

Getting the most out of LGS Music: singing and instrumental lessons

We are so pleased that you are taking on an instrument! Music-making is so often a way to better learning, better health and better relationships. With your teacher's help, all sorts of doors might open to you that you never imagined could be possible!

Our overriding aim is to provide musical opportunities for all pupils at LGS; with this in mind, it is hoped that this document will provide a useful reference point for pupils, teachers and parents who are involved in music-making at the school.

Our superb team of Visiting Music Teachers is the lifeblood of a thriving music scene at LGS. VMTs are self-employed and liaise directly with parents to arrange lessons, contracts and invoices. This affords a degree of flexibility and enables a personal approach that brings both educational and pastoral benefits to our pupils.

In line with our duty of care to pupils and to all who work at LGS, the school is keen to highlight a few things that will ensure smooth running of lessons. Many of these points draw together what is already widely understood but it helps to have them all in one place!

Safeguarding:

Parents may contact a VMT via the teacher's personal email or phone number but pupils must *never* do so. If a pupil wishes to contact his or her teacher directly, he or she must do so using their school email address to email his or her teacher at their school email address. VMT email addresses are available via Mary Bloomfield (bloomfieldm@leicestergrammar.org.uk), or the school website.

It is also vital that parents communicate with VMTs about any particular or additional needs that their child may have. VMTs do not have the same access to pupil information as class teachers who are employed by the school and so will not know automatically what your child's needs are.

Timetabling:

Pupils should expect their lessons to rotate through their timetable so that they do not miss the same lesson more than once per half term. There are a few exceptions to this:

- Pupils in Year 11 have first priority for fixed lesson slots in break and lunchtimes.
- Sixth form pupils should be able to fix their lessons in a free period.
- Pupils who learn more than one instrument in school should aim for one lesson to be in a fixed slot.

It is reasonable for pupils or parents to request particular slots and for VMTs to aim to accommodate this. In the interests of fairness, however, the rotation system must be the norm. If there is a particularly urgent request for a pupil not to miss a particular subject, such a request will normally need to be considered by the relevant Head of Year (Senior School) or the Deputy Head Academic (Junior School).

A key responsibility of pupils is to communicate politely with their class teacher when they have a timetabled instrumental lesson that means they will miss part or all of the class lesson. This must be done at least a week in advance so that any contingency plans can be made for catching up on the work – and as a matter of courtesy.

Missed Lessons:

Lessons that are missed through no fault of the teacher can expect to be charged for. In practice, some of our VMTs may be able to reschedule a missed lesson, but others, who are in for only one or two days, may not be able to be as accommodating.

Online Lessons:

These have been a great help throughout the pandemic. Indeed, for many, such lessons were a lifeline that helped maintain a sense of normality and wellbeing. In normal times, however, face-to-face lessons clearly represent best practice. As such, we would expect online lessons to take place only during the holidays as a supplement to face-to-face lessons or where a pupil is obliged to self-isolate. Online lessons should not usually take place out of normal hours or in place of a missed face-to-face lesson.

Participation:

All instrumental and singing pupils are warmly invited and expected to take part in at least one ensemble or choir. Making music in a group is an enjoyable way to extend our musical learning and to socialise – as well as being available for free! There are no auditions for our ensembles; pupils need only an instrument or voice and a desire to have fun!

Ensembles and choirs are advertised at the entrance to B Wing and all pupils are welcome, whether or not they learn their instrument in school.

Rather like when a pupil is selected for a sports fixture, pupils are expected to take part in any concerts for which they are eligible. Concert dates are published and advertised well in advance.

Equipment:

It is vital that pupils have an instrument that they can use at home as well as at school so that good progress can be made. Some instruments are available to borrow or hire from the school or from a teacher. Each instrumental teacher can advise on the best instrument to buy for each pupil's age, stage and budget.

Pupils should bring their school planners to each lesson along with music books and any other notebooks or manuscript paper that their teacher requires.

Practice:

From the earliest stages of school life, young people are expected to read by themselves every day in order to progress in their learning. Much the same can be said about learning an instrument! Regular, daily practice is needed for pupils to achieve their goals as musicians and will lead to really satisfying lessons in which learning and enjoyment can really take off!

Conversely, those who do not play their instrument a little each day can expect to feel frustrated at their lack of progress and enjoyment. Please press home to your son or daughter the importance of “little and often”!

Exams:

Pupils and parents are encouraged to view instrumental exams as an important goal and motivation for improving their musicianship and skill. They can also contribute to gaining UCAS points for older students and are therefore both a satisfying and strategic objective.

Instrumental music exams take place in school once a term, with both Trinity College and ABRSM sending examiners for face-to-face exams. Your child’s music teacher will advise on whether and when they are ready to take their exam, and the music administrator will coordinate the rehearsals and timetabling with the music teachers and appropriate exam boards.