

~Acquiring a Guitar~

The beginning and advanced guitar classes require your student to have access to his/her own guitar. As these are elective class, the school does not provide instruments for the students. Instruments can be purchased or rented, based on family preference. For the beginning class, you and your student should look into purchasing/renting an acoustic guitar. For the advanced class, access to both an acoustic guitar as well as an electric guitar will be welcomed but not required.

Quality guitars are not inexpensive to make. A quality instrument should be acquired because plastic-part instruments do not make a pleasing tone, and students who are newly learning need to be encouraged by a pleasant sound when they play it correctly. Additionally, a poorly and cheaply constructed guitar can be uncomfortable to play, which can prove to be discouraging to students trying to learn this new instrument.

Benefits of Renting

- Renting allows families to try an instrument out without committing to the larger expense of purchasing.
- Rent-to-Own programs allow equity to be applied to the purchase of an instrument at a later time.
- Most rental companies will include repairs, new strings, and insurance in the cost of the rent, which makes getting an instrument fixed hassle-free.

Benefits of Purchasing

- Student pride in ownership leads to better care of instrument.
- The gift of an instrument can be an inspiring gift as a result of achievement.
- Personal instruments can be modified for the best fit: new strings, adjusted action to the needs of the student, etc.
- Owning an instrument is a life-long treasure, as is the ability to play for enjoyment.
- A beautiful instrument is a family heirloom.

What to Look for in a Guitar:

- High-quality construction; no open seams or plastic parts, no tall frets (frets that extend beyond the top/bottom of the neck), etc.
- Quality Brands – e.g. Acoustic: Taylor, Martin, Fender, Gibson, Breedlove, Seagull, Takamine, etc. Electric: Fender, Gibson, Epiphone, Ibanez, Jackson, Gretsch, etc. (There are many other reputable guitar manufacturers out there. These are just a few of the more well-known, readily-available ones).
- Always ask to play an instrument before purchasing. Listen for rattling (avoid this) and for a clear, open tone on all strings all the way up the neck. If notes choke out higher up the neck, I would recommend looking at another instrument.

- If you are considering used instruments, keep in mind that they might bear the cosmetic marks of being older, but these should be considered as secondary to how well the instrument plays and sounds. Pay attention to the resonance of the strings and how high off the neck the strings are (action). If the guitar sounds good and plays well, the cosmetic shortcomings can be overlooked.
- Make certain the instrument is the proper size for your student. Especially true of acoustics, there is a great range of how large the body of the guitar can be. If the guitar is too large for your student, it will be difficult to play, which can prove to be discouraging to new guitar students.

Where to Rent/Purchase:

- Guitar Center offers guitars for rent and purchase. There are also several other local stores that offer guitars for purchase.
- Ebay, Amazon, and Craigslist are difficult places to find quality instruments; look for local listings that you can test out before you purchase.
- Some online companies offer free shipping and are reliable and affordable – Sweetwater is recommended.

Your guitar teacher is always happy to make specific recommendations or to test an instrument before you purchase.