



Pitt Meadows Secondary School
Music Department

Secondary Band & Choir Program

A Handbook for Students and Parents

Updated Fall 2020

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Mission Statement

The goal of the Music Department at PMSS is to provide as many students as possible with the opportunity to express themselves through music, be a part of a community, and a part of a team. Individual and team (ensemble) growth are paramount in each music course. At PMSS we strive to create a welcoming environment that allows each student to develop new skills, build community and in doing so, gain skills that will serve them for the rest of their lives.

Contact Information

Band/Choir Director: Mr. Nicholas Renaud
Email: Nicholas_Renaud@sd42.ca
Mailing Address: 19438–116B Avenue, Pitt Meadows BC V3Y 1G1
Website: www.pmssmusic.com

COVID-19 Safety Protocols

The following important safety protocols that have been developed by the CDC to make sure we stay safe:

- **All non-cohorted classes that are too large to fit in the Band Room with the appropriate distance will take place in the MULTIPURPOSE ROOM (where we held our concerts last year–on the floor where the audience of 400 people was seated) to provide us with TONS of space for physical distancing, as required.**
- Students will be required to sanitize their hands upon entry to the class and exit.
- Students will face forward and have the required physical distance between them at all times as required by the CDC.
- Students will not share instruments.
- No in-person concerts or inter-school events.
- No overnight music activities (to be re-assessed throughout the year).

More information on the above is available on the CDC website (scroll down to Activities>Singing):
<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/childcare-schools/schools>

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Prompt and regular attendance of classes and rehearsals is imperative to developing as socially responsible people/musicians/students. Each music ensemble is a team that works best when all students are present and on-time. Students who walk in late miss out on important announcements, theory lessons, and warm up activities. Latecomers also disturb the class and detract from the momentum of the rehearsal. Band students are expected to have their instruments set-up and be in their **seat** and **ready to play** by the start time of the class period. Choir students are expected to be **on the risers** and **ready to sing** by the start of the rehearsal.

For classes in the early morning or after school hours, prompt attendance is expected and necessary to ensure the continued musical progress of the ensemble every class period. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Students who are not ready to play/sing at the start of the class period will be marked as late.

Due to the nature of the music class where learning happens and is demonstrated in class, more than 3 unexcused late arrivals or 1 unexcused absence may result in a loss of marks large enough to drop a student's letter grade. Lates and absences must be excused by an email from a parent to Mr. Renaud. *If the entire group goes an entire term without anyone dropping a letter grade due to unexcused absences/lates, Mr. Renaud will buy donuts for the class!*

Please note: "After school help" will not be considered a valid excuse for being late to class. Please schedule time with your teachers that does not conflict with your after-school music course.

Please note: Music is a **curricular subject**. Students require a set number of hours spent in class to complete the course. **Extra-curricular** activities (i.e. sports, clubs, etc.) are not to conflict with students' ability to attend courses. *If you would like to register for a sport or activity that conflicts with a music class, please make arrangements with Mr. Renaud. In case of a conflict, students will likely be expected to split their time evenly between the conflicting activity and the music course—this is approved on a case by case basis by Mr. Renaud.*

ASSIGNMENTS

Sectional Reports

Students are required to complete **one 20-minute sectional each month**. They must **schedule this time in advance** due to COVID-19 Safety Protocols. The times in which they can schedule sections are before school, after school, and at lunch. The section leader fills out the sectional report and submits to Mr. Renaud.

Sectional reports must consist of:

- section attendance (marking down who was present/absent/late)
- list of repertoire covered in the sectional;
- specific sections worked on in each piece (measure numbers);
- a brief reflection on how the sectional went (did you fix the section? Any thoughts on what went well? Thoughts on what could have gone better? **Minimum 2 sentences, maximum 5 sentences**).

Please Note: Section Leaders will be assigned in September by Mr. Renaud.

Practice Reflections

Students are expected to practice 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week. Students in grades 8-10 will fill out Practice Records where parents sign off each day the student practices. In addition, we are encouraging students to reflect on the process of improving as musicians. **Practice Reflections** are completed **once per term** for students in grades 8-10 and **bi-weekly** by students in grades 11 and 12. Practice reflections will be submitted via online form (available on pmssmusic.com and MSTeams). Practice Reflections must be a minimum of 50 words and a maximum of 150 words and answer the following:

- What have you been practicing?
- How long do you typically practice for?
- Why did you practice for as long as you did? Is that enough time to help you improve? Are there ways we can help you fit practicing into your routine better?
- Are you satisfied with your practice routine? What do you want to change about your practice routine? Is it supporting your growth as a musician—why/why not?
- Any thoughts or questions about practicing your instrument?

Concert Review/Observation

*Listening critically to a musical performance is an important skill to develop: students refine their listening skills, musical vocabulary, and find musical models they can turn to develop their own musicianship. For these reasons among others, students are expected to attend one live performance during the school year on their own time. **During COVID-19, this live performance may be attended online instead of in-person. Mr. Renaud will be advertising many on-line concert watching opportunities throughout the school year.** After they watch the concert, they are asked to write a review/observation report.*

Name of the Concert: _____

Name of Performer(s): _____

Date: _____ Venue: _____

Genre: _____ Repertoire Performed: _____

In a **short** written report, include **8** insightful comments / observations / reflections (e.g. *what did you like about the genre? How was their stage presence? How was their concert dress—was it professional for the occasion/genre? How did you hear about this concert/performance—did you know of the performers before you went? What was the best part of the performance and why?*). **Each comment should relate to a musical concept you have learned.**

Report must be a minimum of 150 words, preferably double spaced so Mr. Renaud can make comments. Reports may be submitted via Microsoft Teams or in hard copy.

Reports are due by the Term 3 marks cut-off.

INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE SESSIONS

Individual practice is imperative to developing your musicianship skills. Each member of a music class is a member of a team and individual practice ensures that everyone shows up to class ready to support the other members of our team. Practicing is all about being prepared: preparing yourself and your music for the next rehearsal. Of course, a big part of playing an instrument is the “play” part – practicing should also give you time to **play** your instrument – have **fun**, enjoy making new sounds, and try some new pieces that appeal to **you!** To aid you in your practice, here are a few tips for success:

Step 1: Prepare your environment

- Assemble your instrument/music stand.
- Take out your music.
- Soak your reeds and oil your valves, grease your slides.
- Put your phone on airplane mode and make sure you are free of distractions for at *least* 20 minutes.

Step 2: Prepare yourself – 5-10 minutes.

- What do you want to accomplish? What parts of your music need to be practiced? Any specific passages assigned for practice?
- Begin with warm-up exercises
- Choir students do some breathing and interval exercises.
- Brass/Woodwind instruments practice lip slurs, long tones, slow scales. Ensure you are breathing deeply.
- Listen to your tone – can it be improved?
- Are you in a proper playing/singing position?
- Percussionists: Relax/ exercise the wrists and arms. Check hand/wrist position. Practice basic rudiments slowly and evenly.

Step 3: Prepare your music for the next rehearsal – 15-20 minutes.

- Clean up trouble spots by taking the music apart: Slow it down, check fingerings, work out the counting;
- Gradually speed up until it can be played comfortably at tempo
- Never practice mistakes. Be accurate. Work out trouble spots immediately instead of skipping over them.
- Use a metronome or keep time lightly with your foot.

Step 4: Prepare whatever you want – 10-15 minutes.

- Play/sing for fun – **play/sing whatever you want!**
- Ensure that whatever music you make, you make with beautiful tone and good posture and playing/singing position.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Students are expected to follow the PMSS code of conduct while on- and off-campus. Please remember to abide by the following rules at all times: **Respect yourself, Respect each other, and Respect the school/community/venue.**

While Off-Campus:

- How you dress, act and speak is a reflection of PMSS and Pitt Meadows. Please be sensitive to this at all times.
- Please remember your audience/workshop etiquette. Do not talk or move about when other groups are performing at concerts.
- Instrumentalists with PMSS instruments - you are responsible for all damage and loss, so make sure you take **very** good care of your instrument.
- There will be zero tolerance for drugs, alcohol and smoking. Consequences for this will include being sent home at your parents' expense, suspension from school, and possibly being prohibited from future participation in PMSS Music ensembles.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

Choir Students:

- *Sheet music* –The sheet music fee of \$4.00 allows Mr Renaud to buy new music throughout the school year to meet student requests and the needs of the choir.
- *MusicFirst* will be our platform for learning to read music, develop our listening skills and theory skills. The price of \$20.00 covers the cost of your subscription.

Band Students:

- **Beginner Concert Band:** *Standard of Excellence, Book 1* by Bruce Pearson (\$14.00)
- **Symphonic Concert Band:** *Superior Bands in 16 Weeks (Method Book)* by Quincy C. Hilliard and Deborah Sheldon (\$14.00).
- MusicFirst – this platform will help you to learn to read music and make the right sounds on your instrument.
- Band Folder (\$26 if bought brand new, purchased through PMSS Music Department – or you can borrow an old folder for free)
- A wire music stand for at-home practice (\$18 from local music store).
- A Cleaning Kit (sold at local music stores for approx. \$15.00).
- Tuner – OPTIONAL (\$30, purchased through PMSS Music Department)
- Woodwinds: reeds (approx. \$20 per box, bought at local music stores)

- Brass players: valve oil (approx. \$10 bought at a local music store)
- **Percussionists:**
 - sticks if you don't own two pairs (\$5/pair through PMSS)
 - Mallet/Stick Pack and Bag (one-time purchase that will last your whole high school career) - \$115.00 through PMSS
 - Practice Pad (one-time purchase that will last your whole high school career) - \$30.00 through PMSS.
- Instrument rental (approx. \$30 per month from a music store). ***PLEASE NOTE: PMSS Music Department has some instruments for loan to students. Students will need to make a \$100 damage deposit to use PMSS instruments and a small rental fee per month to cover maintenance at the end of the year—less than music stores charge. Please see Mr. Renaud if you would like to explore this option.***

Please Note:

- Students are responsible for keeping their music and method books in good condition and will be charged for replacing any lost or destroyed music or books.
- Students who borrow school instruments will receive their \$100 deposit back upon returning the instrument **in good playing condition** in June.
- **If you have any financial difficulties that would impede you from acquiring any of the required materials, please see Mr. Renaud in September. Arrangements will be made and no one will be excluded due to finances.**

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Music Students' Association:

The music students' association is a great way to get involved with other music students, learn to work in a team, and get some experience in a leadership capacity. Involvement is voluntary and we encourage all interested students to come check it out. The music students' association will organize fundraising events for students, help to plan concerts, help with preparation and backstage management at concerts, and will work on other projects. The association will meet at least once a month lunch. If you are interested in having a say in the direction of the music department, please see Mr. Renaud!

TOUR 2021

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all overnight travel has been suspended in British Columbia. Mr. Renaud will provide students with various day-time field trip activities that align with the COVID-19 guidelines.

UNIFORMS

Music ensembles are very much like sports teams. When a sports team represents PMSS, they wear their team jerseys. When PMSS Music ensembles perform, they are representing PMSS and like our sports teams, must be in uniform; this presents a sense of identity and professionalism. This is why all aspects of the uniform must be present. You would be surprised by how much a pair of sneakers stands out in a sea of black dress shoes! **Students who show up in an incomplete uniform may be asked not to perform.**

FORMAL DRESS:

Concert Blacks – black dress shirt, dress pants, dress socks, dress shoes OR black dress, black nylons/leggings, black dress shoes (or a similar combination). **At least** $\frac{3}{4}$ length sleeves, please.

MUSIC PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

The PMSS Music Parents' Association is a group whose primary function will be to organize fundraisers for students, individual music accounts (for more information, see FUNDRAISERS in this package) and help with organizing and consulting on the direction of the music program. They will choose which fundraisers will be most beneficial, organize parents to collect money and forms and distribute the items. The Music Parents' Association's other function is as a forum where information is shared between the music department and the parents. Upcoming field trips, concerts and tours are discussed, reminders are given about payment dates and assignment due dates. The MPA meeting is also the place where input and ideas are gathered from parents about things that are going on in the music department. The Music Parents' Association will meet once a month on the first Tuesday at 6:30 pm **via Zoom (during COVID-19)**.

FUNDRAISING AND TRIPS

For many of us, the most memorable experiences from school are those which were unique, fun and educational. As part of our program, we like to give our students the opportunity to travel. Whether it be a local festival, a retreat or a major tour, these excursions give students valuable opportunities to learn. Most, if not all, of these experiences cannot be duplicated in the classroom. **(During COVID-19, we will still partake in field trips to enhance what we learn in the classroom. All excursions will be in line with BC CDC Guidelines.)**

All excursions cost money—for school buses, tickets, entry fees, etc. Therefore, most music programs in BC like to give students and parents the opportunity to raise funds to help them reduce the cost of these activities. It is important to mention that all fundraising is entirely optional. This year, we will be exploring possible fundraisers we can do to help make these sorts of experiences happen.

Typically, when a student joins a music program, they begin an individual music account with us until they leave the program. All money that they earn goes into their personal account that is kept up to date by our MPA treasurer. When a student leaves the program, any money left in the account will be used to promote music at PMSS. Students may use their fundraising money for trips, fees, musicwear or anything else music-related. Students may not withdraw band money when they leave the program. They may pass it on to a sibling.

Typical music fundraisers often include Entertainment books, Purdy's Chocolates, Poinsettias, Coffee, Spring Planters, and Krispy Kreme Donuts. New ideas are welcome and parents willing to help organize are even more welcome!

AWARDS

End of Year Student Achievement Awards:

Most Outstanding Musician Award

- Awarded to the musician who has proven him/herself to be the highest achiever in the music department.
- Student will be enrolled in multiple music courses and have A's in all music courses in which they are enrolled.

Most Outstanding Instrumental Musician

- Awarded to a musician who has gone above and beyond in his/her practice records or practice reflections.
- Student will most likely be enrolled in more than one instrumental ensemble.

Most Improved Instrumental Musician

- Awarded to the student who has shown the most growth throughout the school year on his/her instrument through consistent practice and a willingness to seek help when needed.

Most Outstanding Vocal Musician

- Awarded to a musician who has gone above and beyond in his/her practice records or practice reflections.
- Student will most likely be enrolled in more than one instrumental ensemble.

Most Improved Vocal Musician

- Awarded to the student who has shown the most growth throughout the school year on his/her vocal technique through consistent practice and a willingness to seek help when needed.

Service Awards

- Awarded to the student or students who has/have shown their willingness to support the music department with their time and efforts well beyond the general commitment expectations. This/these students are always willing to jump in and help out whenever they can.

CONCERTS and PERFORMANCES

This year, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, our performances will look a little bit different: we will not have in-person attendance and concerts may not take place in after school hours (to be confirmed). That being said, performances are still an integral part of our music program—even if they happen livestreamed and during the school day! Concerts are to music courses what exams are to math classes. Concerts allow students to apply all they have learned about performance practice, theory, and music history. Failure to attend a performance will therefore have an extreme negative impact on the student’s grade. Moreover, unlike a math student in a math class where missing the exam only affects the individual student, missing a concert affects others in the class as well. Playing in a musical ensemble is a lot like playing on a sports team. In hockey, for example, everyone on the team is important and is needed at a game. The same applies for music; every student-musician is an integral part of the musical ensemble and it is not an exaggeration to say the entire musical “team” will suffer if even one student misses our “game,” aka concert. **All performances on the Calendar of Events are mandatory and graded.** *Other performance opportunities and/or enrichment opportunities may come up throughout the year. Mr. Renaud will pitch these to the group and students will have ONE week to check their calendars and get back to Mr. Renaud. After a week has passed, students are considered “committed” to the performance.*

CONCERT AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

1. Please remain seated for the entire performance. If you have to leave the room, please do so between pieces so as to avoid disruption.
2. Applause is appropriate at the end of a piece of music—be sure to watch for the conductor’s hands/baton to lower before starting to applaud so that you avoid clapping between movements.
 - a. During jazz performances, it is appropriate to clap after a soloist has finished their solo.
3. Please stay for the duration of the concert. Each ensemble should have a full audience to perform for. Also, students should support their peers by watching their performances. This is part of their concert grade.
4. Please refrain from talking or whispering during performances.
5. Please silence all cell phones and electronic devices.

GENERAL MUSIC DEPARTMENT EXPECTATIONS

- Music must be practised & reviewed at home. Our Success depends on it!
- Don't play, sing, or talk while the teacher is explaining something to you or anyone else. Listen to what the teacher is saying. Even if he is not talking directly to you, chances are that you will need the information sooner or later.
- If you have a question or comment, please raise your hand and wait to be recognised by the teacher before speaking.
- Don't play or handle any instrument **not belonging to you**.
- Unless you are a percussionist, **please stay out of the percussion section** and don't touch the percussion equipment.
- Absolutely no gum, food, or drinks (including coffee/tea) in the music rooms or practice rooms (water OK). ***Practice Rooms are OFF-LIMITS during COVID-19.***
- School music is on loan to the student. All students must return all their school music on time and in good condition with all markings erased.
- Bring **two pencils** – one in your folder (**on your music stand**, please), and one in your case. Please don't mark your music with pen!
- In general, please try to use the washrooms before or after class – not during.
- Be on time & give yourself time to set up. You must be in the classroom before the rehearsal starts.
- If you are late or away, bring a note or have your parents send an email. Unexcused absences and lates will lower your letter grade. When possible, please schedule dentist/orthodontist appointments on non-rehearsal days, and not right before a concert.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

etiquette (et' e ket') n. 1 the conventional rules for conduct or behaviour in polite society.

- Instrumentalists: be in your SEAT and WARMING UP before the start of rehearsal.
- Singers: be at your spot and reviewing trouble spots in the music prior to the start of the rehearsal.
- Full participation is expected at all scheduled concerts, field trips, etc.
- If you use something, please put it away when you are finished (i.e. cables, cords, mutes...)
- When the teacher or conductor approaches the podium at the start of rehearsal, stop talking/playing and get in the "ready position".
- Please be mindful of your manners. Remember: "Please", "Thank-you" (especially when there is a guest conductor/clinician!)
- Handle all music with care; it is on loan to you, to be returned in good condition with all pencil markings erased.

