# PARTICIPANT / GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

2026-2027

## THE MUSIC ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

On behalf of the Edmonton String Players Association (ESPA) and the administration of the Music Enrichment Program, welcome! You are now an important part of an experience that will be sometimes challenging, lots of fun, and always rewarding for participants.

The Music Enrichment Program is a unique opportunity for students ages 8 and up to excel in music learning and enjoyment outside of private lessons, through participation in string ensembles.

The ESPA is a non-profit organization that runs the Music Enrichment Program, with support from members. An administrator oversees daily operations.

## OBJECTIVES

The Music Enrichment Program strives to provide a sequential, well-rounded experience based on sound musical principles and ideas. The following concepts are addressed for string players:

- awareness and development of instrumental technique, including posture, bowing and tone
- introduction and development of musical notation
- musical language and concepts, including expression, tempo, rhythm and dynamics
- development of musical interpretation
- exploration of music, composers and history of other times, places and cultures
- exposure to excellent string and orchestral music through recordings and performances
- opportunity to work with experts in string music
- opportunity to perform in excellent venues
- development of skills to listen to and play with others of similar age and development

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The conductor will:

- foster a respectful and safe learning environment
- strive to provide an educationally sound, rewarding and creatively inspired experience
- be musically and organizationally prepared

The student will:

- arrive prepared and on-time for all rehearsals and performances
- maintain focus and participate fully in the rehearsal process
- help build a safe learning environment by being respectful towards peers and instructors

For youth programs, the parent or guardian will:

- support the child by ensuring attendance at all classes, rehearsals and performances
- support the ensemble and program by volunteering when possible
- watch for and respond appropriately to communication distributed by the conductor

## ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

Each ensemble operates as a team. Absences impact everyone. All members are expected to attend all classes, rehearsals and performances.

- If a member needs to be absent from a rehearsal or performance, the conductor must be notified in advance. (e.g. by email or text message)
- After several absences, a member may be asked to reconsider participation in the program
- Registration fees will not be refunded if a member is asked to leave an ensemble due to unexcused absences

To make the most of rehearsals, all members should:

- arrive in adequate time so that instruction can begin on time
- bring their instrument, music and a pencil to every class
- help put away chairs and music stands following each practice if needed.

## PRACTICING

Practicing is essential to success on a string instrument. All students committed to an orchestra or ensemble should also be committed to practicing at home.

Establishing a regular practice routine makes it easier to get practice time in. Shorter, frequent practices are most effective. Frequent practice leads to increased comfort on the instrument, strength and flexibility, information retention, muscle memory, mastery of techniques, and increased confidence.

Participants are encouraged to review their ensemble pieces at home, and to seek help from their private teachers with any challenging pieces or passages as needed.

## INSTRUMENTS AND MUSIC SUPPLIES

Every participant is responsible to provide a suitable instrument, and to bring it to rehearsals and performances.

Music and binders will be provided and must be returned at the end of the season.

Students are expected to provide their own:

- pencil
- rosin
- sponge or shoulder rest if needed (violin and viola)
- puck or end pin stopper (cello and bass)

Shops in Edmonton where music supplies may be purchased include:

- Acoustic Music Shop (9934-82 Avenue)
- Bella Music (11002-150 Street)
- Long and McQuade (6633 118 Avenue NW; 10528 Mayfield Rd NW; 13651 149 Street NW; 9219 28 Avenue NW; and 10832 82 Avenue NW)
- Myhre's Music (8735-118 Avenue)

## CONCERTS

Performances represent the culmination of work and demonstrate progress to family, friends and the community.

All ensembles participate in twice-yearly concerts at mid-winter and spring. Other performance opportunities such as festivals or community events may be arranged for a specific ensemble. Any required travel will be identified well in advance and will be the responsibility of the student and their parent/guardian.

Concerts are a formal event. Your conductor will advise you of expected concert attire. If you are unsure about concert dress, please speak with the conductor prior to the performance.

## REGISTRATION AND FEES

Registration forms can be filled out on our website at www.musicenrichment.ca. Students will not be permitted to attend rehearsals or performances unless a registration form has been submitted.

Fees are to be paid when registration is sent in by the payment methods offered on the web site. No refunds will be issued after October 15th. Registration fees are subject to annual review. Grants and scholarships for financial support may be available. For inquiries about financial aid, please connect with the board at president@musicenrichment.ca

## VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

Every September, all members are required to provide a $300.00 cheque made payable to the Edmonton String Players Association, post-dated for June 1 of the following year. This volunteer deposit cheque will be returned upon completion of volunteer hours recognized by the Association.

Opportunities to volunteer in support of the ESPA and the Music Enrichment Program include:

- ESPA Governance – EPSA is governed by volunteer members who form the Executive, including representatives from each orchestra. If you are interested in serving on the executive or a committee, please contact the President at president@musicenrichment.ca

- Casino shifts - One of the major sources of funding from the ESPA is a biannual casino. There is a casino scheduled for **November 2026.** All members will be contacted by email to coordinate volunteer shifts.
- Fundraising, bookkeeping, promotions and more!

Please see the Volunteer Activity webpage for more details at musicenrichment.ca/volunteer/

**EDMONTON STRING PLAYERS ASSOCIATION (ESPA)**

The parents or guardians of any youth student, as well as all adult students enrolled in the Music Enrichment Program are automatically granted membership in the Edmonton String Players Association (ESPA). EPSA is a volunteer run, non-profit organization and federally registered charity.

Roles and responsibilities of the ESPA include:

- to finance and administer the Music Enrichment Program
- to support the Music Enrichment Program by providing volunteers for rehearsals, concerts and events
- to support the Music Enrichment Program by providing financial assistance for music, supplies, festivals, workshops, accompaniment, etc.
- to engage teachers, conductors and administration for services to the program
- to collect and disseminate program information to members and participants.

The Association elects its Board yearly at its Annual General Meeting. The President may be reached at president@musicenrichment.ca