

HIGH SCHOOL FAQs

SPECIAL MUSIC SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL

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What is the mission of Special Music School High School?

The school is uniquely dedicated to providing talented young musicians the opportunity to pursue serious, pre-professional music studies along with a rigorous academic curriculum. Our music curriculum emphasizes the development of the student as a musician for the 21st century, [View the curriculum: academics, music and graduation requirements.](#)

Why haven't I heard of this high school before?

Special Music School High School is a new high school with its first class of 9th graders in fall 2013.

Will you have any Information Sessions?

Yes, we have three Information Sessions scheduled: October 22, 24 and 29. They will all be held in room G52 at the Martin Luther King Educational Complex at 122 Amsterdam Avenue, between 65th and 66th.

Where is the school?

The school will be located in the Martin Luther King Educational Complex at 122 Amsterdam Avenue in Manhattan—in the Lincoln Center neighborhood.

How large will the high school be?

The high school will admit 50 students per grade, beginning with ninth grade, in the 2013-14 school year. It will reach its full capacity of 200 students in the 2016-2017 school year.

Who is eligible to apply?

Special Music School High School accepts applications from any current 8th grade student who is, or will be, living in one of the five boroughs of New York City in September 2013.

Do I need to know how to read music?

Yes, you must be able to read basic rhythmic and pitch notation.

How do I apply?

You must submit a Special Music School High School application directly to our admissions office by November 4, 2013, in addition to listing SMSHS, code number A85A, on the DOE high school form. The DOE form, which lists all your high school choices, is submitted to your middle school's guidance counselor.

Where can I get an application?

You can download an application [here](#), or pick up an application in person from Kaufman Center's front desk (129 West 67th St in Manhattan), or request that one be mailed to you by calling 212 501 3395.

Does an applicant need to have studied music for many years?

No, the school is designed to educate and nurture both highly accomplished high-school aged musicians and those who have only recently discovered their passion for music.

Do I need to have a classical music background?

No, anyone with a strong love of music, in any style, is encouraged to apply. However, most of our music instruction is steeped in Classical music traditions.

What are the admissions criteria?

Acceptance to Special Music School High School is based on your application, audition and a review of your academic record.

How would you describe the ideal Special Music School High School student?

Any instrumentalist, vocalist and/or composer, with some musical background, who is passionate about music, who wants to be musically and academically challenged and who wants to make/study music on a daily basis.

How many audition rounds will there be?

There will be one round of live auditions. Anyone interested in the school is encouraged to apply and schedule their audition according to the instructions in the application support packet.

How do I schedule a live audition?

[Download an application](#) or pick up an application at Kaufman Center, 129 West 67th Street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue. Instructions for scheduling your audition are included in the application support packet.

What do composers do for the live audition?

Composers are asked to submit their application with all the supporting musical material as specified in the application support packet. They will be asked to come in and speak with our admissions panel for the live audition.

What are you looking for in a live audition?

We are looking to determine your basic instrumental, vocal, and/or composing abilities.

What will the audition consist of?

Qualified applicants will be asked to schedule a live audition. Based on the performance stage of their audition, qualified applicants will take a music theory test and will participate in a mini improvisation workshop. In addition: Vocalists and Instrumentalists may be asked to sightread. Composers will meet with members of the audition panel to discuss their music, ideas and compositional processes.

What instruments are acceptable for an audition?

You may audition on any standard classical or jazz instrument.

Will you provide an instrument for the audition?

We will provide a piano, electric amp and drums—and a vibraphone (on request). All other instrumentalists, including harpists, must bring their own instrument.

Will there be an accompanist?

No, we will not provide accompanists at the audition. Applicants may bring their own accompanist-any and all expenses for a personal accompanist are the sole responsibility of the applicant. Recorded, taped, karaoke, and/or "Music Minus One" accompaniments are not acceptable.

May I audition for more than one concentration or for more than one instrument?

Yes, you may audition for one, two or three concentrations and/or on more than one instrument. If you are auditioning for more than one concentration (i.e. guitar and composition or voice, composition and bassoon), you must fill out separate applications for each concentration. If you are auditioning on two instruments (i.e. oboe and piano), fill out one instrumental application; please make note of your second instrument in the appropriate place on the application.

What is Kaufman Music Center?

A national leader in the field of music education and one of New York City's most vibrant cultural organizations, [Kaufman Music Center](#) combines the finest in music education for all ages with world-class performance in the acoustically superior [Merkin Concert Hall](#). Founded in 1952 as a community school for pre-conservatory music training, today's Kaufman Center is home to [Merkin Concert Hall](#); [Lucy Moses School](#), New York's largest community arts school; and [Special Music School](#), New York's only K-12 public school for musically gifted children.