

# INSTRUMENTAL AND VOCAL TUITION FAQs



METHODIST  
LADIES'  
COLLEGE

## HOW DO I ENROL MY DAUGHTER?

All students wishing to enrol for the first time must complete an Application Form.

This includes students with a Council Music Scholarship, Instrumental Music Prize or Choral Prize.

The enrolment form, terms and conditions and fees are available for download from Music in the Parents' Handbook on Wyvern.

## WHAT IS THE IDEAL COMMENCEMENT AGE?

The ideal commencement age for students in Instrumental and Vocal Tuition is based on a range of factors outlined in "Which instrument do we choose?".

The following guide indicates the likely fit of specific instruments to suitable ages for commencing lessons on them:

**K - Year 2:** piano, violin, cello

**Year 3 - 4:** viola, cello, double bass, classical guitar, flute

**Year 5:** clarinet, trumpet, euphonium, oboe, bassoon, French horn, trombone, tuba, harp, acoustic and electric guitar, percussion, alto saxophone, bass guitar.

**Year 6:** voice, drum kit.

Students may commence lessons on a particular instrument at an earlier age subject to approval. The Director of Music would be happy to advise parents needing assistance in this matter.

## WHAT INSTRUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE?

Tuition is offered for the following Instruments:

- **Woodwind:**
- Flute and Piccolo
- Clarinet
- Bass clarinet
- Oboe
- Bassoon
- Alto, tenor and baritone saxophone
- Brass
- Trumpet
- French horn
- Trombone (and Bass Trombone)
- Tuba (and Euphonium/Baritone)
- Strings
- Violin
- Suzuki Violin
- Viola
- Cello
- Double bass
- Harp (Level harp and harpsicles)
- Guitar
- Acoustic
- Classical
- Bass guitar
- Electric
- Jazz
- Keyboard
- Piano
- Piano Suzuki
- Jazz/Popular Keyboard
- Harpsichord/Organ (subject to availability)
- Voice
- Classical (Years 7-12 only)
- Jazz
- Percussion
- Orchestral
- Kit drums

Other instrumental tuition may be available upon request.

## HOW DO WE CHOSE AN INSTRUMENT?

Students should select an instrument that they are attracted to; they should like its sound and appearance. Students may have heard an instrument and formed a strong attachment to it. Other factors should also be carefully considered in selection and enrolment:

- **physiological development and coordination;**
- **personality;**
- **levels of concentration;**
- **previous musical experience and current musical skills;**
- **availability and suitability of the instrument for family circumstances (i.e. transport, appropriate “noise” levels) and**
- **availability of appropriate family support.**

Tuition may be limited by the availability of tutors and instruments, and by the suitability of instruments for individual students.

Electing to enrol in formal instrumental or vocal lessons is a significant personal investment that demands commitment and motivation. Please consider the choice of instrument carefully. Enrolment represents an initial commitment for at least two terms. Thereafter, notice of withdrawal must be given according to the Terms and Conditions of Tuition. Students remain enrolled for as long as they are at the College, unless a Withdrawal Form has been received by the Music Administrator, and required notice served.

Music staff will be happy to assist you in the selection of a suitable instrument for your daughter.

For further advice, please contact the Music Administrator: (08) 9383 0222 - [music@mlc.wa.edu.au](mailto:music@mlc.wa.edu.au)

## CAN I HIRE AN INSTRUMENT?

Students are strongly encouraged to supply their own instruments.

The College provides good quality student models for students in the early stages of tuition. A longer term commitment to instrumental learning demands that students have their own instruments (e.g. after two years).

All instruments, with the exception of flutes, classical guitars, acoustic guitars, and pianos, are available for hire from the Music Department. Priority for hire will be given to students in the early stages of tuition.

Highly specialist instruments (e.g. oboe, bassoon, French Horn) may be available for hire on a long term basis.

The instrument hire charge for most instruments is \$125 per semester.

Instrument hire for oboe and saxophones is \$150 per semester.

Instrument hire for bassoons is \$175 per semester.

For further advice, please contact the Music Administrator: (08) 9383 0222 - [music@mlc.wa.edu.au](mailto:music@mlc.wa.edu.au)

## CAN MY DAUGHTER LEARN THROUGH THE SUZUKI METHOD?

MLC offers lower Junior Years students the option of learning the piano and violin and cello through the Suzuki method\*. Active parental involvement is required in individual lessons, group classes and in the home. Students and their parents are required to attend both individual and group lessons.

All students who elect to learn through the Suzuki method are required to be members of the Suzuki Association.

Parents interested in learning more about the Suzuki method may wish to visit [www.suzukimusicwa.com.au](http://www.suzukimusicwa.com.au)

\* subject to availability.

## WHEN DO LESSONS TAKE PLACE?

Lessons commence in the second week of Term 1 and cease two weeks prior to the completion of the school year.

Lessons are scheduled to take place once a week, although in weeks when a disruption such as a camp or excursion occurs, it may not be possible to schedule a lesson. Every effort will be made to make up these lessons at a later date, but no guarantee can be given that this is possible.

The duration of lessons is as follows:

- **All Instrumental and Vocal lessons: 40 minutes**
- **Suzuki Group Sessions: 60 minutes**
- **Junior Years' Paired Instrumental (not piano) lessons: 40 minutes**

\*Paired lessons are only available by special arrangement or as part of the Year 3 String Programme and Year 5 Instrumental Programme.

All lessons are on an individual basis (except for the Year 3 String Programme and Year 5 Instrumental Programme). Lessons are rotated fortnightly to avoid students regularly missing the same period.

Instrumental and vocal lessons for students in Years 11 and 12 are taught outside of the school timetable (i.e. before or after school). The College is unable to guarantee instrumental or vocal tuition for students from other years outside of normal school hours.

## **HOW CAN I ASSIST MY DAUGHTER?**

Many parents enquire about how they can help encourage their daughter with their musical studies. Family attitudes and values towards music, along with careful parental support, will almost certainly be critical to the progress your daughter makes and to her acquisition of life-enriching music skills that may range from basic instrumental competency to high-level expertise.

Evidence suggests that while it is helpful to encourage your daughter to adopt a regular practice routine, simply enforcing regular "timed" practice sessions is not likely to be effective in the long term. Practice does not make perfect, it makes permanent. Only good quality, focused practice can make perfect. Two key indicators may help you gauge the quality of your daughter's practice and give cues for support or intervention.

- **Is there evidence of fluency and fun? - Is your daughter able to play through pieces, set by her teacher, for her own enjoyment, and for the enjoyment of others (i.e. you and your family)? Is there evidence of personal connection to some of the pieces she is playing? Does your daughter play for fun and for "practice"?**
- **Is there evidence of attention to detail? - Is your daughter attempting to fix things that aren't sounding right? Does she have strategies to do so? Is she persevering with a challenging passage or is she just going from one piece/exercise to another, regardless of errors and in the absence of fluency, until the agreed practice time "is up"?**

A recent review of research literature indicates clearly that enjoyment of music, increased motivation, self-esteem and student satisfaction with instrumental lessons are enhanced when parents:

- **Seek children's opinions about appropriate parental involvement**
- **Negotiate practice issues with children rather than imposing them - within the parameters that music teachers have set**
- **Help create a structured home-environment (time and space) for practice**
- **Take a keen interest in maintaining positive teacher-pupil relationships**
- **Communicate with teachers about their child's progress,**
- **"Remain a supremely interested audience."**

(Creech, 2010)

## **WHAT IS THE RECOMMENDED AMOUNT OF PRACTICE?**

The recommended amount of practice is always dependent on a wide range of factors. Parents should be guided by their daughter's Music Tutor.

A student who begins to play an instrument in the Junior Years will probably need to practise well for at least 15 minutes a day, on at least five days of the week during the first year, if they are to make progress that sustains interest and makes playing enjoyable.

Many students can be encouraged to practise for significantly longer periods of time, or may do so from high levels of self-regulation and motivation.

The following is a guide only:

- **1st year of learning: 15 - 20 minutes per day**
- **2nd year of learning: 15 - 30 minutes per day**
- **3rd year of learning: 20 - 60 minutes per day**
- **4th year of learning: 20 - 90 minutes per day**

Two well-focused practice sessions in a day may be more effective than one longer one.

Some students may be learning more than one instrument and evidence suggests that practice on one may positively impact progress on the other.

The rate of progress and the amount of pleasure derived from playing an instrument depends largely upon the amount of practice, the regularity of practice, the level of concentration and the application of good strategies during the practice routine. It is very important that students practice as soon as possible after their lesson (i.e. on the same day). This enables new strategies, concepts and understandings to be reinforced and consolidated through immediate practice.

Above all, participate: listen to your daughter and encourage music making at home, meet her teacher, attend concerts and recitals at MLC and at other venues. Listen to music at home and in the car. Sing together. Accept your daughter's performances as the gifts that they are; encourage her to share those gifts without feeling anxious about making mistakes.

### **WHAT MUSIC RESOURCES CAN I PURCHASE?**

All music books, Music Record Books, strings, reeds and other resources are purchased through the Music Department and charged to your account. In this way they become available as quickly as possible.

If you do not wish your daughter's music and accessories to be purchased through the College, please inform the Music Administrator: (08) 9383 0222 - [music@mlc.wa.edu.au](mailto:music@mlc.wa.edu.au)

### **WHAT ABOUT EXTERNAL MUSIC EXAMINATIONS?**

Music examinations have been shown to have a range of potentially positive outcomes for students. These include:

- **Motivation and inspiration; working from a carefully structured syllabus towards a definite goal;**
- **A measure of personal progress and attainment against nationally or internationally recognised benchmarks;**
- **An objective guide to improve musical skills;**
- **Assessment by a respected and independent musician who has been highly trained and is constantly monitored, and**
- **Performance opportunities**

(Adapted from Taylor, 2005)

There is also evidence that music examinations can have a range of negative outcomes:

- **Increased anxiety;**
- **Increased performance anxiety;**
- **Feelings of failure and disappointment to parents and teachers;**
- **Limiting repertoire;**
- **Demotivating because very extended periods of time may be spent on just a few examination pieces or technical requirements, and**
- **Limiting engagement by privileging performance from notation above all other forms of music-making (i.e. playing by ear, improvising, composing).**

However valuable formal music examinations may be to some students, progress, enjoyment and senses of achievement

are not necessarily dependent upon them. Parents, Music Tutors and students themselves will have views about the appropriateness of music examinations. The role of examinations in instrumental learning programmes should form part of discussions between parents, students and music tutors.

Having agreed that a student should be entered for Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB), Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) or Trinity College music examinations, Music Tutors will then enter the student through the College.

The cost of this examination will be charged to student accounts.

### **HOW WILL STUDENTS' INSTRUMENTS BE KEPT SECURE?**

All instruments, whether hired or privately owned, must be stored, when on College premises, in the lockers or Bartok Room on the lower level of the Music Department, unless otherwise directed.

All instruments left in the Music Department must be properly labelled. Luggage labels may be purchased from the Music Coordinator.

Instrument cases should be identified with the student's name, address and telephone number.

Students are responsible for the security of their own instruments.

In the case of College-owned instruments, loss or damage to College instruments outside the College premises is the parents' responsibility.

The College's insurance policy does not cover the loss or damage to private instruments while on College premises.