

Semiahmoo Music Department Handbook

Grade 8 - 9 September 2017

The Directors and Music Society Members would like to welcome all of our music students and families to the Semiahmoo Music Department. This year promises to be another exciting year for Semiahmoo music students with new educational experiences and a full calendar. Please take the time to read through this Department Handbook to familiarize yourselves with the program and the expectations for our students. Looking forward to meeting all of you soon!

*Dagan Lowe
Kevin Lee
Sarah Kennedy*

Grade 8 Parents (and “New to the Program” Grade 9 Parents) Meet the Music Teachers Night Thursday, September 14th (6:00-7:00pm)

Come and meet the music directors on Thursday, September 14th from 6:00-7:00pm in the large band room. We will use this evening to help acquaint our grade 8 parents (and any new grade 9 parents) with the Semiahmoo music program as a whole, introduce the Semiahmoo Music Society, go over “Smart Music” (the computer program all grade 8 and 9 band students will be using), and answer any questions parents may have. Students are welcome to attend this meeting!

We are planning to have Mandarin and Korean translators at this meeting for parents who would appreciate this service.

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of our Music Department is for students to develop abilities and attitudes that will assist them in acquiring skills that are technical, social, and artistic, that in turn will facilitate their participation in the world of music throughout their entire lives.

Students are offered the opportunity to prepare themselves to be both competent and reliable members within a variety of exciting performance groups. Membership in these groups calls for strong character as well as strong musicianship.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT CURRICULAR OUTLINE

Semiahmoo Secondary music courses follow provincially prescribed curricula. Strong emphasis is placed on developing proficiencies that are useful and indeed recognizable in post-secondary musical endeavours of all kinds. Elements of this curriculum are common at all grade levels with an appropriate degree of mastery set for each level. Supplementary materials and activities such

as small ensemble assignments and written reports will be added with increasing frequency as the grades progress. Students should expect significant and identifiable progress in each of the curriculum area with each advancing year in the Semiahmoo Music Program.

The elements of this curriculum are as follows:

A. ENSEMBLE INTEGRITY

“getting under baton”
proficiency at following conductor
vertical clarity

B. RHYTHMIC FLUENCY

use of rhythmic counting system for use in
fluent reading and effective self-correction of
rhythms

C. NOTATIONAL FLUENCY

key signatures, accidentals
fingerings, alternate fingerings
development of speed with accuracy

D. INSTRUMENT PEDAGOGY

- embouchure, mechanics of the breath
- hand positions, posture
- instrument mechanics and maintenance

**E. REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE
TECHNIQUES AND EXPERIENCES**

- retention and transfer concepts
- concentration techniques
- school, community, regional, national, and international concerts and festivals will be undertaken

F. PITCH AND TUNING

- instrument / mechanical
- embouchure and air direction
- tuning characteristics of individual instruments
- ear training

G. STYLE AND MUSICALITY

- note shape as it relates to a broad range of musical styles
- historical and stylistic perspective as it relates to repertoire and to an overview of traditional music history

H. QUALITY OF SOUND

- instruction that relates to instrumental tone: embouchure, air support, mouthpiece, reed management and equipment quality

EVALUATION

Students demonstrate proficiency in the curricular areas outlined above each time they rehearse and perform. The directors are constantly assessing each student throughout the learning and rehearsal process. Individual playing tests are not used as the major basis for achievement grading but are occasionally required as classes are quite large and each student needs an opportunity to demonstrate their progress. Written tests are also used for partial assessment, particularly of rhythmic counting proficiency.

SMART MUSIC

- Smart Music is an online computer program that all grade 8 and 9 students will be regularly using in their practice routine.
- This is an extensive program designed to help students practice the music in their technique books, as well as much of the music we will be playing in band. It offers the student the ability to record themselves with background tracks and will give them instant feedback on their performance.
- Each week students will be assigned music to practice and record on Smart Music, which they will submit for marks. The beauty of this program is that students can record themselves as many times as they want until they attain the performance mark they are happy with.
- *This program will be discussed further at our Meet the Music Teachers Meeting.*
- A detailed document outlining how to get started on Smart Music will be distributed during the second week of classes.
- **Grade 9 students need to update their subscription to Smart Music for this school year.** (This will be discussed further in class)

Students or parents may, at any time, request an interview with a director to review the progress of their child.

Performances are an important element of the learning process and are mandatory for all members. It is also very important for parents to attend concerts so they can see and hear the results of the practice they hear at home and be able to share in the excitement of their son's or daughter's success. It is very important for both students and parents to see and hear the other performance groups in our program. More experienced groups provide an important model that serves to help younger musicians know what they are striving for and what is possible for them. *This greatly helps younger students to have the excitement to practice on their instrument.*

To facilitate this it is most important that both students and parents
stay until the conclusion of all concerts.

HOME PRACTICE

Students are expected to practice 40 minutes per day 5 days of the week. This is most easily accomplished by making sure the instrument goes home each weekend. The weekend accomplishes 3 of those days leaving only 2 days in the Mon-Thurs. part of the week when there is a need to transport the instrument back and forth from school.

Students are encouraged to use good practice habits, which include:

- Working on assignments through “Smart Music”
- Working on the hard parts rather than playing over parts already mastered
- Using a pencil in rehearsal so you can practice the “music” as well as the notes and rhythms.
- Working hard on reading the rhythms rather than playing by memory.
- Remembering that being a musician is “physical” as well as “artistic” and that if the muscles aren’t strong then you can’t express yourself the way you would like.

SUMMARY

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| • Observation during rehearsal | 40% |
| • Playing tests, sectional assessment and recorded submissions | 20% |
| • Smart Music Tests | 40% |

Semiahmoo Music Department Teaching Staff

Mr. Dagan Lowe	Music Director and Department Head	lowe_d@surreySchools.ca
Mr. Kevin Lee	Music Director	lee_k@surreySchools.ca
Ms. Sarah Kennedy	Music Director	kennedy_sarah@surreyschools.ca

Communication by email is most efficient for the Directors and is preferred.

Band Room Direct Phone: 604-542-5255

TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS:

Concert Bands

Grade Eight Concert Band	Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Lee, Mr. Lowe
Grade Nine Concert Band	Mr. Lee, Mr. Lowe and Ms. Kennedy
Senior Wind Ensemble	Mr. Lowe and Mr. Lee

Jazz Bands

*Jazz Band 8	Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Lee and Mr. Lowe
Jazz Band 9	Ms. Kennedy and Mr. Lowe
Jazz Band 10	Mr. Lee
Jazz Band 11	Mr. Lee
Jazz Studies 11	Mr. Lee
Jazz Band 12	Mr. Lowe
Jazz Studies 12	Mr. Lowe

*Jazz Band 8 is open to all Grade 8 music students on all instruments after school Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:05 pm to approximately 4:20 pm

Small Ensembles and Jazz Combos:

Each year we have numerous extra-curricular ensembles and jazz combos that are put together by students with the assistance of the Directors. These ensembles offer an excellent opportunity for the further development of jazz improvisation.

Combos at the Gr. 9, 10, 11 and 12 levels will have an assigned practice time in the band room each week. Directors will often be on hand for practices.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

Band members are expected to perform at a superior level at all concerts and festivals. Students must strive each year to increase their skill and proficiency with their instrument. This progress will be achieved within a highly focused rehearsal atmosphere in a supportive ensemble setting strengthened by consistent individual home practice. *Instruments must go home for practice each weekend and at least once or twice during the week.*

Students are expected to have a good quality instrument that is maintained in good repair. Suitable accessories (reeds, neck strap, valve oil etc.) are the responsibility of the parents.

Class participation missed due to lack of proper supplies or the instrument is “in the shop” can result in great harm to a student’s progress and learning momentum. *The directors offer assistance and indeed insist upon assessing all instruments thought to be in need of repair.* If professional attention is necessary, this will be advised and parents should undertake this immediately.

All technique books and sheet music will be provided. The Directors insist that these materials be kept in the music folder that is provided. Protecting these materials properly insures the best possible use of our resources and enables the directors to expand our library of exciting and current repertoire rather than see these resources used to replace damaged or misplaced materials.

Instrument Cases:

Labeling:

First and last names, as well as the school’s name must be clearly labeled on all instrument cases.

Instrument Storage:

Instruments can be kept on the shelves in the band room storage room during the school day.

Please note: Parents are advised that the school does not assume responsibility for loss of student owned instruments. Please add the instrument to your family household insurance if this sort of loss is not already covered. Before securing extra private insurance for instruments rented from a music company, check the terms of your rental contract to see if loss due to theft is already included.

Instruments on loan from the school **MUST** be insured against loss or damage of any kind as a pre-condition of their use.

FIELD TRIPS AND TOURS

In past years the directors and the parents have been very supportive of the benefits of music ensemble travel. Previous tours have included:

- New Orleans
- Canadian Anaheim Music Festival – Disneyland, California
- Canadian Rocky Mountain Music Festival – Banff
- Hawaii
- Las Vegas Jazz Invitational
- New York City
- MusicFest Canada – Calgary, Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Montreal
- Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival – University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho
- San Francisco
- Okanagan Concert Band Festival – Penticton
- Cuba

RATIONALE FOR UNDERTAKING A TOUR

- provides opportunity to perform for non-captive audience i.e. adjudicators who evaluate and suggest improvements and/or general public that don't have to like us for any other reason than our performance competence
- provides opportunity to learn about music in an intensive setting (music festival or working with educator and other musicians in another city)
- strengthens and confirms, in a positive way, the musical, organizational, and emotional interdependence between group members
- provides focus for Directors to plan for organizational and disciplinary structures that remain in place throughout the year(s)
- provides a long term focused communal project for students that in turn fosters stability and enjoyment of school life in a general sense for the entire year and for future years as well
- enhances students' ability to plan and manage finances through fund-raising credit system and personal money

Students must maintain sufficient academic and behavioral standards to successfully receive permission from subject teachers to be excused from class to Tour. The Directors will, of course, be very concerned about how such problems will affect the ability of the group to fulfill performance, travel, and financial commitments.

The “Band Tour” has proven again and again to members and their families to be a very powerful life changing experience for our members and that it is an experience that will be cherished for a lifetime.

Planned Tours for this year include:

- Senior Program Tour – Senior Wind Ensemble, Jazz Bands 10, 11, & 12 -**Cuba**
- **Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival** – Jazz Band 11 and 12
- Grade 9 Tour – **Whistler Cantando Music Festival**

Unlike other “educational tours” Music Department tours must include *all members* otherwise performances are not possible. Members and their parents must think carefully about this at the beginning of the year so that tour integrity is protected for all members.
