

# Your Contribution to the Chamber Strings Ensemble

To make sure the ensemble runs smoothly, here are the basic guidelines.

1. Our Goals: to make music at an excellent standard, and to have fun.
2. Attendance requirements: We have high expectations!
3. School Ensembles: You are expected to maintain your commitment to them.
4. Individual skills: You will need to keep up a consistent, constructive home practice routine.
5. Performance uniform: Formal Black

## 1. Goals:

Our aim is for students to:

- Challenge their individual limitations as musicians.
- Develop excellent ensemble skills.
- Experience excellence in performance.
- Value the process and the achievements.
- Love the music.

In other words: your conductors are determined to make sure you achieve excellence and they assume you are, too.

We are going to work hard - and have a lot of fun.

## 2. Attendance:

- Members of the Ensemble should attend all rehearsals.

This includes a few extra rehearsals which will be held out of school hours during the year. We will aim to give you a month's notice of any time commitments outside the normal rehearsal routine.

- Whenever a student has a reason to miss a rehearsal, the student or his/her parents must contact one of the conductors before rehearsal – the earlier the better. This is a legal requirement. We must know where all students in the band are, during scheduled rehearsal times, in order to meet our Duty of

Care obligations. SMS is usually the best method if you're communicating on the day of the rehearsal. Otherwise, written notes or emails are fine.

- Illness, school camps and so on are obviously good reasons to miss a rehearsal, but please don't assume that your school will let us know about them. Please email us, text us, or write a note.
- Full attendance is expected at all performances, and at the final rehearsal before each performance. Most performances will be out of school hours. VCE Study Leave is not available for final rehearsals.
- The last resort: when you have a clash of commitments, and you find there is no way of changing either, the fairest policy is to honour the commitment you were informed of first (and give the other group as much notice as possible).

### **3. College Ensembles:**

- Students in Chamber Strings Ensemble are also expected to maintain a full commitment to bands and/or other ensembles at their colleges.

### **4. Individual Playing Skills**

Each student owes it to the Ensemble to keep his/her playing skills as secure and fluent as possible. Each student is expected to practise his/her instrument consistently.

- 4 or 5 practice sessions per week would be appropriate. The practice routine should include:
  - practising band music.
  - regular use of drills and exercises to develop and maintain playing skills (finger fluency, range, tone quality, articulation, sight-reading, etc.). Ask your teacher's advice on which exercises will benefit you most. We would strongly prefer that each member of the Ensemble takes regular lessons on his/her instrument.

### **5. What to Wear for Performances**

We aim to be excellent, therefore we dress classy. Concert attire is formal black

- Black trousers or long black skirt (well below the knees when seated). Jeans, track pants etc. are not ok.
- Black shirt or blouse with a collar
- Socks: black
- Stockings: skin-toned or black
- Shoes: black (not runners)
- Hair-clips, hair-ties etc: black, white or hair-coloured.

## **6. Extra Advice for VCE Students**

- We are proud of the leadership role our senior students take in the Ensemble. Leadership duties could include:
  - Taking sectional rehearsals
  - Bringing a positive attitude, and encouraging younger members.
  - Specific tasks (eg library, stage management, celebrations)
  - Year 12 students, you may arrange one extra absence from rehearsals per semester as “study leave”, if you feel you have a particularly heavy homework load. Of course, we expect you to give us as much notice as possible – preferably a week or more.
  - We can create opportunities for senior students to conduct the Ensemble. Ask your conductors if you’re interested.

## **7. Student Input**

It’s great to have suggestions from students about repertoire, performance opportunities, or any other aspect of the Ensemble’s work. Email us, or speak to your conductor at rehearsals.