

I am writing to let you know how the music program has helped my son. When my son started in high school he was nervous and unsure, as are most students starting high school. He's not an exceptionally outgoing boy and not very sporty but he persisted at tennis all through his school life. He'd learnt piano privately for a few years and found that he had a talent for music and an activity he could feel relaxed and excel at. Unfortunately his piano teacher moved and we were unable to find another to fill her wonderful space.

In his first term at St Helena Secondary College we attended the Year 7 Music Recruitment Night where the senior band played and the music department explained how the students could become involved. They helped match the students to instruments and pointed my son, Joseph, to the trombone. So he not only started learning the trombone with other kids but was placed in the beginner band which saw him move at a steady pace through the different levels of the bands - beginner, junior, middle and senior as well as the different levels of jazz band. He has never looked back and is still playing into his year 12 VCE year. He currently plays in both the Senior Jazz Band and Senior Concert Band as well as doing VCE Music Performance.

As Joseph's parents, my husband and I feel that Joseph has a new found confidence and a place for himself within the school community. Joseph's self esteem has escalated over the years and he makes the effort to make it to all rehearsals and performances. In VCE Music Performance where a small group of students form a group and are self driven Joseph has shown leadership and confidence. Knowing that he has a subject that he excels at and enjoys immensely is a huge stress relief for Joseph in such a stressful year. He is considering taking music further after school is finished by teaching or joining other bands.

It's understandable that sport is a big focus in schools providing fitness but all kids are different and should be treated as such and given all avenues find their self esteem.

The bands are more than just a bunch of kids playing instruments. They are a cohesive supportive group who form a bond and look out for one another. The bands offer a way for these students to express themselves and feel part of a team, as well as making friends that they will keep into adulthood.

Thank you for your time,

Karen Fudge

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]