



Who takes private lessons?

Each student in the Dowell Band has the opportunity to study privately with a professional musician in our private lessons program. This enrichment opportunity is available to all band students.

Why should we enroll in private lessons?

Enrollment in private lessons is the most significant predictor of a student's success in music. While not mandatory for most instruments, the individual attention available through private instruction provides tremendous enhancement of your child's skills, motivation, and musical enjoyment.

Don't we already get rigorous and stimulating instruction in our band classes?

Yes! However, while the instruction provided in the group lessons of the Dowell Band classes can lift a student to a high level of musical competency, there is no substitution for the individual instruction that is only available through private study. The individual nature of private lessons means that instruction is catered directly to your child's ability level, and supplementary materials are provided to expand on the full class curriculum. Students enrolled in lessons are able to move at their own fast pace instead of being tethered to the pace of the class as a whole.

Isn't private tutoring just for kids who are struggling?

No! On the contrary, the purpose of the private lessons program is not to provide remedial instruction — its purpose is to provide supplementary instruction for students seeking to get the most out of their music education.

Who will be my child's private lessons teacher?

Private lessons instructors at Dowell are carefully selected by the band directors of the McKinney ISD and receive the same scrutiny as full-time teachers at the district level before being hired. Most of our teachers hold graduate degrees (masters & doctorate) on their instrument and are professional performing musicians in the area.

Why should I take lessons at Dowell? Can't we just get free lessons from Uncle Rico, who played the saxophone for a couple of months in 1986? With private lessons, just as with any worthwhile product or service, you get what you pay for. By studying with a Dowell-approved private lessons teacher, your child will receive instruction that aligns with the philosophy and quality of the Dowell Band. The band directors are able to collaborate with our lessons teachers and work together to give every student the best experience possible. This is not possible with non-Dowell instructors.

When do lessons happen?

Private lessons are offered once per week either before school , after school, or during your child's band class, depending on the teachers availability and your schedule. Private lessons may not happen during any other class besides band.

Shouldn't we try to avoid missing band class to take private lessons?

No! Taking private lessons is the best possible reason for a student to miss a bit of band class. In this scenario, a student is trading group instruction for individual instruction - a good tradeoff by any measure! It's important to remember, too, that lessons are only once per week and during-class lessons take only half of one class period. If families are hesitant about this, they are encouraged to consider after-school lessons, if scheduling is available.

How long is a lessons?

A during-class lesson is 25 minutes; a before or after school lesson is 30 minutes. Both options are the same cost, and the shortened lesson taken during class is considered to be a convenience fee. Lesson lengths and rates are standardized across all of McKinney ISD. 60-minute lessons may be available outside of the school day by some private lessons teachers, but the standard lesson is 30 (or 25) minutes.

What is the cost?

Each lesson costs \$20 regardless of whether it is a during-class lesson or a before/after-school lesson. Lesson lengths and rates are standardized across of McKinney ISD. Compared to the rates charged by independent teachers not under the Dowell umbrella and who are not affiliated with McKinney ISD (who can charge \$40 to \$80 per hour), this is a comparative steal.

Scholarships are available for 7th and 8th grader students (some 6th grader pending approval). Fundraising plays a HUGE role in the funds available for this.

How does payment work?

Payment details will be communicated by your lessons teacher, and payment is made directly to them, usually in the form of a monthly check. Please understand that our private lessons teachers make their living teaching our students and students at other schools.; in many cases it is the primary source of their livelihood, in addition to performing. As such, timely payments and 24 hour notice of a missed lesson are important facets of private lessons enrollment. A missed lesson without notice will be charged at the full rate. With proper notice, alternate scheduling can be arranged.

Can we just take a few lessons to get started and then discontinue lessons?

No. The purpose of private lessons is to provide continuous, enhanced instruction to students seeking to get the most out of there music education. Private lesson enrollment lasts the entire school year.

How do we enroll?

Private lessons enrollment is part of the Band Registration process done at the beginning of the school year. Starting “early” in July/August is also an option. It is not too late to enroll if you decline lessons at the time of registration, but it is best to enroll **early** to ensure teacher availability. Because we hire only the best, our lessons teachers are in high demand, and their schedules fill up quickly! Enroll by completing the Private Lesson Sign Up Form.

The Dowell Band is fortunate to be able to provide this exceptional opportunity for students and band families. Private lessons at Dowell are a convenient and economical way of your child to receive individualized instruction. We hope you will take advantage of this powerful program!