

To grade 6/7 students and parents/guardians,

Welcome to your brand new École Sir William Osler Concert Band Program!

This is going to be an exciting year. As the first students to take part in our new band program, you get to set the precedent for what your program looks and sounds like. Furthermore, you will now be the first students to showcase to the rest of the school how fun and exciting a band program can be.

Since we are starting this year with a brand new program, we will spend the beginning of the year learning about the instruments and trying them out as a group. Unfortunately, not every student can play every single instrument. Instruments come with their own unique ways of playing, and their own challenges to overcome. Because of this, students will find some instruments easy to play and some difficult, or even impossible to play. Every student will have an opportunity to play every single instrument and discover which of the instruments they are most suited to begin to learn on. Once students have had a chance to try out every instrument, they will be assigned an instrument that ensures they have the most opportunity for success in learning, while also ensuring that our program has a balanced number of players for each instrument.

Learning a new instrument isn't an easy thing to do. Concert band instruments are loud, and they take time to become comfortable with. This first year we will be spending the start of the year getting comfortable with the feel and handling of the instruments, as well as how to use our bodies to make music with them. As the year progresses, students will find themselves becoming more and more comfortable with playing these instruments, and they will start to find them physically easier to play as well.

This document will give you an outline of what to expect for the 2026/27 school year, as well as additional information regarding events and some expectations of the program.

Assessment

Students will be assessed through the criteria presented in the Manitoba Music Curriculum. This curriculum highlights four main branches that our learning will focus on.

1. Making: The physical act of playing an instrument. This is the primary focus of much of our class time.
2. Creating: Students will have the opportunity to add their own expression and identity to the music which they create.

3. Connecting: Throughout the year we will examine and learn about different kinds of music, including concert band music and beyond.
4. Responding: Students will be asked to understand and reflect on the music they are making and learning about.

Additionally, there will be six individual check-ins per year, three playing checks and three written checks, each happening once per term. The playing check-in will require a student to play a short musical passage in one attempt, and will be used to measure individual progress towards group goals. The written check-in will be an opportunity for students to demonstrate their level of music literacy.

Attendance

There are three ways in which attendance will be assessed in the band program.

1. Regularly scheduled practice: Band practice is part of the school's regular school day, all students are expected to attend band just as they would any other course offered in the school.
2. Sectional rehearsals: There will be times in which select students/instruments are asked to come to the band room for additional rehearsal time. This will happen during the students' regular school day, and is subject to the approval of the homeroom teacher.
3. Concert attendance: Concert attendance and participation is mandatory for all students.

Concerts

There are two concerts this year, a winter concert and a spring concert. These concerts will be taking place in the ESWO gymnasium.

Winter Concert: December 10th, 2026 (time TBA)

Spring Concert: May 27th, 2027 (time TBA)

Concert attire for concert band students is all black clothing.

Practice Expectations

Because concert band is a group activity, there is an expectation that students will put in effort on their own time to work on their technical playing ability. The specifics of what practice is and how to do it effectively will be discussed in class, but the expectation is that students will be practicing outside of class at minimum for 15 minutes, 3 times per

week Playing an instrument requires muscle training in the same way that playing a sport does, and so this extra practice time is very important for physical development and building muscle memory.

The Band room will be available for practice during the lunch period, from 12:00 - 12:30 on school days 1, 3, and 5 (may be subject to change).

I am reachable either through Powerschool, or via email at dbetz@wsd1.org. My work hours will be from **8:00am to 4:00pm**. Emails or messages outside of these hours will be responded to the following day. I will make every effort to respond to emails and messages within 48 hours. If there is something urgent, please call the office and I will return your call the same day.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions that you may have. I am excited to be able to teach here at ÉSWO, and I look forward to sharing a year filled with music and joy with this school.

David Betz