

North Trail High School



Music Program Handbook 2026-2027

Dear Music Students and Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 North Trail High School Music Program!

Thank you for choosing to be a member of the North Trail High School Music Program! We are delighted to welcome you to the program and look forward to an exciting year of learning, performance, collaboration, and growth.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide students and families with a clear understanding of the policies, procedures, and expectations that apply to all music classes, both within and outside the regular timetable. These guidelines are designed to support a positive, respectful, and successful learning environment for every student.

This handbook also provides important information about scheduled events and performances, additional expenses, assessment, student behaviour and responsibilities, and performance and concert attire. We encourage students and families to review the handbook carefully and refer to it throughout the school year.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information in this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Music Department.

Thank you for your support and commitment to music education. We look forward to getting to know you and working together throughout the 2026–2027 school year.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Ahenda and Keshini Senanayake (Fine and Performing Arts Learning Leader)
Music Teachers

North Trail High School

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NTHS Music Season 2026-2027 - Important Dates

November 2026

- MRU Clinics - Date TBD, Concert Band and Wind Ensemble
- Remembrance Day Ceremony, NTHS - Concert Band and Choir
- Wednesday Nov 25th, 2026 - MANDATORY Dress Rehearsal 3:30pm-6:30pm
- Thursday Nov 26th, 2026 - NTHS Winter Music Concert, Call Time 6pm, Performance 7pm

December 2026

- Caroling at Livingston HOA holiday party: small group of Band and Choir students
- North Trail Winds Feeder School Concert - NTHS Theatre

January 2027

- Grade 9 Tours - Jazz Band

February 2027

- CBE Sings - Choral Festival offsite
- Alberta International Band Festival - Concert Band, Wind Ensemble, Jazz Band

April

- Jazz Night, NTHS - Jazz Band
- Band Camp: details TBD

May

- Wednesday May 5th - MANDATORY Dress Rehearsal - 3:30pm-6:30pm
- Thursday May 6th - Spring Music Concert, Call Time 6pm, Performance 7pm
- Spring Concert, NTHS - ALL Ensembles
- Monday May 17th - Graduation Ceremony - performance from joint ensemble of Concert Band and Wind Ensemble

Additional Expenses

In addition to the costs associated with instruments and supplies, music students may participate in events and activities that involve additional expenses. These may include:

- Music festivals and trips
- North Trail High School Music polo shirt for the performance uniform
- Instrument supplies, such as reeds, cleaning supplies, and other necessary accessories

If your family is experiencing financial difficulty that may affect your child's ability to participate in a music activity or obtain required materials, please contact the school as soon as possible. We are committed to working with families to ensure that financial circumstances do not prevent students from participating in the music program.

Performance Uniform

All North Trail High School Music ensembles are expected to wear the following uniform for all concerts and performances:

- North Trail Music polo shirt — approximately \$30
- Black dress pants, skirt, or other approved black bottoms (No jeans or sweatpants)
- Black shoes
- Black socks or tights

If a student has difficulty obtaining any part of the required uniform, please contact a member of the Music Department as soon as possible.

Renting an Instrument

North Trail High School has a selection of instruments available for students who require an instrument for their participation in the music program. Students and families should speak with a Music teacher about instrument availability and rental arrangements.

As students progress through high school, families may also wish to consider purchasing an instrument. Quality instruments from established music retailers, such as Long & McQuade or St. John's Music, are recommended. Both retailers offer a selection of quality new and used instruments.

Students and families are encouraged to consult with a Music teacher before purchasing an instrument to ensure that the instrument is appropriate for the student's needs and level of study.

Required Materials

Students are expected to arrive at every class and rehearsal fully prepared. In addition to the materials specific to each instrument or ensemble, students should bring:

- An instrument that is clean, properly maintained, in working condition, and ready to play
- Band or Choir folder
- All assigned sheet music
- Pencil
- All necessary accessories, such as reeds, cleaning supplies, mouthpieces, and other instrument-specific materials

Being prepared for every class and rehearsal allows students to make the most of their instructional time and contributes to the success of the entire ensemble.

Rehearsal Requirements

Rehearsals are an important part of the music program and should be approached with the same level of responsibility and commitment as regular classes.

Upon arriving in the music room, students are expected to:

1. Help prepare the rehearsal space by setting up chairs and music stands before beginning their individual warm-up.
2. Ensure that they have all required materials, including their instrument, pencil, folder, and music.
3. Begin preparing their instrument as soon as they are ready, allowing time to ensure that everything is functioning properly.
4. Warm up appropriately using long tones, scales, and other exercises as directed by the teacher.
5. Be ready to begin rehearsal promptly at the scheduled start time.

Rehearsal Attendance

Attendance at all rehearsals is mandatory. Although out-of-timetable rehearsals may not be recorded through PowerSchool attendance, students are expected to treat these rehearsals with the same importance and responsibility as regular classes.

If a student misses 70% or more of scheduled rehearsals without communicating with their music director, the student may be unable to perform with the ensemble.

If a conflict arises that may prevent a student from attending a rehearsal, please contact Ms. Ahenda or Ms. Senanayake as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to work with students and families to address conflicts and determine appropriate arrangements.

Rehearsal Rationale, Attendance, and Participation

Music is a team sport!

An ensemble is built on the commitment and participation of every member. Regular rehearsal attendance is essential to the success of the music program and to the musical development of each individual student.

Consider the analogy of a sports team: an exceptionally skilled hockey player cannot fully contribute to the success of the team if they do not attend practices or learn to work effectively with their teammates. Music ensembles function in much the same way. Musicians need regular opportunities to rehearse together, develop musical skills, and build a unified ensemble sound.

The absence of even one student can affect the progress, preparation, and performance of the entire group. Every member matters, and every student contributes to the success of the ensemble.

For this reason, students are expected to attend all scheduled rehearsals and participate fully and positively in the rehearsal process.

Home Practice

There is a strong connection between a student's musical development and the time they dedicate to practising outside of school. Like any physical or cognitive skill, playing an instrument or singing requires consistent effort, reflection, and review.

Students who practise regularly have greater opportunities to develop their technical skills, musical understanding, confidence, and independence. The rewards of music education extend beyond the school day, and regular practice is an important part of that process.

Parents and guardians play an important role in supporting their child's musical development. Your encouragement and positive reinforcement can have a significant impact on a student's continued growth. We encourage families to support students by providing a suitable practice environment and recognizing the effort they put into

developing their skills. Students are strongly encouraged to practise an average of three days per week for approximately 30–60 minutes per session.

How to Practice Effectively

Effective practice is purposeful and focused. Students are encouraged to use the following approach:

1. **Set up your practice space.** Find a quiet location with minimal distractions and ensure that you are sitting or standing in a comfortable, appropriate position.
2. **Gather your materials.** Have your instrument, music stand, chair, instrument, tuner or tuner app, and music ready before you begin.
3. **Set a practice goal.** Set a timer for approximately 30 minutes, or choose an appropriate length of time for your practice session.
4. **Warm up.** Begin with warm-up exercises such as long tones, scales, mouthpiece buzzing for brass players, and gradually working through higher and lower notes.
 - Singers: Review the warm-ups used during Choir rehearsals to develop breath support, control, projection, and vocal technique.
5. **Review your music.** Play through the assigned music from beginning to end to identify areas that need attention.
6. **Practise challenging sections.** Focus on the passages that are difficult. Break them into smaller sections and work on one section at a time using slow, careful practice.
7. **Put it together.** Gradually combine the smaller sections and work toward performing the entire passage smoothly.
8. **Play through.** Finish by playing through the entire song or section you have been practising.

Music Performances

All students enrolled in the North Trail High School Music Program are expected to participate in every scheduled concert and performance.

Participation in an ensemble is a shared commitment. Much like a sports team, a music ensemble depends on every member being present and prepared. Each student has an important role in the success of the group, and absences can affect the ensemble's preparation and performance.

Missed rehearsals and performances may be reflected in a student's report card mark for the music course, in accordance with course assessment practices.

Communicating about Conflicts

Communication is essential. If a student has a conflict that prevents them from participating in a scheduled performance, the student or family must communicate with Ms. Ahenda or Ms. Senanayake at least two weeks before the concert, whenever possible.

Communication should be made by email or in person and should include the reason for the absence. This allows the Music Department to plan appropriately and, where possible, make alternate arrangements.

Absences from performances that have not been pre-approved, or absences that are not the result of illness, will result in a BG1 for that performance.

Student Concert Expectations

Students are expected to arrive prepared, appropriately dressed, and on time for all concerts and performances.

Concert Attire

The required concert attire is:

- Black shoes
- Black socks or tights
- Black pants or skirt
- North Trail Music polo shirt

The North Trail Music polo may be purchased online through a link that will be distributed in October.

If a student is unable to obtain any required item of concert attire, please contact Ms. Ahenda or Ms. Senanayake as soon as possible. Students who are not appropriately dressed for a concert or performance may be asked to make an adjustment before performing.

Arrival and Conduct

Students must arrive on time for every performance and at the designated call time provided by the Music Department.

When representing North Trail High School, students are ambassadors for the school and the Music Program. Students are therefore expected to demonstrate respectful, responsible, and appropriate behaviour at all times and to follow the school's Student Code of Conduct.

Audience Concert Expectations

Families, guests, and other audience members contribute to a successful concert experience. Audience members are asked to:

- Arrive at least 10 minutes before the scheduled concert start time so that the performance can begin promptly.
- Remain quiet and attentive throughout the performance.
- Applaud appropriately following performances.
- Silence cell phones and other devices for the duration of the performance.
- Refrain from using devices in a manner that distracts performers or other audience members. Video recording is permitted.
- Plan to remain for the entire performance whenever possible.

Expectations for Student Behaviour

As in any other class at North Trail High School, students are expected to behave respectfully, responsibly, and appropriately at all times.

When behavioural concerns arise, the Music Department will address them progressively. Depending on the nature and frequency of the concern, this may include a verbal reminder or warning, communication with a parent or guardian by phone or email, and/or additional teacher or school-based action.

All students are expected to follow three fundamental principles:

1. Respect yourself.
2. Respect others — including peers, teachers, visitors, and other members of the school community.
3. Respect your environment — including the music room, instruments, music, chairs, stands, equipment, and other shared resources.

These expectations apply during regular classes, rehearsals, performances, field trips, festivals, and all other activities associated with the Music Program.

Communication

Important dates, schedules, announcements, and other information will be communicated to students and families throughout the school year.

Students and families should regularly monitor the following reliable sources of information:

- Formal letters and email communications from the Music Department
- The North Trail High School website
- The school calendar

Students are responsible for reviewing communications and keeping track of important dates and requirements. Families are encouraged to review these communications with their students to help ensure that everyone is informed and prepared.

What can parents do to support student learning and success?

Parents and guardians play an important role in supporting their child's musical learning and development. There are many ways families can encourage students and help them build confidence, commitment, and a lifelong appreciation for music.

Families can support student success by:

- Encouraging students as they develop their musical skills, particularly during the early stages of learning.
- Creating opportunities to experience music and culture together by attending concerts, plays, and other live performances.
- Watching musical performances together through video or television.
- Attending your child's concerts and performances whenever possible and recognizing their accomplishments and efforts.
- Encouraging regular practice at home and celebrating progress rather than focusing solely on achievement.
- Volunteering to support Music Department activities, including chaperoning festival trips and assisting during concert events.

Your encouragement, involvement, and support can make a meaningful difference in your child's musical experience. Music education is a partnership between students, families, and teachers, and we appreciate the role that families play in helping our students succeed.

*****IMPORTANT NOTICE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS*****

Important Notice Regarding Instrument Repairs

Please do not attempt to repair your child's instrument yourself if it appears to be damaged or is not functioning properly.

North Trail High School and the Calgary Board of Education have established procedures for the repair and maintenance of school-owned and rented instruments. Instrument repairs must be completed by qualified and trained instrument repair

technicians to ensure that the instrument is properly serviced and that no additional damage occurs.

Parents and guardians are asked not to attempt repairs or modifications to rented or school-owned instruments. Any damage resulting from unauthorized repairs or modifications may become the financial responsibility of the student or family.

If an instrument is damaged or is not working properly, please contact the Music Department as soon as possible. We will help determine the appropriate next steps and arrange for the instrument to be assessed or repaired through the proper process.

Additional information regarding instrument rental, maintenance, and repair procedures will be provided when instrument contracts are issued, whether the instrument is obtained through a music retailer or the CBE's instrument storage system.

Music Program Handbook Agreement Form

Thank you for taking the time to read and review the North Trail High School Music program handbook. Please **print, sign, and return** the last page of this handbook and return to the Music room no later than October 31st, 2026.

Looking forward to an excellent year ahead, please read the statement below and complete the acknowledgement.

By signing the form below, I agree that I have read the entire music handbook and understand the policies and expectations outlined in the booklet.

Student's Name Print

Parent/Guardian's Name Printed

Student's Name Signature

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date