

HIGHVALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

2015

Information Handbook

November 2014

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1. INTRODUCTION

Highvale Primary School started a new instrumental music program in 2012 as a response to the 2011 school review and audit. The aim of this initiative is to develop a concert band program, supported by quality instrumental music lessons. In 2013 this program grew through the addition of percussion lessons and introduced a novice band in addition to the senior band for new students. In 2015 we intend to continue the consolidation of the program.

How to read this handbook

This handbook has been written to answer many of the questions that parents have as they consider enrolling their child in the instrumental music program or as their child starts to learn. As such, it is not intended to be read cover to cover, but to serve as a reference. Please use the contents above to determine which sections are of interest and feel free to skip sections that are not relevant or of immediate use.

This handbook should be kept for reference to help answer questions as they arise during the year.

2. WHY INDIVIDUAL LESSONS

Individual lessons allow the school to integrate instrumental music education into the wider school environment. It is a way of specialising attention on each student and their individual needs. A child who has individual lessons progresses much faster and becomes more apt at playing music (rather than just playing a bunch of notes).

While group lessons are slightly cheaper, they cannot cater for the individual needs of your child to the same degree as individual lessons. As learning an instrument requires individualised attention on particular needs, group lessons are generally not an ideal way to learn. However where group lessons are possible we will offer these as an option: it requires having two students who are in the same year level, at the same standard of learning on the same instrument and both willing to have shared lessons. Hence there are expected to be only very few opportunities for this.

3. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the instrumental music program at Highvale Primary School are to

1. provide an opportunity for students to development musically through individual lessons and ensemble work;
2. provide the opportunity for students to gain ensemble skills and performance skills as part of their education;
3. offer students the opportunity to explore and develop their musical abilities;
4. enhance the students' enjoyment and understanding of music, and allow them to respond to it with a deeper understanding;

5. engage students to use their musical abilities to become more self-aware, and to develop confidence and listening skills;
6. encourage students to become more sensitive, discerning and creatively aware of the world and the people around them;
7. motivate students to explore a variety of musical literature, so that they can value music and use it as a mode of expression, while in the school and as a lifetime leisure activity or vocation; and to
8. enhance the musical experiences of the school and the wider community by providing opportunities to perform to integrate music education into the learning process and to aid and assist in enrichment and remedial work where required.

When learning an instrument, the following areas of learning and skill development will be refined over many years of practice and music education:

- knowing the instrument,
- playing posture,
- tone,
- pitch,
- fluency of reading,
- tuning and intonation,
- articulation,
- symbols and terms,
- rhythmic and melodic awareness,
- improvisation and composition,
- sight-reading, and
- performance.

4. ACCEPTANCE INTO THE PROGRAM

All students have the opportunity to participate in the instrumental music program. We do not carry out suitability tests or listening tests. However, feedback will be sought by the instrumental music staff on students.

Where possible we will endeavour to offer students a position on their first choice instrument, however this may not always be possible. For example the needs of the band are taken into consideration when students apply, to ensure a balanced ensemble can be achieved. A band would not be as balanced if there were 15 flute players and just one trombone player, and the music they could explore would be severely limited.

Physical features must also be taken into consideration when choosing an instrument.

1. size of hands and arms
2. mouth and teeth structure (potentially including braces)
3. lip shape

4. physical body size/height

Instruments being offered

Students can nominate to learn any of the following instruments:

- Flute
- Clarinet
- Alto Sax
- Tenor Sax
- Trumpet
- French Horn
- Trombone
- Baritone/Euphonium
- Tuba
- Percussion (includes both tuned percussion and drum kit).

5. EXPECTATIONS

It is expected that all students who participate in the music program will:

1. commit to the program – learning an instrument takes time. Sometimes it will be fun and sometimes it will just be hard work. Generally it is hard work in the beginning for about a year (depending on the amount a student practises) and the fun grows with the ability of the student.
2. practise regularly – it is expected that students will practice 5 x 30 minutes each day; (begin with 5 days of 10 minutes and work up to this over a period of time).
Practising a quarter of an hour each week day is much more effective than doing a single session for an hour and a half. Students generally stop learning due to lack of home support to find appropriate time for this practice to occur. Practice needs to be seen as an integral part of the student's homework.
3. attend a lesson each week – where a student is unable to attend a lesson the music teacher must be notified in advance (by 9am of the lesson day at the very latest) so that the lesson can be re-scheduled on another day.
4. become an active member of the band;
5. purchase/rent the required items and remember to bring your musical equipment every week when required;
6. take part in performances, concerts, instrumental music excursions;
7. have an attitude that is of a high standard;
8. pay the cost and hire fees associated with being in the program.

6. LESSONS

Students are given individual lessons conducted during school time (including recess and

lunch time) on a rotational timetable each week. Lessons will be 30 minutes in length. Students will be collected from class by the instrumental teacher when it is time for the lesson and returned to class at the end. Students, parents and teachers will have prior knowledge of the time of their lesson so that class teachers can work around this temporary absence of the student. It is expected that students be responsible for catching up on class work that was missed. Students are encouraged to choose a 'buddy' who can collect any worksheets or information for them and go through any difficult concepts discussed in class before approaching the class teacher.

Students will be able to store their instruments in one of the lockable store rooms in the multi-purpose room. They should drop their instrument off at the beginning of the school day and remember to collect them at the end. Students may need to bring their instruments to school twice a week, on the day of their lesson and for band rehearsals.

Parents are encouraged (but not expected) to attend one or two lessons per term, to help them understand how they can support their child in the process of learning an instrument. Prior arrangements should be made with the music teacher. It is not encouraged for parents to attend every lesson, as students' behaviour and response to teachers sometimes change with parents being present, especially in one on one situations.

All students will be expected to bring an exercise book, pencil and eraser to each lesson, and practice notes will be entered in the exercise book. It is useful for parents to check each week what is written in the book so that they know what students should be practising.

Parents will have the ability to communicate directly with instrumental music staff through their child's exercise book, as well as by email and phone. Interviews may be organised with instrumental teachers, as required.

How will shared lessons work?

Shared lessons will only be offered students where there is sufficient interest to enable matching of students. It requires having pairs of students on the same instrument from the same year level and preferably in the same class. Also shared lessons for beginner students are often difficult as beginners often progress at highly variable rates in different aspects of their playing. The students will still be taken from their class for just 30 minutes per week. However unless both students miss a lesson there will be no opportunity for catch-up lessons. Also in general the progress of students in shared lessons can be expected to be somewhat slower than for students receiving individual lessons.

What happens if a student cannot make a lesson?

Where a student is going to be absent for a lesson, it is the **parent's** responsibility to contact the **instrumental teacher by 9am** on the day of the lesson at the latest (SMS is sufficient). If such notice has been given, the instrumental teachers will endeavour to make up the missed lesson. Such catch-ups could take the form of several slightly longer lessons or utilising the last week of term, as only 9 lessons are scheduled per 10 week term.

What happens if the instrumental teacher is absent?

As with all teachers, instrumental music teachers might be sick or not able to teach for

various reasons at some point. If this is the case, teachers notify the school and lessons are cancelled. These lessons will be made up by one of the following options:

1. Adding an extra lesson to the term (Please note that there are only 9 lessons in a 10 week term, for example, with one week in each term dedicated to catch up lessons).
2. Giving longer lessons in 10 to 15 minute brackets depending on the level of your child's ability to concentrate.
3. Lessons could be given on a different day in the week
4. Lesson could be transferred to the next term.
5. In very rare circumstances where the above are not applicable, the lesson fee will be refunded.

7. BAND

All students are expected to participate in the band once they have reached a suitable standard. Continuing students from last year will play in the concert band which rehearses on Wednesday mornings from 8:00 – 8:55am in the Performing Arts room. For students who are starting to learn an instrument in 2015, we will offer a Novice Band starting in Term 2, *if there is sufficient numbers* to support a second band. Otherwise new students will be able to join the concert band once they have reached an appropriate standard. Students are expected to arrive early to assist in the setting up and to help with packing up at the end. Students need to be ready to play in their positions by 8:00am. They should arrive in time to set up their own instrument and organise their music. Tardiness will be monitored because it severely disrupts rehearsals when students are late.

As for instrumental music lessons, the band will only rehearse 9 weeks in a 10 week term.

Students will be allocated parts in the band according to their standard and the needs of the band. This may sometimes mean that a stronger player will be allocated a “lower” ranked part (eg 2nd Trumpet) in order to help the band as a whole to provide a more balanced sound. Also the school has purchased some larger instruments for use in the band. This allows some students to get experience with playing different parts in the band; for example for a clarinet player trying Bass Clarinet (which is similar to play as a regular clarinet but helps to give the band a more solid bass).



8. PERFORMANCES

The band will be expected to perform regularly throughout the year. Some of these performances include:

- school assemblies (as a band and solo performances)
- official school ceremonies (graduation night etc)
- showcase concerts
- fetes and community events
- carols evening
- local events (e.g. playing at the local kindergarten, aged care facility, shopping centre)

We will also work towards performing in performances such as The Melbourne Bands Festival and concerts organised by the Eastern Metropolitan Region once the band has reached a sufficient standard. The band will perform in their school uniform for all performances in 2015.

It is extremely important for parents to arrange for their child to be present on such occasions. Being part of a band is being a member of a **team** and without all present it affects the ensemble. If an absence cannot be avoided, it is necessary for parents to contact staff as soon as possible to ensure arrangements can be made for the student's part.

Students will also be encouraged to regularly perform individually at school assemblies and other activities such as carols evening. This is an important aspect of playing and develops the students' confidence.

9. DEVELOPING THE WHOLE STUDENT THROUGH MUSIC

Music and student well-being

Music has a power of forming the character, and should therefore be introduced to the education of the young. *Aristotle*

Playing music has a number of benefits to students, both while they are studying at school and throughout their later life. Music serves as a means of expressing emotions. This can

help students to process a range of emotions that they are feeling, whether they are sad or happy.

Playing music in a band or ensemble is also a very social activity. It requires listening closely to others to ensure that the sound one is making blends with the others. Bands also help students to appreciate the benefit of diversity, with each student bringing the skills on their own instrument and playing different parts.

Learning to play music also provides an



environment in which students can strive to achieve both individually and as a group without a strong element of competition. Unlike playing in a sports team, excelling in a band is about creating greater enjoyment for the audience rather than “beating” another team. While competition can be useful as a motivator for some students, for others development is enhanced by the knowledge that they do not have to compete constantly.

Music and the brain

There are numerous studies that have shown that music has a profound impact on our brain and its development. Playing music involves a large number of areas of the brain to process the auditory signals, rhythms, melody, fine-motor skills, harmonies, emotions and analysis of larger musical structures. This means that many areas of the brain are stimulated and exercised as students learn music. In the longer term this changes the brain, with parts of the brains of musicians typically being enlarged compared to those of non-musicians. Thus music can be seen as a very effective form of “brain training” or exercise for the brain “muscles”.

Music involves areas used by language involving a similar sequential structure; yet music is different, with people able to retain musical ability even if they have lost their language skills and vice versa. There are also strong links to mathematical thinking, with music involving very abstract structure, and to emotional intelligence.

For more information see, for example, “Musicophilia: Tales of music and the brain” by O. Sacks (<http://musicophilia.com/>) or Wikipedia (http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_and_the_brain).

Music for enrichment and remedial teaching

The approach taken to instrumental music learning is that it is developing the whole student, rather than just learning an instrument as an isolated activity. Learning an instrument can serve as a remedial activity for students that are struggling with some other aspects of their learning. For example, reading skills can be improved by students getting introduced to note reading, having to follow a line, being forced by the music to read at a consistent speed etc. Subdividing notes in rhythms can help with understanding fractions. Working on fingering scales can improve fine motor skills.

At the other end of the scale, instrumental music is also a great form of enrichment for advanced students. Individual lessons allow them to move through material at their own rate. Students can challenge themselves to learn more complex pieces, develop their abstract thinking skills by analysing musical structure, or their creative side in how they play and interpret the music.

Studies¹ have shown that the benefits of music to improve academic performance have a long-term impact, with students that learn an instrument having statistically significant higher test scores in academic subjects.

1 See for example “The Impact Of A Formal Public School Instrumental Music Instruction Program On An Eighth Grade Middle School Student's Reading And Mathematics Achievement” by G.D. Babo *Doctoral Dissertation* (2001), Available from <http://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations/1581> or “The Effect of Instrumental Music Participation and Socioeconomic Status on Ohio Fourth-, Sixth-, and Ninth-Grade Proficiency Test Performance” by K. R. Fitzpatrick *J. of Research in Music Ed.* Vol 54, No 1 pp 73-84 (2006)

10. COST

The cost of instrumental lessons has been tied to the minimum rate set by the Victorian Music Teachers Association. In 2015 the School's rate is \$68/\$90 per hour for individual/group lessons. In addition there is a band fee of \$90 per term. The band fee has been set to take into consideration the cost of music (each concert band score can cost up to \$125), resources and the cost of the conductor (teacher).

The cost of participating in the program in 2015 will be as follows. Prices are quoted separately for Term One, which is significantly shorter than the other terms.

Term 1: 7 lessons and band rehearsals

Individual Lessons + Band	\$328.00
Individual Lessons Only	\$238.00
Group Lessons + Band	\$247.50
Group Lessons only	\$157.50

Terms 2 & 4/Term 3: 10/9 lessons and band rehearsals

Individual Lessons + Band	\$430/\$396.00
Individual Lessons Only	\$340.00/\$306.00
Group Lessons + Band	\$315/\$292.50

As mentioned above, group lessons are only available as an option where matching students can be found. Students are expected to attend band while participating in the instrumental program.

The cost of hiring an instrument will be \$55 per term or \$150 for a full school year.

The cost will be invoiced by the school and must be paid at the beginning of each term at the office.

Parents will also be expected to fund the extra cost of a music stand for home practice, music books, instrument reeds and oils, and other incidentals required by students to gain the most out of their lessons.

11. OBTAINING AN INSTRUMENT

Students can obtain instruments in the following ways.

- **Through family/friends** – please ensure that the instrument is in suitable working order, and is available for the student to take to school and to practise on at home.
- **Purchasing new** – the school will not sell instruments, but will provide a guide to which brands of instruments are suitable.
- **Purchasing second-hand** – this is usually the cheapest option however it can be difficult to find a suitable instrument. Please see below for some helpful hints.
- **Hiring** – we have been fortunate to secure a number of instruments that are available for hire. However the school does not have sufficient funds to purchase instruments for *all* students to hire. Hence, parents are advised to approach music shops for this option if the school is unable to provide an instrument for hire.

The choice made from the above options generally depends on which is available and how certain the parents are that their child is going to continue with the instrument for a number of years.

Instrument hire

The school has bought a small number of its own instruments which are available for hire as a service to parents. This includes in particular a range of larger brass instruments including *French horns, trombones, baritones* and *tuba*. There are also a limited number of other instruments including *clarinets, flutes, saxophones* and *trumpets* available. Unfortunately there are *no drum kits for hire*.

The instruments will be able to be hired by students, depending on availability, at a cost of \$55 per term or \$150 when paying for all four terms at the start of the year. It is expected that parents replace the instrument if it is lost or badly damaged. The hire cost includes a general service each year to cover normal wear of the instrument (not repair to damages) so that the school can maintain instruments in perfect working order.

Students are given school instruments if requested on a first come, first placed basis for 12 months only. After this time, it is beneficial (and expected) that students own their instruments.

For some of the larger instruments such as the tuba, students will not be expected to purchase such an expensive instrument themselves and will be able to hire the instrument for the duration of their stay at Highvale Primary School. Note that many high schools also have these large instruments available for students to hire so that they will be able to continue learning right through their school education without needing to buy an instrument.



Guidelines for purchasing a new instrument

When buying a new instrument, brands are not just about image, but there are also some significant quality differences. Cheap brand-new instruments sold on eBay out of China generally break easily and have a poor sound, so should be avoided.

The recommended brands for student model instruments are:

- Flute - Yamaha, Pearl, Nuvo, (avoid Jupiter)
- Clarinet - Yamaha, Buffet, Vito
- Sax - Yamaha, Vito
- Trumpet - Yamaha, Bach, King
- Trombone - Yamaha, Conn, King, PBone

Please feel free to discuss the purchase of an instrument with your music teacher before making the final decision.

Check-list when buying 2nd hand instruments

- Do your research regarding different models and new prices – some second hand instruments are being offered at almost the same price as new
- Ask when the instrument was last serviced
- Check for cracks (woodwind) or dents (brass)
- Ensure that pads close tightly and seal without leaking (woodwind instruments)
- Check if valves move easily and without generating too much noise for valved instruments like trumpets.
- Check that the slide moves easily for a trombone (and without making noise)
- Ensure that the tuning slide & valve slides move easily on brass instruments
- Check if the instrument comes with a solid case that is still in reasonable condition to protect the instrument. A new case can be bought separately but this can be expensive.
- For many instrument types it is possible to “upgrade” the instrument by buying a high quality mouthpiece. This means that the student can start with a basic instrument, with more money being spent only once they have shown some commitment to learning.

Helpful websites

The following list of websites, while by no means comprehensive, should be enough to get you started

Music Shops

- Music Junction Camberwell: <http://www.musicjunction.com.au/>
- Cranbourne Music (also at Blackburn): <http://www.cranbournemusic.com.au/>
- Allans Billy Hyde: <http://www.allansbillyhyde.com.au/>
- Melbourne Brass and Woodwind: <http://ozwinds.com.au>
- Pat's Music: <http://www.pianoshop.com.au/> (not just pianos)

Concert Bands:

- Monash Concert Band: <http://www.monashconcertband.org.au/>
- Wikipedia: <http://www.monashconcertband.org.au/>

Instrument Repair:

- Most music shops recommend a repair person
- Paul Donnelly Ph: 9579 1205 107 Victor Rd Bentleigh East 3165

12. INSTRUMENT CARE AND MAINTENANCE

How to look after an instrument

All instruments whether they are owned privately or through a company or the school require a certain amount of care and maintenance. Some DO's and DON'Ts for instruments include:

- DO NOT leave the instrument in the sun or a hot car. Particularly for wood instruments this can lead to cracking or damage of the instruments.
- DO clean and pack the instrument back into the case after practising to keep it protected from accidental damage.
- DO NOT attempt to make your own repairs of the instrument. If the instrument appears to be broken, discuss this with the instrumental teacher in the first instance and take it to a professional for repairs if required.
- DO clean with a soft cloth, NEVER use harsh or abrasive cleaning materials. Eg using mineral turpentine or eucalyptus oil on some mouthpieces not only discolours but can damage the lacquer.
- DO NOT try any home maintenance on instruments eg using super glue to secure pads on woodwind instruments.
- DO apply valve oil regularly for brass instruments to ensure they move freely.
- DO NOT leave instruments lying on a chair where they can fall off.

Malfunction or damage of an instrument

Musical instruments are delicate items that can be easily damaged. When this happens it is important not to attempt to try to make any non-trivial repairs yourself. In the first instance, if the instrument of your child appears to be broken or malfunctioning it is best to let the instrumental music teacher inspect it. In some cases, what appears to be a malfunction can simply be due to incorrect use of the instrument or be otherwise easily fixed. However for the repair of any serious damage, the assistance of a professional instrument repairer will usually be required.

13. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BEGINNER MUSICIAN

In addition to their instruments, students will also need some other equipment to help them learn their instrument. For all students this includes a music stand and a display book for keeping photocopied music (eg copies of band music parts to practise at home). Music stands come in a variety of styles and prices. The only crucial requirement for the beginner student is that the stand is sufficiently adjustable that the student can easily read the music while maintaining a good posture.

All students also need a music book from which to learn. At Highvale PS in 2015 the series “Essential Elements 2000 Book 1” will be used for all band instruments.

In addition the following equipment is required depending on the instrument:

- Flute -** Cleaning cloth
- Clarinet -** Cleaning pull-through cloth, cork grease and at least 4 size 2 reeds. The number of reeds “consumed” during a year will vary by student but it is essential to have a few spare reeds just in case. A neck strap is strongly recommended, particularly for smaller students. A mouthpiece patch maybe used to cushion the top teeth. Optionally a thumb-rest can help with making the instrument easier to hold.
- Saxophone -** Pull-through cleaning cloth, cork grease, at least 4 size 2 reeds and a neck strap. The neck strap helps students to hold what is a fairly heavy instrument more comfortably and easily. A harness, instead of the neck strap, is compulsory for smaller students to ensure there are no ergonomic issues. A mouthpiece patch may be used to cushion the top teeth.
- Brass -** For all valved instruments including **trumpets, French horns, baritones** and **tubas**, the requirements are a bottle of valve oil and cleaning cloth.
- Trombone -** Slide oil and pump spray bottle (filled with water) for lubricating the slide, cleaning cloth
- All Players -** Essential Elements 2000 book, music stand, display book, exercise book, pencil & eraser.

Optional extras include a bag for the music, and, for the reed instruments, a small reed case is useful to protect the reeds from accidental damage.

14. ASSESSMENT AND REPORTS

All students will be given a report twice a year within their school report at the end of term 2 and 4. Students are assessed on an individual basis, and are not compared to other students but against their own improvement and effort.

AMEB Examination

Students are able to participate in external examinations, but only if the following requirements are met.

1. All books and fees are paid.
2. The student understands the commitment to the practice for the examination, and has demonstrated this commitment regularly.
3. The student has approval from their instrumental music teacher, and is at the appropriate level and standard for the examination.
4. The teacher reserves the right to pull the child out of the examination at the parent’s expense if the requirements for the examination are not met due to lack of practice and commitment.

While AMEB exams are quite popular in Australia, they are not necessary for a child to

learn an instrument well. Note that the AMEB (Australian Music Examination Board) is an independent body that charges a significant fee for its services and is very rigid about the scheduling of examination times.

15. WHAT IF MY CHILD WANTS TO STOP LEARNING

It is expected that all students will commit to learning their instrument for at least 12 – 24 months. It is hard work to learn the technical requirements necessary to play an instrument



effectively. It is only with regular practice and commitment that students become proficient and it is then that students find learning an instrument fun. Most music teachers have found that students stop learning not because they don't like it but more because their parents are not willing to commit to developing a regular practice routine in family life. Children tend to avoid anything that looks like hard work without parents directing their time.

If a child wishes to stop, they may do so after a meeting with the instrumental teachers is organised. Students may only finish lessons at the end of the term and not midterm. If a student wishes to discontinue with music lessons, it is important to identify and address any underlying problems with the child's learning and progress. The most common reasons why children stop learning are:

1. I don't have time to practise – This is the responsibility of parents to organise regular practice times.
2. It's not fun anymore. – Usually this is tied to no practice. Nothing is fun when you don't come prepared to lessons and can't play the pieces so get given the same work week after week creating a negative cycle.
3. It's too hard – Talk to your children about school values. Commitment and perseverance are two very good values to encourage in your children.

Like anything that is good for you, it is not necessarily easy or fun all the time. Eating lollies and chocolate is fun but not necessarily good for you, and you wouldn't let your children eat them all the time just because it is fun. Children often want to quit when it becomes too hard or not fun. Most children will want to quit at some point. As parents, it is important to ride out the storm. By not allowing children to quit, you are teaching dedication, commitment, courage and resilience.

Most children find learning music up to around AMEB level 4 or 5 an activity requiring an extrinsic reward. That is, they require external rewards for learning. Once children can play at a proficient level, learning becomes intrinsic. This is, they begin to learn for the sake of the enjoyment and satisfaction that comes with improving skill. It is at this level of learning when children can make a holistic value judgement as to whether learning music is

something which they would like to continue to do. It is also at this point a child has had enough musical experiences to have a lasting appreciation of music-making in their lives.

16. PRACTICE

Some helpful hints

Parents do not need any musical training to make a HUGE difference to their child's progress in music. Here are some practical steps to help develop good practice habits. Through studies on student practice such as those conducted by Melbourne Universities Prof. Gary McPherson, it has been found that parents make up for around 70% of their child's success in music. Teachers account for only around 30%.

1. Set practice times. If you do not schedule practice into each day, it will not happen. Plan a time in each day that belongs to practising alone, and make sure it is never exchanged for something else (like homework or a special TV show). Make sure the time isn't when your child is tired or going to be preoccupied with other things. Practising at 10pm the night before a lesson when your child is stressed and tired does not create a positive learning experience.
2. Help your child organise their practice time. Most young students need help with organisation simply because the part of their brain needed to do this task is not yet developed. Some students struggle to organise how to learn a new piece by themselves without guidance, just as they need guidance to organise their homework tasks. Teach your child to set mini goals for each practice session, and praise them when they achieve these goals.
3. Check your child's progress mid-week or even more often if necessary. The whole practice process is similar to the regular inspections that building sites need to ensure that the job is running to schedule. Younger children may need a parent to sit with them for the whole practice session.
4. Know when not to help. As students become more autonomous with their practice, parental involvement should move gently from helping regularly to simply being available should the student need it.
5. Your child should be able to explain exactly what their tasks are to complete each week. Their school diary is a great way of checking all tasks to be completed within the week. It is also great to note down the amount of practice done to track the time spent practising. Any concerns or questions can also be communicated to your teacher through the diary as well.
6. Encouragement.
 - Tuition is only for thirty minutes a week. For the rest of the week, it is up to the parents to provide support, or else the student works alone. And most students should not work alone, any more than they should play with power tools by themselves.
 - Be interested. Most children are delighted to be the centre of their parents'

attention, and will tend to view favourably any activity that thrusts them into the limelight.

- When you catch your child doing something right, praise them for it, and the behaviour is more likely to be repeated in the future.
- Steer. Sometimes three pieces, five scales and some music theory homework can feel overwhelming and a little help from parents to help set mini goals in each practice session can go a long way.
- Enthuse! Children love to hear that their parents are proud of their achievement no matter how large or small. Such comments of praise don't have to be given directly to the student. They just need to be said within earshot.
- Try buying some CD's, sheet music of their favourite music, or even download the music they are playing off the web. Listening to music together is a great way to encourage children to explore different styles and develop a sense of what type of music they enjoy. Try looking for the piece your child is learning on YouTube and watch it together.

How much practice should my child do?

This is easy to self-assess. Enough practice is generally the time it takes to accomplish your weekly goals. Like homework, it fluctuates depending on exams, performances and also varies from child to child. The amount of work given is for the 'average' child to learn within 5 practice sessions a week, with sessions ranging from 20 - 30 minutes each.

It is essential to not allow your children to find 'better' things to do when it is time to practise. Schedule in practice time so that it is not 'forgotten' or overlooked.

Remember not to practice in marathons. You would not brush your teeth only on Sundays for one hour to make up the time you did not brush during the week. This would have obvious dire consequences to the health of your teeth. Likewise, if you save all your practice for one long marathon, you are unlikely to be successful, but instead be left frustrated and unwilling to learn. Learning music is about “muscle memory” and rewiring the brain. This requires regular repetition.

How to practice 3 hours a day and achieve nothing²

- Always practice the piece from start to finish, never stopping for anything, especially not mistakes or hard bits.
- Practice as fast as you can. Try breaking your record each time. Music is all about personal bests.
- Never look at the music, check the notes or count the rhythms. You are clever, you can guess them!
- Choose your favourite dynamic level (volume) and play it all the way through the piece. To make sure people are listening, choose *ff* (fortissimo – very loud)

² Adapted from “Not Until You've Done Your Practice!” (The classic survival guide for kids who are learning a musical instrument, but hate practising) by Philip Johnston and David Sutton

- Don't worry about rests or staccatos. They are small details and don't make much difference anyhow.
- Try practising in front of the TV. Multi-tasking is a skill that should be learnt as soon as possible.
- Practice 200 different pieces in the same week. Be careful not to spend more than 35 seconds on each one. Variety is the spice of life!
- Ignore the hard bits. Play the easy bits over and over. After all, it's important to sound good all the time while you are practising.
- Only practice when you are very sleepy or when other people are trying to sleep. Then play as loud as you can to keep yourself focused.
- Practise once a week for three hours the night before your lesson. Your teacher will never guess!

17. PARENT/STUDENT/TEACHER CONTRACT

The following summarises the expectations and responsibilities of the parents, student and teacher.

STUDENT

1. Bring appropriate books and equipment to ***EVERY LESSON.***
2. Practise the requirements set out by the teacher each week to an appropriate standard. This means more than just one practice a week. Ideally each student should practise for five thirty-minute sessions per week, as teachers try to set work that will take this amount of time to perfect. Practice should be done over several practice sessions, rather than in only one session.
3. Speak up if something is not understood. We love answering questions!
4. Come to lessons prepared and ready to play with a definite improvement from the previous week.
5. Should have a willingness to try new things.
6. Be open to different opinions and appreciate the different perspectives your teacher can offer you.
7. It is the student's responsibility to make music fun by putting in the required effort needed to learn.

PARENTS

1. Pay fees on time.
2. Support your child in finding regular practice times at home.
3. Support your child in making sure they have appropriate books and resources available to them.
4. Encourage students to play for peers and family.
5. Support teacher in their capacity as a teacher.

TEACHER

1. Share my musical experience to the best of my abilities.
2. Try to inspire and encourage the student to enjoy their music-making.
3. Encourage the student to broaden their musical outlook by providing a range of pieces and technical exercises to play.
4. Teach each concept until it is understood by using various pieces, teaching aids, techniques.