

Music Department Newsletter

December 2020

December 7, 2020

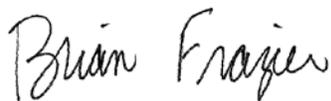
Dear Parents and Community Members:

In order to keep you updated about the Music Department during the 2020-2021 school year, we will be sending out newsletters periodically throughout the year.

This newsletter describes what we are doing differently this year due to the implications that the global pandemic has had on Music Education. We hope that you find this newsletter informative.

If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's music teacher.

Sincerely,



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Elementary News



GENERAL MUSIC: In the traditional scheduling model, students received General Music once per week for forty minutes. For the 2020-2021 school year, General Music classes are in a four week rotation with Art, Library and Physical Education. After four weeks, students will receive instruction in a different area of specials class. The reason for this year's schedule is to follow safety guidelines recommended by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

For the month of September, General Music classes were not allowed to utilize any classroom instruments. However, in October the music teachers were given permission to re-introduce classroom instruments that could be disinfected after each use, such as keyboards and percussion instruments.

Singing is traditionally a major component of General Music at the elementary level. However, currently no singing is allowed due to the safety requirements for COVID19. We hope to be able to bring singing back into General Music classrooms when it is determined by health officials to be safe to do so.

During our hybrid scheduling model, students who participate in Chorus do so via video conferencing on days when they are not in school. We hope to be able to bring singing back into our schools later this year, when it is deemed safe to do so.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC: Instrumental music is currently taught using video conferencing, on days when students are not in school. When students return to in-person learning, instrumental music will be taught to students in school 4 days/week during in-person learning with appropriate social distance. For distance learning, lessons will continue to be available via video conference. Appropriate PPE is being ordered to facilitate playing wind instruments in school.

This year, instrumental music teachers will continue to recruit and enroll new students throughout the entire school year.

In order for students to resume playing wind instruments in school, instrument covers, flute bags, and face masks were purchased. Bands can begin to resume rehearsal and performance with appropriate social distance and safety protocols.

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Middle School News



MUSIC NOTES:

All middle school music classes:



- Meet every two weeks and follow an alternating A and B week schedule. Students are seen once during their assigned week due to cohorts.
- Have been especially focused on the social and emotional needs of the students this year.

GENERAL MUSIC/EXP MUSIC & VOCAL MUSIC:

General Music/Experiencing (EXP) Music: General Music/Experiencing Music classes are working on a beats project in BandLab. They are also learning about musical form from different genres and time periods. They will be comparing the context of the different genres to early American music as well as working on a musical form project.

Chorus: Chorus is working on reading rhythms, creating rhythmic compositions, improvising rhythms, and analyzing a variety of music in preparation for learning how to select repertoire.

Both EXP Music and Chorus continue to work on activities which require students to respond to music and make connections to music. Chorus classes have also focused on incorporating mindfulness into lessons. We hope to welcome singing back into our middle school music classes in the near future.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC:

Band: We are happy to welcome the playing of instruments back into band classes.

Orchestra: String Orchestra classes have been playing their instruments all year long.

Both Band and Orchestra are using SMARTMusic to learn techniques and solos.

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High School News



MUSIC NOTES:



We are pleased to announce that the long awaited Music Department renovations at SHS are finally complete. The students now have new and improved classrooms, rehearsal spaces and an auditorium to continue learning, practicing and performing music and theatre

VOCAL MUSIC

Chorus: Singing has returned to both high schools as of October 26, 2020. We are very excited that students can sing, following guidelines provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education. These guidelines include the use of masks, additional social distancing and resting periods for rehearsal spaces. At this time, students use a combination of pre-recorded and live video conferencing for their singing instruction. Students in Chorus classes are using SMARTMusic software to eliminate all paper materials. We hope to resume after-school Select Choir rehearsals during the month of November.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Band: Live on-campus band rehearsals resumed on October 15, 2020. In order for the band to resume in-person activities, specialized PPE had to be ordered, and additional social distancing measures were put into place. We are happy to report that Concert Band, Jazz Band, Marching Band, and Wind Ensemble have all resumed. Jazz Band and Marching Band are holding after-school rehearsals. We thank the Music Parents Associations at both high schools who have been actively involved in supporting all of our Music Department students!

Orchestra: Orchestra students have begun learning their winter concert music. To facilitate the rehearsal process, students work together across cohorts to learn their individual parts. Orchestra students are also using SMARTMusic software in lieu of paper materials.

MUSIC CLASSES

Guitar and Keyboard: Students in guitar and keyboard classes have been working to both practice their instruments and learn music theory. At this time, distance learners in both groups have received instruments to work with at home. Our guitar and keyboard classes utilize software with self-guided lessons and tutorials, which allow students to work at their own pace. Students are currently learning fine motor skills that enable them to play music literature.

Music Theory/AP Music Theory: Music Theory and AP Music Theory classes are moving along well. Both classes are Early College Experience classes through UCONN, and students who take these classes receive college credit that is transferable to colleges and universities.

Theatre Arts: Students at both high schools have been engaged in primarily independent work in these classes. Paper materials have been eliminated from these classes and replaced with online instructional materials. Video conferencing and video recording software are used on a daily basis in these classes to allow for more inclusion of students who are learning remotely.