

DURACK STATE SCHOOL

Instrumental Music Program



PARENT HANDBOOK

Information, Policies, Procedures

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
OVERVIEW	5
OBJECTIVES	5
SELECTION OF STUDENTS	5
INSTRUMENTAL ALLOTMENT.....	5
TUITION.....	6
TUITION BOOK.....	6
REHEARSALS	7
REPERTOIRE SELECTION.....	7
PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS	8
ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING.....	8
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC FEES	9
INSTRUMENT HIRE AND STORAGE.....	9
UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS	10
STUDENT AND PARENT COMMITMENTS.....	10
CONCERT PERFORMANCES	10
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC POLICIES.....	11
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC ACHIEVEMENT POLICY.....	11
UNPAID FEES POLICY.....	11
ATTENDANCE POLICY	11
CONCERT PERFORMANCE POLICY	11
EXIT POLICY.....	12
CONSUMABLES.....	13
MUSIC CAMP OPPORTUNITIES	13
COMMUNICATION	14
APPENDIX A: WHERE TO PURCHASE YOUR CHILD’S INSTRUMENT/ACCESSORIES	15
APPENDIX B: INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC REQUIREMENTS FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS	16
STRINGS	16
WOODWIND.....	17
BRASS	18
PERCUSSION.....	19
APPENDIX C: RECOMMENDED INSTRUMENT BRANDS.....	20
APPENDIX D: TIPS FOR PURCHASING YOUR OWN INSTRUMENT.....	21
APPENDIX E: SUGGESTIONS FOR ACHIEVING SUCCESS	22

PRACTISING YOUR INSTRUMENT22
YOUR CHILD AS A MEMBER OF THE MUSIC PROGRAM23
HOW PARENTS CAN ENCOURAGE SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE25
IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING COMMITMENT TO THE LEARNING OF A MUSICAL
INSTRUMENT.....26

INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents/Carers and Students,

I extend a warm welcome to all our students and their families who are considering joining the Instrumental Music Program at Durack State School. As an extension to the classroom music curriculum, Durack state school now offers three extracurricular ensembles – the Durack Band, Durack String and Durack Choir.

In line with the Queensland Instrumental Music curriculum, the Instrumental Music Program seeks to provide continuous music training for students from Grade 3 to Grade 6, with the hope that students will continue their Instrumental music education into high school. Many past students who participated in Instrumental Music program have transitioned into a vast array of pathways, with a richer and more comprehensive education as a result.

Your commitment to participation in this program is highly valued in our school. Our vision is to build a strong instrumental program that places our school at the forefront of community involvement supporting groups from elderly citizens to promoting state school education. Apart from your regular commitment to weekly instructional lessons ensemble rehearsals, often times you will be required to perform for a variety of audiences to promote feelings of goodwill and enjoyment.

It cannot be understated that the student's commitment to this valuable program is a whole family effort with parents often called on to support at home practice sessions and transport 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 take pride watching your child grow musically over the future years. I am always proud when our students perform both in school, out in our community and in instrumental music competitions.

I am confident in the knowledge that no matter at what skill level, students will be able to explore their music potential and find a rich and rewarding musical experience in the Instrumental Music Program at Durack State School. Please read this document carefully as it contains all the information you need to make the most out of this diverse and stimulating program.

Together, we look forward to beginning this journey of music education with you and your child.

Kind regards,

Ms Kathy Chen
Music Teacher
Instrumental Specialist & Conductor

Durack State School

OVERVIEW

The Department of Education provides an Instrumental Music Program at Durack State School. This program provides tuition during school hours in Strings, Woodwind, Brass and Percussion instruments. Ensemble experience is provided through participation in our school's string ensembles or concert bands, and other smaller groups during lunch hours. Attendance to these groups is **compulsory** and an integral part to the success of our Instrumental Music Program. Classes take place on a small group basis between four to eight students of similar ability level learning together.

OBJECTIVES

The aims of this program are:

- To provide opportunities for motivated musical students to develop instrumental skills via weekly group tuition and daily personal practice;
- To provide opportunities for such students to experience playing music in large and small groups (e.g. orchestra, concert band, stage band, ensembles, duets, etc.); and
- To provide an enriching dimension to the school's music program.

SELECTION OF STUDENTS

The amount of teaching time allocated to the Instrumental Music is dependent on lesson time and vacant spots availability. It is therefore vital that students attend all lessons. Additionally, due to limited school resources, not all students who express their interest to participate in this program can be accommodated.

Students are selected on criteria of:

- Behaviour record;
- Academic strength
- Musical aptitude;
- Physical appropriateness; and
- 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 in Term 4 for current Grade 2 students for the strings program, and current Grade 3 students for the band program. To maintain a progression, new student groups are rarely started at other times during the year or at other year levels except in particular circumstance. Students enter the Instrumental Music Program at Grade 3 for strings, and Year Grade for woodwind, brass and percussion.

INSTRUMENTAL ALLOTMENT

Students apply for inclusion in the Instrumental Music Program, **not** for a particular instrument. This ensures all ensembles are balanced for sound.

Most musical children will eventually acquire the knowledge to play more than one instrument. In choosing a “starting instrument” for a particular child, the music teacher will try to take into account the following factors (in no particular 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 and transportation;
- The availability of a school instrument for loan; and
- The student’s personality traits.

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

TUITION

Once selected for the program, students are expected to participate with full commitment until the conclusion of primary school. The lessons are timetabled during the normal school day and students are withdrawn from class for 30 minutes to attend their lessons. Students will receive one half hour lesson per week on his/her instrument. The lessons are conducted in small groups containing children of similar standard.

The lesson is timetabled in a permanent time every week. The Music teacher provides student and class teachers with the instrumental lessons timetable at the commencement of each year.

Timetables for lessons and ensemble rehearsals are displayed on the noticeboard inside the Music room. Students are informed of their permanent lesson time. It is the students’ responsibility to attend lessons and rehearsals when required and notify Ms Chen of any foreseeable lesson absence.

Students are expected to arrive at lessons punctually, appropriately prepared and with all the required equipment. Students are also responsible for making up the work they miss when attending their Instrumental Music lesson. Students are also required to participate in one of the musical ensembles, outlined in more detail in the ‘ensemble’ section.

The commitment made by the child is for all of primary school and changes to this can only be made by the music teacher or by parents after consultation with the music teacher. **All changes require a written request from parents.**

TUITION BOOK

Students are encouraged to purchase their own tuition method books. The book will last each student for at least the calendar year and allow students to draw and write in their own books during school lessons and practise at home. Having a personal copy allows students to refer to these resources for note reading, playing techniques, finger charts, repertoires etc.

In cases that parents are unable to purchase tuition books. These tuition books are available for loan from the library and incurs no additional cost. Students borrow out the method book from the library at

the start of the year and returns after their final lesson during December. These books are **shared resources** and therefore it is important students write minimally in them and take good care to ensure students of the following year are able to continue sharing these resources.

REHEARSALS

Durack State School offers four ensembles to enrich the Music Education. The ensembles are:

- String Ensemble
- Senior Band
- Durack Choir

All students participating in Instrumental Music lessons must be a member of one of these ensembles. Attendance at rehearsals is compulsory. Our senior band begin rehearsals during Term 1. Our Junior Band begin rehearsal during Term 3, after students have been taught the basics of their instrument. Students should check their rehearsal times at the beginning of the year to **avoid clashes with other activities when planning their participation in various school activities**. Parents of children who are already involved in other regular training programs (e.g. sports, keyboard class etc.) need to negotiate attendance with their teachers and may need to consider carefully whether a commitment to a demanding music program is recommended.

Department of Education policy mandates that membership in an ensemble is dependent both on attendance at lessons and also rehearsals. If either of these requirements are not met, a student may be withdrawn from the Instrumental Music Program. See the ATTENDANCE POLICY section for more information.

Placement of students in ensembles is at the discretion of the teacher/ conductors of the various ensembles and is subject to a minimum performance standard. Once all ensembles have finished their final performances near the end of the school year, they will be disbanded and new ensembles formed for our younger musicians.

REPERTOIRE SELECTION

The repertoires for all ensembles and bands will be chosen by their conductor based on factors such as:

- Students' level of technical ability;
- Variety of repertoire;
- Diversity of student body;
- Specific performance occasion;
- Criteria of out of school competition;
- Length of time needed for learning.

To promote student engagement and enthusiasm, students are welcome to suggest particular repertoires they wish to learn and perform, decision is subject to the teacher's discretion based on the above factors.

PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS

Students will be required to prepare for the next lesson by practicing the set work after their weekly class. 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. Regular communication will take place via the practice sheet to be brought to each lesson and signed weekly by parents and Instrumental Music teachers.

The **minimum** recommended amount of practice starts from 20 minutes per day, 5 days a week (100 minutes total) and increases as students level advances. More advanced students and extremely keen students should consider more practice to further develop their music abilities.

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Students in the Instrumental Music Program progress through the Department of Education's Instrumental Music Curriculum. It is structured in ten levels, each of which includes three areas of learning and skill development – a copy of the instrumental music curriculum may be supplied for interested parents. Instrumental Music teachers plan their teaching programs and assessment around the Instrumental Music Curriculum.

Students will be assessed on their instrument throughout the year in lesson time. The assessment items which the student must perform as assigned by their Instrumental Music teacher may be recorded for moderation purposes.

All students will receive a written report each semester along with their general classroom reports. Grades on the reports will be a reflection of the student's performance throughout the semester in both their class and ensemble environments. Students will be reported on in two categories:

Achievement: A-E

This is a reflection of how well the student performs the set assessment on their instrument. Instrumental Music teachers will be looking for correct rhythms, key signatures, dynamics and musicality at their level. Students will also receive comments relating to the curriculum areas for Literacy, Technique and Performance.

Effort: A-E

This is a combination of attendance record, in class work and commitment, and a correctly filled out practice record. Every student has the ability to achieve an "A" rating in this area.

If parents wish to discuss the contents of reports, they may contact the music teacher through the normal processes.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC FEES

All students participating in Instrumental Music are expected to pay the annual Instrumental Music Participation Fee of \$45. This fee is used to pay district levies and to provide and maintain resources and equipment for use in lessons and ensembles. The fee also covers the cost of administering the program.

For those students who needs to hire a school instrument, an additional \$15 loan fee will be payable to the school. This fee is used for the maintenance and replacement of the school instruments.

For families who are not able to pay the fees in one sum, the instrumental fees can be split into 3 instalments throughout the year. Please contact the office for instalment plan. These payments are required to be paid by the due date as outlined on the invoice. Parents may make alternative arrangements with payment plans through the school office. Students will **not be able to bring home their instruments** until the at least the first instalment is paid and External Equipment Request Form (EQ11) is completed and returned to the office. Furthermore, unpaid Instrumental Music fees may see students withdrawn from the Instrumental Music Program and school equipments will need to be returned to the Music block.

INSTRUMENT HIRE AND STORAGE

There is a full set of band and string instruments for students to hire in their first year of tuition. Subjecting to availability (the number of new intake the following year), your child may either continue to hire the school instrument continuing through the rest of primary, or family may need to supply their own instrument. Generally, follow the first year, parents are encouraged to purchase their own instrument in order to allow students to practise between school holidays and make the instrument available for another student to begin tuition.

There are guarantee supply for parents who wish to hire larger, more expensive instruments for the whole duration at Durack State School, these instruments are French Horn, Euphonium and Tuba. The percussion instruments used at school in rehearsals and lessons are not able to be taken home by students, rather, students will practise on their drum pad and bring their own drum sticks to and from class.

Any student using a school instrument must complete and return a loan agreement form to staff before the instrument can leave the school. Students will be given a hard copy of this form at the start of the year. It is **vital that parents read and understand the responsibilities** of hiring a school instrument and accept all responsibilities and repair fees if lost or damage occurs.

Classroom teachers allow students to store their instruments on the racks outside of class or at alternatively arranged classroom area. In situation where this is not viable, is a storeroom available in the Music Block for students to store their instruments. In any case students leave their instruments there at their own risk.

In addition, students are strongly encouraged to individualise and **clearly name their instrument** case to assist with identification in school. This individualisation will also minimise the chances of the case being mistakenly collected by another student.

UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

Unless otherwise advised, students will be required to be dressed in the full school uniform during performances.

STUDENT AND PARENT COMMITMENTS

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

- Practice regularly on a daily basis;
- Participate in ensembles and performances as required;
- Attend lessons and rehearsals as required; and
- 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; and
- Regularly replace items as necessary, e.g. reeds, cork grease, valve oil, sheet music, strings, etc.

CONCERT 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 competition for the various groups to enter. Unless otherwise advised, the students will be required to be dressed in full school uniform when performing outside the school. Attendance at all performances is mandatory for all instrumental music members and families are encouraged to attend and support the student at each of these events.

A typical timeline of Instrumental Music instruction and performance events are outlined below:

MONTH	SENIOR STRING ENSEMBLE AND SENIOR BAND
February (Term 1, Week 2)	Receive loaned instruments (only if loan agreement form and fees has been received) Lessons commence as outlined on timetable
April (Term 2, Week 1)	Rehearsals commence as outlined on timetable Anzac day celebration
May	Beginner Strings Workshop (for Year 3 strings only) Fanfare
June	Progress Reports Semester 1 Concert for parents
September/ October	Silkstone Eisteddfod (or similar) Oxley Road Music Festival
November	TBC – End of Year Concert for community Instruments on loan returned to Music block
December	Progress Reports

MONTH	JUNIOR STRING ENSEMBLE AND JUNIOR BAND
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December	Progress Reports

Please note:

- a) other concerts may be scheduled throughout the year depending in opportunities
- b) regular performance occurs during school assembly which parents are welcome to attend

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC POLICIES

By agreeing to participate in the Instrumental Music Program at Durack State School, you agree to abide by the Instrumental Music Program policies and procedures as outlined on the Enrolment Form, Contract Form, the Loan Agreement Form, and as described throughout this document.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC ACHIEVEMENT POLICY

Students are expected to maintain a sound achievement (i.e. a “C” standard) in Instrumental Music. A student that does not show aptitude to learning a musical instrument will be identified by the end of the term. Parents will be notified to discuss the student’s difficulties. Students may be withdrawn from the program by the end of the semester if progress is insufficient.

UNPAID FEES POLICY

Durack State School has the right to withdraw any student from its Instrumental Music Program if they have Instrumental Music fees owing beyond the due date and a payment plan has not been discussed and put into effect. School staff will make contact with the parent informing them of the school’s decision to withdraw their child from the Instrumental Music Program.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

All students enrolled in Instrumental Music are expected to attend lessons and rehearsals on a weekly basis. If a student is unable to attend a lesson due to assessment, they should first see their Instrumental Music teacher and attempt to organise an alternative time. If a student misses a rehearsal, he/she must tell the conductor beforehand or alternatively, parents must inform the teacher in writing of the student’s absence. Parents will be contacted by email after a student misses three rehearsals or lessons without sufficient explanation. Any student who misses rehearsals or lessons without sufficient explanation may be withdrawn from the Instrumental Music Program.

CONCERT PERFORMANCE POLICY

Attendance at performances is compulsory for all musicians. A calendar of performances is published at the beginning of each term and students are expected to participate in group performances. These include contest and concert performances, and a variety of other performances within and outside the

school community. If a student is unable to attend a performance, the conductor must be notified via email or in writing by the parent prior to the performance. Unexplained absence from performances may be grounds for withdrawal from the program. If unforeseen circumstances prevent attendance at a performance and the conductor is not notified beforehand, the conductor must be informed at the earliest opportunity.

EXIT POLICY

Instrumental Music is a commitment until graduation at the end of Year 6. If a student is not going to continue in the program, parents should notify their respective Instrumental Music teacher via email or in writing. An interview may be scheduled between parents and the music teacher to discuss their reasons to withdraw their child from the program. Once withdrawal is approved, the loan agreement is cancelled (if applicable) and Instrumental Program fee can not be refunded in this circumstance. The instrument must be returned to the Music Block.

CONSUMABLES

Parents are responsible for the provision of consumable items such as reeds, strings, oils, etc. It is important that students arrive at lessons and rehearsals properly equipped. Few consumables are supplied or stocked by the school and most must be purchased by families from retailers. Recommended instrument brands, store locations, and required materials can be found at the end of this handbook in the APPENDIX section. If parents are unable to drive to the music store for purchase, arrangements are able to be made with the music teacher to make purchase on behalf of student.

Music folders – students use clear display folders as music storage and display folders. These folders must be in blue for uniform appearance on stage and could be purchased at major retailers (e.g. OfficeWork). If parents are unable to drive to the store for purchase, arrangements are able to be made with the music teacher to make purchase on behalf of student.

MUSIC CAMP OPPORTUNITIES

Students may have the opportunity throughout their time in the Instrumental Music Program to participate in a number of cluster music camps/workshops which happen each year.

First year string students have the opportunity to participate in the Beginner Strings Workshop, a one day event that runs in May/ Students combine with other neighbouring schools and work through music with a number of Instrumental Music teachers, which culminates with what is usually their first ever performance being in the Instrumental Music Program.

Advanced students may have the opportunity to try out for the prestigious WestCent Music Camp, which runs for an entire week and involves over 20 schools in the westerns and central suburbs of Brisbane. Due to the high calibre of the event, selected students who meet the minimum requirement for the event will receive a nomination form and complete an audition.

Opportunities to participate in these events will be made known to students are the relevant time throughout the year.

COMMUNICATION

Parents may contact the music teacher, Ms Chen by email. General communication between Ms Chen and parents can occur through email, practice log sheets or student communication book. Notice of relevant documents, along with details of performances and events, are published in the school newsletter. Parents may communicate directly with the school staff if clarification about the program is needed.

Durack State School Office
Phone: 07 3714 2666

Ms Kathy Chen
Email: kkche0@eq.edu.au

**APPENDIX A:
WHERE TO PURCHASE YOUR CHILD'S INSTRUMENT/ACCESSORIES**

STRINGS	BAND
<p>The School Locker Oxley The Zone Oxley 2118 Ipswich Road Oxley QLD 4075 (07) 3725 2500 https://theschoollocker.com.au/</p>	<p>The School Locker Oxley The Zone Oxley 2118 Ipswich Road Oxley QLD 4075 (07) 3725 2500 https://theschoollocker.com.au/</p>
<p>Browns Place Music Spot 129 Browns Plains Rd, Browns Plains 07 3800 5229 https://musicspot.com.au/</p>	<p>Browns Place Music Spot 129 Browns Plains Rd, Browns Plains 07 3800 5229 https://musicspot.com.au/</p>
<p>Animato 789 Kingsford Smith Drive, New Farm 07 3876 3877 www.animato.com.au</p>	<p>Brass Music Specialists 90 Appel Road, Graceville 07 3245 1311 brassmusic.com.au</p>
<p>Simply for Strings 78 Enoggera Terrace, Red Hill 07 3368 3666 www.simplyforstrings.com</p>	<p>Brisbane Brass & Woodwind 7 Enoggera Terrace, Red Hill 07 3367 8776 www.ozwinds.com.au</p>

Note: We advise parents to shop around for the best prices for both new and second hand instruments. Many stores have various payment plans on all instruments. There are many more great music stores in Brisbane, these are the ones that we often deal with. If you have a good experience at other stores, please let us know and we will add them to our list.

APPENDIX B: INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC REQUIREMENTS FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

Outlined below are the requirements all first year students must have prior to the start of their first lesson. Take this list with you to the recommended music stores and their staff should be able to assist you in acquiring all necessary materials for your child.

STRINGS

Violin

- Rosin (buy something smaller as they tend to break or get lost)
- Blue music display folder
- Soft cleaning cloth (old t-shirt or equivalent would be suitable)
- 2B pencil
- Metronome- Free downloadable app on all smart phones, iPad, tablets (for at home practise)
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)
- Spare strings

Cello

- Rosin (buy something smaller as they tend to break or get lost)
- Rock Stop
- Blue music display folder
- Soft cleaning cloth (old t-shirt or equivalent would be suitable)
- Metronome- Free downloadable app on all smart phones, iPad, tablets (for at home practise)
- 2B pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)
- Spare strings

WOODWIND

Flute

- Mens hanky (to use as a cleaner on cleaning rod)
- Metronome- Free downloadable app on all smart phones, iPad, tablets (for at home practise)
- Blue music display folder
- Soft cleaning cloth (old t-shirt or equivalent would be suitable)
- 2B pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)

Clarinet

- Clarinet cleaning pull through
- Cork grease (preferably in 'chap stick' type container)
- 4 x size 2 Rico Royal Clarinet reeds
- Metronome- Free downloadable app on all smart phones, iPad, tablets (for at home practise)
- School music folder (available from office)
- Soft cleaning cloth (old t-shirt or equivalent would be suitable)
- 2B pencil
- Soft eraser
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)

Alto Saxophone

- Saxophone cleaning pull through
- Cork grease (preferably in 'chap stick' type container)
- Reed guard (holds 4 reeds)
- 4 x size 2 Rico Royal Alto Saxophone reeds
- Padded saxophone neck strap or harness (preferably Neotech brand)
- Mouthpiece pad saver
- Metronome- Free downloadable app on all smart phones, iPad, tablets (for at home practise)
- Blue music display folder
- Soft cleaning cloth (old t-shirt or equivalent would be suitable)
- 2B pencil
- Soft eraser
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)

Tenor Saxophone

- Saxophone cleaning pull through
- Cork grease (preferably in 'chap stick' type container)
- 4 x size 2 Rico Royal Alto Saxophone reeds
- Metronome- Free downloadable app on all smart phones, iPad, tablets (for at home practise)
- Blue music display folder
- Soft cleaning cloth (old t-shirt or equivalent would be suitable)
- 2B pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)

BRASS

Trumpet

- Valve Oil (Al Cass preferred brand)
- Slide grease or anhydrous lanolin (available at the chemist)
- Metronome- Free downloadable app on all smart phones, iPad, tablets (for at home practise)
- Blue music display folder
- Soft cleaning cloth (old t-shirt or equivalent would be suitable)
- 2B pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)

Trombone

- Trombone slide cream (Conn or Superslick preferred brands)
- Small water spray bottle
- Slide grease or anhydrous lanolin (available at the chemist)
- Metronome- Free downloadable app on all smart phones, iPad, tablets (for at home practise)
- Blue music display folder
- Soft cleaning cloth (old t-shirt or equivalent would be suitable)
- 2B pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)

Baritone Horn/Euphonium

- Valve Oil (al Cass preferred brand)
- Slide grease or anhydrous lanolin (available at the chemist)
- Metronome- Free downloadable app on all smart phones, iPad, tablets (for at home practise)
- Blue music display folder
- Soft cleaning cloth (old t-shirt or equivalent would be suitable)
- 2B pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)

Tuba

- Valve Oil (al Cass preferred brand)
- Slide grease or anhydrous lanolin (available at the chemist)
- Mouthpiece brush
- Metronome- Free downloadable app on all smart phones, iPad, tablets (for at home practise)
- Blue music display folder
- Soft cleaning cloth (old t-shirt or equivalent would be suitable)
- 2B pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)

PERCUSSION

- Drumsticks Size 5A (wooden tip)
- Practice Pad
- Practice Pad Stand (optional)
- Metronome- Free downloadable app on all smart phones (for at home practise)
- Blue music display folder
- Soft cleaning cloth (old t-shirt or equivalent would be suitable)
- 2B pencil
- Collapsible music stand (for home practice)

APPENDIX C: RECOMMENDED INSTRUMENT BRANDS

STRINGS

Violin	Cello
Arioso Arco Enrico Gliga	Arioso Arco Enrico Gliga

WOODWIND

Flute	Clarinet	Alto Saxophone
Yamaha Jupiter Pearl	Buffet Yamaha	Yamaha Yanigisawa Jupiter

BRASS

Trumpet	Trombone
Yamaha King Conn Bach	Yamaha King Conn Bach

PERCUSSION

Tuned Percussion: Mallets	Un-Tuned Percussion: Sticks & Brushes
Vic Firth Pro-Mark Zildjian Vater	Vic Firth Pro-Mark Zildjian Vater

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.

Note:

- If you have access to another brand instrument not on the list, please consult your Instrumental Music teacher before you buy.
- Avoid purchasing instruments from generic shops that are not music specialists.
- Care should be taken when considering the purchase of a second hand instrument. It is always best to do your research, consult your music teacher or have a professional repairer look over the instrument before you purchase.

APPENDIX D: TIPS FOR PURCHASING YOUR OWN INSTRUMENT

Students are encouraged to look into the second hand market for quality instrument.

Please do not buy from non-specialist instrument stores like eBay or Aldi, as they often sell instruments which are of poor construction and do not last a long time (some do not even last six months as opposed to those listed below which can last 10-20 years). Additionally, poorly constructed instrument can very difficult to tune, maintain and produce a quality sound, thus limiting your child's potential to develop their musical skill.

Other things to consider when buying from a shop:

- What standard of strings are on the instrument?
- Are they factory strings?
- Has the instrument been set up by a repairer?
- Should I consider upgrading the bow?
- For Cello: Should I consider upgrading to a hard case?

APPENDIX E: SUGGESTIONS FOR ACHIEVING SUCCESS

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); and
5. Pencil and eraser.

Where to practise

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

How often to practise

Daily – regular short and focused practice achieves more progress than long, irregular practice. Beginners start with 20 minutes a day and duration increase as they advance on their instrument.

When to practise

Any time that works around family schedule. For best result, families are encouraged to have a regular practise time scheduled in. Try to avoid late evening practice when body and mind are tired.

How long to practise

Year 4 20 minutes per day 5 days a week

Year 5 & 6 30 minutes per day 5 days a week

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

What to practise

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.

Practise the music stopping to correct mistakes WHERE THEY OCCUR. Zone 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 it. Start with the problem.

Why practise

- 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 recognise 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

His/her 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

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.

Year 4 20 minutes per day 5 days a week
Year 5 & 6 30 minutes per day 5 days a week

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 Practised	Goal
3 - 5	Long tones; easy drills at slow tempo	Warm up of embouchure, breath and instrument; concentrating on producing good tone. Working on Using whole straight bows
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.

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 the 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

When you read this, you will probably be wondering why you thought it would be a good idea for your child to learn an instrument. Everyone goes through phases of boredom or rebellion about practicing, 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 four 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?” (This may be doh, re, mi; or against an open string i.e. for string players; or matching an octave or unison, doh-doh).
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 practise 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. Practise 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 Instrumental Music Teacher to discuss the situation.

