

Normanhurst West Public School

Training Band 2022 Information Pack



Normanhurst West Public School has a thriving band program, which is managed by band parents as a subcommittee of the NWPS P&C Association. The passion and inspiration of our Musical Director, Dave Odams, the dedication of the parent committee, and the loyal support of our school, not to mention the enthusiasm of our students, has sustained the program through a very difficult couple of years for the musical community at large. We are very pleased to be able to offer the same program as we have in previous years, and are looking forward to it continuing to grow and prosper within such a supportive community.

This information pack has been developed to provide you with all the information you need to make a decision about your child's involvement in band from the start of 2022. If you have any questions after reading this information, please don't hesitate to contact the band convenor at band.convenor@nwpspc.org.au

Band demonstration video

Our Musical Director, Dave Odams, has put together a video that showcases some of our bands' recent work and explains all the instruments in detail. You might like to watch this video with your child. Not only does it give a good overview of the instruments on offer, it also goes into some detail about what might make a student well suited to a particular instrument. You can watch the video here: <https://youtu.be/vUwkip66VEI>

Why join the band?

The Normanhurst West band community believes that music is a fundamental part of society, and that learning music helps develop a child by fostering creativity, instilling discipline, building confidence, and teaching patience. We believe that our music program focuses on these ideas, as well as ensuring that the students learn music, the 'universal language', in a fun, challenging, and inclusive environment.

Research has shown that learning to play an instrument is of great benefit to a child's developing brain. The following link is worthwhile viewing:

<http://laughingsquid.com/neuroscientists-find-that-playing-an-instrument-is-a-unique-workout-for-the-brain/>

'When you listen to music, multiple areas of your brain become engaged and active. But when you actually play an instrument, that activity becomes more like a full body-brain workout.'

How do I register my child?

We'd love to see your child join band in 2022 and to have them experience the challenges, fun, and musical opportunities that band can provide. Please keep the following important dates in mind:

- **11 November at 7.15 pm:** There will be a Zoom session for parents at which we will present general information about the band, demonstrate some of the instruments, and answer questions.
- **16 November:** Get your registration in by midnight on this date! Register on our band database, My School Music (MSM), at the following web address: <https://portal.msmusic.com.au/nwpsband> (those who already have another child registered on MSM can log in and click 'Add Student; everyone else can click 'New Student Registration').

Yours sincerely,

NWPS Band and Strings Committee

APPENDIX: BAND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The NWPS Band Program is a parent-run initiative that works closely with the school executive and staff.

The Bands

In 2022 we will have 4 bands, involving students from Year 3 through to Year 6. Each band will be conducted by a professional conductor, specifically chosen to meet the various needs of each of the four bands.

1. Training Band (TB)

This is our introductory band. Students in this band are usually in their first year of learning their instrument. The band is made up of predominantly Year 3 students, but it is also open to students from Years 3–6 who have little or no prior experience. Students learning a second instrument can also choose to join this band. The majority of students starting in Training Band are new to both their instrument and reading music, yet it continues to amaze everyone how quickly they come together as a band.

2. Intermediate Concert Band (ICB)

All students who have graduated from TB become a part of this band. To move into ICB, students need to have completed their Bronze Award (for details, see Q&A).

Senior Concert Band (SCB)

This band is for students in their 3rd or 4th year of playing their instruments and who have completed their Silver Band Award or successfully passed a band audition. The music for this band is more complex, expectations are higher, and different styles of music are played. This band provides an opportunity for students to be challenged in their musical experience and ability.

3. Jazz Band

Jazz Band is an *extension* ensemble and entry is by audition only. Students in this band are also members of Senior Concert Band, or, occasionally, Intermediate Concert Band. This band works on a variety of jazz, pop, and rock music that is not covered in the other bands, and gives the students the opportunity to try new styles of music. Places in Jazz Band are offered to those musicians who show the required level of musical ability and who also demonstrate the commitment to practise their parts at home and come to the rehearsal prepared.

Where do our bands play?

Our bands play at many school events such as the regular Principal's Medallion Assemblies, Open Day, The ANZAC Day assembly, Presentation Night, and Grandparents' Day, as well as a number of external eisteddfods and festivals. Our aim is to provide the students involved with a range of different types of performance opportunities throughout the year, to both build their confidence and expose them to different musical environments.

Instrument Allocation

One of the most frequently asked questions is 'How does my child get allocated an instrument?' Please indicate your child's instrument preferences (if they have any) when registering interest for the band through [My School Music](#). Up to three preferences can be selected. All attempts will be made to allocate your child one their preferred instruments, but they may not be allocated their first-choice instrument.

Instrument testing usually involves students trying out different instruments. This year, owing to COVID-19 restrictions, it is unlikely that instrument trials will be possible. As such, we urge you to watch our demonstration video (<https://youtu.be/vUwkip66VEI>) so that you are familiar with the instruments when deciding on instrument preferences.

Please keep in mind that when allocating instruments, we need to consider the makeup of the whole band, ensuring that we have a balanced band with instruments from all sections.

Once we have received all expressions of interest / registrations, you will be notified by email of the instrument we would like to offer your child and whether the school has one of these available for hire. If there are any issues, you are welcome to get in touch and discuss them.

Instrument Hire

The band committee has invested money in purchasing a range of instruments for hire by our students at reduced rates. When instruments have been allocated, depending on availability, families have an option to rent one of our band instruments at a rate of \$80/term.

Band Awards

In 2022, we will continue with our Band Awards system. The award system is based on the steady progress of students learning the basic skills to play their instrument. Students are issued a band book, *Tradition of Excellence*, that teaches the skills one by one. Students in Training Band will work through the book with their instrument tutor, who can sign off their progress on the worksheets provided. Students in Training Band complete one worksheet per term to achieve their Bronze Award and progress to the next band. Intermediate Concert Band students work towards their Silver Award in a similar fashion, and Senior Concert Band students work towards their Gold Award.

Parent Communication

The Band Committee maintains email distribution lists of all band parents in the band database, MSM. Parents are kept up to date with all the necessary information via email. We also have WhatsApp groups for each band so that you can ask questions or we can send quick reminders about events and such.

The conductors also send a band update after rehearsal most weeks in order to keep parents and tutors informed of what music students should focus on in practice.

The NWPS P&C website (<https://nwpspc.org.au/>) hosts band-related information – click on 'Our Services' > 'Band and Strings'.

2021 Band and Strings Committee

Below is the Band Committee as it stands for 2022:

Convenor	Elena Andersen
Bookkeeper	Sid Mukherjee
Secretary	Richard Greer
Training Band Coordinator	VACANT
Intermediate Concert Band Coordinator	Payel Benerjee
Senior Concert Band Coordinator	Kelli Thwaites
Jazz Band Coordinator	Prue Soupdis
String Ensemble Coordinator	Lana Mactier
Band Camp Coordinator	Nicola Woods
Librarian	Fiona Odams
Instrument Coordinator	Leon Chew / Mike Caddy
Events Coordinator	Jacqui Baxter
MSM Administrator	Mike Caddy
Tutor Coordinator	Dave Odams



Please note: Our band program is only able to run thanks to our team of volunteers. Please contact Elena at band.convenor@nwpspc.org.au if you think you might be able to join us next year as the Training Band Coordinator. This role is responsible for supervising performances and TB rehearsals (7.20 am to 8.30 am on Friday mornings) alongside the conductor. The role could be done by one person or shared.

2022 Training Band Q&A

Who supervises rehearsals?

One parent of a child in Training Band will need to volunteer to be the Training Band Coordinator (note: this role can be shared between two parents). They will attend rehearsal each week to assist the conductor in supervision of the children, mark the roll, and help the conductor with whatever is needed. They will get to know the children and will be a support to them. If this person can't attend any of the performances, they will organise another parent to be there in their place.

What instruments are available?

Across our three bands we currently have flute, piccolo (not offered to Training Band students), clarinet (including bass clarinet), oboe, saxophone (alto and tenor), trumpet, French horn, percussion (which includes drums, glockenspiel, and other percussion), bass guitar, trombone, baritone horn, tuba, and euphonium.

Can we choose our child's instrument?

If your child is set on a particular instrument or instruments, you need to identify that on the Expression of Interest Form and it will be taken into consideration. Please bear in mind, however, that we need to consider the balance of instruments in the band.

How are tutorials organised?

Children are required to have one private tutorial per week. Lessons are usually one-on-one (though, at the discretion of the tutor, they may be held as a small group with another student/students from the band playing the same or a similar instrument).

Agreement is made privately between the parent and tutor. The Band and Strings Committee can put you in touch with a couple of different tutors.

What other expectations are there?

Children are expected to attend a half-day Saturday or Sunday band workshop held at school (usually at the end of March) and Band and Strings Camp (usually a weekend in May). Parents are given a lot of advance notice for festival and performance dates and children should be available to attend those.

What is Band Camp?

The Band Camp is usually located at the Baden Powell Scout Centre at Pennant Hills. Children have a 'welcome to camp' evening on the Friday afternoon/evening, then go home for a good night's sleep. On Saturday morning, children will be dropped off at camp by their parents and they will play, rehearse, and have fun from Saturday morning through to Sunday afternoon. Camp ends with a concert for parents on the Sunday afternoon. Note that should the number of children in the Normanhurst West Band and Strings Program exceed the number of beds available, there is an option for Year 3 children to sleep at home on the Saturday night instead of at camp.

Who manages the program?

The conductors direct the musical side of the program in regards to music selection, instrument allocations (in liaison with the committee), suggested performances, and awards.

The Band and Strings Committee oversees and administers the program, manages the finances, signs off on performances, organises parent involvement, and liaises with the school. The committee is entirely made up of parent volunteers (who, for the most part, volunteer alongside their full-time jobs!) and relies on parents volunteering to help with some events throughout the year. If people do not volunteer to help, the workload for the committee is huge, so please consider offering your assistance when there is a call-out for volunteers. Vacancies come up from time to time in essential committee roles when parents move on (and especially when their kids finish up at the school), so please consider taking up a committee position if you are in a position to do so when one becomes available.

What are the costs involved with Training Band?

Training Band fee: \$80 per term (\$55 for siblings)

Instrument hire: \$80 per term

Annual band workshop: approx. \$45 in Term 1 for a half-day workshop on the weekend

Band camp: approx. \$225–\$250 for a weekend early in Term 2

Private tutor: \$40–\$45 (approx. fee for weekly half-hour lessons)