

Private Lesson Information

What is a private lesson?

A private lesson is an opportunity for your student to work one-on-one with a highly-qualified and experienced performer and teacher who specializes in their particular instrument.

Who teaches private lessons?

The private lesson staff at RMJH is made up of university-level performers or higher. Our teachers range from degreed teachers and performers to undergraduate performance and education majors (generally from Rice University and the University of Houston). All McNair lesson staff has been interviewed by the RMJH Band staff to ensure appropriate teaching techniques and concepts. All Alvin ISD private lesson teachers have applied with and been approved by Alvin ISD. They have all been subjected to fingerprinting and an FBI criminal background check.

Who needs private lessons?

We strongly recommend that all students wanting to improve on their instrument take private lessons. Students playing school-owned instruments are highly encouraged to participate in lessons. Because of difficulty of those instruments, lessons are a requirement for students playing oboe and bassoon. Private lessons are not tutorials. If you can afford private lessons you should take them. Nothing will improve your playing faster than private lessons.

Where and when are the lessons taught?

All of our lessons are taught at McNair JH. Alvin ISD allows us to have lessons taught during the school day, so a lot of our students have their lesson during band class. We also have lesson teachers who teach before or after school. Your lesson time would be determined by your personal schedule and that of the lesson teacher.

How often are the lessons, and how much do they cost?

Private lessons are usually 30 minutes long, once a week. Because the private lesson teachers are not employees of Alvin ISD, the lesson cost may vary between teachers and instruments. Generally, the cost is \$20 to \$25 per 30 minute lesson.

I have a friend or neighbor who has offered to teach my child, can I just do that instead?

No. Our lesson staff is chosen not only for their ability to teach their instrument, but for the specific methods that they employ. We constantly communicate and collaborate with them to help our students improve. They use the same terminology and methods that we use in class, just at a more personalized level. By taking lessons with someone outside of our lesson staff, you lose all of those benefits. Even if someone has played an instrument for years, they may not be trained as to how to teach it. The result is often information that is confusing or conflicting with the information provided during class.

If I start private lessons, can I stop if necessary, or do I have to do it for the entire year?

Private lessons are not required, only recommended. We ask that all private lesson students remain in lessons for the duration of the school year, but we understand that financial difficulties occur. If your financial situation doesn't allow you to continue with lessons, we ask that you let your lesson teacher and your band director know at least two weeks before stopping lessons. That way we can try to help the lesson teacher fill the hole in their schedule. For many of our lesson teachers, private lessons make up a large part of their income. Stopping lessons without notice makes it very difficult for us to keep qualified teachers.

What if we have an emergency and can't make it to a lesson?

It is your responsibility to get contact information from your lesson teacher during your first lesson. Contact the lesson teacher as soon as you know you won't be able to attend a lesson. *If you do not contact them at least 24 hours before missing a lesson, the absence is unexcused and you will need to pay for the lesson.* In case of emergency cancellations, contact the lesson teacher immediately.

How do we pay for lessons?

Lessons may be paid for in cash or with a check. All checks must be made out to the individual lesson teacher. *To facilitate any possible unexcused absences, we recommend paying for lessons one month at a time if you are able.* Alvin ISD asks that you pay for the first four lessons upon starting private lessons. After that, a payment schedule can be worked out with your lesson teacher.