



# ST PETER'S

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

## PERIPATETIC MUSIC TUITION AT ST PETER'S

Music-making lies at the heart of St Peter's and the school offers a wide range of musical instrument and vocal tuition. A dozen visiting music teachers (VMTs), also known as peripatetic teachers, are available to teach pupils during the school day. These teachers are specialists in their chosen fields which can include some rare and endangered instruments such as the double bass, harp, trombone and French horn.

The benefits of learning an instrument are widely documented; in Britain, 90% of the pupils in the top academic sets of secondary schools learn at least one musical instrument. Benefits include **literacy, numeracy, long term and working memory function, confidence, fine and gross motor control, lung capacity** (wind and brass instruments), **spatial skills, social skills and learning strategies**, amongst others.

One of the most common regrets in adults is that they either did not learn a musical instrument when they were younger, or that they did, and gave it up. At St Peter's, we are committed to helping our young people invest their time and energies wisely in this area and supporting them throughout their time at the school so that they can make the most of the opportunity to learn an instrument while they are here.

### When to start

There is no hard and fast rule as to when a child should start to learn an instrument; it very much depends on the child's overall learning journey, their ability to focus, their literacy skills and their keenness to start an instrument. Certain instruments (e.g. the string family, the piano, the guitar) are dependent upon hand size; others (e.g. the brass family) upon lung capacity and power. As a general rule, however, the earlier a child starts, the better their chance of maximising their potential.

### Choosing the right instrument

Children are generally inspired to take up instruments they hear or see being played. Many of them instinctively want to take up an instrument for which they feel a particular affinity - perhaps they like the sound, the complexity or the look of it. This is often the best route to take in the first instance. However, it is worth bearing in mind that many children have much greater exposure to rock and pop instruments than orchestral ones. Learning an orchestral instrument first will usually enable an older child or young adult to learn a rock or pop instrument very quickly later on.

### Taster lessons

Pupils at St Peter's are encouraged to try out a particular instrument through a 15 minute taster lesson with an appropriate teacher. These can be arranged via the Director of Music, are free of charge and often greatly help the pupil and parent decide which instrument is right for them.

### Optional Extras Form / Contract

Once a particular instrument has been chosen (this includes singing), parents are required to fill out an Optional Extras form from the office and hand it in. This constitutes a contract with the peripatetic teacher, who will be allocated for the pupil according to availability by the Director of Music. The terms of the contract are:

- Fees (currently £20.50 per 30-minute lesson) are payable by Week 3 of the ongoing term

- A term's written notice is required to cease lessons
- Unpaid fees will result in lessons being postponed with immediate effect
- The contract may be terminated by the teacher at any time

It is worth noting that the contract is between the parent(s) and the peripatetic teacher, not the school. Once the teacher has been appointed, any questions regarding tuition and lesson times should in the first instance be addressed directly with the teacher.

It is strongly recommended that parents keep in regular contact with the peripatetic teacher, whose contact details are available via the school office. Recommended is a **practice notebook**, updated weekly with a brief report on the lesson and some aims or practice recommendations for the pupil. This is a very useful point of contact for parent and pupil and it is important that the pupil is encouraged to follow the advice given each week. Any questions regarding lessons, practice, performances etc. can be written by the parents for the teacher's attention in the same manner.

#### Attendance, Organisation and Punctuality

Music pupils at St Peter's are strongly encouraged to develop **good organisational skills** and attend their music lessons **punctually and independently**, especially if in the Senior School.

They need to remember their **music** (preferably in a **case or music bag**), **practice notebook** and, if applicable, **instrument** on the day of their lesson.

Pupils (especially vocalists) may be given loose pieces of paper in the course of their studies so a folder with plastic sleeve pockets is highly recommended in order to keep these safe and well-organised. It is essential that all instrument cases and bags are **clearly labelled**.

It is expected that all pupils check with the **Music Lesson Noticeboard** (outside the Music Room) on a weekly basis to **make a note of the time of their lessons**. Years 5-8 have a section in their **prep diaries** each week for this purpose.

**Pupils up to and including Year 4 will be collected, if necessary, from their classrooms by the peripatetic teacher** (although they will be encouraged to make their own way to their lessons). **Pupils in Years 5-8 are required to make their own way to lessons**. If they do not appear on time, they will be collected, when possible, after 10 minutes. If the pupil cannot be located (on occasion this is no easy task) then they may end up missing their lesson altogether.

#### Illness / Absence

**Pupil illness or unscheduled absence** count as a **missed lesson** and are **charged as normal**.

In *some* instances, a lesson *can* be rearranged for a scheduled absence; **however** please note that this **must occur at least a week before the scheduled lesson** and remains at the discretion of the peripatetic teacher. It is up to the pupil / parents to advise the peripatetic teacher of any unscheduled or non-calendar trips or activities which will result in the pupil missing their lesson.

**Teacher illness or absence** will result in the **lesson being rescheduled** (where possible), **deducted from the bill or refunded**, whichever is the more convenient.

#### Timetabling and Rotation Policy

Lesson times are rotated on a continuous basis throughout the term so as to lessen any impact with the academic timetable.

Any pupil may miss any academic lesson, **apart** from pupils who receive **extra support in Maths, English or Social Skills**, who are required not to miss lessons on the subject in question. In exceptional circumstances, and with permission from the parents, these lessons may be missed in order to accommodate the music lesson.

Very rarely, some pre- or post-academic timetable slots are available and it is possible, through an agreement with the teacher in question, for a pupil to attend these on a regular basis.

### Weekly Practice

**Regular practice is essential in order for the pupil to improve.** The amount of practice required varies depending on the age and standard of the child. As a general rule, “little and often” is more valuable than the occasional long practice session, but the quality of practice is more important than the quantity.

Advice on practice should always be sought from the peripatetic teacher and the supporting role of parents in this aspect is usually essential. The Director of Music is always willing to provide advice on practice strategies if required.

### Examinations

Music examinations are an excellent way to set aspirational targets and encourage progress in the pupil. The peripatetic teacher is the best port of call to advise when the pupil may be ready for such an examination.

**ABRSM (Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music) and Trinity Guildhall music examinations** take place off site and are usually organised by the peripatetic teacher in liaison with the parents.

Any general questions regarding music examinations should be put in the first instance to the peripatetic teacher, although the Director of Music may give general advice on procedure and some technical aspects of the examinations.

### Performances

Performance and presentation play an important role in the ethos at St Peter's and we have the busiest musical performance timetable of any prep school in the South West, with over thirty different musical performances per year.

Some of these are open to all comers (such as the Junior and Senior Music Assemblies); others are invitation concerts for pupils and ensembles (such as the Summer and Evening Concerts).

All pupils who study a musical discipline are heartily recommended to perform in a music assembly at least twice a year in order to practise their performance skills and celebrate their musical progress.

### Music Ensembles and Activity Groups

Once pupils have a basic command of their instrument, by far the most enjoyable way to share music-making is in a music activity group or ensemble. Vocally, St Peter's is well-placed to help singers, with four choirs available - **Syncaeters** for Years 1/2, **Lower School Choir** for Years 3-5, **Upper School Choir** for Years 6-8 and **Chamber Choir** (by invitation) for aspiring choristers.

Also available are **Wind Band** and at times other *ad hoc* music ensembles which are organised depending on the availability of the teaching staff and pupils.

For pupils who are of an intermediate or advanced standard, it is strongly recommended to try out an external music ensemble, such as the many County orchestras and groups available. These have excellent leaders and enable pupils to learn ensemble skills at an impressive rate; they also count towards the overall Performing Arts grade in the St Peter's Baccalaureate.

### Instrumental Hire

St Peter's has an extensive and growing stock of instruments for hire, including many “endangered” instruments (e.g. double bass, trombone, French horn, viola, tenor saxophone). The details of instruments available may be obtained from the Director of Music.

Instruments are hired out upon completion of a simple form at the following rate:

- 1<sup>st</sup> year of hire - £17.50 per term
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year of hire - £27.50 per term
- 3<sup>rd</sup> and subsequent years of hire - £50 per term

### Parents Attending Lessons

Parents are always welcome to attend peripatetic music lessons, although it is recommended to contact the teacher in question beforehand as some pupils (particularly vocalists) can be surprisingly inhibited if parents attend!

Occasional attendance is an excellent way to stay in touch with the pupil's progress and can be very helpful for both parent, pupil and teacher on many levels.

Regular attendance is rarely necessary and may be counterproductive for both teacher and pupil.

### Practice books/Feedback

At the end of each term, the peripatetic teachers and parents are encouraged to make contact (via email, telephone or a practice notebook/shared drive document) in order to discuss progress and targets.

### St Peter's Baccalaureate

Regular practice, performance, examinations, music ensemble participation, progress, effort and organisation are all aspects which are reflected in the Performing Arts area of the St Peter's Baccalaureate.

### The Role of the Director of Music

Please note that since **the contract is between the parent(s) and the peripatetic teacher**, the role of the Director of Music with regards to the above is as follows:

- To initially assign a peripatetic teacher for the pupil
- To arrange a taster lesson if required
- To take an interest in the progress of the pupil with the peripatetic teacher, especially when liaising re school performances and examinations
- To mediate should any disputes / difficulties arise.

Parents are reminded that, once lessons have begun, all queries regarding timetabling, progress, examinations etc. should primarily be directed to the peripatetic teacher as it is they, not the Director of Music, who oversees these areas.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this. We hope that your child spends many enjoyable years learning their chosen instrument and we at St Peter's look forward to helping them on their learning journey.

Chris Hoban  
Faculty Head of Performing Arts  
September 2023

### PERIPATETIC MUSIC TEACHERS

Mrs Fiona Austen	<i>Harp &amp; piano</i>	fiona.austen@stpetersprepschool.co.uk
Mrs Candice Hamel	<i>Flute</i>	candice.hamel@stpetersprepschool.co.uk
Ms Katie Hole	<i>Clarinet &amp; saxophone</i>	katie.hole@stpetersprepschool.co.uk

<b>Ms Marie Kelsall</b>	<i>Drama</i>	marie.kelsall@stpetersprepschool.co.uk
<b>Mr Peter Manfield</b>	<i>Brass</i>	peter.manfield@stpetersprepschool.co.uk
<b>Mrs Helen Mountain</b>	<i>Voice &amp; piano</i>	helen.mountain@stpetersprepschool.co.uk
<b>Ms Jenni Moussali</b>	<i>Violin</i>	jenni.moussali@stpetersprepschool.co.uk
<b>Mrs Sarah Nelmes</b>	<i>Piano</i>	sarah.nelmes@stpetersprepschool.co.uk
<b>Mr Will Paley</b>	<i>Clarinet, saxophone &amp; flute</i>	will.paley@stpetersprepschool.co.uk
<b>Mrs Sara Ware</b>	<i>Brass</i>	sara.ware@stpetersprepschool.co.uk
<b>Mr Josh Williams</b>	<i>Drums</i>	joshua.williams@stpetersprepschool.co.uk
<b>Mrs Helen Wills</b>	<i>'Cello &amp; piano</i>	helen.wills@stpetersprepschool.co.uk