



Rockheights Middle School Music Program

1250 Highrock Ave. Esquimalt, BC V9A 4V7 Ph: (250) 384-7125

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN BEGINNING BAND!

Monday, September 19, 2022

Dear Rockheights Music Family:

I'm delighted that your child has expressed interest in joining Beginning Band! This will be a great opportunity to make meaningful memories and friendships and to learn to play a woodwind, brass or percussion instrument! Here are answers to the questions you might have:

When are the class times?

Mondays at 12:58 – 1:54pm (block 4)

Wednesdays from 8:52 – 9:48am (block 1)

Beginning band is not a club; it's an enrichment course and students will receive report cards for their work. Attendance at all classes is expected. Rockheights has a "pull out" model for its music program, which means that music classes happen during the normal school day, and students are responsible for any work that they miss when they're away from their usual advisory class. Advisory teachers are supportive and recognize that learning to play an instrument is an important opportunity for students. If anyone feels that they are falling behind, we can all work together to find a solution.

What instrument will I play?

Students learned in an assembly last week that band class includes the following instruments only:

Woodwinds: flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone (alto, tenor and baritone), bassoon

Brass: trumpet, French horn, trombone, baritone / euphonium and tuba

String: electric bass guitar only (sorry, no treble or 6-string guitar in concert band)

Percussion: percussionists learn all of the drums, cymbals, timpani and mallet percussion

They saw older students demonstrate the instruments, and then signed up for the one they wanted to learn. I know this timing is not ideal, but **if your family is able to get their instrument this week, they will benefit hugely** from having it for the Super Saturday first lessons event (more on that below).

How do we get an instrument?

You can rent, borrow or purchase an instrument. Rockheights owns some wind, brass and percussion instruments, which can be loaned out on a first-come, first-served basis. I ask families to please make a one-time donation, \$20 is suggested, for the year if you can, but **no student will be denied an opportunity to participate in band because of costs.** Your donations help to defray the costs of maintaining these instruments and allows future students to have the same opportunities. Please make cheques payable to "Rockheights Middle School" and write your student's name on the memo line. Please don't send cash.

If you cannot donate \$20, please consider donating later. In addition to the \$20, **parents must sign the receipt for borrowed materials form, which clearly shows the serial number of the instrument. The first students to return these forms will be given the school instruments.** Please note that school instruments go quickly – you might not get your first choice of instrument if all of the school ones are loaned out.



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Alternatively, two excellent music stores who rent band instruments from are:

Long and McQuade Musical Instruments

756 Hillside Avenue, Victoria

(250) 384-3622

www.long-mcquade.com

Tapestry Music

772 Bay St., Victoria

(250) 590-0752

Tapestrymusic.com

“How do I work this thing?!”

There is a lot to know about playing an instrument for the first time. Instruments are fragile, and if your child has not been taught how to assemble it correctly, damages can happen very quickly. To get everyone off to a great start, **please do not try to assemble the instrument at home**. Rockheights beginning band students are asked to please attend the following event, where a professional on their chosen instrument will get them off to an excellent (and safe) start:

SUPER SATURDAY! First Lesson On Your Band Instrument Event

9:45am to 11:45am, Saturday, September 24th, 2022

Parents, please come to the gym at 11:30am to hear your child perform their first notes!

Central Middle School, 1280 Fort St.

For any students who miss this event, we will go over these steps in class, however they may have to come in at lunch or wait some time for their turn. Ideally, **every student should attend Super Saturday**.

How much will I need to practice?

Consistent practice and commitment to your group are necessary for success. There will be assignments to help students set goals for practicing. Students should expect to practice for **a minimum of one hour every week** on their own time, typically on weekends. The music rooms are often available at nutrition break and lunch for practicing. It's a great way to spend the time.

When are the concerts?

There are two major concert events this year. Your participation is expected at them:

- **7pm, Wednesday, December 7th, 2022**
- **7pm, Wednesday, May 31st, 2023**

If you can't attend a concert, please speak with Ms. McDonell as soon as possible. There will be other events such as festivals and field trips announced later. In the meantime, check out the Events page of www.rockheightsmusic.com

Is there a uniform?

Yes. Having a quality uniform contributes to our sense of pride and belonging. You are asked to please purchase a **Rockheights Music t-shirt for \$13**. Information about t-shirts will be sent home later – please do not send money for t-shirts to school. If you are not able to pay, we can loan one to you, which you



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will return with your instrument and books in June. The full uniform for concerts, assemblies and festivals is: Rockheights Music t-shirt, black (or dark) pants or skirt with tights, and comfortable shoes.

Do we go on trips?

Yes. Beginners attend daytime field trips, such as festivals or visiting schools. Overnight field trips are for students in grade 7 and 8 only at this time. A retreat to Camp Pringle on Shawnigan Lake is planned for grade 7's and 8's for the night of May 11th, 2023.

I'm concerned about costs, is there support if we can't afford to pay?

No student will be denied an opportunity to learn to play a band instrument because they can't afford the instrument, supplies or a uniform). If your family is in need of assistance, please speak with me or send me an email. Field trips, however, are optional extra-curricular opportunities, and those costs are additional. Fundraising helps to defray the cost of field trips and costs are kept as low as possible. Again, please speak with me if you are concerned about those costs.

How will I receive information from the program?

From time to time, I will send information home via email or paper letters. Please make sure your email addresses are up-to-date with the school. The best way to reach me is through email at rmcdonell@sd61.bc.ca or by calling the school at (250) 384-7125. www.rockheightsmusic.com is the place to go to find all kinds of information about the music program at Rockheights, including the timetable and a copy of any letters that go home.

How can parents get involved?

Being involved in a music parents' group is a fantastic way to get involved in your child's schooling and to make friends! All "grown-ups" are warmly encouraged to help out whenever they can! Some things parents typically help with are: decorating for concerts, making baked goods for the Winter concert, driving students to events (a volunteer driver form and other paperwork are required).

I have more questions, how can I reach you?

Please get in touch with me if you have any questions or concerns rmcdonell@sd61.bc.ca. I look forward to working with you! **Our website is www.rockheightsmusic.com** Go here for information about the program, class times and offerings, dates and events, and a copy every letter that goes home. Please be sure to check out the page made especially for [Newcomers](#). I'm looking forward to making music with you!

Warmly,

Risa McDonell,
Music Teacher, Rockheights Middle School