



Pittwater High School
Performing Ensembles
Programme
Handbook



Pittwater High School Performing Ensembles Programme

MEMBERSHIP HANDBOOK

The Pittwater High School Performing Ensembles Programme Membership Handbook has been compiled as a guide and a reminder to members of their commitment and responsibilities in relation to their participation in the various school ensembles.

The handbook is meant to clarify areas of uncertainty and ensure smooth and trouble-free administration of the programme. It has been compiled after observation of, and consultation with, many successful musical groups that have attained a high level of achievement over many years.

The Pittwater High School Performing Ensembles Programme provides opportunities for students to rehearse and perform with other students of a similar standard. All members should be role models for aspiring music students and engender respect from their peers and the general public. All ensembles are extensions of musical experiences that members receive in the classroom.

It is essential that all members fully support their ensemble to the best of their ability; this naturally implies punctuality and commitment.

Members of the Pittwater High School Performing Ensembles Programme should read this document thoroughly and will be expected to abide by all sections of it. Each member is expected to retain a copy of this document and keep it in a place where it is easily available for reference.

1 Membership Agreement

The “Membership Agreement” is an important document that should be completed and returned to your ensemble director as soon as possible. This document is Pittwater High School’s record of parental and student commitment to be involved in Pittwater High School’s Performing Ensembles Programme.

The Pittwater High School Performing Ensembles Committee should be notified of any changes in personal details (i.e. postal address, phone number, email address, change of school, medical conditions, etc.), immediately. It is vitally important that we have your current email address as the majority of correspondence to ensemble members is sent via email.

2 Code of Behaviour

Members of the Pittwater High School Performing Ensembles Programme are expected to be punctual, respectful, responsible and friendly. Our music programme is recognized and respected throughout the school and the community. Many ensemble members before you have contributed to the fantastic reputation both within Australia and overseas. As a current member of the Pittwater High School Performing Ensembles Programme it is your responsibility to make sure that the good reputation is maintained. Good conduct will be expected of all students at all times in uniform and out of uniform. Conduct at all activities should reflect positively upon the whole school.

3 Blues Point Program

Blues points are awarded by your conductors for attendance and commitment to your ensemble. These become part of the overall school's Blues Program which culminates with the end of year Presentation Night.

4 Rehearsal Times

Rehearsal times vary from year to year. Generally, rehearsals operate before and after school. For the latest Rehearsal timetable please see the website.

Extra rehearsals, other than those that appear on the schedule, may be arranged from time to time as required. This will only be in the case of major events and only if absolutely necessary. As much notice as possible will be given.

5 Commitment

Our ensembles are amongst the finest in NSW and a full commitment needs to be made. Students should not leave during the year; it is expected that when students have made a commitment to their ensemble(s) they will be an active member for the full year.

Once payment has been made there will be no refunds.

Instrumentalists are committed to two rehearsals per week and at least one of the following Primary ensembles:

- Woodwind, brass and percussion players will be part of one concert band.
- String players will be part of the string ensemble and orchestra.
- Piano and guitar players are expected to be part of the above ensembles.
- Vocalists will be part of the vocal ensemble.

The other Secondary ensembles are stage band, big band and advanced strings. Students who participate in these must commit to the Primary ensembles first.

Any student who participates in ensembles outside of school must commit to the school's ensembles first. If there is a clash with outside ensembles the school's ensembles must come first.

6 Absences

All absences must be explained both as a courtesy to fellow musicians and conductors, so that your lack of attendance may be understood. You can do this by the following methods:

Letter: A letter to explain your absence is to be handed to the Conductor. *Please do this before the rehearsal.*

Phone: If you are unable to attend any rehearsal and have not already notified anyone, it is necessary for the Ensemble Director to telephone your home to ensure your wellbeing. Unexplained absences will require a note to be handed to your Director at the next meeting.

Attendance is required at *all* regularly scheduled rehearsals, extra rehearsals and performances. It is understood that there are times when attendance is not possible due to circumstances beyond the control of the parent and/or student.

The following are considered acceptable reasons for absence:

- Illness
- Serious illness of immediate family which consequently affects a student's attendance.

A Year 12 half yearly or HSC exam on the next day after an afternoon rehearsal or on the day of a rehearsal.

A part time job is **not** an acceptable reason for missing a performance or rehearsal.

An assignment due the next day is not an acceptable excuse for missing a performance or rehearsal.

Studying is not an acceptable excuse for missing a performance or rehearsal.

7 Practice and Tutors

It is the responsibility of each ensemble member to ensure that all their music is learnt for rehearsals and performances. Students are expected to have one private lesson with an experienced music tutor, specifically on the instrument they are playing in their ensemble(s), each week; this brings an obvious benefit to the player and the ensemble.

8 Ensemble Fees

Ensemble fees are necessary to cover the expenses required to employ your conductors, purchase music, enter competitions and maintain equipment. It is a commitment of ensemble membership that fees are paid in advance and usually at the registration night. A registration form must be completed by each new member and accompany payment. Thank you to all those families for their consideration in paying their fees on time.

If any student or family has special circumstances making payment difficult please contact:

Music Committee Treasurer by email at pittwaterhighmusic@gmail.com

It is an unenviable job, but vitally important, to follow up with families to collect overdue fees. The first call is often due to an oversight, the second is embarrassing! Regretfully it has been decided that failure to pay ensemble fees or to contact the Treasurer if financial difficulties arise will mean that the student will not be permitted to continue in this programme. It is, after all, unfair that the majority of ensemble families end up subsidising those that do not make the effort to pay.

9 Activities for Ensembles

The Music News which is emailed to every Ensemble member and the School Newsletter are the main sources of communication. Functions and performances will be listed in these publications.

Each conductor will inform students of activities and events at ensemble rehearsals that are additional to those already published in this Handbook. Permission notes will be distributed before each event where necessary and must be returned as soon as possible.

Local School Ensemble Performances.

During the school year all ensembles will perform at local school invitation nights. These will be Mona Vale, Newport, Bilgola and Avalon Schools and possibly others in addition; the events will be held either at the PHS Hall or Performance Space or at the relevant Primary School. This is a great opportunity to see and hear the progress of the different ensembles during the year. It is also an opportunity, if we are

hosting the event, for the parent committee to do a bit of fundraising, and we request support with cakes and slices for sale at supper time.

External Competitions and Activities

Symphonic Band, Concert Band, Performance Band, Big Band and Orchestra are entered into significant competitions during the year, which may include Eisteddfods and other state-wide events. During the year there will also be Special Workshops at School with visiting Bands/Ensembles.

10 Ensemble Uniforms

All students are to be fully dressed in the correct Pittwater High School Performing Ensembles Programme uniform for every performance (unless otherwise stated). Uniform is to be worn from the moment the student arrives at the performance venue.

Uniforms can be purchased through the uniform shop (<https://www.phsshop.com>).

Pittwater High School Performing Ensembles Uniform is as follows for all ensembles:

Girls: black Band shirts, tailored pants, black leather shoes and black socks.

Boys: black Band shirts, tailored pants, black leather shoes, black socks and maroon tie.

In colder weather, a school jumper or jacket may be worn prior to performances.

12 Parent Support Committee

There is a very active Parent Support Committee to assist in the running and development of this school-based Performing Ensembles Programme and parental involvement is welcome whether you can spare just enough time to help occasionally or whether you can take a more active role on a week to week basis.

Meetings are generally held once per term (in week 4, the week before P&C meetings), at the Pittwater RSL and are advertised in 'Music News' (emailed to Ensemble members) and the School Newsletter.

Ensemble Awards

Each year at our Instrumental Presentation Evening awards are given to individual students who go beyond the expectations and contribute greatly to the ensembles. Generally, these students have extremely high attendance rates, are substantially committed to improving themselves as musicians and show diligence to improving the ensembles program.