

Dear Sir,

There was a item in my children's school newsletter asking parents to email their support for the school music program, so given that my child participates I thought I would add my voice.

Can I say that having come from a Steiner School my child finds the music program at BLACKBURN HIGH absolutely awful, my son has dropped out already on the grounds that it was harsh, ridged and inflexible – he was forced to participate in a band program when he did not want to or else had to cease lessons – he stopped lessons as he could not cope with band – great! My other child persists with the program because she LOVES her flute teacher and the flute ensemble – what she does not love is the Concert Band which she is FORCED to participate in if she wants to continue with in school lessons – what a relief in our household that the afterschool music program and all concerts have been cancelled for terms 1 and 2 due to the teachers industrial action (Hip Hip Hooray) the thought of having to sit through several ghastly concerts was beginning to get me down. Furthermore my daughter is compelled to take part in the South Street Competitions – this often clashes with her beloved “Showtime” (A Scout Association show in which she plays in the band) she would rather play in showtime than in South Street but is given no choice. The school is totally inflexible when it comes to the students participating in the band program and this is ridiculous – not all kids want to play in a band, especially ones as dreadful as those my kids have been subjected too (I don't know what it is - perhaps they try to play stuff above their capacities, but they sound AWFUL – the smaller ensembles are generally ok) My daughter plays in 2 nads outside the school and LOVES them – wild horse and all that even though the rehearsals are at awkward times – she gets there!

SO – after all that what I am trying to say **is Music at school is great BUT** just not the way the do it at Blackburn High – Individual lessons YES, Small group ensembles (if the kids want to go) YES, Bands (if the kids want to go) YES, but not if they don't – my daughter reckons that half the kids in the bands don't want to be there, most don't want to do all the competitions either SO surely if all this compulsory stuff was dropped there would be less bands and less resources needed to support those bands, there would be less competitions etc etc.

Blackburn High prides itself on it's music program, but from what I have seen it really only suits the mega competitive kids, my children who play for the joy of it suffer ...

Kind regards Katherine McKay