

RMHS Music Handbook

RPS

Music Handbook



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Mission Statement

Performing arts are a fundamental part of culture and our experience of life. The department believes that through the arts, by creating, performing, responding, and connecting, we come to understand our own processes for learning and growth and how that relates to the human condition. The performing arts allow for the celebration of individuality while honoring the collaborative process, empowering students to see how their contributions impact the larger community. The study of the arts is rooted in quantitative, practicable action, but the process of performing in an ensemble puts those learned skills to use in relation to others, helping students understand and navigate a subjective world. The arts help us learn to say what cannot otherwise be said, and arts education aids in student learning across all disciplines. We believe that all students can learn music. We strive to ensure high expectations but also to provide strong support for students, both within the school system and through a wide network of community resources. The sequential curricular benchmarks guiding coursework in the music department are on display at public performances, but ultimately, it is our goal to prepare students to be musically engaged citizens and curious, lifelong learners. The performing arts department strives to extend in-school learning experiences to real-world applications and individualize educational opportunities, so students can pursue artistic avenues that are relevant and interesting to them, as well as help them develop the skills they need to engage meaningfully with the arts after they leave the Rockport Public Schools.

Course Offerings

Elementary School:

General Music

All RES students attend **General Music** with their class. PreK students receive 30 minutes of music instruction per week. Students in grades K-5 receive 45 minutes of music instruction per week. All students learn introductory music theory and music history through movement, listening, discussion, performance, and composing. We sing and move in every class period and often play instruments.

Chorus

Chorus is an extracurricular singing opportunity for students in grades 3, 4, and 5. Chorus meets once weekly before school from 7:30-8:30 am and has between 3 and 5 performances each year. Students learn fundamentals of singing: music literacy, proper breathing and sound production, and emoting while performing.

Band and Orchestra

Band and **Orchestra** are extracurricular activities for students in grades 4 and 5. Band and Orchestra students meet before school from 7:30-8:30 am twice weekly: once in a small-group lesson and once in a large-group ensemble. Instruments offered for Band are flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, trombone, and percussion (snare drum and orchestra bells). Instruments offered for Orchestra are violin, viola, cello, and string bass. In both ensembles, students learn music literacy, the fundamentals of playing their individual instrument, and how to perform with a group.

6th Grade:

The three 6th grade core music classes (Band, Chorus, and Orchestra) meet at the same time during the day. These classes will often combine for shared musical experiences. ALL 6th grade music students will experience Jazz Band and Small Ensemble inside of their core music class.

Band

Band is for any woodwind, brass, or percussion student. Students learn music literacy, instrumental fundamentals, and basic ensemble skills. They focus on developing practice habits and working as a disciplined unit toward a common performance goal, while respecting the evolving musicianship of individual members.

Chorus

Chorus provides students with an educational opportunity in music through singing. The class strives to help students establish good vocal technique, build music literacy skills, and develop the concept of ensemble identity and skills, while respecting the

musicianship and achievement of individual members. Emphasis is placed on building confidence while exploring multiple traditions by connecting musical works with the study of history, culture, foreign languages, and cultures.

Orchestra

Orchestra students learn music literacy, instrumental fundamentals, and basic ensemble skills. They develop their practice habits and work together as a disciplined unit toward a common performance goal, while respecting the evolving musicianship of individual members.

Jazz Band

Jazz Band is for woodwind, brass, piano, guitar, bass, or percussion students. They are introduced to the language of jazz and its history. Students study jazz standards through listening, interpreting, and performing. They also learn concepts of improvisation, as well as experimenting with performing solos.

Small Ensemble

Small Ensemble gives students voice and choice in their music-making, as they employ their knowledge of music fundamentals to arrange and perform songs of their choosing. Students learn basic music theory in order to create simple parts from chord progressions. They focus on a wide variety of musical skills and are introduced to using interpersonal strategies for making collaborative decisions.

7th and 8th Grade:

7th and 8th grade students are combined into mixed grade ensembles. Students have the opportunity to enroll in Jazz Band or Small Ensemble as a separate class. Students must be enrolled in one of the three core music classes (Band, Chorus, and Orchestra) to also enroll in Jazz Band or Small Ensemble.

7/8th Grade Band

7/8th Band builds on the 6th grade Band experience, as students continue to explore instrumental technique, developing further understanding of musical concepts and terminology through performance and reflection. Students expand their overall musicianship while contributing to the musical culture of the school and the Rockport community.

7/8th Grade Chorus

7/8th Chorus builds on the 6th grade choral experience, as students continue to explore vocal technique. They work to improve singing and listening skills, to foster a love for

singing, to increase knowledge of music theory and literacy, to develop sight-singing abilities, and to gain confidence in performance and ensemble experience.

7/8th Grade Orchestra

7/8th Orchestra students continue to explore instrumental technique, developing further understanding of musical concepts and terminology through performance and reflection. Students expand their overall musicianship, while contributing to the musical culture of the school and the Rockport community.

7/8th Grade Jazz Band

7/8th Jazz builds on the 6th grade jazz experience for woodwind, brass, piano, guitar, bass, or percussion students. Students engage in more complex jazz arrangements, using listening and improvisational skills in a wide variety of contexts. They explore several sub-genres of jazz, developing their overall musicianship, while contributing to the musical culture of the school and the Rockport community.

7/8th Grade Small Ensemble

7/8th Small Ensemble gives students voice and choice in their music-making as they employ their knowledge of music fundamentals to arrange and perform songs of their choosing. Students develop a further understanding of music theory as they craft effective arrangements from basic chord and lyric sheets. They also expand their music literacy and note-reading abilities. Students also explore different kinds of leadership roles and focus on a wide variety of musical skills, as well as interpersonal strategies for making collaborative decisions.

High School Music:

At RHS, music classes are focused on the development of ensemble skills, culminating in public evening performances, assemblies, workshops, and festivals. In Band, Chorus, and Orchestra, students refine their understanding of music concepts, utilize effective practice habits and performance techniques, and participate actively in the community. Students have the opportunity to enroll in Jazz Band or Small Ensemble as a separate class. Students must be enrolled in one of the three core music classes (Band, Chorus, and Orchestra) to also enroll in Jazz Band or Small Ensemble. Jazz Band and Small Ensemble provide students with the opportunity to extend their learning, to develop more musical independence, and to explore improvisation, composition, and song arranging. Courses are offered at both the college and career preparatory and honors level.

HS Symphonic Band

HS Symphonic Band is for students who want to learn a brass, woodwind, or percussion instrument. Students rehearse and perform a variety of music, such as marches, fanfares,

contemporary classical works, and pop arrangements. Types of performances include seasonal formal concerts, festivals, workshops, Memorial Day observance, graduation, and community performances.

HS Chorus

HS Chorus students develop vocal technique, breath control, intonation, music literacy, confidence, ensemble skills, and musicianship while exploring a wide variety of music, including classical, jazz, folk, and pop. Types of performances include formal concerts, festivals, workshops, graduation, and community performances.

HS Orchestra

HS Orchestra members play music composed in a variety of styles primarily for string instruments, though collaborations with wind players, percussionists, and vocalists occur at times. Performances include seasonal formal concerts, festivals, workshops, graduation, and community performances.

HS Jazz Ensemble

HS Jazz Ensemble members perform a wide variety of styles, including jazz swing, Latin, rock, pop, ballad, fusion, funk, and more. Members are expected to perform and practice at the highest level, as the class includes extra performances not offered in Symphonic Band, Orchestra, or Chorus. Performances include formal concerts at the Shalin Liu Performance Center, frequent workshops with professional clinicians, festivals, community performances, and more.

HS Small Ensemble

HS Small Ensemble is a student-driven class where students explore their own voice and choice, working together in small groups to choose music and run rehearsals, as well as developing skills in song arranging, ensemble leadership, personal responsibility, production management, and interpersonal communication. Members are expected to perform and practice at the highest level, as the class includes extra performances not offered in Symphonic Band, Orchestra, or Chorus. Students take part in seasonal performances and performances at school assemblies, cafes, community events, ceremonies, etc.

Necessary Materials

Band/Orchestra:

- A working instrument
 - Percussionists are expected to have their own pairs of yarn mallets and drumsticks.
 - Supplies to maintain a working instrument (reeds, valve oil, cork grease...)
 - There are a limited number of school-owned instruments that are available to loan.
- A folder/binder to keep music in (as per director's instruction)
- A pencil with an eraser at every rehearsal
- A music stand at home on which to practice

Chorus:

- A 3 Ring Binder (any size) to keep music in
- A pencil with an eraser at every rehearsal

Instrument Storage

The school will provide a space for students to keep their instruments during the school day. This is a shared space that should be kept tidy by all students. The storage area is only to be used for instruments and instrument accessories. Students should make sure all of their possessions are labeled clearly with their name. School books, gym clothes, etc., are not to be kept in the storage area. Instrument storage spaces do not have individual locks. Instruments are left at their owners' risk.

Concert Attire

Elementary

Formal White Top

Black Bottoms

RMHS

Formal all-black attire (concert black)

All-Black Shoes

No T-shirts, polos, or visible logos please!

Concert attire should support proper playing technique (posture, hand position, breathing, etc.). When choosing concert attire, students should consider factors such as shoulder tightness, skirt/dress length, and fingernail length, and make clothing and style selections that will not impede the quality of their performance in any way.

Concert attire may change for specific performances.

In an instance where a student does not come dressed in appropriate concert attire, they may be asked to change. The music department has a small collection of concert attire pieces that students may access.

Attendance

Each individual student's participation affects the group's performance, and each student plays a valuable role in the ensemble. Students are expected to attend all rehearsals and performances, during and after school. All prearranged absences, such as a family wedding, must be arranged with your music teacher as soon as possible.

Students absent from a performance will be expected to complete a make-up assignment that demonstrates both the level of mastery of repertoire and an understanding of the musical material presented at the concert.

Please note, all performances will be preceded by a dress rehearsal at some point during that day, either during class or after school. Students are expected to be at these rehearsals. Exact schedules will be sent home closer to those performances.

Grading Breakdown

- **Concert and Event Performance – 35%**
 - Each individual student's participation affects the group's performance, and each student plays a valuable role in the ensemble. Students are expected to be at all concerts unless prior arrangements are made (details above). Students absent from a performance will be expected to complete a make-up assignment that demonstrates both the students' ability to perform the material and an understanding of the musical material presented at the concert. Make sure to check all concert dates, mark calendars right away, and reach out immediately if there are any immovable conflicts.
- **Practice, Preparation and Collaboration – 35%**
 - Practice and Preparation will be assessed through a variety of methods. Readiness to participate actively in class means having prepared parts ahead of time and being ready for the start of rehearsal. Our in-school class time is rehearsal. That is the time to put together the work you have done on your own. Despite the number of rehearsals we have in school, the majority of growth takes place through independent practicing. We will explore methods of effective practice throughout the year. Active and appropriate collaboration with classmates is an essential part of our practice. Consider factors that support proper technique. For string players this means keeping fingernails trimmed. (The Palm Test: when you look at the palm side of your hand, your fingernails should not be visible behind your fingertips.)
- **Tests, Quizzes, Written Assignments and Multimedia Projects – 30%**
 - As we learn about different styles of music, there may be simple written response homework assignments and in-class quizzes. There may also be quizzes and tests on musical terminology and symbols. You may be asked to complete multimedia projects and presentations as well. More information will be given out in class about the specific assignments.
 - *High School Honors: In addition to the assignments required of other students, RHS honors students will be required to create additional projects, complete additional assignments, or act as facilitators in class efforts.*

Class Behavior and Participation

Help us create an environment of mutual respect where we can concentrate on learning music – how to play it, how to talk about it, how to listen to it, and how to create it. Conflicts arise in all avenues of life. Playing in an ensemble is one area in which we can find common ground through the process of making music. Please remember to keep your attention on that task. With large groups of students, each with a loud instrument, the potential for chaos in the classroom is always present. Please help us keep our class focused.

District Auditions

District Auditions are an optional challenge for middle and high school music students. Auditioning for Northeast Junior or Senior District Chorus, Band, or Orchestra is a serious endeavor, but the process of preparation will prove beneficial whether or not you are accepted. A bus will be organized, and all auditioning students will travel together to the audition site. Please talk to your music teacher about ordering music.

School-Owned Instruments and Other Resources:

No student will be turned away from participation in the music department for financial reasons. If you are unable to afford a rental instrument, please contact a music teacher for information about using a school-owned instrument. Reach out with questions about other support available, including assistance with private lesson cost, etc.

Should I Get Private Lessons?

The fastest way to improve your playing is to enroll in private lessons. Lessons give you support to achieve technical mastery, but also provide you with an avenue to pursue music of interest for you that we might not touch on in class. There are many teachers in the area, including several who teach after school at the school. Please contact your music teacher about arranging lessons with a teacher who would be a good fit for you.

Why Invest in Private Lessons?

- Any skill level can benefit from studying your instrument in a one-on-one setting.
- Private teachers model a professional tone quality on their instrument.
- Receive individual constructive feedback and a tailored practice plan.
- Students work out of instrument-specific method books and supplemental exercises.
- Assist in preparing for district solos on an individual level.
- Learn and perform solo literature for your instrument.
- A private teacher can be a role model and motivate young musicians.
- Get advice on specific instruments and equipment options that are best for you.

Concert-going

Most Rockport Music performances are free to students 18 and under by calling the box office. Students are highly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity and any other chance to hear live music.

Parent Support and Involvement

Parental involvement is an important part of a successful music program. Parents are urged to attend performances, encourage students to practice, and become active in the school music program. Parent volunteers are needed to help with chaperones, trips, fundraising, etc.

Communication

Occasional updates regarding upcoming concerts, assignments, grades, and more will be sent home via ParentSquare. Please feel free to contact the music department at any time with any questions or concerns you may have.