



Pittwater High School Performing Ensembles Not just for band students

Information for parents and students.

2023

Pittwater High School is well regarded for the amazing opportunities we offer young musicians, with many gaining skills beyond those at other schools, including private schools. Students who have not yet begun to learn an instrument are welcome to discuss borrowing a school instrument and beginning with a tutor to gain the basic technique and understanding to then join an ensemble when ready. This can be discussed with Dr Martin Hardy, head of The Performing Ensembles Program.

Opportunities

As a musician in a public school, students have opportunities to play at a community level, at the prestigious Sydney City Recital Hall, Sydney Town Hall and Sydney Opera

House, and at the world record breaking Schools Spectacular. Every few years the students have the amazing opportunity to tour overseas. The most recent tour was in China where the students performed on the Great Wall among other amazing places. The 2020 tour is currently being planned and the fundraising team are working hard to minimize the cost for students.

Parent Involvement

The band program is organised by the P&C with input from Dr Martin Hardy. Parent volunteers are needed to cover the positions of President, Secretary, Treasurer, Communication, Uniforms, and Fundraising. These positions are for 1 year and are up for re-election at the annual general meeting. Parents are also asked to assist as ensemble managers. The task of the

ensemble manager is to ensure that the conductor's time is devoted to being at the front of the band, teaching the students. Other issues such as copying music, finding extra parts, checking performance details and talking to students who may have a question are dealt with by the manager.

For parents who cannot commit on a regular basis, there is a great need for baking cakes, cooking sausages, serving in the hall canteen at performances and selling raffle tickets. All of these occasions are a chance to meet other parents socially and show the students our support.

Uniforms

Uniforms are required for all performances and these include the PHS performing ensemble shirt, a maroon tie for the boys, black pants,

black socks and black lace up shoes. Band shirts and ties can be purchased through the school uniform shop.

Rehearsals

Pittwater High School currently has nine performing ensembles for students to participate in. Each student must first be a member of their primary ensemble, and those who choose may take on a second ensemble.

Primary ensembles include the wind ensembles, string ensembles and choir. Secondary ensembles include the symphony orchestra, advanced strings and stage bands. Performance students also enjoy taking part in the annual school musical.

The current rehearsal schedule allows for 2 hours of rehearsal for each member of the primary performing ensembles. This should also be supported by tutorials outside of school. Students training for their AMEB or Trinity exams would generally have a one hour tutorial in order to cover the school music as well as the exam music. Secondary ensembles are in addition to this basic structure. Primary ensembles are based firstly on school years but are flexible to allow for balance of



instruments across the different levels. The current 2023 rehearsal schedule is shown in the table below

Ensemble	Day	Time	Year group
Wind Ensembles – woodwind, brass, percussion			
Symphonic Band	Thursday	2:30 – 4:30pm	10 – 12 (others by audition)
Concert Band	Monday Wednesday	7:30 – 8:40am 7:30 – 8:40am	7 – 9 (older less experienced students welcome)
String Ensembles – violin, viola, cello, double bass			
String ensemble	Thursday	2:30 – 3:30pm	7-12
Advanced strings	Thursday	3:45 – 4:45pm	By audition
Orchestra – all strings, selected brass, woodwind, percussion	Wednesday	2:30 – 3:30pm	7-12 (all string players)
Jazz – Jazz improvisation – selected wind instruments, percussion, vocalist, bass			
Junior Stage Band	Tuesday	7:30 – 8:40am	Beginning students
Big Band	Friday	7:30 – 8:40am	By audition
Vocal Ensemble	Friday	2:30 – 3:30pm	7-12

Fees

The cost for membership of the band covers fees for conductors, school instruments, musical scores and other minor costs. The primary ensemble fee assists by subsidising the secondary ensembles so that students can be involved in these at a heavily discounted price. Parents are also very involved in fundraising to support the purchase of instruments and scores as well as assisting to lower the costs involved in overseas tours. All parents are expected to assist whenever possible. Fees tend to increase slightly as needed, however as a guide, fees are listed here.

Primary Ensemble Fee	\$450 per year
Secondary Ensemble Fee	\$160 per year
Vocal Ensemble	\$220 per year (1 rehearsal per week).
Payment plans can be arranged with the band treasurer if requested.	

Please contact the ensemble secretary Paula Patterson or head of creative arts Martin Hardy (martin.hardy@det.nsw.edu.au) with any further questions. Email: pandtpaterson@gmail.com or pittwater-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au