



STRETTON  
STATE COLLEGE  
*Instrumental Music*

# Parent Handbook



## Table of Contents

1. Table of Contents
2. Welcome
3. Overview, Objectives and Staff Allocation
4. Selection of Students, Instrument Allocation and Lessons
5. Rehearsals and Current Ensembles
6. Instrument Loans, Attendance, Practice, Rewards and Communication
7. Music Fund, Commitment and Uniform
8. Performances and Music Calendar
9. Individual Instrument Requirements – Strings and Woodwind
12. Individual Instrument Requirements – Brass
13. Individual Instrument Requirements – Percussion
14. Where to Purchase Your Child’s Instrument
15. Recommended Brands
16. What to Look for in a Second Hand Instrument
17. Why Learn an Instrument?
20. Withdrawal from Program
21. Practice Your Instrument – Thoughts for Students
22. Thoughts for Parents
23. Your Child as a member of the Instrumental Music Program – Thoughts for Parents
25. How Parents can Encourage Successful Practice
26. Important information regarding commitment to the Learning of a Musical Instrument

## **WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOL'S INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAM**

Dear Students and Parents,

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all of our students and their families who are considering joining our instrumental music program at Stretton State College. Our program is conducted by a very professional and musically talented team of music teachers who have many years' experience both as teachers in schools and as professional musicians.

Your commitment to participation in this program is highly valued in our school with the performances often placing our school at the very forefront of community involvement supporting groups from elderly citizens to promoting state education. Apart from your regular commitment to instructional lessons once per week and regular band or ensemble rehearsals, you will be often required to perform for a variety of audiences to promote goodwill and enjoyment for love of The Arts.

The student's commitment to this valuable program is a whole family effort with parents often called on to support the home practice sessions and transport performers to and from performance venues. I would like to thank parents for encouraging their child to participate in this learning extension program and trust you will enjoy watching your child grow musically over the future years. I am always extremely proud when our students perform both at community events and in instrumental music competitions.

Together we look forward to beginning this journey of learning with you and your child.

Regards,



Mrs Jan Maresca  
Executive College Principal

## **OVERVIEW**

Education Queensland provides an Instrumental Music Program in our school. This program provides free tuition during school hours in Woodwind, Brass and Percussion instruments. Ensemble experience is provided through participation in a range of large and small ensembles outside of school hours or during lunch time. Attendance at these groups is compulsory and an integral part of the Instrumental Music Program. Tuition classes take place on a small group basis with 3 to 7 students of similar ability level learning together.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The aims of this program are:

- to provide opportunities for motivated musical students to develop instrumental music skills via weekly group lessons and daily personal practice
- to provide opportunities for students to experience playing music in large and small groups (e.g. concert bands, string ensembles, jazz ensembles, percussion ensembles, small ensembles, etc.)
- to provide an enriching dimension to the school's classroom music program.

## **STAFF ALLOCATION**

Instrumental music teachers are specialist teachers who are allocated to our school based on the number of students interested in participating in the instrumental music program. Please check with your child's instrumental music teacher the times he/she is present in the school for tuition and available times for personal interviews if required.

Unfortunately due to funding constraints, not all students who might wish to participate in this program can be accommodated. Based on the size of the school, Education Queensland allocates instrumental teachers according to a staffing formula. Currently our staffing is:

<b>Jan Maresca</b>	Executive Principal
<b>Brad Stewart</b>	A/Principal
<b>Adam Hornagold</b>	A/Deputy
<b>Julie Stewart</b>	Director of Instrumental Music
<b>Victoria Taylor</b>	Instrumental Music Teacher – Brass
<b>Thomas Sweeper</b>	Instrumental Music Teacher – Percussion
<b>Jessica Long</b>	Instrumental Music Teacher – Strings
<b>Sophie Willis (Christensen)</b>	Instrumental Music Teacher – Woodwind

## **SELECTION OF STUDENTS**

Students are selected on criteria of:

- musical aptitude
- physical appropriateness
- academic strength
- emotional and social development.

Due to the high demand on the limited resources available to the school, the number of children who can participate in the instrumental music program is limited. It is necessary therefore, to operate a selection process for admission to the program. This in turn, ensures balance to the various groups.

Selection of new instrumental music program participants occurs during term 3 and 4 and is for students in year 3. To maintain consistent learning progression, new student groups are not started at other times during the year or at other year levels except in particular circumstances. Students enter the program at year 4 for strings, woodwind, brass and percussion in 2019.

## **INSTRUMENT ALLOCATION**

In the instrumental program, children audition to be included in the program, NOT for a particular instrument. This ensures all ensembles are balanced for sound.

Most musical people can play more than one instrument. In choosing a “starting instrument” for a particular child, the selection process will take into account the following factors (not in order):

- the student’s preferences and enthusiasm
- the student’s physical aptitudes
- the student’s music test results and sense of discipline
- the school’s needs in terms of ensemble balance
- the parent’s ability to assist in the supervision of home practice
- the availability of a school instrument for loan
- the student’s personality traits.

The Instrumental Music Teacher selects students for the instrument they are most suited to, to ensure they succeed on their instrument.

## **LESSONS**

Once selected for the program, students are expected to participate with full commitment of two years until the conclusion of year 5. Students will then make another commitment until the end of year 7. Participation during years 8 to 12 is a one year commitment made every 12 months. A child who is selected for the instrumental music program will receive one half hour lesson per week on their instrument. The lessons are conducted in small groups containing children of similar standard. The lesson is timetabled on a rotating basis during the school term to limit interruption to the child’s learning of particular subjects in class. Children and class teachers are provided with the relevant instrumental music timetables at the commencement of each term by the instrumental music teachers.

## Stretton State College: INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAM

---

Children in the lesson group are responsible for excusing themselves from their normal classrooms 5 minutes prior to their lesson to avoid arriving late for their lessons at the designated practice venue. They are also responsible for making up the class work missed during their instrumental music lesson. Children involved in instrumental music lessons must participate in one of the musical ensembles. In addition to this, a child may be involved in other groups according to their ability, interest and the policy of the school.

The initial commitment made by the child is for years 4 to 5 and changes to this can only be made by the instrumental music staff or by parents after consultation with the Director of Instrumental Music or College Deputy Principals. All changes require a written request from parents.

### **REHEARSALS**

Parents and students are notified of rehearsal times at the beginning of the school year by the instrumental music teacher. Ensembles rehearse on both campuses either before or after school. Each ensemble will have one rehearsal every week. Additional rehearsals may be required due to performance commitments throughout the school year. Before school rehearsals are held from 7.40am-8.35am. After school rehearsals are held from 3.00pm-4.30pm for senior ensembles. Parents of children who are already involved in regular early morning training programs (e.g. athletics, swimming, tennis, etc.) need to consider carefully whether a commitment to a demanding music program is recommended.

### **CURRENT ENSEMBLES**

Year 4	Gowan Beginner String Orchestra
Year 5	Gowan Junior String Orchestra
Year 6	Gowan Senior String Orchestra
Year 7-12	Middle School String Ensemble
Year 7-12	Senior String Ensemble
Year 4	Junior Concert Band
Year 5	Year 5 Concert Band
Year 6	Year 6 Concert Band
Year 5-6	Junior Jazz Ensemble
Year 5-12	Wind Ensemble (selected students)
Year 7-12	Concert Band (selected students)
Year 7-12	Symphonic Band (selected students)
Year 5-12	Jazz Ensemble
Year 7-12	Stage Band (selected students and instrumentation)
Year 7-12	Big Band (selected students and instrumentation)
Year 7-12	Junior Percussion Ensemble (selected percussion students)
Year 7-12	Senior Percussion Ensemble (selected percussion students)
Year 7-12	DrumLine

All ensembles rehearse separately once per week. Please note all Stage Band, Big Band, Percussion and Brass Ensemble members must be a member of a College Concert Band.

## **INSTRUMENT LOANS**

In year 4, the following instruments will be available to hire for 12 months for selected beginning students: cello, flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet and trombone. After this period, it is expected that students purchase their own instrument for the following year. Larger, more expensive instruments including bass clarinet, tenor saxophone, french horn, euphonium and tuba are available for loan each year. Due to the lower cost of percussion, no percussion equipment is available for loan. Percussion students are expected to purchase the required equipment for year 4. Percussion students will have access to the band percussion instruments during rehearsals.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Students must attend all lessons and rehearsals. Punctuality is vital and lateness will be noted. Please be aware that lessons are provided free of charge. If your child is absent from school on a rehearsal or lesson day, a note explaining the absence is required by the instrumental teacher.

## **PRACTICE**

Students will be required to prepare for the next lesson by practising the set work. They will also be expected to prepare their music for ensembles. It is recommended the practice be regular, concentrated and in short intervals. More can be achieved in twenty minutes each day than sixty minutes once per week. Practice should gradually lengthen in duration over time and be supported and encouraged by parents. Year 4 and 5 students are expected to practice 15-20 minutes x 5 days per week, Year 6-12 students are expected to practice 30-45 minutes x 5 days per week (see pages 18 - 21).

## **REWARDS AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR EFFORT**

Stickers and stamps are given to the students for good weekly practice and improvement.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### ***Progress Sheet***

Regular communication will take place via the Progress Sheet to be brought to each lesson and signed weekly by parents and Instrumental Music Teacher. This sheet is given to students at the beginning of each term by the teacher.

### ***Reports***

Students and parents will receive a report twice per year, at the end of each semester on their *One School Reports*. Parents will also be notified should a student not be performing to an acceptable standard or if there is a lack of practice, irregular attendance, poor punctuality or attitude.

If the identified problem is not rectified in a short period of time, the student may be excluded from the program. Notice of exclusion will be issued to the parents. Parents are invited to be involved by communicating with the instrumental music staff regarding the progress of their child. Interviews can be arranged by telephoning the school's office for an appointment.

## **MUSIC FUND**

It is expected that those participating in the instrumental program contribute to our Music Fund which is used for servicing and progressively upgrading school instruments, providing music and other equipment.

Music Levy (all students)	\$ 80.00
Instrument Hire Levy (only if hiring school instrument)	\$130.00
Percussion Levy (all percussionists)	\$40.00
Stretton Music Folder (all students)	\$12.00

These levies are required to be paid at the commencement of the school year through the school office. Notices will be provided to each student outlining the amounts owing and the due date for payment. For budgeting purposes, no refund will be given if a student withdraws from the program during a school year.

## **STUDENT AND PARENT COMMITMENTS**

This is a skilled based program. To achieve a satisfactory level at any skill, a great deal of effort is required. The student must:

- practice regularly
- participate in relevant ensembles and performances as required
- attend lessons and rehearsals as required
- take care of the instrument.

To support the student's efforts, the parents must be prepared to:

- supervise regular practice
- ensure regular attendance at lessons and rehearsals
- oversee the care of the instrument
- regularly replace items as necessary e.g. reeds, cork grease, valve oil, rosin, strings, sheet music, tutor books.

## **MUSIC PERFORMANCE UNIFORM**

The music performance uniform is compulsory for all ensemble performances and can be purchased through the school uniform shop.

### **Girls**

- Music performance shirt
- Girls Stretton music slacks
- SSC black socks
- Formal black shoes
- Stretton music maroon scrunchie
- Stretton music maroon clips (optional)

\*\* Long hair must be tied neatly up with Stretton music scrunchie

### **Boys**

- Music performance shirt
- Boys Stretton music trousers
- SSC black socks
- Formal black shoes

## **PERFORMANCES**

The major focus of the music program will be on developing interest and encouraging achievement. This will be accomplished through public performances and competitions. Opportunities will be provided for performances both within the school and at external community venues. The school's staff will identify suitable competitions for the various groups to enter. Attendance at all performances is mandatory for all ensemble members and families are encouraged to support the student at each of these events.

### **APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIMELINE**

Students and parents will receive a Yearly Planner of concerts in term one and will be notified by letter of all performances. Below is a brief summary of some of the performances throughout a typical year.

Month	Gowan Ensembles	Illaweenia Ensembles
February Week 2	Receive loaned instruments. One hour lesson	Receive loaned instruments.
Week 3	Lessons commence on rotating timetable	Lessons commence on rotating timetable
February	Workshop Day	School Leaders Ceremony
April		Anzac Day Ceremony
May		Instrumental Fanfare (every 2 <sup>nd</sup> year)
June	One School Reports Gala Concert	One School Reports Gala Concert
July		Tour (every 2 <sup>nd</sup> year)
August		Music Fest Competition
September	Symphony of Stars (awards night)	Symphony of Stars (awards night)
October	Music Fest Competition	College Awards Night
November		
December	One School Reports. Instruments on loan returned.	One School Reports. Instruments on loan returned.

\* Each ensemble will perform on assembly during the year as required

## **INSTRUMENTAL STUDENT REQUIREMENTS**

### **STRINGS**

#### **Violin and Viola**

- Purchase of a three-quarter violin/viola recommended. Please check with music store staff before purchasing. Check the instrument comes with a case, bow and rosin.
- Essential Elements Book 1 (Violin or Viola)
- Rosin (if not already included with violin) – Hidersine or Otto brand recommended
- Full set of spare strings. Please ensure they correlate with the size of violin.
- Pencil
- Exercise book for notes
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)
- Metronome and tuner app for iPad
- School music folder (available from the school office for \$12)
- A bag to store items in

#### **Cello**

- Essential Elements Book 1 (Cello)
- Rosin – Hidersine or Otto brand recommended
- please purchase an “A” string and if possible a “D” string. These strings are more expensive than violin strings and not as likely to snap.
- Rock Stop (this is used to keep the instrument secure so that it can be played as it rests on the floor).
- Pencil
- Exercise book for notes
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)
- Metronome and tuner app for iPad
- School music folder (available from the school office for \$12)
- A bag to store items in

### **WOODWIND**

#### **Flute**

- Essential Elements Book 1 (Flute)
- Silver polishing cloth
- Gauze cloth (cleaning inside of instrument)
- Cleaning rod
- Pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)
- Metronome and tuner app for iPad
- School music folder (available from the school office for \$12)

**Clarinet**

- Essential Elements Book 1 (Bb Clarinet)
- 4 x size 2 Rico Royal Clarinet reeds
- Reed guard (holds 4 reeds)
- Clarinet cleaning pull through
- Cork grease (preferably in 'chap stick' type container)
- Black rubber thumb rest
- Mouthpiece pad saver
- Pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)
- Metronome and tuner app for iPad
- School music folder (available from the school office for \$12)

**Bass Clarinet**

- Essential Elements Book 1 (Bb Bass Clarinet)
- 4 x size 2 Rico Royal Bass Clarinet reeds
- Reed guard (holds 4 reeds)
- Bass Clarinet body cleaning pull through
- Bass Clarinet neck cleaning pull through
- Cork grease (preferably in 'chap stick' type container)
- Mouthpiece pad saver
- Pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)
- Metronome and tuner app for iPad
- School music folder (available from the school office for \$12)

**Alto Saxophone**

- Essential Elements Book 1 (Eb Alto Saxophone)
- 4 x size 2 Rico Royal Alto Saxophone reeds
- Reed guard (holds 4 reeds)
- Alto Saxophone body cleaning pull through
- Alto Saxophone neck cleaning pull through
- Cork grease (preferably in ‘chap stick’ type container)
- Mouthpiece pad saver
- Padded saxophone neck strap or harness (preferably Neotech brand with swivel hook)
- Pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)
- Metronome and tuner app for iPad
- School music folder (available from the school office for \$12)

**Tenor Saxophone**

- Essential Elements Book 1 (Bb Tenor Saxophone)
- 4 x size 2 Rico Royal Tenor Saxophone reeds
- Reed guard (holds 4 reeds)
- Tenor Saxophone body cleaning pull through
- Tenor Saxophone neck cleaning pull through
- Cork grease (preferably in ‘chap stick’ type container)
- Mouthpiece pad saver
- Padded saxophone neck strap or harness (preferably Neotech brand with swivel hook)
- Pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)
- Metronome and tuner app for iPad
- School music folder (available from the school office for \$12)

<b>BRASS</b>
--------------

**Trumpet**

- Essential Elements Book 1 (Trumpet)
- Valve Oil (Al Cass preferred brand)
- Tuning Slide grease (Superslick preferred brand)
- Mouthpiece brush
- Cleaning snake
- Lacquer Polishing Cloth
- Pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)
- Metronome and tuner app for iPad
- School music folder (available from the school office for \$12)

**French Horn**

- Essential Elements Book 1 (French Horn)
- Rotary Valve Oil (Holton preferred brand)
- Tuning Slide Grease (Superslick preferred brand)
- Mouthpiece brush
- Lacquer Polishing Cloth
- Pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)
- Metronome and tuner app for iPad
- School music folder (available from the school office for \$12)

**Trombone**

- Essential Elements Book 1 (Trombone)
- Trombone slide cream (Conn or Superslick preferred brands)
- Small water spray bottle
- Tuning Slide Grease (Superslick preferred brand)
- Mouthpiece brush
- Vinyl Coated Cleaning Bore Brush (Superslick preferred brand)
- Lacquer Polishing Cloth
- Pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)
- Metronome and tuner app for iPad
- School music folder (available from the school office for \$12)

### **Baritone/Euphonium**

- Essential Elements Book 1 (Baritone B.C.)
- Valve Oil (Al Cass preferred brand)
- Tuning Slide Grease (Superslick preferred brand)
- Mouthpiece brush
- Vinyl Coated Cleaning Bore Brush (Yamaha preferred brand)
- Lacquer Polishing Cloth
- Pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)
- Metronome and tuner app for iPad
- School music folder (available from the school office for \$12)

### **Tuba**

- Essential Elements Book 1 (Tuba)
- Valve Oil (Al Cass preferred brand)
- Tuning Slide Grease (Superslick preferred brand)
- Mouthpiece brush
- Vinyl Coated Cleaning Bore Brush (Yamaha preferred brand)
- Lacquer Polishing Cloth
- Pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)
- Metronome and tuner app for iPad
- School music folder (available from the school office for \$12)

## **PERCUSSION**

### **Percussion**

- Essential Elements Book 1 (Drums and Mallets)
- Drumsticks Size 5A (wooden tip- Vic Firth)
- Tuneable Practice pad
- Practice pad stand
- 32 bar Glockenspiel with carry bag
- Percussion Stick Bag
- Mike Balter Mallet Pack (medium marimba mallets, med hard timpani mallets, medium rubber xylophone mallets, medium glock mallet, hard brass glock mallet)
- Metronome and tuner app for iPad
- Pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)
- School music folder (available from the school office for \$12)

**Where To Purchase Your  
Child's Instrument and Accessories**

**Brass Music Specialists  
(Woodwind/Brass/Percussion)**

90 Appel Road  
Graceville  
Ph. 3245 1311

**Music Express  
(Woodwind/Brass/Percussion)**

2048 Logan Road  
Upper Mt Gravatt  
Ph. 3849 7088

**Simply for Strings**

78 Enoggera Terrace  
Red Hill

**Animato Strings**  
5/789 Kingsford Smith Dr  
Eagle Farm

**Vivace Music  
(Woodwind/Brass/Percussion)**

Shop 8/62 Pinelands Road  
Sunnybank Hills  
Ph. 3344 1880

or

Underwood Store  
36 Compton Rd  
Underwood  
Ph: (07) 3090 4268

**Brisbane Brass & Woodwind  
(Woodwind & Brass)**

7 Enoggera Terrace  
Red Hill  
Ph. 3367 8776

**Mick's Mobile Music  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Hand Woodwind & Brass  
Instruments)**

Ph. 0416 150 213  
[sounddimension@bigpond.com](mailto:sounddimension@bigpond.com)  
[www.micksmobilemusic.com](http://www.micksmobilemusic.com)

N.B. We advise you shop around for the best price for both new and second hand instruments. Many stores have various payment plans on all instruments.

***RECOMMENDED BRANDS***  
***Brass/Woodwind/Percussion***

**BRASS**

**Trumpet**

Yamaha  
King  
Conn  
Bach

**Trombone**

Yamaha  
King  
Conn  
Bach

**WOODWIND**

**Flute**

Yamaha  
Pearl  
Buffet

**Clarinet**

Buffet  
Yamaha

**Alto Saxophone**

Yamaha

While the instrument brands recommended above may, in some cases be a little more expensive initially, all these instruments have stood the test of time; rarely going out of adjustment and wearing well. These brands also tend to have very good resale value. The first brand listed for each instrument is preferable.

NB. If you have access to another brand instrument, please consult your Instrumental Music Teacher **before** you buy.

Care should be taken when considering the purchase of a second hand instrument. It is always best to have your Instrumental Music Teacher or a professional repairer look over the instrument **before** you purchase.

## ***What to look for in a second hand instrument:***

### **Flute**

- Check there are not too many small dints or any large dints
- Check the plating to ensure it is not too worn
- Check the cork/felt bumpers
- Check the pads, under the keys. They should not be split or torn. Press pad lightly with finger nail to see that they are reasonably soft.
- Flute overhauls cost approximately \$200
- Flute service cost approximately \$120

### **Clarinet/ Saxophone**

- Check there are not too many small dints or any large dints
- Check the plating to ensure it is not too worn
- Check the cork/felt bumpers
- Check the pad, under the keys. (Clarinets have felt covered with rice paper, Saxophones leather) They should not be split or torn. Press pad lightly with fingernail to see that they are reasonable soft
- Check that all corks; tenon (clarinet) and goose neck (saxophones), have no 'chunks' out of them
- Check the mouthpiece has no chips out of the tip
- Clarinet overhauls cost approx. \$200
- Saxophone overhauls cost anywhere from \$200-\$400
- Clarinet or Saxophone service cost approximately \$120

### **Trumpet**

- Check for wearing on valves
- Check for dints in valve casing
- Check for large dints on the instrument that may affect tuning
- Check for pitting in the valves
- Check for dents in the shank of the mouthpiece
- Check that all tuning slides are operational
- Check that spring works on water keys
- Trumpet service cost approximately \$120

### **Trombone**

- Check for pitting in the slide
- Check for dints in the outer slide
- Check that the tuning slide is operational
- Check for dints in the bend of the slide
- Check that spring works on water key
- Check for dents in the shank of the mouthpiece
- Trombone service cost approximately \$120

## **WHY Learn an Instrument?**

### **18 Benefits of Playing a Musical Instrument**

© EffectiveMusicTeaching.com

**by Michael Matthews**

#### **1. Increases the capacity of your memory.**

According to an article from The Telegraph online magazine, "New research suggests that regularly playing an instrument changes the shape and power of the brain and may be used in therapy to improve cognitive skills." There is continually more evidence that musicians have organisationally and functionally different brains compared to non-musicians, especially in the

areas of the brain used in processing and playing music. If you learn how to play an instrument, the parts of your brain that control motor skills (ex: using your hands, running, swimming, balancing, etc.), hearing, storing audio information, and memory actually grow and become more active. Other results show that playing an instrument can help your IQ increase by seven points. (Source:

#### **2. Refines your time management and organisational skills.**

Learning how to play an instrument requires you to really learn how to be organised and to manage your time wisely. A good musician knows that the quality of practice time is more valuable than the quantity. In order for a musician to progress quicker, he/she will learn how to organise his/her practice time and plan different challenges to work on, making efficient use of time.

#### **3. Boosts your team skills.**

Team skills are a very important aspect of being successful in life. Playing an instrument requires you to work with others to make music. In band and orchestra settings you must learn how to cooperate with the people around you. Also, in order for a group to make beautiful music, each player and section must learn how to listen to each other and play together.

#### **4. Teaches you perseverance.**

Learning to play an instrument takes time and effort, which really teaches you patience and perseverance. Most people can't play every piece of music perfectly the first time. In fact, the majority of musicians have to work difficult sections of music multiple times in a row before they can play it correctly.

#### **5. Enhances your coordination.**

The art of playing an instrument requires a lot of hand-eye coordination. By reading musical notes on a page, your brain subconsciously must convert that note into specific motor patterns while also adding breathing and rhythm to the mix.

#### **6. Better your mathematical ability.**

Reading music requires counting notes and rhythms and can help your math skills. Also, learning music theory includes many mathematical aspects. Studies have shown that students who play instruments or study the arts are often better in math and achieve higher grades in school than students who don't. (Source: Friedman, B. (1959) An evaluation of the achievement in reading and arithmetic of pupils in elementary schools instrumental classes. Dissertation Abstracts International, 20, pp.s 3662-3663.)

**7. Improves your reading and comprehension skills.**

According to a study published in the journal *Psychology of Music*, "Children exposed to a multi-year program of music tuition involving training in increasingly complex rhythmic, tonal, and practical skills display superior cognitive performance in reading skills compared with their non-musically trained peers." (Source: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/03/090316075843.htm>)

It's not surprising to hear results like that because music involves constant reading and comprehension.

When you see black and white notes on a page, you have to recognize what the note name is and translate it to a finger/slide position. At the same time, you also have to read what rhythms the notes are arranged in and force your tongue to produce the correct pattern.

**8. Increases your responsibility.**

Playing an instrument comes with its responsibilities. Maintenance and care are very important in keeping an instrument in working condition. Each instrument has different procedures to keep in functioning properly, but most instruments need cleaning and some form of oiling/greasing. In addition to maintenance responsibilities, there are other aspects such as remembering music events (like rehearsals and performances) and making time to practice.

**9. Exposes you to cultural history.**

Oftentimes music reflects the environment and times of its creation. Therefore, you learn a variety of music types such as classical traditions, folk music, medieval, and other genres. Music itself is history, and each piece usually has its own background and storyline that can further your appreciation of other cultures.

**10. Sharpens your concentration.**

Playing music by yourself requires you to concentrate on things like pitch, rhythm, tempo, note duration, and quality of sound. Playing music in a group involves even more concentration because you must learn to not only hear yourself, but you must listen to all the other sections and play in harmony with the rest of the group.

**11. Fosters your self-expression and relieves stress.**

It's your instrument, so you can play whatever you want on it! The more advanced you become on an instrument, the greater you'll be able to play what you want and how you want. Music is an art--just like an artist can paint his/her emotions onto a canvas, so can a musician play a piece with emotion. This has proven to relieve stress and can be a great form of therapy. In fact, music therapy has been useful in treating children and teens with autism, depression, and other disorders.

**12. Creates a sense of achievement.**

Overcoming musical challenges that you thought you'd never quite master can give you a great sense of pride about yourself. When you first start learning how to play an instrument, it seems like just holding out a note for a couple beats or hitting a high pitch is an amazing accomplishment. As you practice and become a more experienced musician, making beautiful sounding music pleasing not only to your ear, but others as well is a very rewarding experience.

**13. Promotes your social skills.**

Playing an instrument can be a great way to enhance your social skills. Some of the best people join bands and orchestras, and many times the friends you make here become like family. It's very common for people to gain lifelong friendships through musical activities like these.

**14. Boosts your listening skills.**

Although it's pretty obvious, playing an instrument requires you to listen very carefully to things. You have to learn how to hear when you're playing a wrong note in order to correct yourself. Tuning your instrument means hearing if the pitch you're playing is high (sharp) or low (flat). When playing in an ensemble, you have to listen for the melody and play softer if you're the supporting part (accompaniment). There are too many examples to list every possibility here, but by playing an instrument you are guaranteed to improve your listening skills.

**15. Teaches you discipline.**

As previously mentioned, playing an instrument can be very challenging. One of the qualities that musicians learn is discipline. Practising often and working on the hard parts of music and not just the easy and fun stuff requires discipline. The best musicians in the world are masters of discipline which is why they are so successful on their instrument.

**16. Elevates your performance skills and reduces stage fright.**

One of the goals of practising so much on your instrument is so that you can perform for others. The more you get up in front of people and perform, the more you'll reduce any stage fright. Playing on stage in a band or orchestra helps with stage fright because you're not alone. Also, being prepared and really knowing how to play your part makes it much easier to get up and play for a crowd.

**17. Enhances your respiratory system.**

If you have a good music director/tutor, you should hear them tell you quite often to "use more air!" Air is one of the key components in making wonderful-sounding music. In order to play any piece of music correctly when playing an instrument, you'll need to take huge breaths and learn how to expel the air properly to make the desired sound. Breathing exercises are highly recommended for musicians, and they can really strengthen your respiratory system.

**18. Promotes happiness in your life and those around you.**

Playing a musical instrument can be very fun and exciting. Not only is it fun to play music that you enjoy, but it feels wonderful to hear an audience applaud you for giving a great performance. It can also be very honourable and gratifying to voluntarily play in your local community and see the happiness on people's faces because they enjoy watching you play.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM**

1. *A student that does not show aptitude for learning a musical instrument* will be identified by the end of Term 1. Parents will be notified to discuss the student's difficulties. Students will be withdrawn from the program by the end of Semester 1 if progress is insufficient to warrant further withdrawal from general class lessons.
2. *A student that does show aptitude, but is not making sufficient progress –*
  - Will be identified by the instrumental teacher with a discussion with the student and a note in the homework diary.
  - The Director of Instrumental Music and parents will be notified of lack of progress.
  - Parents asked to attend an interview with instrumental music teacher and Director of Instrumental Music.
  - Additional support will be provided by the instrumental music teacher possibly including extra lessons and practice strategies to assist student progress.
3. *The student wanting to be withdrawn from the program:*
  - Students are committed to a minimum 2 year commitment (year 4 – 5).  
*After this time students may only withdraw from the program at the conclusion of the school year by:*
    - Parents to inform the Instrumental teacher and the Director of Instrumental Music in writing.
    - An interview with the parents and Director of Instrumental Music and/or Deputy Principal
    - If accepted, parents' letter kept on file and loan agreement cancelled (if applicable). Instrument returned to the instrumental music teacher.
4. *Student's Progress Report*
  - The Instrumental Teacher will comment on the Semester 1 Report. If progress has been limited, the parents will be asked to reconsider the continued involvement of their child.
5. Should a student withdraw from the program for any reason, there is no refund of levies due to budgeting.

## **PRACTISING YOUR INSTRUMENT**

### *Thoughts for students*

#### **What You Will Need**

1. Instrument
2. Music
3. Music stand
4. Chair with straight back ( standing is best for wind players)
5. Pencil and eraser
6. Eraser
7. CD player / Computer (sometimes)

#### **Where to Practice**

A quiet enclosed room – turn off the TV and radio. It is best to practice where there are no other people, or unknowingly you will perform rather than practice.

#### **How Often to Practice**

Daily – regular short and focused practice achieves more progress than long, irregular practice.

#### **When to Practice**

Try to avoid late evening practice when body and mind are tired.

#### **How Long to Practice**

Year 4 - 5	20 minutes per day x 5 days a week
Year 6 - 12	30 minutes per day x 5 days a week

Pacing the session is important. Play and rest in regular intervals.

#### **What to Practice**

For some students you can go as far as allocating specific time intervals to certain segments of the sessions – but it should include warm ups, scales, flexibility exercises, technical work from Method Book, specific pieces of music (solo or ensemble) and anything else required. Students are required to use the Home Practice Sheet.

Practice the music stopping to correct mistakes WHERE THEY OCCUR. Zero in on the problems. Don't keep going back to the beginning – you only spend time on what you already know. Don't brush past the problem areas hoping 'to go back later'. You will never get around to it. Start with the problem.

### ***Why Practice***

- To be able to play your instrument better
- To solve problems
- To improve skills on what is already known
- To learn new things
- For enjoyment.

### ***Prepare the Session***

- Set goals to be accomplished
- Develop a warm up routine
- If preparing for exams review technical work, and review scales in the keys of the music to be practiced
- Before playing a new piece of music:
  - check key signature, time signature, tempo and dynamic markings
  - check all other markings, use a dictionary if necessary
  - 'scan' the music then read it again more carefully
  - with your pencil mark unusual fingerings, accidentals, and rhythms that may be troublesome
  - check and go over measures with difficult or unusual rhythms.
- If you have some problems try to:
  - write out the counting
  - count out loud (use a metronome)
  - count and clap the rhythm (use rhythm names)
  - play the rhythm on the one pitch
  - play as written – slowly and accurately at first then increase speed.

### ***Evaluation***

Don't be afraid to ask for help if you don't think you are getting anywhere. The best players in the world do this. Listen carefully to what you are producing and try to recognize problem areas. Be critical of yourself. You are now your own teacher.

### ***Music is a Disciplined Art***

Without self-discipline and persistence there can be no progress or success. There are no short cuts and there is no magic wand. The recipe for success is 90% hard work, 10% talent and a dash of interest.

**YOUR CHILD AS A MEMBER OF THE MUSIC PROGRAM*****Thoughts for parents***

Your child's progress will depend a great deal on what is achieved during daily practice sessions at home. Learning takes place in school, but proficiency is gained at home. You can use the following guidelines to help your child at home.

***Time Schedule (see previous page)***

Establish with your child a weekly practice schedule. This time can be split into two or three shorter sessions. Practising at the same time every day is good, but flexibility should be built into the schedule. Kids need time for fun and relaxation. If the situation merits, re-schedule the practice session to an earlier or later time.

***Practice Goals***

While a sufficient amount of time per day is important, it is also important to have definite goals in mind for each session. These goals might include the improvement of tone on one note or the ability to play a lengthy tune or exercise without a mistake. As your child gains experience on the instrument, a typical practice session might be broken down as follows:

No. of Minutes	Material Practiced	Goal
3 - 5	Long tones; easy drills at slow tempo	Warm up of embouchure, breath and instrument; concentrating on producing good tone.
5	Scales learned	Finger co-ordination.
10	New material	Development of new notes, increased range, new rhythms and articulations, new key signatures.
10	Exercises and tunes already learned	Improvement of finger movement, rhythm and overall fluency and musicianship.

### ***Climate***

Practising should be done in an area that is free from distractions – away from the TV, radio, stereo and family traffic. Good lighting, a straight backed chair, a mirror and a music stand are definite assets. Clarinet and saxophone players should have at least two or three good reeds available.

### ***Encouraging Your Child***

Spend some time listening to your child practising. Offer constructive criticisms, but choose your words carefully e.g. "That sounds better today." Try to play the instrument yourself and let your child teach you what he/she has learned.

### ***Is Your Child Progressing?***

The field of instrumental music is new for your child. He/she is learning to use facial muscles in a different way, and breathing apparatus for a different purpose. There is a new language of intangible symbols (notes) that require the use of mind and body to translate into musical sounds. All this takes time. Even parents who have had band experience have probably forgotten the struggle of producing those first few tones. So the question arises: "Is he/she progressing as well as he/she should be?"

Parents can evaluate practice sessions by asking themselves:

- Am I hearing attempts at new material (such as higher notes, lower notes, new rhythms and new articulations), or am I hearing the same old tune day after day?
- Is the tone quality becoming more characteristic of the instrument, or is the tone harsh, unmusical and unpleasant?
- Does the familiar tune or exercise move along steadily in a fluent rhythmic manner, or is it halting and jerky?

If you reach a point when your evaluation consistently comes up negative, please give your child's Instrumental Music teacher a call. The student may be doing fine by beginning standards; he/she may be having difficulty in grasping the basic concept that could bring progress to a halt. This last problem may take a joint parent-teacher effort to overcome.

## ***How Parents Can Encourage Successful Practice***

Everyone goes through phases of boredom or rebellion about practising, some more frequently than others. It is easy to lose sight of the goals.

Remember that music making is one of the most gregarious pursuits, and also one of the most satisfying and time consuming. Playing an instrument is a form of relaxation cultivated by many of the world's greatest under-achievers. The ability to play a musical instrument well is one of the most highly prized skills in the adult world. It is often the plodders who achieve these things rather than the most talented, who throw it all away in the heat of the moment.

Here are a few hints to help you with your budding instrumentalist:

1. Practice is best done at a regular time in a regular place preferably early in the morning
2. 10 minutes a day practice is better than 70 minutes at the end of the week
3. Good posture is less tiring than bad posture
4. Students should develop the ability to watch their playing in a mirror
5. Reading music should be placed on a music stand at the correct height – just below eye level
6. Your child requires help and encouragement during practice sessions. Use the practice session as a positive time with your child – do the ironing, etc.
7. Organise some home incentive scheme for completing practice
8. Each piece, exercise, scale should be played through at least 4 times each practice session. Start each piece at a very steady pace. If the same mistake happens twice, the student should stop and correct that bar or phrase, playing it many times before proceeding with the whole piece. At the next practice session, time will be saved if this passage is repeated several times before attempting to put it in the context of the whole piece.
9. If the piece sounds odd to you or definitely out of tune, there are several possibilities: one the instrument needs tuning; two, the student is learning a harmony part, not the tune; three, he/she is not listening to him/herself and is playing out of tune or out of time. Ask, "Can you sing it first?" or "are your fingers in the correct place?" or "Is there a note you can check with?"
10. Getting on and learning a contentious piece is the quickest way to the next interesting phase. Ask him/her to play you something known really well, however simple. Then remind him/her that once he/she couldn't play that at all. Then decide upon two bars of the contentious piece to learn today.

***IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING COMMITMENT TO THE  
LEARNING OF A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT***

***Parent Commitments***

1. Provide your child with a suitable instrument.
2. Show an interest in music study with your child.
3. Find a quiet place for your child to practice without interruption.
4. Arrange a regular time for practice.
5. Help your child with practice as much as possible – instructions in booklet, etc.
6. Never make fun of the strange sounds your child may make.
7. Help your child maintain a practice record.
8. Give your child a safe place to keep/store the instrument.
9. Keep instrument in good repair with reeds and strings, etc.
10. Teach your child to be on time for rehearsals and lessons.
11. Encourage your child to play for others whenever possible.

***Student Commitments***

Every student must agree to:

1. Practice regularly.
2. Become a member of the school concert band or orchestra or other groups as designated by the instructor.
3. Take part as required in all concerts and camps.
4. Attend lessons, rehearsals and other classes regularly as required.

If difficulties are being experienced in practising, waning interest levels, instrument function or attendance, please ring and make an appointment with the Director of Instrumental Music to discuss the situation.

\*\*\*\*\*