

LGMS
Music Parent
Resource Guide

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1. OVERVIEW

“The systematic development of musical skills, knowledge and perception is fundamental to the total development of the individual.”

- Alberta Education

We couldn't agree more. And, at LGMS, we take our music education seriously.

LGMS has a dedicated music teacher, Lisa Murphy whose time is committed to our school's music education and drama programs. She doesn't teach other subjects. That's rare in a school system of our size. We also have a second music teacher, Suzanne Morley, who teaches grade four students (along with her duties at Canmore's Elizabeth Rummel Elementary School).

Alberta Education curriculum requires students in grades four, five and six to receive at least ninety minutes of music instruction a week. Music is also available as an option for grade seven and eight students.

- **all grade four and five** students participate in music twice a week. Students follow a general program that includes singing, reading and understanding basic musical notation, orchestra and classical composers, hand drumming and playing the recorders.
- **all grade six** students start beginner-level band and study one instrument for the year. At the end of the year, their learning culminates in a wonderful debut performance at the spring concert in June.
- **for grade seven and eight** students, music education is an option. Students receive three 45-minute classes of formal instruction per week for the entire year, students make several band trips a year, and participate in music festivals and put on many performances, including concerts at our school.

Why Music is SO good for students

Research over the last few decades has begun to address the overwhelming benefits of music education for children and young adults. There are many ways music helps a child's brain develop, and lays down an incredible foundation for success.

Here are just a few of the benefits music education has for students:

- enhances speech and reading skills
- improves fine motor skills
- boosts memory and abstract thinking
- trains the brain to focus attention over a sustained period
- encourages empathy for others
- inspires creative approaches and team spirit

- builds confidence in individuals

For the full report *An Overview of Current Neuroscience Research: The Benefits of Music Education (April 2014)* see links at the bottom of this document.

What makes our LGMS Music Program special?

“Music education has been so important for our sons. Since LGMS has two ‘streams’ (French & English) our one son got to know students in the other stream quite well through band, when he normally wouldn’t have had any classes with these students. The social aspect of being part of the LGMS band has been such a bonus to him. He has a wider circle of friends who all have music in common.”

– Linda B., parent of past and present LGMS music students

Today, students are exposed to so much online learning and play. Music education and learning an instrument gives them an alternative to this virtual world. Music provides an opportunity to create something truly interactive, tactile and concrete.

At its core, the music program at LGMS is a place where students come together to learn theory, techniques and skills so they can appreciate, enjoy and perform music. The heart of the program teaches a love of all music, a sense of cooperation and the thrill of mastering an instrument.

Our school’s music program provides a learning environment that fosters open, accepting and non-competitive learning and cooperation. The students strive to work together as a cohesive unit, and they take the benefits of the skills they have learned into other parts of their daily life.

We encourage you to come by our LGMS music room, complete with three private sound booths and room for the whole orchestra to practice. This music room is also unusual for a middle school of our size, and we are very proud of it. Here, your student has access to instruments they may never encounter outside school, like a xylophone, djembe drums and a gong. They can also experiment with a wealth of classic orchestral instruments like trumpets, flutes, clarinets and more.

2. MUSIC TEACHERS

Full-Time Music Teacher Lisa Murphy (Grades 5 through 8)

“Music is an international language spoken all over the world and is a life skill that I have come to treasure as an adult.” – Lisa Murphy

Lisa Murphy has been teaching music education in the Canadian Rockies School district since 2000. Growing up, she had parents that encouraged music exploration, so she studied piano from a young age, singing in choirs and participating in many concerts and festivals.

When it came time to decide on a career, Lisa chose to pursue her Bachelors of Education with a focus on instrumental music and social studies.

“I have thoroughly loved teaching music in public schools,” she says. “There is nothing like the thrill of working with beginners and seeing the spark of motivation as they continue their music studies into the higher grades.”

Lisa also notes that research shows music facilitates better concentration in mathematics and helps to promote language learning. As an educator, she's seen students develop positive self-esteem and confidence when they realize they can excel at performing and creating.

"From my experience, studying music promotes discipline, encourages team work and enhances listening and communication skills," she says. "I know it also encourages creativity and emotional intelligence."

Lisa encourages every parent to consider the gift of music for their child, and looks forward to working with students and parents through the LGMS music program.

Lisa can be reached at lisa.murphy@crps.ca or by phone at the school at 403-678-6006.

Music Teacher Suzanne Morley (Grades 4)

Suzanne Morley is well known to elementary students (and their parents) who have attended Elizabeth Rummel Elementary School (ERS) in Canmore. Suzanne teaches music to grade four students at LGMS, as well as teaching music to students in kindergarten through grade three at ERS.

3. LGMS MUSIC PROGRAMS

MUSIC INSTRUCTION (Grade 4 & 5)

All **grade four and five** students participate in music twice a week. Students follow a general program that includes singing, reading and understanding basic musical notation, orchestra and classical composers, hand drumming and playing the recorders.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC (Grade 6)

Instrumental music is mandatory for all **grade six** students. The students study within the environment of a beginner band program and have the opportunity to study one instrument for the year. At the end of the year, their learning culminates with a debut performance at the LGMS spring concert.

LGMS BANDS (Grade 7 & 8)

Two types of band experience are offered at LGMS: concert band and jazz band.

Concert Band

Concert band is available **to grade seven and eight** students as a full-year option. Rehearsals are mandatory, and take place on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:15-12:50 p.m.

The LGMS Concert Band performs at all school concerts, participates in the Canmore Vic Lewis Festival <http://artsplacecanmore.com/community-events/details/vic-lewis-band-festival> and students attend 1-2 trips per year (see BAND TRIPS below). Rehearsal time provides an opportunity for all grade seven and eight music students to collaborate and refine the skills they have learned in their option classes.

Jazz Band

Jazz band is open to **grade seven and eight** students who have selected concert band as an option (students cannot participate in jazz without the concert option). Jazz Band is an optional extracurricular activity, but students can use this rehearsal time to put towards their mark for their music option practice time.

The LGMS Jazz Band meets two mornings a week: Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7:15 a.m. These students have many opportunities to perform and often participate in one band trip a year. Students are encouraged to begin to solo and improvise on their instrument. Students may play a different instrument than the one they play for concert band.

4. WHAT STUDENTS NEED

For **grades four and five** students, nothing is needed outside of regular school supplies.

The information below relates to all LGMS students in the mandatory **grade six** music program, and for students in **grades seven and eight** that choose to take music for one of their options.

For all students, attendance and punctuality is essential for the band to be a success. Students commit to the following ideals to keep the band running smoothly and to respect their fellow band mates.

1. Arrive on time to class and rehearsals.
2. Bring all materials to class and rehearsals. (Instrument, sheet music, pencil, binder, eraser, agenda.)
3. Behave in a respectable manner towards others.
4. Demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning.
5. Practice their instrument regularly (2-4 times a week).
6. Complete all homework and hand in all assignments on time.

INSTRUMENTS

Grade six students begin their exciting foray into music by selecting an instrument.

A music information night is held in the spring (watch the 'Week at a Glance' school email communications for dates) for grade five students who will be attending LGMS the following year to get information about the mandatory instrument music program. Attendance at this session by students and parents is extremely important as we cover an overview of the grade six band program, and introduce options for choosing an instrument.

Students will indicate their top three instrument choices on a form handed out at school. Although we do try to accommodate special requests for instruments, and take into consideration families that already own an instrument or have lessons underway, in a few cases, students may not get to play their top instrument of choice because a band requires a balanced group of instruments.

Putting together a cohesive band from dozens of students is an intense and creative job with a lot of moving parts. We strive to make this introduction to band a positive experience, but may have to assign an instrument to a student for the good of the band. On the positive side, we have seen so many students pick up an instrument they were unfamiliar with and grow to love it by the end of the year! It can be a very positive learning experience for the students to try something new.

Should I rent or buy an instrument?

Many students new to music may want to lease/rent an instrument before they commit to buying an instrument for grade six.

LGMS works with St. John's Music in Calgary to provide leased instruments for students, should they wish. A St. John's Music representative will attend the spring music information night at LGMS to discuss options with parents. Price and terms vary according to the instrument, and agreements are made directly with St. John's Music (not LGMS). Once you are done with an instrument, you simply arrange with St. John's to return it in good condition, and end the lease.

Depending on the instrument the student will play, it may be less expensive to purchase an instrument rather than lease one. Trumpets, flutes and clarinets are examples of instruments that can be purchased at a reasonable cost for 'student quality' instruments. Check online at amazon.ca or the Long & McQuade's or St. John's Music online stores or retail outlets in Calgary for pricing. (We don't encourage the purchase of instruments from Costco, however, as the quality is not great and should the instrument break, there are few outlets that will repair these instruments.) Sometimes, used instruments can be purchased online, as well.

How much does it cost to buy an instrument?

That depends on the instrument chosen. For example, a student-grade (beginner) trumpet can be purchased for about \$200-\$250 and a flute or clarinet for about \$130-\$175. More expensive instruments, like drums and xylophones, are provided by the school.

BAND UNIFORMS

Grade six students do not need a band uniform. When performing at the June LGMS concert, students may be asked to wear a white shirt and dress pants or skirts to keep the band look professional.

Grade seven and eight students do need to purchase clothing to use for the LGMS-approved band uniform. Uniforms are not branded, but consist of dress-style clothes that students could use for other purposes outside band. Students will not be allowed to perform unless they are wearing a complete, clean uniform.

The band uniform consists of:

- white dress shirt with 'button-down' collars (shirts tucked in, sleeves cannot be rolled up)
- black dress shirt (as above, ***for jazz band performers only***)
- black pants or skirts to the knee (girls may choose to wear pants or a skirt)
- black belt
- black dress shoes
- blue school tie & LGMS pin (cost \$25)

As you can see, the school provides a blue tie and band pin to every band student for a cost of \$25. The rest of the clothes need to be purchased early in the school year to be available for the first band trip in October.

Canmore does not have a dress store for children, so we recommend shopping in Calgary or Cochrane for these items. Many parents have told us that they have successfully gotten these items at a reasonable cost at Wal-Mart.

5. BAND TRIPS: CAMPS & FESTIVALS

Trips and camps are available only to **grade seven and eight** students. Participation is optional, but highly encouraged. These are one-of-a-kind opportunities for students to learn music skills in different environments.

Band camps and tours are an exciting part of the music program. The LGMS **grade seven and eight** band students attend several provincial music festivals during the year. Music festivals give student important performance practice, often in large venues, as well as the pleasure of hearing other school bands perform. Camps include one-on-one student tutoring with talented professional musicians and clinicians.

LGMS BAND CAMP

Location: Camp Caroline, Alberta

Timing: Annually in October

Student Fee Required: approx. \$200

Band Program Pays: approx. \$100 per student

Camp Website: <http://www.campcaroline.ab.ca/facilities/band-camps>

This camp is optional, but student participation strongly encouraged.

The Camp Caroline Band camp provides an amazing opportunity for students to learn from professional musicians, rehearse together and enjoy social and recreational activities with their peers. The camp helps the music students prepare for the annual November Vic Lewis Band Festival in Canmore.

Camp Caroline is usually one of the highlights of the year for grade seven and eight music students.

Sample pack list: <http://www.campcaroline.ab.ca/facilities/what-to-bring>

2-3 Parent chaperones required, preferably one male parent (CRPS ratio requires 1 adult: 10 students)

CANMORE'S VIC LEWIS BAND FESTIVAL

Location: Canmore Collegiate High School

Timing: Annually in November

Student Fee Required: approx. \$80-\$90

Band Program Pays: approx. \$40 per student for festival entrance fee

Vic Lewis Website: <http://artsplacecanmore.com/community-events/details/vic-lewis-band-festival>

This camp is optional, but student participation strongly encouraged.

The Vic Lewis Festival is Canmore's premier music festival. It's earned the reputation of being one of the best non-competitive band festivals in the province. Over 800 junior and senior high school students attend each year.

Both the LGMS Concert Band and the Lawrence Grassi Jazz Band participate in this festival. Over the weekend, students perform and participate in workshops at Canmore Collegiate High School. Professional musicians and conductors from across North America assist the students in improving their individual technique on their instrument as well as improving their ensemble sound.

This is a great home-town venue that makes it easy for band parents to attend and see how their child is progressing. As this is a home-town event, pack list not required. Parent chaperones not required, but parent attendance is encouraged!

CANTANDO MUSIC FESTIVAL

Location: Edmonton, Alberta

Timing: Annually in April

Student Fee Required: approx. \$200 per student, plus suggested \$150 spending money for three days of food/activities

Band Program Pays: approx. \$70 per student festival entry fee

Cantando (Edmonton) Website: <http://www.cantando.org/edmonton/when.html>

This camp is optional, but student participation strongly encouraged.

This is a non-competitive music festival that is held every year in Edmonton, Alberta. During this annual band trip, we spend three days performing, attending workshops and celebrating the accomplishment of our dedicated group of musicians. A highlight for the LGMS band has been performing in the Winspear Centre, a beautiful theatre in downtown Edmonton.

This is a great trip that celebrates their year and helps further their music education.

2-3 Parent chaperones required, preferably one male parent (CRPS ratio requires 1 adult: 10 students)

A NOTE ABOUT BAND FEES

The LGMS music program has a great tradition of excellence and opportunity for students. The costs for band camps, festivals fees, travel expenses, repairs to school instruments, and numerous other program expenses really add up.

While fundraising covers a good portion of the cost of the music program each year (including some portion of the camps and festivals), students are also required to cover a portion of the cost for selected activities.

How much can I expect to pay for the year?

Music participation for **grades four, five and six** is free. Students in **grade six** may have to purchase or lease an instrument.

For **grades seven and eight** who choose music as an option, there no option fee to take music. However, if your child chooses to attend the festivals and band camp for the year, expect to pay about \$500* for all activities. Costs can be lower if students elect not to participate in some of the optional camps and trips. Fees are due just before the events, so are spread out over the year.

** Compared to hiring a private music teacher, which can run about \$40 per week for a 1-hour lesson, LGMS music students are getting several hours of music education a week over about 40 weeks at a cost of about \$12/week.*

What if I have a hard time paying the additional music fees?

Some families would love to have their student participate in music, but don't have the resources for the whole program. If this is an issue, any family can contact Lisa Murphy confidentially to request help with paying for the fees. We ask that you contact her early in the year to see what arrangements can be made.

6. FUNDRAISING & VOLUNTEERING

Costs for the music program include buying sheet music for music classes, purchasing instruments and equipment (amps, tuners, etc.) for the LGMS band room, plus keeping our instruments in good repair after a season of hard playing by our students.

Out-of-town music festivals and camps require costs to hire transport buses, subsidizing lodging or hotel costs, and all festival have a fee per student to enter. Costs for a single festival can be significant. The band program pays a portion of the cost of all band trips and festivals from the money earned through their band fundraising efforts (and students are asked to also pay for a portion of the costs).

Many school music programs require band parents to participate in several bingos and casinos each year. At LGMS, we've heard from parents that they would prefer to have one big fundraiser a year, and cover some of the costs of the program themselves, rather than working at a casinos or bingos throughout the year.

Poinsettia Fundraiser (Every November-December)

Poinsettias are sold every year to support the music program. It is a huge undertaking that requires both student involvement and parent volunteers. Students are asked in the fall to sell poinsettias to their friends, family, and neighbors at a cost of approximately \$15 per poinsettia to support the band program. The poinsettias are supplied by a high-quality greenhouse and come to the school to be distributed to the purchasers over two days.

We ask that all band students in grades six, seven and eight participate in this fundraiser, and we need up to 20 parents to coordinate the distribution of the poinsettias each December for two days.

This important fund raiser has been hugely successful for the band program. We raise about \$8,000-\$10,000 annually, and all money raised goes toward supporting the LGMS Music Program.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

The volunteer duties of band parents for the LGMS Music Program are not significant. Parents are needed every year to help with the one-time poinsettia fundraiser efforts, as well as a few chaperones for out-of-town band camps and festivals. These music trips can be a good deal of fun for the parents, who get to know the kids and see the band perform in music venues outside Canmore.

For those who are more passionate about music education, you can help develop and fundraise for the LGMS Music Program through the Association for Music Parents (AMP), new for 2017-2018.

ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC PARENTS (AMP)

What is AMP?

The LGMS Association for Music Parents (AMP) is a new organization in support of music education at the school. AMP currently consists of three music parents who will meet at regular intervals during the school year, and will be the liaison between the Music Teacher, LGMS Staff and Music Parents of children in music education or options in Grades 6, 7, and 8.

What are AMP's goals?

FUN: To nurture, encourage and support creativity and joy in the music education program at LGMS.

FUTURE: To encourage a sustainable the music education program at LGMS by providing assistance, guidance, inspiration and transparency for all present and future LGMS participants (music students, teachers and parents).

FINANCIAL: Along with LGMS staff, help identify fundraising needs, review and organize fundraising activities, and share fundraising reports back to parents.

FANS: To encourage cross-pollination of music opportunities with others in the Bow Valley, including parents, former Canadian Rockies Public School (CRPS) music students, as well as music educators inside and outside CRPS.

This is the inaugural year for the Association, and we are looking for others passionate about children's music education like we are! If you are interested in getting involved and helping develop this new association throughout the year, we'd love to hear from you!

To Contact or Join AMP:
lgmsamp2017@gmail.com

Thank you for your continued support of the music program and your children's music education!

7. YEARLY BAND EVENTS SCHEDULE

OCTOBER

BAND CAMP, CAMP CAROLINE, ALBERTA
Parent volunteers/chaperones needed.

NOVEMBER

VIC LEWIS BAND FESTIVAL, CANMORE, ALBERTA
Parents (grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings...) are encouraged to attend (free) at any of the performances.

DECEMBER

LGMS SCHOOL CHRISTMAS CONCERT*
Date TBA; In the LGMS Gym
Parents (grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings...) are encouraged to attend this performance.
Features the grade fives plus highlights the work of the LGMS Concert Band and the Lawrence Grassi Jazz Band.

LATE MAY OR EARLY JUNE

LGMS ANNUAL SPRING CONCERT*
Date TBA; In the LGMS Gym
Parents (grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings...) are encouraged to attend this performance.
This concert features the grade six band students in their performance debut, and is always a highlight! The LGMS Concert Band and the Lawrence Grassi Jazz Band also perform. It's a great way to finish the year and celebrate the student's music journey for the year!

**Concerts require the participation of all LGMS music students.*

Additional informational links for this subject area:

PDF from Canada Royal Conservatory of Music:

https://www.rcmusic.ca/sites/default/files/files/RCM_MusicEducationBenefits.pdf

Globe and Mail article

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health-advisor/why-music-is-key-to-your-childs-development/article23515934/>

20 Benefits of Music in our schools:

<http://www.nafme.org/20-important-benefits-of-music-in-our-schools/>

Preventing children from quitting their instrument:

<http://www.musicparentsguide.com/2015/02/17/students-really-quit-musical-instrument-parents-can-prevent/>