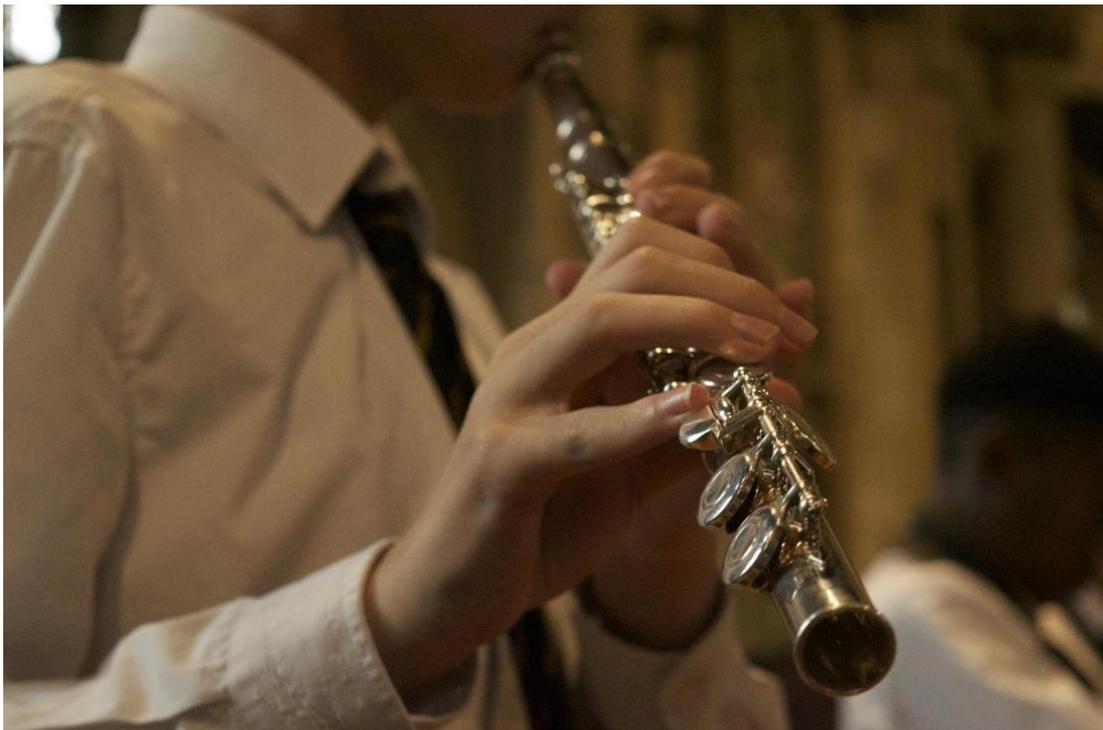




William Ellis School Parents' Handbook for Extra-Curricular Music Lessons



Please read through the following information carefully and keep this handbook to refer to should you have any questions in the future about your son's instrumental lessons.

If you have any general queries about your son's lessons, please see if it is answered by the information in this booklet in the first instance; if it is not, please email the music department: williamellismusic@gmail.com

We hope your son enjoys his music lessons and look forward to hearing him playing in concerts in the future.



Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns not addressed in this handbook, please email williamellismusic@gmail.com in the first instance.

We aim to respond to emails within 3 working days. In some instances, the matter will be referred to your son's peripatetic music teacher or the Head of Music.

More specific queries about lesson content, progress and ways to aid your son's learning should be sent to the peripatetic teacher directly. Please write a note in your son's practice diary in the first instance, or email the Music Administrator with the subject heading: 'FAO [*Teacher's name*]'.

Complaints and concerns about instrumental lessons should go to the **Head of Music**.

Communication from the Music Department

The music department uses email, text message and/or letter to notify parents of absences from music lessons and any timetable changes. Please ensure the music department has your up-to-date contact details by emailing williamellismusic@gmail.com

Music lesson general information

The extra-curricular music lessons William Ellis School runs are all provided by Camden Music Service and DJ lessons are provided by Future DJs. Our peripatetic music teachers are all fully qualified professional musicians and DBS checked. Many are involved in musical professional and educational projects outside of teaching and so bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to lessons as well as opportunities for musical development outside the classroom.

Timetables for music lessons can be viewed online [here](#):

An application form is available online [here](#) if you wish to sign up for an additional instrument:

Ensembles

The following ensembles take place each week during term time in Room 48 unless otherwise stated:



- Big Band*	Mon	3.30pm (<i>auditioned/by invitation only</i>)
- Drumming Group	Wed	1.30pm (all welcome)
- LaSWAP Concert Orchestra*	Wed	1.30pm <i>at La Sainte Union School</i> (all welcome)
- Vocal Group	Thur	1.30pm (all welcome)
- Junior Brass Group*	Fri	8.30am
- Senior Brass Group*	Fri	1.30pm <i>in MS4 (grade 4+)</i>

Advanced orchestral players are invited to join the *LaSWAP Chamber Orchestra, which runs short orchestral projects twice a year in the lead up to the bi-annual LaSWAP Concerts. Information about rehearsal dates and times will be sent directly to parents.

*Students should see the **Head of Music** in the first instance if they would like to join these ensembles either now or in the future. Students are encouraged to join any ensemble for which they are of a sufficient standard. If you have any questions about this, please contact the **Head of Music** who will advise students and parents as to which ensemble is most appropriate for their son.

Students are invited to attend any ensembles where students are 'all welcome'. In situations where more than one student is interested in a position of limited availability (for example, rhythm section instruments) and there is a vacancy, students will be invited to audition on a discretionary basis by the Head of Music.

Students are expected to participate in at least one ensemble relevant to their instrument. Playing in a school ensemble will give students the chance to perform in concerts during the year. It is also a great way to improve playing, have fun and make new friends.

For students who wish to participate in an additional range of ensembles, Camden Music Service (CMS) also runs an excellent programme of weekend and holiday ensembles (see the [CMS website](#) or email camdenmusic@camden.gov.uk for details).

Concerts

The Music Department organises several concerts throughout the school year. These may be on the school site or at a local venue. They include:

- **LaSWAP concerts in November and June** (to showcase ensembles from across the 4 schools in LaSWAP);
- **Performance Platform** (These are informal concerts are held in the Hall straight after school on a regular basis).
- The **Winter Entertainment Event** also takes place annually in December.
- The **Spring Shindig**, the annual fundraiser for the Music Department, held at the end of the Spring Term.



Playing in these concerts is a wonderful opportunity for your son to develop public performance techniques in a supportive and friendly atmosphere and for family and friends to see his musical development in action. Praise points are also awarded to students who contribute to concerts.

Practice Facilities

The school a purpose built Music Suite on the ground floor which opened in late 2018. The suite consists of two generously sized practice rooms with pianos, a small ensemble room for band and chamber rehearsals and a recording studio. The practice rooms and recording studio are used primarily for 1-2-1 instrumental teaching throughout the week, however GCSE Music students are permitted to use these practice rooms during lunchtime if they are available, on a discretionary basis.

The school also boasts a full size Steinway Model D grand piano which is kept in the main hall and used for concerts and recitals. Pianists above grade 5 may use this to practice. Your son should ask the **Head of Music** for more information.

Students practising any instrument at any grade can sign up to practice and rehearse in the music practice rooms next to room 48, including the band practice rooms, at lunchtime each day. Your son should see the **Head of Music** to sign up.

Payment for Music Lessons

The school must pay peripatetic music teachers in advance for their time. Therefore **payment for music lessons must be received by the Friday of the first week of each term** (or, for students starting music lessons mid-term, the first Friday after the invoice is received). **If payment is not received by this time, students will be removed from timetable until payment is received.**

If there is a problem with making payment before lessons begin please contact the Music Department as soon as possible and a short extension on the payment period may be arranged (at the Head of Music's discretion).

Invoices are sent out by post at the end of the preceding term. If you do not receive the invoice by the end of the preceding term, please contact the Music Administrator who will ask the finance manager to send a duplicate invoice.

Payment can be made in any of the following ways:

- **Online:**
www.scopay.com/williamellis (use the same login as you would to pay for trips and/or school dinners)



- **BACS transfer** (school bank details are given on the invoice each term. Please email the Music Administrator to confirm if you have made payment by BACS as these payments do not immediately show up on the finance office's records)

We are happy to accept payment in 2 instalments, each for half of the total amount and payable at the beginning of each half term.

Please note: we no longer accept cash payments of any type.

Subsidies

Students eligible for Free School Meals

The Music Department will subsidise 30 minute lessons on **one instrument per student** if he is eligible for Free School Meals.

Parents/carers of students eligible for Free School Meals are charged only £20 per term. We ask that this small fee is paid promptly to assist with the Music Department's costs.

GCSE Music students

A 50% discount (on one instrument) is given to any student studying for Music GCSE. This is dependent on excellent attendance and may be withdrawn if the student is absent without a valid reason.

Music lessons for Sixth Formers

Year 12 and 13 students studying Music, Music Technology AS or A level are automatically eligible for a 50% discount on the price of lessons (one instrument only).

We do not normally offer any subsidy to sixth form students based on parental income or Free School Meals eligibility except in exceptional circumstances – this will be at the **Head of Music's** discretion.

Cancellation of lessons

IMPORTANT: Half a term's notice is required for cancellation of your son's lessons.

Peripatetic music teachers are reliant on each student for their income and so it is vital that he or she has half a term's notice of a student coming off timetable in order to be able to make alternative provision for his or her time and earnings.



If you fail to provide half a term's notice for cancellation of lessons you will be charged for lessons up to the next half-term irrespective of whether your son attends the lessons.

Students who receive full subsidy because they are eligible for Free School Meals will be charged in full for each lesson timetabled and not attended.

We must receive written notification of intention to cancellation from a parent. You may email williamellismusic@gmail.com or send in a letter marked for the attention of the Music Administrator. Please state the date from which you intend lessons to cease.

Instrument guidelines

The music department has the following large instruments available for use by music students:

- Piano
- Keyboard
- Drum kit

Students are required to bring all other instruments to school for lessons.

Storing your instrument

Students bringing an instrument from home can leave it in the Music Store, which is located in the Music Suite (inside MS1) when they arrive at school.

Please ensure the instrument is insured.

If MS1 is locked on arrival, your son should go to the Music Office, next to Room 48 to inform the Head of Music.

Please note that instruments cannot be stored in Reception or the Music Office, owing to lack of space.

Purchasing/hiring an instrument

The School has a limited number of instruments which it can hire out to students directly. Please contact the **Head of Music** to enquire about availability. If the school cannot facilitate a hire, please see the option below.

Camden Music Assisted Purchase/Hire Scheme

This scheme enables students learning an instrument through the Camden Music Service at a Camden school to purchase a suitable instrument at the most advantageous price.

This is the best choice if you wish to buy an instrument but are worried about the cost.

CMS purchase the instrument in the first instance and students can then collect the instrument from CMS and pay them back in instalments.



Alternatively, if you don't wish to buy an instrument you can hire one by calling Camden on 020 7974 7239, or emailing camdenmusic@camden.gov.uk

For full and up-to-date details, please see the CMS website: www.camdenmusic.org

Dots Music

Instruments, sheet music and other accessories can be purchased from **Dots Music** in Camden (www.dotsonline.co.uk)

132 St. Pancras Way
Camden Town
London
NW1 9NB

Tel: 020 7482 5424; Email: dot@dotsonline.co.uk

Music lesson expectations

Conduct/Behaviour

- Your son is expected to arrive promptly for his lesson and have with him all necessary equipment:
 - His instrument (unless using school equipment i.e. piano, drum kit)
 - His school planner
 - His practice diary (this will be provided by his music teacher when he has his first lesson)
 - Sheet music or any other equipment requested by the teacher
- On arrival at the practice room, the student should knock on the door and wait quietly to be let in.
- Students are expected to behave as they would in any other lesson; teachers' instructions should be followed with courtesy and respect.



Attendance

Students are expected to tell the teacher in advance if they know they have a trip/medical appointment/exam coming up so that their lesson times can be arranged to avoid a clash. **Time management is an important life-skill and so it is the student's responsibility to plan ahead.** Five working days' notice is needed to rearrange a lesson. Lessons cannot be made up if appropriate notice is not given.

If less than five working days' notice is given it is the student's responsibility to arrange a lesson swap with another of his teacher's students.

Absences

100% attendance is expected, unless there is a valid reason for absence such as illness, or a medical appointment arranged at short notice.

Class teachers should notify students a week in advance of any trips or tests and it is then the student's responsibility to inform his music teacher so that his music lesson for the affected day can be avoided. A lesson missed because of a trip or test will be classed as an invalid absence – if your son was not notified of the trip or test a week in advance he should inform the Head of Music.

The Music Administrator and/or the Head of Music will notify parents/carers and form tutors when a student is absent without valid or known reason.

'Forgetting' is not deemed a valid excuse for absence – if a music teacher has to go and fetch a student from a lesson it will be classed as lateness to lesson. The teacher will only fetch a student twice in a term and a student who has to be fetched from class more than once may be put into detention – students are expected to take responsibility for managing their own time.

Outlined below is the policy for students who miss lessons without a valid reason:

Unauthorised absence (per term)	Consequences
1	10 minute 'Level 2' detention with Head of Music and text sent home to inform parents.
2	10 minute 'Level 2' detention with Head of Music and a text sent home.



3	45 minute 'Level 3' detention with Head of Music and direct contact with parents.
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Students whose lessons are fully or partially subsidised by the Music Department may be removed from timetable if more than 3 lessons are missed in a term without a valid reason.

Students who pay in full will have their attendance monitored and may be removed from timetable if attendance is poor, especially if there are other students on the waiting list – commitment is vital to making the most of music lessons and if a student cannot demonstrate this there is likely to be another student on the waiting list who can.

Teacher absence

If a music teacher is absent from school through sickness a notice will be put up at the top of the music staircase, close to the practice rooms in the morning. There will also be a sign on the music noticeboard on the staircase leading up to the practice rooms.

If your son arrives at the practice room and the teacher is not there but there is no notice visible, he should wait for 5 minutes for the teacher to arrive. If the teacher does not arrive he should go to the School Office to tell the Music Administrator to explain the problem. The matter can then be looked into if the teacher cannot be located.

Where/when do music lessons take place?

Lessons take place primarily in the Music Suite, however piano lessons with Mr Gray and singing lessons with Ms Ellins which occur in the practice room next to the Music Office (next to room 48).

Peripatetic music teachers visit a number of schools throughout the week and so each instrument is only taught on a certain day (or certain days) of the week. You will receive notification of your son's lesson day when he has been put on timetable.

Lessons occur during school hours on a rotational basis so that students do not miss time from the same subjects each week.

Your son should inform his music teacher when his PE lessons will be so that timetable clashes can be avoided.

Please note that PE is the only lesson we can schedule around as standard – we make this exception only because of the problems that arise with students having to use the changing rooms for PE lessons and PE classes going out onto Hampstead Heath.

How are students informed of their lesson times?

You will be notified by letter of your son's first lesson date and time.



At the end of each lesson your son will be given his lesson time for the following week by his tutor. This should be written in his planner. **Your son should tell his teacher if he has a trip or medical appointment coming up which will clash with the given lesson time so that an alternative arrangement can be made.**

- If your son is absent from a lesson he can find out his lesson time for the following week by:
- Checking the timetable on the Music noticeboard
 - Checking the timetable on the school website: www.tinyurl.com/williamellismusictimetables

If the student has checked all of the above and is still unsure of his lesson time, he can ask the Music Administrator based in the Office who will contact his Music teacher for clarification.

What do students need to do in order to leave class and attend a Music lesson?

Your son should tell his class teacher at the beginning of the lesson what time he will need to leave class to attend his Music lesson.

Depending on how far away from the practice room his classroom is, your son may need to leave his lesson several minutes before the lesson is due to begin. This should be agreed upon with his class teacher.

Timetables

Instrument timetables are available for parents to view via the music department’s page on the school website, quicklink:

www.tinyurl.com/ellistimetables

The online timetables look like this:

Monday Piano Timetable – Mr Sample								
Total no	STUDENT NAME	5th Jan	12th Jan	19th Jan	26th Jan	2nd Feb	HALF TERM	16th Feb
		11	12	13	14	15		16
30	XXXXX XXXX	1000	1100					
30	XX XXXXX	1130	930					
25	XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX	1100	1000					
30	XXX XXXXXXXXXX	1030	1130					
		1	2	3	4	5		6
20	XXXXX XXXX	930	1030					

Total number of lessons the student will have timetabled before the end of the academic year.

Record of how many lessons student has had timetabled during the year so far



Students are timetabled for an **average** of 10 lessons per term. The fee charged at the beginning of each term is based on a student receiving 10 lessons in that term.

Some terms are longer than others which may mean your son is timetabled more than 10 lessons one term and fewer than 10 the next. The figure in the 'Total no.' column will indicate the quota of lessons your son should be timetabled by the end of the academic year.

Any lessons missed owing to teacher absence, inset days, unforeseen school closure or other event that is the responsibility of the Music Department or the school site as a whole (e.g. practice room out of bounds or fire evacuation) will be made up later in the term/year.

Lessons missed owing to student absence cannot be made up unless the teacher has been given a week's notice.

Year 11 students are only timetabled for 5 lessons in the Summer term. This is in order to support Year 11 study for GCSE exams.

If at the end of the academic year you think your son has not received his full quota of lessons, you should contact the Music Department. The matter will be looked into and if the Head of Music agrees in your favour catch-up lesson/s or a refund will be arranged.

Homework and practice diary

Students are expected to practice what they have learnt each week at home between lessons. The teacher will provide a practice diary when a student begins lessons, in which he or she will make notes of areas to be practiced each week. The recommended practice time at home is 30 minutes per day, though even 10 minutes a day will result in some improvement and your son will see a greater improvement if he practices for a short time every day rather than for a longer time only once or twice a week.

The practice diary can be used as a messaging system between parents and peripatetic teachers – queries about lesson content, progress, instrument etc. should be put forward to teachers in this way. Responses may be via the practice diary or by email.



Progress and assessment

Peripatetic Music teachers submit a formal report on student's progress to Camden Music Services annually during the Summer term. These are usually posted or emailed to parents during the first week in August.

Please note that formal reports are only sent once a year. If you have not received a report by the end of August each year, please notify the Music Administrator by email.

When the teacher feels a student has progressed sufficiently to be entered for a formal qualification he/she will notify you. Your son will then be entered into an exam (by mutual agreement).



Tips for supporting your son's progress in music lessons

Practice

The most important thing is for your son to practice between lessons. Little and often is best. If possible, hire or purchase an instrument for him to use at home. You can also help your son by scheduling a practice time each evening (between 10 and 30 minutes is recommended).

If your son needs to practice at school, arrangements can be made for him to use the practice rooms at lunchtime/the end of the day.

Public performance

Encourage your son to attend ensembles and take part in concerts as these will improve his confidence and provide many extra-curricular opportunities.

Listening widely

Your son will benefit greatly from listening to a wide range of musical styles outside of lessons – you could change your usual radio station or use YouTube, Spotify or online radio players to broaden his listening range. Your local public library will also have a wide selection of CDs you can borrow.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this handbook. We hope it helps to answer any queries you may have and aids a smooth start to your son's music lessons.