The Forestville Public School Strings Program has developed over the last four years to provide students with the opportunity to learn a string instrument and to play in ensembles.

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!


**Our Ensembles**

The Strings Program will comprise of 3 ensembles in 2016:

**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 basic skills on their instrument and learning how to be part of a musical ensemble.

**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 become rehearsals rather than lessons. As such, students in this group are also required to have a weekly private lesson with an instrumental tutor.

**Senior Strings**
In 2016, all 2015 Junior Strings members are invited to join the Senior Strings group. Students in this group will be exposed to more challenging repertoire. They are required to have a weekly private lesson 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:

1. All students in K and Year 1 attend a special Strings Assembly on **Tuesday 13\(^{th}\) October** during school time

2. Read and discuss this booklet with your child

3. Return Expression of Interest Form by **Friday 30\(^{th}\) October**

4. Parents and students attend Information Evening in the school library on **Thursday 5\(^{th}\) November** (Students can be measured for an instrument during this evening).

5. Confirm interest by return email and let the music begin!
Instruments in Our Strings Groups

Both violins and cellos come in a range of child-friendly sizes. Our strings teacher will be available to measure children for the correct-sized instrument. Alternatively, a reputable music store will be able to do the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violin</th>
<th>Cello</th>
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<tr>
<td>The violin is the soprano voice in the string family. It is held under the chin, resting on the shoulder. Sound is made by bowing and plucking the strings.</td>
<td>The cello is lower in pitch than the violin. While shaped like a violin, the cello is larger and is held between the player’s knees.</td>
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Students are required to obtain their own instrument when joining the Strings Program. For your convenience, we have sourced the following options:  
(please note, all details are correct at the time of publication)

- **Mona Vale Music Warehouse** is able to provide a violin starter package at a cost of $235 – this price is inclusive of violin and shoulder rest.
- Cello packages and other violin packages are also available. A Mona Vale Music representative will be in attendance at our Information Evening. For orders, go to [http://www.monavalemusic.com](http://www.monavalemusic.com) and type FPS in the search box.
- **Sydney String Centre** (High St, Chatswood) for hire and purchase options [http://violins.com.au/](http://violins.com.au/)
- Data base of second hand instruments – see school website
Rehearsals

All groups will rehearse once each week. Morning rehearsals will be held from 7.50am – 8.45am. Afternoon rehearsals will be held from 3.10 – 4.05pm.

2016 rehearsal details are as follows, but may be subject to change:

- Beginners – Monday mornings 7.50 – 8.45am
- Juniors – Monday afternoons 3.10 – 4.05pm
- Seniors – Monday afternoons 3.10-4.05pm

Rehearsal time is precious and all members are expected to:

- Attend all rehearsals
- Help with both set up and pack up of the music room
- 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 and Coordinators are very happy to speak with parents to discuss their child’s progress. 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 addressed early.
Tutors and Private Lessons

Students participating in the Beginner Strings Program are **not** required to attend a weekly private tutorial session.

After their first year in the Beginner Strings, 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.

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

The following tutors are local and currently have some vacancy for 2015:

- **Violin** - Maryana Sywak – 0401 497 920  maryana_sywak@hotmail.com
- **Violin** - Suzanne Cattell - scattell@optusnet.com.au
- **Violin** – Hana King – 0422 447 573 - hana_465@hotmail.com
- **Cello** – Liam Meany – 0457 841 113 – liam@liammeany.com
- **Cello** - Nikkie Dobosi 0412 240 323

Private tutors may also be sourced from:


**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
- Encouraging their 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 2016:

- Assemblies
- Community visits
- Northern Beaches instrumental Festival
- Strings Program Recital
- Education Week
- Presentation Days
- Carols Night
- Community Events
- Workshop with guest soloists and groups

Fees

Strings Program fees are paid twice yearly (per semester). Fees charged to participate in the Strings groups go towards paying the tutor or conductor and purchasing music. The accounts for the Strings Program are administered by the School Band Committee. An invoice will be sent to participating students at the beginning of each semester. We ask that fees be paid promptly for the smooth running of the program.

The proposed, estimated fees for participation in the Strings Program in 2016 will be $200 per semester. This figure is dependent on enrolment numbers and may be subject to change.

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.

Beginners will require the book ‘Encore on Strings’ and Juniors will require the book ‘Abracadabra’. These books will be handed out to students at their first rehearsal and the cost (approx $25) will be added to the Semester One account.
Administration

Our Strings Program is administered through the Forestville Public School Band Committee, which is run by a volunteer parent committee including parent representatives of the Strings Program. 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.

Communication

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

- via email – conductors and 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, Trish Wenzel (Strings Committee President) or Penny Burt (Teacher Coordinator)

Parent Helpers

Beginner Strings, Junior Strings and Senior Strings Coordinators

- Liaise with teachers, conductors and Strings Committee
- Communicate to parents regarding performances, rosters, rehearsals, and other general information
- Assist in organisation of performances and special events

Rehearsal Supervisors

We request that a parent attend each 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 behaviour and general group management.
- Are able to communicate and give additional feedback to Principal, Coordinators and teachers
- See firsthand how the group is progressing

We look forward to welcoming your child to the Strings Program in 2016!
Strings Program
Expression of Interest – Beginner Strings

Child’s Name: ____________________________________________

Class: _______________

Parent Name: ____________________________________________

Parent Contact Email ______________________________________

Parent Contact Phone ______________________________________

Interested in playing:
☐ violin
☐ cello
☐ unsure

☐ I would like to attend the Information Evening with my child on Thursday 5 November at 5.30pm in the school library.

☐ I am unable to make the Information Evening, but would like for my child to join the Strings Program in 2016.

☐ Comments ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

Parent Signature _________________________________________

* Please return to school office by Friday 30 October *