



Rockheights Middle School Music Program

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

Music at Rockheights! (Revised!)

Monday, September 11, 2023

Dear Rockheights Music Family:

Today at school, grade 6 students learned about the music program at Rockheights. This is a special enrichment program that is open to anyone in grade 6, 7 or 8 who wishes to learn to play a band or string instrument, or to sing in a choir. Getting involved in a school music program is a great opportunity to make meaningful memories and friendships and to do something that is fun and challenging! Here are some things you might be wondering about:

When are the class times? The music program at Rockheights uses the “pull out” model, which means students leave their regular class to attend music. They are responsible for the work they miss while they are away from class, and teachers will of course support them in completing their work. The full music program timetable can be viewed on our website at www.rockheightsmusic.com. **Grade 6's are eligible to take any of these classes:**

- **Beginning Band 6;** Mondays block 4 and Wednesdays block 1
- **Beginning Strings 6;** Tuesdays block 4 and Thursdays block 4
- **Intermediate Strings 6** (if they did one year of Beginning Strings already); Tuesdays after school until 4pm; Thursdays block 5
- **Choir;** Wednesdays block 3 only

When are the concerts? There are a variety of performances throughout the year, but there are two major concerts where **student participation is expected:**

- **7pm, Wednesday, December 6th, 2023**
- **7pm, Wednesday, May 29th, 2024**

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. 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 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. Trip dates are posted to www.rockheightsmusic.com Trips are optional and extra-curricular – more information about trips will be sent out as those opportunities arise.

What instrument can my child play?



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Students learned in an assembly today 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

Orchestral strings classes include these instruments only:

Violin, viola, cello or upright bass.

How do we get an instrument? You can rent, borrow or purchase an instrument. If costs present a challenge, don't despair. Every child can get an instrument for little to no cost. **No student will be denied an opportunity to participate in music because of costs.**

If your family is able to rent an instrument from a retailer, I strongly suggest that you do that. You will get a much better quality instrument than if you borrow one from the school district. Learning a new instrument is challenging, and knowing that you have a quality instrument at the outset helps to resolve questions about what a problem might be (i.e. "is it me, or the instrument?") Repairs are also dealt with much more easily. There are two fantastic retailers in town who support our program very much:

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

For band instruments, 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. 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.

For string instruments, School District 61 owns violins, violas and cellos, which can be loaned out on a first-come, first-served basis. The cost to rent these instruments is \$150 for violins or violas, or \$200 for cellos, for the year. If your family needs financial assistance, these fees can be reduced or waived. Please get in touch with me if you need help with this.

More information about how to get these instruments will be distributed in class, once students know which instrument they'd like to play. In addition to the rental fees, **parents must sign a form, to acknowledge that the student has the instrument. This paperwork will be handed out in our next class.** Please do not send money until you receive the form.



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“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.**

Beginning strings students will learn the first steps during their class time.

Beginning band students are asked to please try to attend one of the following events, where a professional on their chosen instrument will get them off to an excellent (and safe) start:

“EVENING WITH A PRO” (for FLUTES only)

5:30pm – 7:15pm, Wednesday, September 20th, Glanford Middle School, 4140 Glanford Ave.

Or...

“SUPER SATURDAY!” (for all BAND instruments, NO STRINGS)

8:45am – 12:00pm, Saturday, September 23, Central Middle School, 1280 Fort St.

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

For any band students who can't attend either of those events, we will cover the basics in class. However, please make every effort to attend these events – you'll learn a lot and they're fun!

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. **Our most successful students practice for some time every day.** The music rooms are often available at nutrition break and lunch for practicing. It's a great way to make friends and spend the time.

How will I receive information from the program? 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.

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