

STRINGS

FORESTVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL



2018 HANDBOOK

The Forestville Public School Strings Program has developed and grown over the last five years to provide students with the opportunity to learn and play in an Ensemble.

Being part of a musical ensemble can provide children with skills that will last a lifetime. In addition to the obvious musical benefits, children involved in playing an instrument in such programs benefit socially, physically and often academically. Children learn valuable team skills, and above all have fun! Much has been written about the benefits of music for children including the following articles – food for thought!

- Benefits of musical practice: <http://www.essentialkids.com.au/younger-kids/kids-development/benefits-of-musical-practice-20130827-2smw2.html>
- Benefits of playing a musical instrument: <http://www.effectivemusicteaching.com/articles/directors/18-benefits-of-playing-a-musical-instrument/>

OUR ENSEMBLES

The Strings Program will comprise of 3 ensembles in 2018

BEGINNER STRINGS

This group is made up of students in Year 1 and Year 2. They are completely new to playing their musical instrument. Students spend one year in this group learning how to be part of a musical ensemble. Students will need to have a private tutor in addition to the weekly strings rehearsal. Their tutor will be able to help them learn the music and skills required which will then be put together when they rehearse as a group.

JUNIOR STRINGS

Children will move from Beginner Strings to Junior Strings after their first year of playing. In this ensemble, students will consolidate the ensemble and technical skills learned in Beginner Strings, and move on to more challenging repertoire. These sessions are rehearsals; all students need to be having regular lessons with their tutors.

SENIOR STRINGS

There will be auditions held near the end of term 4 this year for existing Junior String students who would like to progress on to Senior Strings. Students in this group will be exposed to more challenging repertoire.

STUDENTS ARE ALL REQUIRED TO HAVE WEEKLY PRIVATE LESSONS WITH AN INSTRUMENTAL TUTOR.

HOW TO BECOME INVOLVED

There are a number of steps involved in joining the Strings Program. Below is a guide on how to join:

- Read and discuss this Strings Handbook with your child
- Children with their parents, are welcome to sit in on a Beginner Strings rehearsal in the last few weeks of term 4 to get an idea of what it's like.
- Confirm your place in the strings program for 2018, and let the music begin!

INSTRUMENTS IN OUR STRINGS GROUPS

The strings are the largest family of instruments in the orchestra and they come in four sizes: the violin, which is the smallest, viola, cello, and the biggest, the double bass. The smaller instruments, the violin and viola, make higher-pitched sounds, while the larger cello and double bass produce low, rich sounds. They are all similarly shaped, with curvy wooden bodies and wooden necks. The strings stretch over the body and neck and attach to small decorative heads, where they are tuned with small tuning pegs.

We have a majority of violins and cellos in the Strings group, 2017 we have seen the addition of 2 Violas in the Senior Strings. We are keen to expand the variety of instruments in the group!



Senior Strings performing at the Opera House

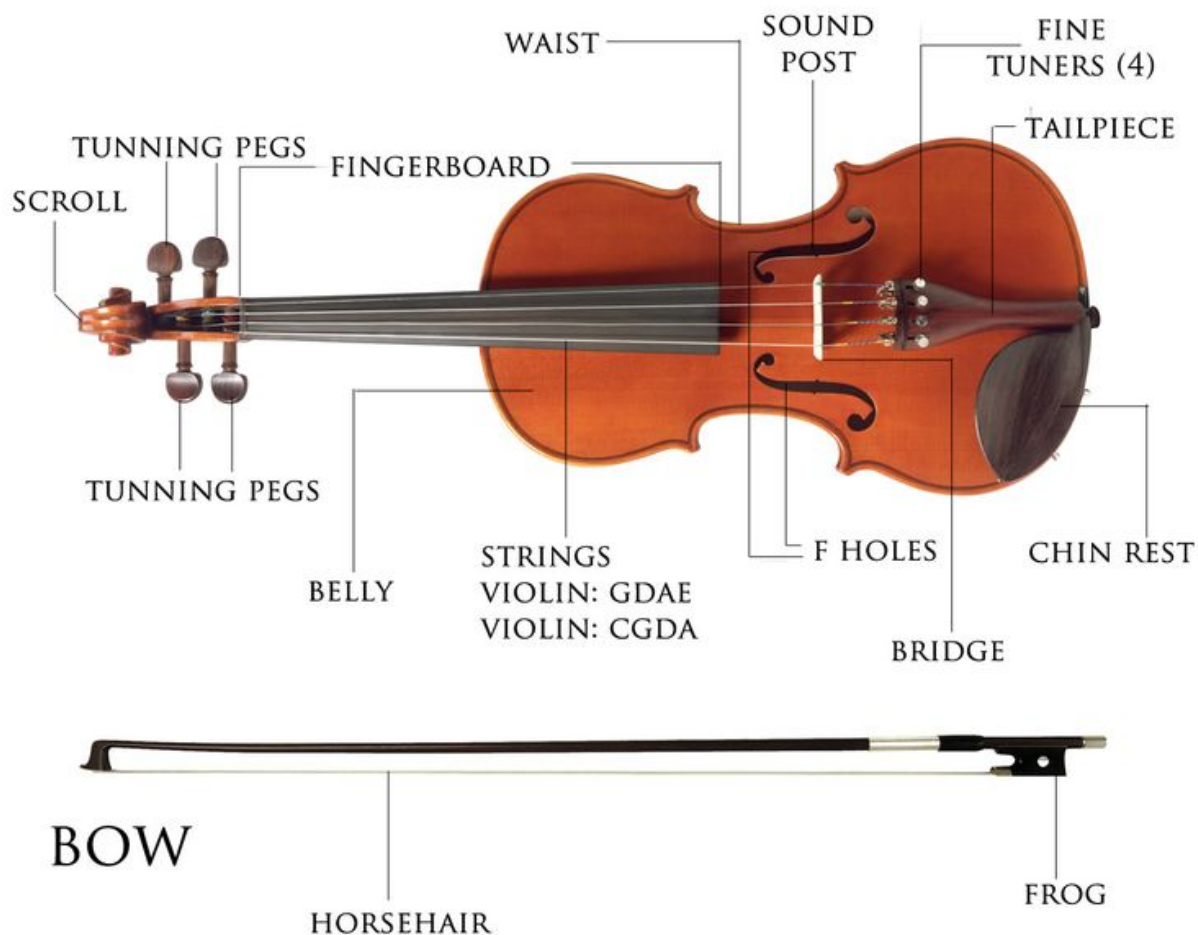
VIOLIN

The **violin** is the baby of the string family, and like babies, makes the highest sounds. There are more violins in the orchestra than any other instrument (there can be up to 30!) and they are divided into two groups: first and second. First violins often play the melody, while second violins alternate between melody and harmony. You play the violin by resting it between your chin and left shoulder. Your left hand holds the neck of the violin and presses down on the strings to change the pitch, while your right hand moves the bow or plucks the strings.

VIOLA

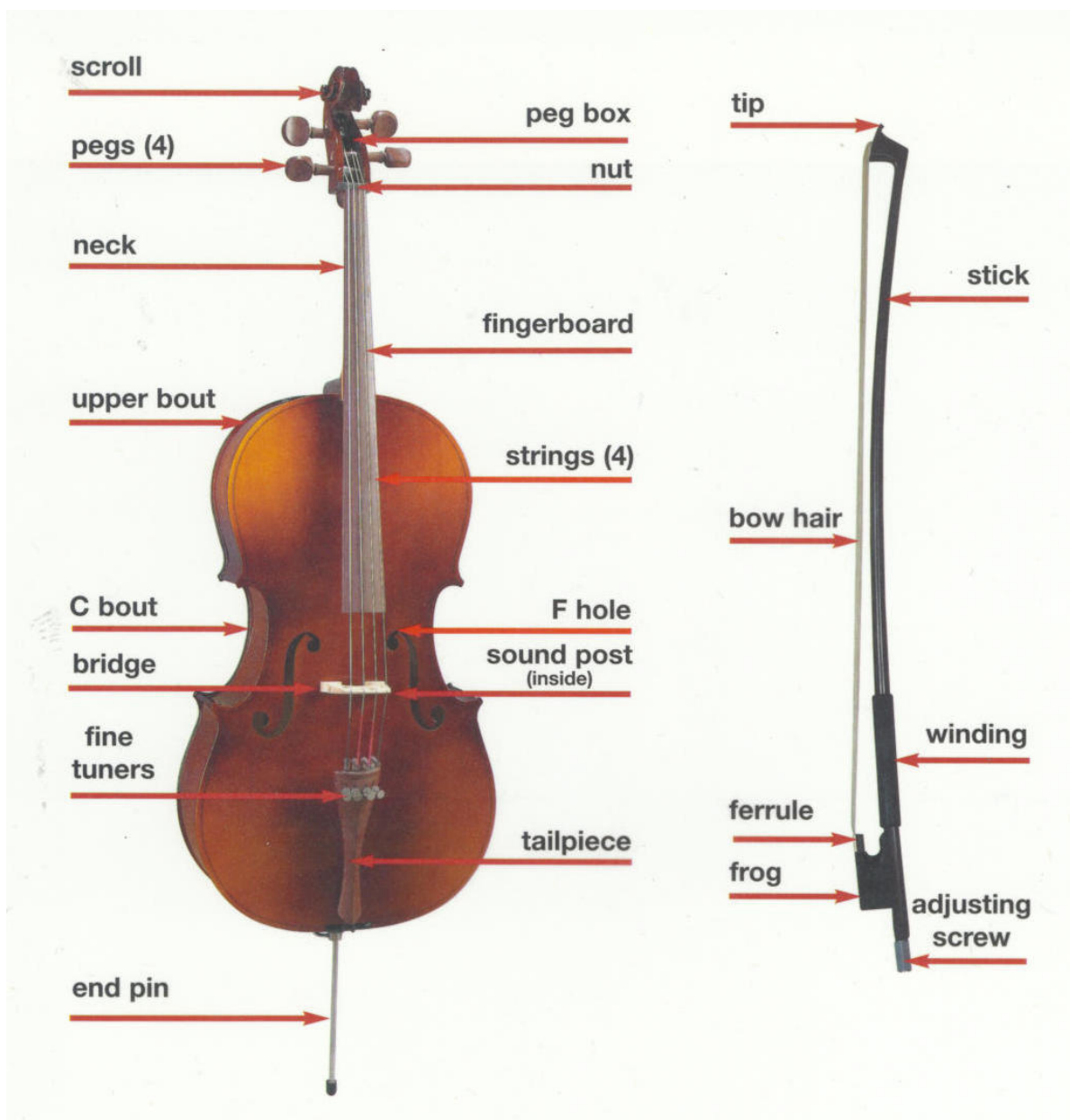
The **viola** is the older sister or brother of the violin. It is slightly larger than a violin, and has thicker strings, which produce a richer, warmer sound than the violin. There are usually 10 to 14 violas in an orchestra and they almost always play the harmony. You play the viola the same way as you do the violin, by resting it between your chin and shoulder. Your left hand holds the neck of the viola and presses down on the strings to change the pitch, while your right hand moves the bow or plucks the strings.

VIOLIN/VIOLA



CELLO

The **cello** looks like the violin and viola but is much larger (around 4 feet long), and has thicker strings than either the violin or viola. Of all the string instruments, the cello sounds most like a human voice, and it can make a wide variety of tones, from warm low pitches to bright higher notes. There are usually 8 to 12 cellos in an orchestra and they play both harmony and melody. Since the cello is too large to put under your chin, you play it sitting down with the body of the cello between your knees, and the neck on your left shoulder. The body of the cello rests on the ground and is supported by a metal peg. You play the cello in a similar manner to the violin and viola, using your left hand to press down on the strings, and your right hand to move the bow or pluck the strings.



DOUBLE BASS

This is the grandfather of the string family. At over 6 feet long (adult size!), the **double bass** is the biggest member of the string family, with the longest strings, which allow it to play very low notes. The 6 to 8 double basses of the orchestra are almost always playing the harmony. They are so big that you have to stand up or sit on a very tall stool to play them, and it helps if you have long arms and big hands. Like the cello, the body of the double bass stands on the ground, supported by a metal peg, and the neck rests on your left shoulder. You produce sound just like on a cello, using the left hand to change pitch and the right to move the bow or pluck the string.



INSTRUMENT SIZE

All instruments come in a range of child-friendly sizes. Below are guides for measuring children for instruments. Alternatively, a reputable music store will be able to assist you in measuring your child and making sure the instrument you purchase is the correct size.

It is important to remember to err on the side of caution when it comes to instrument sizing. Unlike clothes, you cannot 'grow into' an instrument. If the instrument is too large then you will find yourself in severe pain when performing. This often leads to a decrease in practice (and interest), which inevitably leads to the student choosing to forgo learning an instrument. What a waste of money in the long run! You are much better off to use an instrument that is the correct size and enjoy playing in comfort.

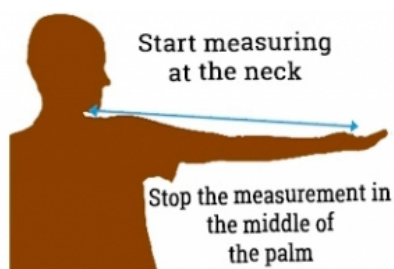
String instruments are, except for violas, measured in fractions. The most common sizes are the full size ($\frac{4}{4}$), a $\frac{3}{4}$ size, $\frac{1}{2}$ size and a $\frac{1}{4}$ size. Violas are measured in inches.

VIOLIN/VIOLA

- Hold instrument in left hand
- Place instrument on the left shoulder and chin on the chinrest
- Extend left arm all the way to the scroll (curly bit at the end of the neck of the instrument)
- If your fingers cannot curl all the way around the scroll of the instrument, the instrument is too large for you
- If your fingers curl all the way around the scroll of the instrument and your left arm is drastically bent then the instrument is too small for you

VIOLIN SIZE	ARM LENGTH (base of neck to fingertip)	APPROX. AGE
4/4 (Full Size)	60 + cms	12 + years old
3/4 (Three Quarters)	56 - 60 cms	10 - 11 years old
1/2 (Half Size)	53 - 56 cms	8 - 9 years old
1/4 (Quarter Size)	48 - 53 cms	6 - 7 years old
1/8 (Eighth Size)	45 - 48 cms	5 - 6 years old
1/10 (Tenth Size)	41 - 45 cms	3 - 5 years old
1/16 (Sixteenth Size)	37 - 41 cms	3 - 5 years old

VIOLA size guide



ARM LENGTH	AGE (YEARS)	VIOLA SIZE
19"	3 - 5	11"
20"	3 - 5	12"
21.5"	3 - 5	13"
23"	4 - 7	14"
24.5"	4 - 7	15"
25"	6 - 10	15.5"
26"	9 - Adult	16"
26"	9 - Adult	16.5"

CELLO

With both the cello and the double bass, it is important to size the instrument whilst using the correct chair or stool for performance.

- Sit on a chair that allows your legs to rest at a 90 degree angle
- The instrument's upper edge should rest on the player's sternum (in the middle of their chest). This is very easy to determine if you look at the buttons on school shirts.
- The pegs should sit just behind the left ear

- The corners of the instrument should never dig into the players' legs.
- The knees should loosely 'grip' the lower sides of the instrument just below the corners.
- Most importantly, the student should be able to reach both the top and the bottom of the fingerboard with ease.
- It is important to adjust the spike length so that the position described above can be attained. To help younger students remember how far out to extend the spike, you can measure how many 'hands and fingers' worth using their own hands and fingers.

CELLO SIZE	CELLO HEIGHT	CHILD HEIGHT	APPROX. AGE
4/4 (Full Size)	121 cms	155 + cms	12 + years old
3/4 (Three Quarters)	115.5 cms	134 - 155 cms	9 - 12 years old
1/2 (Half Size)	101 cms	101 - 145 cms	7 - 11 years old
1/4 (Quarter Size)	89 cms	109 - 117 cms	5 - 9 years old
1/8 (Eighth Size)	77 cms	104 - 125 cms	4 - 7 years old
1/10 (Tenth Size)	71 cms	< 104 cms	3 - 4 years old

DOUBLE BASS

- Stand up straight beside the double bass with the strings facing away from you.
- The bridge of the double bass should be at around the same height as the main knuckles in the player's right hand
- Like the Cello, it is most important to ensure that the player can reach both ends of the fingerboard with ease.
- The chart below shows approximate sizing by age:

Size of Bass	Age of Child
1/8	5-7
1/4	7-9
1/2	9-13
3/4	13+

Remember, when it comes to choosing the correct size instrument, **comfort is key!**

INSTRUMENTS

Students are required to obtain their own instrument when joining the Strings Program. Students need to have their instrument for the first lesson of term 1. (Good xmas present idea!) For your convenience, we have sourced the following options. Please take your child to be measured and try the instrument.

- **Mona Vale Music Warehouse** has put together some starter packages for our strings program. For orders, go to <http://www.monavalemusic.com> and type *FPS* in the search box.
- **The Young Fiddler** for cello & violin **HIRE** options:
<http://youngfiddler.com.au/>
This is a good option before committing to buying an instrument.
- **Sydney String Centre** (High St, Chatswood) for hire and purchase options
<http://violins.com.au/>
- **The Violinery** (Pacific Highway, Lindfield)
<http://theviolinery.com.au/>
new instruments, and also for repairs

We also keep a Database of Second Hand Instruments

**We advise not to purchase STENTOR brand violins.
They are very cheap, but not good quality.*



Strings Workshop Day

REHEARSALS

All groups will rehearse once each week.

Morning rehearsals will be held from 7.45am – 8.50am

Afternoon rehearsals will be held from 3.10 – 4.10pm

2018 rehearsal details are as follows, but may be subject to change:

- **Beginners – Friday Mornings 7.50am**
- **Juniors – Monday Afternoons 3.10pm**
- **Seniors – Wednesday Mornings 7.45am**

Rehearsal time is precious and all members are expected to:

- Attend all rehearsals
- Help with both set up and pack up of the hall
- Arrive on time
- Act courteously at all times

A roll will be taken, and it is requested that notice be given for any missed rehearsals. A musical ensemble is like any other team – it needs all its members in order to function successfully. Children joining the program are asked to commit for a **full year**, and to attend all rehearsals and performances.

The Conductors are very happy to speak with parents to discuss their child's progress. Conductors will ask the students to take their music to their tutors. It's especially important to speak to the conductor if your child is having any difficulties. It's our experience that these concerns are often easy to resolve when they are addressed early.

OUR CONDUCTORS

PIP BIRKETT – BEGINNER & JUNIOR STRINGS

Pip spent her youth teaching and playing the violin in orchestras before choosing a corporate career and keeping music as a hobby. Following the birth of her three children, she returned to her childhood passion of music. The last five years, she has been heavily involved in the string program at Forestville Public (where her boys attend) taking various string groups. She privately tutors violin, and enjoys performing professionally and for fun, she is a member of the Northern Beaches Orchestra.

MARK STEVENS – SENIOR STRINGS

Mark Stevens is a music teacher, conductor and professional double bassist who has been working with music students in public education since 2003. He is music director at Sydney Secondary College and conducts 10 ensembles including string groups at Summer Hill Public School, Lindfield Public School, Killarney Heights Public School and Forestville Public School. This year he was awarded the *Teachers Mutual Bank Performing Arts Recognition Award 2017* for his diverse work in public education. Aside from extensive work in public education, Mark also composes, records and performs in contemporary folk-rock voyagers *The Crooked Fiddle Band*. Through his work in this group he has toured extensively in Australia and Europe performing at some of the world's most acclaimed and eclectic music festivals.

TUTORS & PRIVATE LESSONS

All students participating in the Strings Program are required to attend a weekly private tutorial.

It is compulsory for students to undertake a weekly, private lesson with a string tutor. This is to ensure that children learn to play their instrument with correct technique, and also to ensure all students get the most out of their strings rehearsals. This is the model that is followed by our successful school band program, and most school music ensembles. All students must have a tutor; the tutor's contact details need to be supplied to the Parent Coordinator.

As our Strings Program does not follow the Suzuki Method, we strongly recommend a teacher that follows '**traditional method**'.

The following is a list of local tutors:

Violin & Viola - Suzanne Cattell scattell@optusnet.com.au

Violin - Noam Yaffe – nyaffe.yaffe@gmail.com (PH: 0430 337 172)

Violin - Anthony Donovan – donovash@gmail.com (PH: 0413 20 88 70)

Viola - Rosy Johnston 0400 691 679

Cello – Jenean Lee – 0419 251 921 jekn.lee@gmail.com

Cello – Cara Eccleston 0418 974 447

Double Bass – Jess Brown 0411 438 866 jessica.brown206@det.nsw.edu.au

Private tutors may also be sourced from:

- www.musicteacher.com.au
- www.violins.com.au/apps/find-a-teacher

PRICES FOR LESSONS VARY ACCORDING TO THE EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS OF EACH TUTOR.

HOME PRACTICE

Regular home practice is the key to successful development on a musical instrument, and also to gaining maximum enjoyment from the activity. Sometimes children need a little encouragement to develop good practice habits. Parents can assist their children in developing good practice habits by:

- Providing a quiet practice area and a music stand
- Listening to their practice as often as possible
- Reminding their child of practice time, try setting up an established routine. Preferably when your child is not tired.
- Encouraging your child to perform for others when the opportunity arises at home or for relatives
- Sitting in on the early private music lessons to get a feel for the instrument and how to care and assemble it
- Ensuring the child arrives to all rehearsals, private lessons and performances on time.

PERFORMANCES

Performing is a fun and essential part of being involved in the Strings Program. Dates of performances and other events will be advised through notes and emails. Below are some examples of performances that can be expected in 2018 School Assemblies, Community visits, Northern Beaches Instrumental Festival, Strings Recital Evening, Presentation Days, Community Events, Workshops with guest soloists and groups.



Loreta Fin (Composer) Masterclass

FEES

When you sign up for the Strings program you are committing financially for the year. Fees charged to participate in the Strings groups go towards paying the conductors and purchasing music. We need to ensure the program is run financially to a budget, which is why this year we are asking parents to commit to the full year. (if your child does drop out – there are no refunds. This is because we need to commit to paying the conductor fees for the whole year.) The accounts for the Strings Program are administered by the School Band Committee, as part of The P&C. An invoice will be sent to participating students at the beginning of Semester 1. We ask that fees be paid promptly for the smooth running of the program.

The annual fee for participation in the Strings Program in 2018 will be **\$500**.

AS THIS IS A VOLUNTARY ACTIVITY, A FINANCIAL COMMITMENT IS NECESSARY.

PLEASE CONSIDER THIS WHEN REGISTERING.

IF FEES ARE NOT PAID, FORFEITURE OF A POSITION IN THE PROGRAM IS INEVITABLE.

In addition to fees, Beginners & Juniors will require a music book.

BEGINNERS - Beginner String Ensemble Series by Loreta Fin - Book 1 & 2 - \$35.

JUNIORS - Strictly Strings Book 1 - \$14.

We will do a bulk purchase of the books and these will be added to your fees invoice. These books will be yours to keep.

MUSIC CAMP

For the first time Strings members in 2018, will be able to attend the School Music Camp, which will be for both Band and Strings groups. This will be for Students in years 3 – 6 only. (year 3 students will only attend for the day activities).

The cost of Music camp will be approximately \$240.

ADMINISTRATION

Our Strings Program is administered through the Forestville Public School Band Committee, which is run by a volunteer parent committee. The Forestville Public School Band Committee is a fully self-functioning subcommittee of the P&C Association. It is primarily a self-funded program using the payment of fees.

We welcome new parents to be part of our parent committee. We meet once a term to discuss planning for the groups. We need one parent coordinator for each group.

We are also looking for a new treasurer to administer the financials for both Strings and Band in 2018. If you would like to volunteer your book keeping skills we would love to hear from you!

COMMUNICATION

Messages, information and administrative matters are communicated in the following ways:

- via email – conductors and parent coordinators communicate with Strings Program parents predominantly via email
- via the school newsletter
- via notes home to Strings members

A parent with any enquiries, concerns or suggestions throughout the year should contact the group coordinator, parent coordinator for their section, or the teacher responsible for the strings groups. (2017 Teacher Rep for Strings is Miss Brown)

PARENT HELPERS

BEGINNER, JUNIOR & SENIOR STRINGS PARENT COORDINATORS

- Liaise with Teachers, Conductors and Strings Committee
- Communicate to parents regarding performances, rosters, rehearsals, and other general information
- Assist in organization of performances and special events

REHEARSAL SUPERVISORS

We request that a parent attend each Beginner rehearsal.

If the load is shared, attendance at one rehearsal each term is usually sufficient.

Rehearsal supervisors:

- Ensure supervision requirements are being met
- Support the conductor in matters of behavior and general group management.
- Are able to communicate and give additional feedback to Coordinators and Teachers
- See firsthand how the group is progressing

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOUR CHILD
TO THE STRINGS PROGRAM IN 2018!**



Beginner Strings – SIGN UP FORM

I wish to enroll my child in the 2018 Strings program.

He / She will be playing _____(instrument)

Child's Name: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent Contact Email _____

Parent Contact Phone _____

Parent Signature _____

Please return to school office by Friday 24th November

**Alternatively, email to Strings Parent Coordinator Sarah Cunningham
sly.pork88@gmail.com**

