

Godstowe

Individual Music Teaching

Dear Parents

Music is an important part of the curriculum and School life at Godstowe. The School has achieved an enviable reputation for excellence in music and many pupils contribute to group activities, such as choir and orchestra.

Pupils are encouraged to take individual instrument or singing lessons and to study music theory.

Please find the following attached:

Lesson Scheduling and Payment

Information for Parents

Individual Music Lessons, Practices and Activities

Information for Pupils

Q&A

Information on lessons, practices, exams and practical arrangements

Indication of Interest Form

To be returned to the Music Department, if appropriate

We hope that this information will be useful as you consider individual music teaching at Godstowe. If you have any queries or wish to discuss aspects of individual music teaching, please contact Mr Stuart Bonner, Director of Performing Arts.

Yours sincerely



David Gainer
Headmaster

Music Lessons

Individual Music Teaching

Lesson Scheduling and Payment

Notes for Parents

At Godstowe, individual music lessons are scheduled predominantly after school. Lessons for pupils in Lodge, Forms I, II, LIII and MIII may sometimes be arranged during lesson times on a rotational basis, however, every effort will be made for these pupils only to miss either PE, Art, DT or PSHE lessons and not other parts of the curriculum. We also endeavour to ensure that clashes with scheduled group activities do not occur.

Mr Stuart Bonner, Director of Performing Arts, maintains a register of Godstowe approved music teachers. He will advise and guide parents in their choice of music teacher, and will facilitate the initial contact between parents and music teachers.

Parents should discuss the following aspects with the music teacher: number of lessons and practices required, timing and frequency of lessons, and associated costs. Once an arrangement has been agreed, parents will enter into an individual contract for the provision of individual music lessons with the chosen music teacher and will pay the teacher directly for the music lessons. Payments must be made by the end of the first school week of each term before each term's lessons are in full session. Half a term's notice is required if pupils wish to terminate their lessons.

Music Lessons

Individual Music Teaching

Practices and Activities

Notes for Pupils

All girls who have individual music lessons have allocated times for their lessons and boarders have allocated times for their practices.

Please note:

1. You must check your lesson time and attend, as arranged. If a lesson is missed, it still has to be paid for.
2. Having agreed to learn an instrument you are responsible for doing the required amount of practice each day to make good progress.
3. Boarders: Your music teachers will give you allocated practice times either in the music school or in the houses during lunch times or after school and at weekends. You are expected to do all of these practices. Please sign the attendance book and write down the time you spent in the allocated room. There is also room to write down in your yellow music notebooks the amount of practice you do so that your teachers can see.
4. The practice times are set in stone, ie you must adhere to them and not miss them for any reason. We cannot have the excuse that because it is nice and sunny outside and you want to be with your friends, then it is OK to skip the practice (or lesson) – it is not OK!

Situations may arise when a teacher asks you to attend a meeting or needs to see you at the same time as your music lesson or practice slot. All you need to do is to explain to them that this is the case and I am sure they will understand and either excuse you from the meeting or arrange another more appropriate time for them to see you.

People understand if you have a problem, but they get frustrated when, having made a commitment, you do not stick to it. This not only applies to music lessons and practices but also to music activities such as choir, orchestra, wind band etc.

5. If you have any problems with how a passage is to be played or practised then all you have to do is ask your teacher, as you do with academic work and they will explain. What is frustrating is making the same mistakes over and over again either because you do not know how it is meant to sound or because you are practising it incorrectly.
6. If you are in Lower School and your individual music lesson takes place during the course of the afternoon, then it is your responsibility to ensure that you catch up on the work you have missed in your academic lesson

Finally, it is a good idea to write down all of your commitments in your diary/planner, including the times they take place so that you can keep track of what you have agreed to do. We all know that school life is very busy for you. If you find that clashes occur and you cannot keep all of the commitments you make, then you will need to talk to someone about it. We suggest that you explain this either to your tutor or form teacher. We want you to be happy and fulfilled. Everything in life can be sorted out if we all go about it in the right way.

Music Lessons

Individual Music Teaching

Q&A

Information on lessons, practices, exams and practical arrangement

Learning a musical instrument can be exciting, challenging, stimulating and rewarding. There are often many questions that parents and pupils would like to ask and we hope that this document will cover most of them and therefore be helpful to you.

1. **Which instruments are taught at Godstowe?**

A large variety; all the instruments on the accompanying form.

2. **How many instruments may my daughter / son learn?**

It is suggested that pupils in Lodge, Form I and Form II learn only **one** musical instrument as until the LIIs one instrument is quite often enough. From the LIIs onwards it is possible to start a second instrument but only if pupils can achieve 20-30 minutes' daily practice on each instrument. It is worth considering the additional practices required in addition to prep, clubs, sports and any other subjects. This can become an unrealistic proposition even for the most organised and motivated pupil.

3. **What are the practice arrangements?**

Boarders have timetabled practices, either in the music school, in their boarding house, or a combination of the two. Usually they are given four weekday practices to be done at lunchtime or after school, and they are also expected to do one or two practices at weekends. Weekly boarders are similarly given weekday practices, but often only three because they can do Friday and weekend practices at home. Those taking two instruments are normally given three weekday practices on each instrument with extra practice again expected at weekends. Day girls are expected to do their daily practice at home and it is a good idea to set a regular time for this and aim to stick to it whenever possible.

4. **How will my daughter/son know when to attend her/his lesson?**

Lesson times are agreed between teachers and parents. Parents must ensure that their daughter/son is aware of the lesson time. Lodge and Form I pupils are usually escorted to and from their lessons by the instrumental teacher.

5. **Will I be able to speak to the instrumental/vocal teacher if I have any concerns or questions?**

The teachers are usually most happy to return your call or enquiry and prefer to keep in touch. Where this is difficult for reasons of distance or language the teacher can often be contacted by email or fax through the school. Teachers are, of course, just as happy to speak to a guardian or grandparent or other responsible adult should the need arise. Also, contact can be made through the housemistress who can help to sort out any queries. There is normally an opportunity to meet those instrumental teachers who are available at our annual music teachers/parents evening in January although some may not be able to attend due to professional engagements or other commitments.

6. **My daughter is boarding and we have no piano at home. Is this a problem for pianists?**

It could be! This is because there are many weeks of holiday and weekend exeats, too. Even if a pupil makes good progress at school, no further progress can be made during holidays without an instrument. This is especially important when an exam or concert is approaching. It really is essential for anyone learning the piano to have access to a piano for most weeks of the year.

7. **Will my daughter take music exams?**

Some pupils are entered for the Associated Board music exams each term although this is at the discretion of the teacher and the Director of Performing Arts and, of course, with the consent of a parent or guardian. Not all pupils are suited to taking regular music exams and each girl can progress at her own pace when taking individual lessons, so there is no set rule about this. The exam sessions take place in school once each term and teachers are always assessing whether a pupil is likely to be ready, once they have been preparing the pieces, scales, aural and sight reading for some time. Practice is always important, but for those parents who wish for their daughters to pass the exams, encouraging them to practice is essential.
8. **Can my daughter take music theory exams, too?**

Because some pupils need to achieve Grade 5 Theory in order to progress to the higher grades on their chosen instrument, there are small group theory classes for Grade 3-5 provided by the school for pupils when this is necessary. This may only result in Grade 3 or 5 being taken depending on progress and assessment of the teacher.
9. **Does the school have a loan scheme for orchestral instruments?**

Yes! The school has a hire scheme. Some local music shops also run their own schemes, but please always check first the requirements of the instrumental teacher, as makes and sizes (and cost) can vary enormously.
10. **How much do lessons cost?**

The cost of lessons is determined by the individual music teachers.
11. **Are there any additional costs?**

Yes. The most regular expense is the purchase of music. However, depending on the instrument chosen other costs can include: music case, instrument case, piano tuning, bow repairs, strings, reeds, general repairs, insurance, etc.
12. **Is it possible to have two teachers – one at school and another for extra tuition at home?**

This is not a good idea as it can be very confusing for the pupil and can result in too much practice being set and possibly conflicting views. There are, occasionally, very special reasons why it may be worth considering this but it would be necessary to discuss this with both teachers concerned beforehand as well as the Director of Performing Arts so that we all give the same message and line of instruction.
13. **What opportunities are there for group music making?**

There are plenty of opportunities within school. When your daughter has reached a certain ability on her chosen instrument she will be asked to join the appropriate group. If she learns the piano, group participation is less probable unless she has developed the skills to accompany or play with other children.
14. **Are there opportunities to perform?**

Yes, there are various options. Class performance of their practiced pieces is always encouraged. When your daughter has done sufficient practice and is confident enough, there are other possibilities to play in assemblies, recital concerts, major school concerts and for the advanced players there are Chamber Music competitions and the like held outside of school.
15. **What do I need to do if I wish to terminate lessons?**

It is important to write to the music teacher as soon as possible once you have come to this decision. Notice of at least one half term is expected to be given to the teacher concerned.

Every effort is made to ensure pupils can enjoy playing an instrument. As with many activities, progress depends so much on the amount of work put in but we hope this will not discourage anyone from having a go.

Music Lessons

Individual Music Teaching

Indication of Interest Form

To be completed and returned to Mr Stuart Bonner, Director of Performing Arts

Pupil Name: _____

Form: _____

Age: _____

I would like my daughter/son to have individual music lessons starting (date): _____

Chosen Instrument (please tick as appropriate)

Piano

Flute

Suzuki Piano

Oboe

Violin/Viola

Clarinet

Cello

Saxophone

Double Bass

Bassoon

Guitar

Trumpet

Singing

French Horn

Trombone

Music Theory

I/We have read the accompanying notes

Our daughter/son has already had lessons

Our daughter/son is a complete beginner

(Please tick as appropriate)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Continued overleaf

For those requiring piano lessons (please tick as appropriate):

I/We already have a piano to practice and play on

I/We intend to obtain a piano before she/he starts lessons

For those requesting other instruments (please tick as appropriate):

I/We already have an instrument in good condition

I/We would like to hire or purchase an instrument

For those who already play other instruments (please complete as appropriate):

My/Our daughter/son already has lessons (instrument)

with (name of teacher)

For pupils in Lodge, Forms I, II, LIII and MIII (please tick as appropriate):

We consent to lessons being scheduled during lesson times

Name:

Address:

Telephone: _____ Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____