an informed decision about what instrument to choose, East Side Band students will take part in an instrument orientation followed by the “Kick Start” Program. The instruments available for students to choose include:

- | | | |
|------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| · Flute | · French Horn | · Tuba |
| · Clarinet | · Trombone | · Percussion -chosen |
| · Trumpet | · Euphonium | by the band directors |

Note: All students should begin band instruction on one of the instruments previously listed. Saxophone and oboe players will be started later.

Students who are interested in **percussion** are encouraged to have a solid background in piano or another keyboard instrument or drums, as well as demonstrate a strong sense of rhythm and a high level of independence. Auditions will be required, and students will be chosen by the band director.

Students who are interested in **string bass** are encouraged to already have a solid background in violin, viola, cello, or bass. Auditions will be required, and students will be chosen by the band director. If choosing the string bass, please be aware that it will require more transportation of the instrument compared to all other instruments (mainly transportation to and from the WMCA for concerts throughout the year)

Students who are interested in **saxophone** must consider clarinet or flute in grade 7 first, since these instruments “transfer” most readily to saxophone. Students who are interested in saxophone but want to continue to play clarinet or flute in the concert band through grade eight may be permitted to “double” on saxophone in jazz band.

Students who are interested in double reed instruments (oboe or bassoon) must consider playing either the flute or clarinet since these instrument “transfer” most readily to double reeds. Double reed instruments are considered challenging and are usually played by students who have quite strong musical backgrounds and interests.

Getting an Instrument

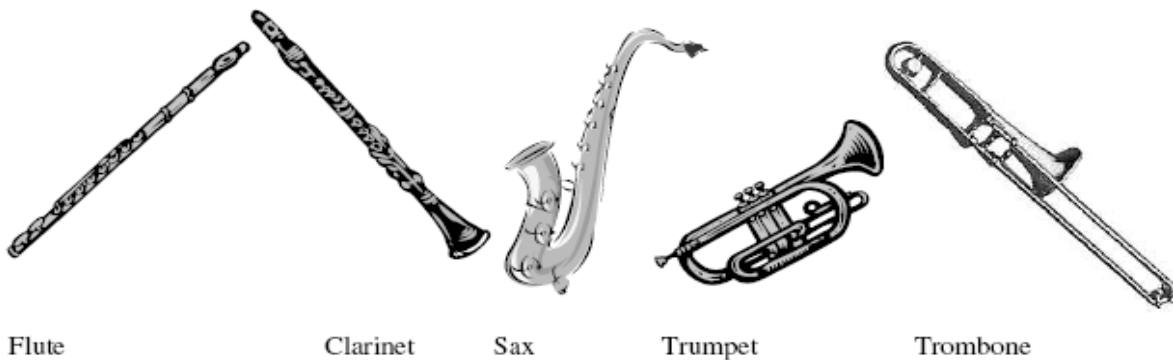
Students renting an instrument through the band program pay a rental fee of \$125. Students who use their own instruments do not pay the rental fee. Fees must be paid before instruments are handed out. Contact Ms. Dodds or Ms. Friesen if you need to make alternative payment arrangements such as financial assistance and individualized payment plans are available. All cheques should be made payable to: **BSIMA** (Brandon Schools Instrumental Music Association) and can be handed in to Ms. Dodds or Ms. Friesen during class. Payments can also be made through e-transfers to adminofficer@bsima.ca.

Brandon Schools Instrumental Music Association (BSIMA)

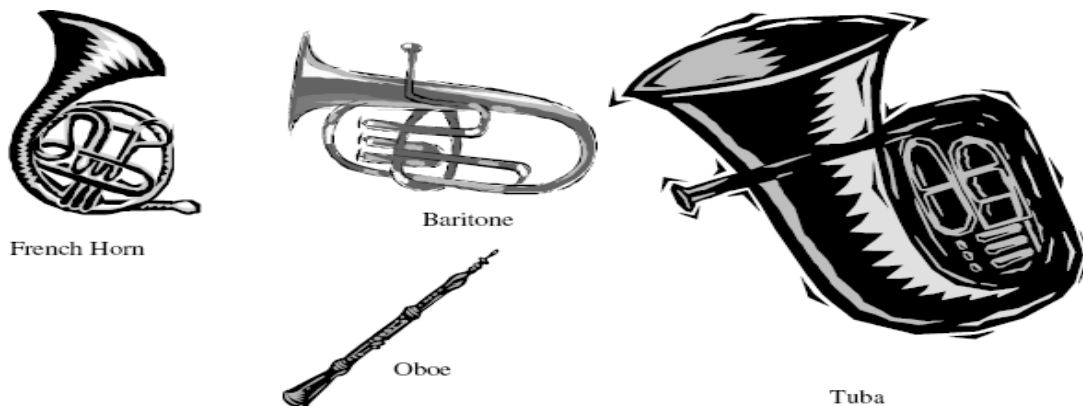
BSIMA is a parent support group for the band programs in Brandon School Division. Parents/guardians of every student in Brandon school band programs are automatically members of BSIMA. BSIMA collects usage fees for instruments it has purchased and loans out. The usage fee and instrument care kit is \$125.00 per year regardless of the size or type of instrument.

Instruments

- Grade 7 and 8 students usually rent an instrument provided by the BSIMA at a cost of \$125 for the school year.
- Grade Eight band students who play Oboe, Bassoon, Bass Clarinet, French Horn, Baritone Saxophone, Euphonium, Tuba can continue to rent their instrument from BSIMA if they choose to continue in band in high school.
- After grade 8 band, the following instruments will be required to purchase/rent their own instrument: Flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, trumpet, and trombone.



- If your family already owns an instrument, please have it checked by a band director for approval and make sure it is in good playing condition. Instruments of poor quality are a serious detriment to a young musician's development and may cause a loss of interest. Instruments should **not** be purchased or rented until the band director in consultation with the students and parents has decided instrumentation.



Switching Instruments

Switching instruments is **not a good idea** unless at the request of the director or for physical reasons such as braces, etc.. But in the event a change is either necessary, or desired, both the parent and student must want the change, and it must be first discussed with the band director. In some instances where the need for a change is brought about by physical reasons, the student may be taken off his/her instrument immediately, switched, and put on an individualized self-study course during band class time. But in most cases, the student must first get their skills on the new instrument, up to where the class is at, while continuing to play the original instrument. He/she may do this through private lessons. When this is done, the student must then wait for an opening in that instrument's section. When there is an opening, the student will then perform an audition to demonstrating his/her skills are at par with the class. The change will then be approved or disapproved. Consideration will be given to practice habits, progress on the present instrument, work habits, music reading ability (theory), instrumentation of the band, and effect on the group. In most cases, private lessons are encouraged.

In some cases, students work toward a "natural switch". This is where the student moves to a similar instrument in a planned and methodical manner. Such switches might include clarinet to oboe/bassoon. Another, and without a doubt, the most common, is from a woodwind instrument to Saxophone. Following is the East Side Band policy on switching to Saxophone:

1. Any student currently playing flute or clarinet may apply to switch to saxophone.
2. The type of sax the student will switch to will be decided upon with the band instructor. The three types of saxophones include Alto, Tenor, and Baritone Sax (smallest to largest).
3. Students may switch to saxophone as their primary instrument (full time) or remain on their present instrument in concert band and play sax in the jazz band as a second instrument (part time). When a student plays clarinet (for example) in concert band and sax in Jazz band, **one instrument would be rented from BSIMA. The second instrument BSIMA will provide at a reduced cost (\$62.50) so that the parent would not have pay for the full cost of two instruments.**
4. In the long term, for many students, it is better to play clarinet or flute as a primary instrument and play saxophone as a secondary instrument. More technique is required and developed on clarinet and flute than is on saxophone in the early stages.
5. Students switching to saxophone should be committed to practicing hard over the summer and **should plan on taking some private lessons. They will be expected to be at a second-year level come September.** Much of the technique, fingerings, etc. that they learned on flute or clarinet can be applied to saxophone, but there are differences too. The band instructor may supply a method book if a book is available. Be sure to ask. A list of private saxophone teachers can be found below.
6. For some students, switching to saxophone is very beneficial, but it should be remembered that it takes years of practice and playing on one instrument to really get good at it. Students should not plan to play a different instrument every year as it is very expensive, and they will end up with little skill on anything.

Concert Dress / Uniforms

The uniform for any performance by East Side Band students is as follows:

Proper concert attire must be worn at all performances

Grade 8 Band Uniform

- East Side Band Sweater (Provided by Band program)**
- Black dress pants (to be provided by the parent)
- Black dress shoes (to be provided by the parent)
- Black socks/nylons (to be provided by the parent)

Grade 7 Band Uniform

- Black Shirt (no logos or colours, provided by parent)
- Black pants (to be provided by the parent)
- Black shoes (to be provided by the parent - no runners please)
- Black socks/nylons (to be provided by the parent)

****Grade 8 band sweaters are only for students to use during the school year. They are property of the Brandon School Division and are to be treated as such. They must be returned in June of every school year. Any lost or damaged sweaters will have a replacement fee assigned to the student.**

Extra-Curricular Band Activities

In grade 8, students will have the opportunity to participate in additional extra-curricular band activities. The East Side and West Side band programs offer two after school groups that grade 8 students can participate in, the Brandon Gr. 8/9 Wind Ensemble and the Gr. 8 Jazz Bands.

Extra-curricular groups begin in October and continue through June. Each group will have the chance to perform multiple times throughout the year, including both East and West Side band concerts in February and June.

The Grade 8 Jazz Bands

The grade 8 jazz bands are open to all students in both the East and West Side band programs. This ensemble is designed to introduce a new style of music to students that is different than what we normally play during class. No matter what instrument you play in band class, you can join the jazz band, as well as if you play the piano, bass, drums, or guitar. Rehearsals are once a week, and times are decided after the initial meeting, based on what works best for the group. This ensemble is co-directed by Ms. Friesen (East and West Side Director) and Mr. Cramer (West Side Director).

The Brandon Grade 8/9 Wind Ensemble

This ensemble will consist of grade 8 students who have shown dedication and commitment to the band program throughout grade 7 and is designed to challenge their musicianship at a higher level and in a smaller group setting. They will be joined by grade 9 students from the CPN and Vincent Massey band program as well. The Wind Ensemble will be co-directed by Ms. Dodds (Director - East Side Bands) and Mr. Cramer (Director - West Side Bands). There will be approximately 20 - 25 students selected from each band program to take part in this ensemble. They rehearse from 6:00pm – 7:30pm every Wednesday evening at Earl Oxford School.

East Side Band Parents Association

Each school or area band program in Brandon has its own band parents group operating under the BSIMA (Brandon Schools Instrumental Music Association) umbrella. The East Side Band Parents Association exists to serve the musical interests of the students in our program, including fundraising opportunities, trip planning, concerts, and financial assistance. The executive for the association is comprised of a **Secretary, Treasurer, BSIMA Reps and a grade 7 and grade 8 representative from each school**. Please contact Ms. Dodds at 729-3277 (Earl Oxford School), or dodds.erin@bsd.ca if you are interested in becoming involved.

Fundraising Opportunities

Students are invited to participate in fundraising throughout the year. There will also be opportunities to do some fundraising for the East Side band Program that could go directly towards lowering the individual student's participation fees for out-of-town trips, or to cover the cost of their instrument usage fee. This year, the East Side Band will be selling Sobeys' grocery vouchers. Cards are available in \$50 denominations with 5% going directly into students' fundraising accounts. Students in the past have been able to pay for their entire Grade 8 band trips on Sobeys vouchers alone.

Each child is automatically set up with a fundraising account when they enter a Brandon band program, and will stay with your child no matter which Brandon School Division band program they participate in. This includes the high schools.

At the end of the school year, families will have a few options of what could happen to any additional funds. The options are:

Option1: Continuing Band in High School —If your child is continuing band in high school, please let me know which high school they are attending, and your child's band account funds will be transferred to their high school band account. This money can be used for band events at their new high school.

Option 2: No Longer in Band—If your child is no longer continuing in band (either in high school or into grade 8), we can transfer any fundraised money to another sibling/cousin/etc. who may be starting band this year, or in the near future. If the next child is taking band at Waverly Park as part of the West Side Band program, or in any of the high school programs, we can transfer funds there as well.

Option 3: No Longer in Band—This money can be donated back to the band program. Throughout the years, we offer financial assistance to students so that they can attend different band events, such as the grade 8 band trips.

Band Trips

Any band trip must be considered a privilege to be earned, not an inherent right. This privilege is earned throughout the school year through regular attendance, at-home practice, positive attitudes and a commitment to excellence.

When students travel, they represent their families, band program and school. It is therefore important that the students demonstrate their responsibility and self-discipline as well as their musicianship **BEFORE** participating in outside activities. In order to participate in any out-of-school band activities, students:

- Must have a record of positive, appropriate behavior in all school activities
- Must have the permission of both the school principal and band teacher
- Must be “Meeting” or “Exceeding” expectations on their report card

In grade 7, we will be attending the Manitoba Band Association’s Level One Festival here in Brandon in April. This is an opportunity for the students to perform and to receive feedback from the province’s top music educators.

In grade 8, we have one band trip throughout the year. For any band trip that costs money, it is not mandatory that all students attend. **Our trip is optional.**

Our band trip is also a three-day, two-night trip to Moose Jaw, Sk. There we will have the opportunity to perform at the Moose Jaw Band and Chorale Festival in May. They will perform as a full concert band, as well as the jazz bands and the wind ensemble (for those who are members of these groups). We also include many different activities, such as nightly concerts, the Tunnels of Moose Jaw, the Saskatchewan Science Center and IMAX, etc.

Additional Music Materials

Students are expected to clean and maintain their own instrument, so it stays in good working condition. These supplies will be included in all BSIMA rentals only. Students not renting from BSIMA must acquire their own cleaning supplies. If you are unsure of the cleaning supplies needed, or would like more information about cleaning your instrument, please contact Ms. Dodds or check out the band website for more information.

Students will also need PENCILS. Pens are not permitted for writing in music.

Instrumental Music Curriculum

“The overarching goal of the music curriculum is to support, nurture, and inspire the growth of every student as a musician and as an artful learner.

The Music Butterfly represents the Music curriculum framework which is based on four interrelated essential learning areas. “

https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/arts/music/framework_k-8.html

1. Making

- correct posture, embouchure, breathing, hand position and instrument position
- quality and control of tone, articulation, intonation, dynamics and range
- accurate performance of musical technique (scales, arpeggios and intervals)
- control of melodic phrasing.
- accurate use of number system (the first note of our Bb Major scale is 1, etc.) and moving from number system to proper music notation
- playing by ear (aural transposition; familiar songs; unfamiliar songs)
- accurate music reading at three different levels: teacher assisted; independent; sight-reading
- recognition of musical signs and symbols

2. Creating

- improvisation (echo patterns, call and response; embellishing familiar melodies; improvising over accompaniments).
- composition (creating beginnings, middles and ends to songs, creating variations, composing within rhythmic and/or melodic parameters, creating simple accompaniments).

3. Connecting

- develop awareness of music from various times, places, and cultures (the significance of music within a culture, what are the purposes of music within a society)
- explaining own purpose of making music.
- knowledge of instrument including ancestry, development, and mechanics.

4. Responding

- analyzing how musical elements (tone, pitch, dynamics/volume, articulations, rhythm) can affect a performance
- assess own music-making process and product (performances or compositions)
- establish, reflect on, and reassess personal and group musical goals.
- express musical opinions on the music we study in class (what musical elements can be added to create a more interesting performance) or listen to (giving their opinion of the music using musical examples to support their opinion).

Everybody Contributes to Success!

Band Teacher's Responsibilities

- Show courtesy and respect for all students
- Deliver well-organized lessons
- Be musically knowledgeable and offer expert instruction to facilitate musical and personal growth
- Maintain high but reasonable expectations of all students
- Establish a positive learning environment
- Maintain open and consistent communication with students, parents/guardians and school administrators
- Offer students extra help and additional challenges as needed

Band Student's Responsibilities

- Show courtesy and respect to self, fellow students, teacher, instrument and music
- Maintain focus and self-discipline in all band activities in order to maximize your learning and the learning of those around you
- Practice your instrument at home regularly
- Attend all rehearsals and performances
- Request extra musical help or additional musical challenges as needed
- Participate to the best of your ability

How Parents Can Help

- Show an interest in your child's music studies and encourage his/her efforts
- Establish a regular time for practicing in a quiet, well-lit place free from TV or other distractions
- Purchase some extra music for your child to play. Instrumental solos, seasonal tunes and "pop" melodies are always favourites (some books available to borrow from the band room). Lots can be found online as well!
- Consider private lessons for your child on their band instrument. If you are interested in private lessons and need some suggestions for instructors, please contact Ms. Dodds.
- Borrow or purchase a recording of a fine musician who plays the same instrument as your child (check YouTube or the public library). A great musical model can be a wonderful inspiration and a "musical picture" worth a thousand words.
- Contact me if you have any questions or concerns about your child and the East Side Band Program.



Practice Strategies

“Practicing reveals who you are, not what you can do.”

An essential part of a student’s progress is daily practice. Daily practice is a band student’s assigned homework. Sufficient practice will ensure a solid grasp of new techniques, music, and ideas, thereby helping to maximize each student’s potential.

Please encourage your child to practice and praise them for their efforts. You are your child’s most important audience! Here are some suggestions for setting up a practice routine with your child:

Practice Routine

- Establish a regular practice time that fits your schedule – before or after school or supper work well
- Find a quiet, well-lit place to practice away from interruptions and TV

What to Practice

- Warm-ups (including breathing and posture exercises)
- Songs and exercises from the band method book
- Band repertoire
- Familiar songs by ear
- Additional song or solo material – just for fun!

How to Practice

- Divide up the 20 minutes into shorter sessions if you find it too long
- Set goals for yourself – what are you trying to accomplish today?
- Frequently listen to recordings of your instrument
- Check your posture, breathing, embouchure, hand position, and instrument position frequently
- Ask your parents to listen and observe you practice

Take Care of Your Instrument

- Never leave your instrument lying around – keep it in the case when you are not actually playing it
- Clean your instrument as you were shown in class in order to keep it in good working condition



Awards

(Awards may vary year to year at the discretion of the band director.)

Several awards and scholarships are presented at the end of the year in June. While the idea of awards is not to encourage competition or jealousy, it is hoped that the awards will encourage our top students to continue with music as part of their education and reward students who have worked hard or contributed substantially to the program. The following awards are given out on an annual basis:

1. Band Director's Award – awarded to the student(s) who have made a significant contribution to the operations and success of the band program by encouraging a positive attitude amongst peers, volunteering, and demonstrating good leadership skills.
2. BSIMA Music Achievement Award – Given to the student who demonstrates outstanding musicianship, leadership, attitude, dedication and potential. This is the rare student who has "*the right stuff*".
3. Outstanding Jazz Improviser Award – awarded to a student in the Jazz Band who has demonstrated strong skills for improvisation.
4. Outstanding Jazz Award – awarded to the student in Jazz Band who has demonstrated a keen interest in Jazz, a willingness to improvise and excellent growth.
5. Outstanding Musicianship Awards – Awards are given in to students who demonstrate outstanding musicianship throughout the year. They consistently work hard in class and demonstrate leadership through their music making skills.

Scholarships/Bursaries

Scholarships/bursaries to date have ranged from \$50 to \$300 awarded to students to attend a music camp. Music camps may include the International Music Camp, Manitoba Band Association Summer Band Camps, the Brandon University Beginner Saxophone Camp or any other approved band camp.

Parent Volunteers

There are many situations which require parental assistance for our band program to continue to be a success. Please fill out a volunteer form or let the band instructor know that you are willing to help. One of the parent executives or the band instructor will contact you when and if help is needed in that area. Following is a description of some of the areas volunteer help is required from time to time:

East Side Band Parent Council Members (attend approximately 8 meetings per year)

- **School Reps**– Represent school band parents on BSIMA board. Attend BSIMA meeting one Wednesday of each month and ESB meeting once a month. These are the people that set policy, fees, etc. Attends ESB meetings once a month.
- **Secretary** – sits on the ESB executive. Prepares minutes. Miscellaneous correspondence. Attends ESB meetings once a month.
- **Treasurer** – sits on the ESB executive. Maintains financial records. Attends ESB meetings once a month.
- **Volunteer Coordinator** - initializes a phoning campaign when required i.e., notification of meeting, buses returning late, etc. Attends ESB meetings once a month.
- **Fundraising Coordinator** – organizes and facilitates the Sobey's Gift Card Fundraiser and helps keep track on fundraising money that students have earned. Attends ESB meetings once a month.

Occasional

- **Day Help** – Occasional classroom or offsite help. Example: photocopying programs, assist with supervision, ride the bus with the students to the auditorium, etc. (Daytime)
- **Concert Helpers** - will assist with tasks the night of a concert or performance by our bands. Jobs may include admissions, supervision, equipment crew, condiments, etc.
- **Chaperones** - people who are willing to chaperone on field trips, and band tours. May be in town or involve out of town and overnight traveling. Chaperones must be signed up as a parent volunteer for their child's school. This includes having up to date Criminal Record Checks and Child Abuse Registry Checks, as well as completing their Respect in School program.
- **Concert Stage Set up/Take Down** – assist the band directors with loading gear for concert events. This could include leading the gear from Earl Oxford School to go to the WMCA, or could be helping tear down the stage (chairs and percussion equipment) after the concerts.

BSIMA – Brandon School Instrumental Music Association (approximately 8 meetings per year)

- **Executive Positions** – President, Vice President, Finance Officer, and Communications Officer
Sits on board of directors. Attend a meeting on the third Wednesday of each month. Approximately 8 meetings a year.
- For a more detailed description of the BSIMA positions, please click here:
<https://bsima.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Postion-Descriptions-2022.pdf>