

Instrumental Music Handbook



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Introduction

Brisbane State High School has a proud history and our Extra-Curricular (E-C) program forms an integral component of the State High experience. Tradition is valued in order to acknowledge the past and maintain a consistent identity.

The E-C program aims to offer a range of activities (including sporting and cultural) that provide opportunities for students to participate, learn, develop and excel. Our E-C program is an integral part of student well-being, promotes a sense of belonging and fosters a sense of pride in both individual and group achievements. Student participation in regular sporting and cultural activities is linked to improved attention and concentration, raised academic performance, improved self-confidence and reduction in stress.

History of Instrumental Music

Brisbane State High School has a proud history of instrumental music education. Established in 1975, our Instrumental Music program has flourished and is now a mature program that caters for approximately 20% of the school population. State High Instrumental Music graduates are found in all areas of the professional musical community as conductors, soloists, orchestral and contemporary musicians, lecturers, teachers, pedagogues and administrators. Many more of our graduates can be found practicing in community bands and orchestras. Through weekly lessons, rehearsals, camps/workshops, competitive and non-competitive performances many students develop an engagement with music that continues beyond the school gates and enriches the State High Instrumental Music legacy.

Goals of the Activity

1. Culture – Learning and instrument and playing in ensembles together, students build school spirit and develop a positive learning and community culture.
2. Progress – the Instrumental Music program aims to engage Instrumental Music students of all ages and abilities in group performances, enabling them to develop self-confidence, creative and critical thinking.
3. Challenge – a high challenge, high support environment in group lessons enables student to develop individual skills that enable them to join with others and work together to experience the joy of making music in large ensembles.
4. Performance – Students work in ensembles is tested under pressure in performance conditions and receive feedback from audiences and adjudicators.

Mission of Instrumental Music

We are confident in the knowledge that no matter what skill level, students will be able to explore their instrumental music potential and find a rich and rewarding instrumental music experience in the Brisbane State High Instrumental Music program.

Past students who participated in the Instrumental Music program have transitioned into a vast array of pathways, with a richer and more comprehensive education as a result. Many of our school leaders – both current and past – have been strong contributors to the Instrumental Music program.

Please read this document carefully as it contains all the information you need to get the most out of this diverse and stimulating program.

Lessons

Students participating in the Instrumental Music program are required to attend a 35-minute lesson once a week with the relevant instructor. Lessons are timetabled during the normal school day and students are withdrawn from classes to attend their lessons.

The timetable for Instrumental Music lessons is rotating in order to minimise disruption to the ordinary school day. A student will only miss any given 35-minute block every six to eight weeks. Instrumental Music lessons are only half the length of other school subjects, therefore, a student will never miss an entire lesson from their conventional timetable. It is the responsibility of the student to catch up on the work they miss when attending an instrumental music lesson.

Students are expected to arrive at lessons punctually, appropriately prepared and with all the required equipment.

Timetables for lessons and ensemble rehearsals will be emailed to students before the end of week one. They will also be posted on notice boards in P Block. A hard copy is given to new Year 7 students. It is the students' responsibility to check the noticeboard and attend lessons and rehearsals when required.

Staff

Each cultural extra-curricular activity has a Master in Charge (MIC). The MIC is responsible for overseeing the management of the program. Individual Instrumental Music teachers manage their lessons/ensembles and participate in discussions regarding event scheduling, repertoire selection and management of attendance.

The Instrumental Music program is staffed by seven specialist instrumental music instructors. Six of the staff members are itinerant and only visit the school on particular days as part of a weekly circuit of schools. These staff members are provided to the school by Education Queensland. The amount of instructor time allocated to the school is dependent on student numbers, so it is vital that students attend all lessons.

In 2026, the Instrumental Music staff are:

Mr Bradley Ruben – Master in Charge – Woodwind	Monday – Friday
Ms Tara Neal – Woodwind	Thursday
Mr Simon Foster – Woodwind	Tuesday
Mr Keith Sharp – Strings	Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
Ms Meg Robson – Strings	Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
Mr Jeff Jarrott – Percussion	Monday and Tuesday
Dr Heather Aitken – Brass	Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday

Instrumental Music Ensembles

Brisbane State High School offers 11 primary ensembles and multiple secondary ensembles to enrich the Instrumental Music program. There are also multiple Chamber Orchestras that function as a lesson for advanced String students. The primary ensembles are:

- Concert Band
- Concert Winds
- Cordelia, Merivale, Highgate, Southbank and Kurilpa String Orchestras
- Symphonic Band

- Symphony Orchestra
- Wind Ensemble
- Wind Orchestra

Placement of students in ensembles is at the discretion of the instructors and conductors of the various ensembles and is subject to a minimum performance standard. A variety of criteria is used to determine a student's ensemble placement. These may include auditions and results of students in intra-school examinations. The student's history of attendance and commitment will also be considered.

Expectations of Participants

Conduct

Students are expected to demonstrate a professional approach at rehearsals and performances at all times. They are also expected to show respect and appreciation towards staff, facilitators, volunteers, supporters and fellow ensemble members.

Attendance

Attendance at rehearsals is compulsory and it is a year-long commitment. Students should check their rehearsal times at the beginning of the year to avoid clashes with other activities when planning their participation in various school activities. If a clash arises during the year, students must contact the MICs of affected activities to try to negotiate a compromise that suits all parties and maximises opportunities for participation. If a compromise cannot be negotiated, the relevant Director of Sport & Activities and Director of Cultural Activities will work together to resolve the issue.

All Instrumental Music staff maintain electronic attendance rolls for ensembles and lessons. Students enrolled in ensembles are expected to attend rehearsals on a weekly basis.

Students who are absent from lessons and/or rehearsals should make direct contact with the relevant Instrumental Music teacher to explain their absence. Attendance at performances and the rehearsal prior to an event is compulsory. The MIC and ensemble conductors have the discretion to withdraw a student from events/ensembles if appropriate communication regarding absences, preparation and commitment is not observed.

The process for explained absence from an ensemble is as follows:

- **Illness:** Students who are absent from school due to illness should contact their relevant Instrumental Music conductor via email on the day of absence.
- **School approved excursion:** Notification of the absence due to a school excursion must be provided via email to the relevant ensemble conductor at least one week prior to the scheduled rehearsal.

Students enrolled under the Cultural Selective Entry (Music) category must participate in the Instrumental Music program for the length of their enrolment at the school.

Students seeking to withdraw during the year must contact the MIC of Instrumental Music. Written advice from the parent/guardian regarding the reason for withdrawal is required.

Uniform

All BSHS ensembles perform in their formal school uniform.

Reporting

All students will receive a written report each semester along with their general classroom reports. Achievements and comments on the report will be a reflection of the student's performance throughout the semester in the Instrumental Music program. Students may also be required to perform practical examinations during the semester which will also be reflected in the reporting process. If parents/guardians wish to discuss the content of reports, they may contact the relevant Instrumental Music teacher through the normal processes.

Communication

Contacting Ensemble Staff

The best method to make initial contact with Instrumental Music staff is via email.

Conductor	Ensemble	Email Address
Mr Bradley Ruben	Stage Band Symphonic Band Wind Orchestra Concert Band	brube1@eq.edu.au
Ms Tara Neal	Flute Ensemble	tneal6@eq.edu.au
Mr Simon Foster	Wind Ensemble	sfost109@eq.edu.au
Mr Keith Sharp	Cordelia String Orchestra Merivale String Orchestra Kurilpa String Orchestra	ksharr@eq.edu.au
Ms Meg Robson	Highgate String Orchestra Southbank String Orchestra Symphony Orchestra	mrobs4@eq.edu.au
Mr Jeff Jarrott	Big Band Fractalia	jjarr8@eq.edu.au
Ms Heather Aitken	Brass Band Concert Winds	hjmcw0@eq.edu.au

Team App

The school has approved the use of Team App and Showbie to maintain communication for all extra-curricular activities.

Letters, notices and information regarding performances and events are published via Team App. All participating students and their parents/guardians are required to sign up to the 'BSHS Instrumental Music' group on Team App.

It is essential that all students use their school email address – not their personal email address – when signing up to Team App.

Instructions for signing up on Stack Team App:

1. Download the app on your preferred device by searching for 'Stack Team App'.

2. Register for an account (or sign in if previously registered) with your full name (parents/carers use their personal email and students use EQ email only).
3. Select 'Find your Team/Club'.
4. Type in BSHS Instrumental Music and search.
5. Click on BSHS Instrumental Music (with the school logo).
6. Click on 'request to join this team's app'.
7. Select the relevant group: parents/guardians select the relevant parent/guardian group/s in the correct year, students select the relevant student group/s in the correct year.
8. Parents/guardians need to put their child's name in the access request message, so we know who we are approving. Occupation and employer details are not required. Click on 'send'. We will go through and approve requests on a regular basis at the start of term.
9. Parents/guardians are also encouraged to join the BSHS Instrumental Music Sub-Committee (this shows up when you search BSHS Instrumental Music) so that you can keep engaged with the parent community and involved in initiatives to support students in the program.
10. Please ensure that you have selected to receive notifications and emails so that when time sensitive information is sent, you will receive it in a timely manner.

Parent/Guardian and Community Engagement

There is an active P&C Association sub-committee dedicated to the Instrumental Music program. The P&C Association Instrumental Music Sub-Committee organises catering, raffles and admission for in-school concerts. They also organise the annual Music and International Food Festival as their major fundraising event for the year. The sub-committee is committed to enhancing the opportunities and equipment for Instrumental Music students and supporting the work of the Instrumental Music staff.

The P&C Association Instrumental Music Sub-Committee meets in the P Block staff room or online in Teams, at 7:00pm on the third Monday of each month during school terms. Parents and guardians interested in joining the sub-committee are welcome to attend these meetings.

For further information regarding the Instrumental Music Sub-Committee, please contact the MIC of Instrumental Music, Mr Bradley Ruben via email – brube1@eq.edu.au.

Selection Policy

Selections

Students who seek to participate in the Instrumental Music program are required to attend an annual audition to be placed in a group lesson and ensemble for the year.

Education Queensland (EQ) policy mandates that membership in an ensemble is dependent both on attendance at lessons and rehearsals. If either of these requirements are not met, a student may be withdrawn from lessons or the ensemble. See the Attendance section below for more information.

Students in Year 11 and 12 who are receiving private tuition may apply to be a member of an ensemble without attending school lessons, however, preference for placement in ensembles will be given to students who attend school lessons.

Once all bands have finished their concert performances at the end of the year, they will disband and new ensembles will be formed.

Registration

Parents/guardians must grant consent via QParents to the Annual General Consent 2026 – Extra-Curricular Program and express interest in the program via the 2027 Extra-Curricular Program EOI survey that was email to all parents/guardians.

Please make contact with the Extra-Curricular Office via culturalevents@brisbaneshs.eq.edu.au if you are unable to complete the survey.

Newly enrolled students to the school seeking to apply for the Instrumental Music Program outside of standard audition timelines are to make contact with the Extra Curricular Office via culturalevents@brisbaneshs.eq.edu.au to confirm availability.

Levies

All students participating in Instrumental Music are expected to pay the annual Instrumental Music program participation levy. This fee is used to pay district instrumental music levies and to provide resources and equipment for use in lessons and ensembles. The fee also covers the cost of administering the program.

In 2026, the levy for the Instrumental Music program is \$110 per student. Students who use a school musical instrument are required to pay an Instrument Hire Fee of \$130 per annum. This fee is used for the maintenance and replacement of the school musical instruments.

Ensemble Information

Instrumental Music Rehearsal Timetable

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Concert Winds 7:30am – 8:30am <i>P104</i>	Southbank String Orchestra 7:30am – 8:30am <i>P107</i> Stage Band 7:45am – 8:30am <i>P106</i> Wind Ensemble 7:30am – 8:30am <i>P104</i>	Kurilpa String Orchestra 7:30am – 8:30am <i>P102/P106+P107</i>	Flute Ensemble 7:30am – 8:30am <i>P108</i> Concert Band 7:30am – 8:30am <i>P102/P106</i> Cordelia String Orchestra 7:30am – 8:30am <i>P107</i>	Symphony Orchestra 7:30am – 8:30am <i>P102/P106</i> Merivale String 7:30am – 8:30am <i>P107</i>
Fractalia 2:45pm – 4:15pm <i>P107</i> Brass Band 2:45pm – 4:00pm	Big Band 3:00pm – 4:30pm <i>P107</i>	Wind Orchestra 3:15pm – 4:45pm <i>P102/P106</i> Highgate String Orchestra	Symphonic Band 3:15pm – 4:45pm <i>P104</i>	

P102/P106 Semester One only		3:15pm – 4:15pm P107		
Any changes or additions to this rehearsal schedule will be communicated via Team App at least one week's notice.				

Performance Policy

Attendance at performances is compulsory for all musicians. A calendar of performances is published to Clipboard at the beginning of each year and students are expected to keep these dates free.

Performances for all groups are planned through the Instrumental Music MIC. These include contest and concert performances and a variety of other performances within and outside the school community. If a student is unable to attend a performance, the conductor must be notified in writing by the parent/guardian prior to the performance. Unexplained absence from performances may be grounds for withdrawal from the program. If unforeseen circumstances prevent attendance at a performance and the conductor is not notified beforehand, the conductor must be informed at the earliest opportunity.

Senior Ensembles carry the heaviest performance load and may perform up to 10 times per year within and outside the school. Intermediate Ensembles also perform within and outside the school but have fewer performance obligations.

Repertoire Selection

The repertoire for the bands, orchestras and ensembles will be chosen by the relevant conductor.

Instrument Hire and Storage

The Instrumental Music program offers musical instruments for students to loan for a small fee. Smaller instruments are usually loaned for one year only. After the year, it is expected that students will purchase their own in order to make the instrument available for another student to begin tuition. All students using a loaned instrument are required to complete and return a 'Loan Agreement' form before the instrument can leave the school. Loan Agreements will be emailed to students at the beginning of each school year.

It is however expected that most students will supply their own musical instrument as loaned instruments are subject to availability in each year.

There is a storeroom available in P Block for students to store their instruments, however, students leave their instruments there at their own risk. Theft of or damage to instruments in the store is extremely low, however, the school recommends that parents/guardians and students insure their musical instrument privately.

In addition, students are strongly encouraged to individualise and **clearly name** their instrument case to assist with identification in a crowded storeroom. This individualisation will also minimise the chances of the case being mistakenly collected by another student.

Consumables

Parents/guardians are responsible for the provision of consumable items such as reeds, strings, oils and music books. It is important that students arrive at lessons and rehearsals

properly equipped. Few consumables are supplied or stocked by the school and most must be purchased by families, from retailers.

Handmade Bassoon and Oboe reeds are available for purchase from the school due to the poor quality of the factory-made products. Students pay for the reed at the Student Services Counter at B Block and bring the receipt to the Instrumental Music MIC in P Block.

Music Camp

Senior musicians in the Symphony Orchestra, Symphonic Band, Cordelia String Orchestra and the Wind Orchestra will be invited to participate in an annual, residential, School Music Camp in early May. Junior musicians in the Wind Ensemble, Concert Band, Concert Winds, Southbank, Highgate and Merivale String Orchestras will be invited to attend a non-residential Intermediate Music Camp in Semester 2.

Both camps involve intensive rehearsals designed to extend our musicians and improve the performance standard of these groups. It is recommended that all musicians who participate in the above groups attend Music Camp. This camp is not included in the Instrumental Music levy and will be an additional fee.

Instrumental Music Leaders

Eligibility Criteria

All year twelve students will be eligible to be leaders providing they meet the following criteria;

- Receive a pocket for their compulsory ensemble.
- A minimum grade of Very Good for Effort and Behaviour in both semesters of year 11
- All year 12 IM students will be able to apply to be a music leader, regardless of which ensemble or which chair they play in. All eligible students willing to meet the responsibilities outlined below will be accepted.

Responsibilities

Music Leaders will be required to undertake the following.

- Maintain the minimum attendance levels from year 11. 75% present.
- Attend the school Music camps if they are in any of the relevant ensembles.
- Music Leaders will be required to assist in the set-up of their own ensemble rehearsal. They will also need to stay at the rehearsal until all equipment and music is packed up.
- Music Leaders may also be asked to contribute to the school magazine article and to usher or compere at school concerts.
- Ensemble representatives at competitions should be music leaders but representatives will be selected by the conductor.

Music Leaders who do not fulfill the responsibilities outlined above at any time of the year will have their leadership status revoked.

Acknowledgements and Rewards

Pockets

Students may be eligible to receive a Pocket (a line describing participation, which is embroidered on their blazer) for participation in school activities. All acknowledgements and rewards are dependent on meeting the generic criteria as outlined in the Acknowledgements and Rewards Policy.

Contact and Dealing with Concerns

Parents and guardians can raise concerns with any member of our staff. Where possible, speak directly to the person with whom you have the concern. To make an appointment to see a staff member, please contact the school office by phone on (07) 3291 4111 or by email to admin@brisbaneshs.eq.edu.au.

In the first instance, any concerns regarding the Instrumental Music program should be directed to the MIC of Instrumental Music, Mr Bradley Ruben, on (07) 3291 4111 or by email to brube1@eq.edu.au.

Where issues may be of a more sensitive or serious nature, the following staff members can be contacted where relevant.

Director of Cultural Activities	Ms Gabrielle Quin – gmgui2@eq.edu.au
Head of Extra-Curricular & Activities	Mrs Leisa McGiffin– lmcgi9@e.edu.au
Guidance Officer – Year 7 & Year 10	Mrs Helen Wittman – hwitt5@eq.edu.au
Guidance Officer – Year 8 & Year 12	Ms Bianca Sommerville – bsomm4@eq.edu.au
Guidance Officer – Year 9 & Year 11	Ms Carly Simpson – csimp100@eq.edu.au
Guidance Officer	Miss Tia Perchard – tperc11@eq.edu.au
Deputy Principal – Year 7 – 8	Mr Matthew Thornton – mjtho4@eq.edu.au
Deputy Principal – Year 9 – 10	Mr Clinton Sheild – cshie35@eq.edu.au
Deputy Principal – Year 11 – 12	Miss Natalie Coleman – ndcol0@eq.edu.au

We look forward to your student participating in the Instrumental Music Program.

Gabrielle Quin
Director of Cultural Activities