

Instrumental Tuition at Michael Hall

Music holds a central position in the day-to-day life of pupils at Michael Hall. In the Lower School singing and flutes/recorders are integral parts of the daily rhythm of Main Lesson; enriching the subject matter; marking the seasons; and developing the social fabric of the classes through the joy of singing/playing together. As our pupils move through the Lower School, they start to have weekly singing and recorder lessons, and in the Middle School they begin music theory/history lessons. In addition to this, many pupils choose to take up an instrument on a one-to-one basis during school time.

Below are the details of the instruments currently offered in school and the details of how lessons are organised. Due to constraints on teaching space, we are not able to offer the full spectrum of instruments and have selected the instruments below based on demand. For your information, both East and West Sussex Music currently offer tuition on a wide range of instruments and there are a number of established instrumental teachers in the locality.

Getting started

All instrumental lessons at Michael Hall are administered by the school's Instrumental Tuition Coordinator, Rachel Masters. Lessons are offered once a week on rotation during term time by a team of dedicated, specialist Visiting Instrumental Teachers. All lessons are 40 minutes long. For pupils taking music exams, instrumental teachers include aural training during lessons up to Grade 5 standard. Yearly progress reports will be given for each pupil.

Instrument	Class available from	Teacher	Fee for 40 min lesson
Cello (Double Bass)	Class 3 (4) and up	Rachel Masters	£28
Violin/Viola	Class 3 and up	Nicoline Kraamwinkel	£28
Flute	Class 4 and up	Julie Groves	£28
Clarinet	Class 4 and up	Emily Finnemore	£28
Piano	Class 4 and up	Simon Casciano	£28
Brass*	Class 4 and up	Richard Cross	£28
Group lessons	Class 3 Strings		£36 in total

*Brass: Trumpet, Cornet, Horn, Trombone, Euphonium

Group lessons

Group lessons are available for Class 3 beginners (maximum 3 pupils); however, this will entirely depend upon demand. It is important to add that group lessons can be a good way of getting started, but that differences in learning needs often result in pupils progressing at different speeds and therefore needing individual lessons. Group lessons will be provided for a maximum of 1 year only though the viability of each group will be continually reviewed.

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The rotation system

All pupils wishing to learn an instrument at school are placed on the rotation system which generally operates from 9:30am through to the end of lesson 8 (4:05pm). Often lunchtime and after-school lessons (up to 5:00 pm at the latest) are included. The length of the rotation will vary according to the number of pupils and teacher availability. Where possible pupils have a fixed day for their lesson, but the time of the lesson changes every week to avoid pupils missing the same curriculum lesson too often.

Fixed slots

Depending on the individual availability of the teachers, we do offer a limited number of after-school fixed slots. Priority is given to older students when allocating these times.

Term dates and Fees

The number of lessons offered per term will vary depending on the length of said term but will generally be one shorter than the number of weeks to allow for a 'catch-up' lesson should the instrumental teacher have been absent.

Parents will be invoiced by the instrumental teacher as agreed.

Please note that in addition to the fee for lessons there is a £20 termly administrative charge which is added to the school fees to cover the organisation of timetables according to the school's requirements.

Practice

Learning an instrument is a commitment both for the child and for parents. If the child is to progress and enjoy playing their instrument, **regular daily practice is essential**. Even for the most enthusiastic and dedicated musicians, practice is a necessity that requires an effort of will. Scheduling in a slot for practice at the same time each day can be very helpful as it builds up a rhythm which can be supportive on those days when your child is struggling. Instructions and comments about practising for the week ahead will be written in the practice book and on the piece of music being studied. It is hoped that pupils will practise a minimum of 5 times each week. The length of the practice is determined by how advanced the pupil is. During the early stages, 10 – 15 minutes' practice on a regular basis is ideal. More advanced players require longer sessions to cover the work set and build stamina. It is so much more beneficial to practise a little and often rather than have one big practice session each week. Practise during the holidays is also to be encouraged.

Supporting practice

Your child does need your encouragement and support to help them practise as it can be lonely at times. Even if you do not understand how to read music or how to play the instrument they are learning, just sitting with them for some of their practice time and helping them read the notes their teacher has written for them is extremely beneficial. All children go through peaks and troughs with their practice, and just like most other artistic or indeed sporting disciplines, extensive hard work is required to achieve mastery in order to reap the rewards.

We also encourage you to **attend your child's lessons**. This can be very helpful especially in the early stages of learning an instrument. Whilst this is best organised in consultation with your child's teacher, we ask that for purely practical reasons, after the initial stages, this happens no more than once a term. Once arranged, please sign in at reception and wait for the instrumental teacher before going to the lesson as you would for any other school visit.