



**Education, Leisure and Housing**



# **Orkney Schools Instrumental Music Service**

**Information for Parents –  
Frequently Asked Questions**

## **Introduction**

Orkney Islands Council Instrumental Music Service currently offers pupils tuition in brass, woodwind and bowed strings. There is a team of eight professional instrumental instructors teaching over 500 pupils weekly in our schools.

Following the introduction of Affiliate Registration for Instrumental Music Instructors in 2018 by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), five of our instructors have gained registration and the remaining four will seek registration when possible.

Orkney is one of the few Scottish local authorities which does not charge for instrumental instruction or instrument hire.

## **Questions and Answers**

### **How does my child get involved?**

Every child who is interested has the opportunity to apply for lessons. Orchestral strings, woodwind and brass are available from P4 upwards.

The Instrumental Music Instructors will carry out simple pitch and rhythmic tests, such as keeping a pulse or clapping a rhythm. They will look at the child's physical suitability to the instrument, and for general skills which include:

- Listening to and following instructions.
- Concentration.
- Coping with being out of class and catching up with work.
- Taking turns.
- Behaviour.

The class teacher / head teacher and music teacher may also be consulted in the selection process.

### **What if my child is unsuccessful?**

On average we teach 25% of the P4 to S6 age range – the highest among Scottish Local Authorities – however demand always exceeds available places.

Some pupils may be added to a waiting list for that academic year and will be contacted if a place becomes available.

Pupils can reapply the following year or apply for multiple instruments, however tuition will only be offered on one instrument.

### **What is expected of pupils?**

- Practise regularly at home.
- Attend lessons, remembering to bring instrument and music each week.
- Attend ensembles when appropriate (contributing to school and wider community).

Musical progress and development are best achieved from a balance of weekly lessons, individual practice and group music making.

### **When are the lessons?**

Lessons are normally taught during the school day and pupils will be released from class in order to attend. Where possible secondary pupils are timetabled on a rotation basis to avoid missing the same subject every week.

### **What happens when lessons start?**

Once lessons have started there is a trial period of a few months to help both pupil and teacher decide if progress is satisfactory.

### **Are there any costs?**

Although lessons are free, there are additional costs including music books and consumables such as reeds, rosin and replacement strings.

### **Will I have to buy an instrument?**

Instruments are available to borrow free of charge.

At a later stage pupils are encouraged to buy their own instrument after consultation with their instructor. There is a VAT-free purchase scheme available to help with buying new instruments.

### **How will I learn about my child's progress?**

There may be weekly comments in your child's practice diary.

After the trial period of lessons you will receive feedback on progress.

Parents can get in touch about their child's progress via the school.

### **How can I support my child's learning?**

You don't need to have a musical background to be encouraging and supportive. Always be positive during the early stages of learning. You can:

- Provide a suitable practice area.
- Help establish practice routines.
- Be aware of lesson times/days and ensure your child is prepared.

### **Which instruments are not taught through the Instrumental Music Service?**

Guitar, bass guitar, ukulele, drum kit, keyboard and tuned percussion are taught through class music teachers. Annual funding from Creative Scotland's Youth Music Initiative provides additional tuition in percussion and guitar.

## **Why learn an instrument?**

Learning to play a musical instrument has many benefits including enhanced co-ordination, developing social skills and building confidence.

Many studies have linked instrumental playing to improvements in mathematical and reading / comprehension skills, along with increased memory and reduced stress levels.

Most importantly it's fun!

## **Contact**

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