



**Parents' handbook for extra-curricular music lessons.**

## **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](mailto:williamellismusic@gmail.com)

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

The Music Department.



## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns not addressed in this handbook, please email [williamellismusic@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:williamellismusic@gmail.com)

## **Music lesson general information**

The extra-curricular music lessons William Ellis School runs are all provided by Camden Music Service. Our peripatetic music teachers are all fully qualified professional musicians and CRB 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:

**[www.tinyurl.com/williamellismusictimetables](http://www.tinyurl.com/williamellismusictimetables)**

An application form is available online if you wish to sign up for an additional instrument:

**[www.tinyurl.com/ellismusiclessons](http://www.tinyurl.com/ellismusiclessons)**

A music newsletter is sent by email each term to keep parents informed about the school's latest events and achievements. Please make sure the music department has your email address so that you can be kept up-to-date.

## Ensembles

The following ensembles take place each week during term time:

- Big Band	Mon	1.30 (grade 5+)
- Samba group	Tue	1.30
- Junior Brass Group	Wed	1.30 at Parliament Hill School
- String Group	Wed	1.30
- LaSwap Orchestra	Wed	3.30 at Parliament Hill School (grade 5+)
- Choir	Thur	1.30
- Senior Brass Group	Fri	1.30

*All groups take place in the Music Department classroom unless stated otherwise.*

*Students are expected to participate in all ensembles 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.*

Camden Music Service also runs a programme of weekend and holiday ensembles (see the CMS website or email [camdenmusic@camden.gov.uk](mailto: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** (for students and ensembles from across the 4 schools in our sixth form consortium);
- **Annual Stepping Stones Concerts** (for students who have been learning their instrument for less than 2 years);
- A **Winter Entertainment event** also takes place annually in December.

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.

## Practise facilities

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

Students practising any instrument at any grade can sign up to practice/rehearse in the music practice rooms, including the band practice room, 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).*

Billing is added to ParentPay accounts at the beginning of each term and payment must be made online via your ParentPay account.

Payment can be made in any of the following ways:

**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.**

## 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 £15 per term (more than 85% discount on the full price of lessons). We ask that this small fee is paid promptly to assist with the Music Department's costs.



## **GCSE Music students for Pupil Premium Students**

A 50% discount (on one instrument) is given to students with Pupil Premium status 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 or Btec Music may be eligible for up to 50% discount on the price of lessons (one instrument only). Please contact the Head of Music if you would like to be considered for a discretionary subsidy.

We do not 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](mailto: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 (student should bring his own drum sticks)

**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 their music practice room (located at in the Performing Arts Block) or in the storage cupboard in MS1, when they arrive rather than carry it around school all day. ***Please ensure the instrument is insured before leaving it in a practice room.***

If the practice room is locked on arrival, your son should go to the MS1 to inform the Head of Music.

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

### Purchasing/hiring an instrument

#### 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](mailto:camdenmusic@camden.gov.uk)

For full and up-to-date details, please see the CMS website: [www.camdenmusic.org](http://www.camdenmusic.org)

#### Dots Music

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

132 St. Pancras Way  
Camden Town  
London  
NW1 9NB

Tel: 020 7482 5424; Email: [dot@dotsonline.co.uk](mailto: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 days' notice is needed to rearrange a lesson. Lessons cannot be made up if appropriate notice is not given.

**If less than five 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 see the Head of Music to inform him which subject and teacher did not give adequate notice.

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	30 minute 'Level 3' detention with Head of Music and a text sent home.
3	30 minute 'Level 3' detention with Head of Music and a warning letter sent home to parents.

**Students whose lessons are fully or partially subsidised by the music department will 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 close to the practice room 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 Office to leave a note for the music administrator that he has attempted to go to the lesson but the teacher wasn't there. The matter can then be looked into if the teacher cannot be located.

## Where/when do music lessons take place?

Lessons take place in the Music Department practice rooms. These are located in the Performing Arts Block.

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 rotation 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 the 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 onto the lesson authorisation card 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/william\\_ellismusictimetables](http://www.tinyurl.com/william_ellismusictimetables)

*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 Art Department, 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. He should have his lesson authorisation sticker in his planner as proof of his lesson time. If he does not have this with him he should ask to leave the lesson and return with a note from his music teacher to verify that the lesson has taken place.

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.

The class teacher should sign the lesson authorisation card to show that he or she has given permission for your son to leave the lesson.

## Timetables

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

[www.tinyurl.com/ellistimetables](http://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	XX 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 to parents during the Summer Break.

**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. He should speak to the Head of Music about suitable times.

## 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.