

Frequently Asked Questions:

My child missed their lesson, will the lesson be re-scheduled?

No: with almost 300 children receiving instrumental lessons, timetabling arrangements are incredibly complex. As stated in your contract, we agree to provide 30 lessons per academic year, averaging 10 per term. If your child does not receive their quota of lessons, then you will be reimbursed accordingly at the end of the summer term. Occasionally we are able to re-schedule lessons when we are aware of school trips and visits which coincide. (Please note this is not possible with continued alternative commitments ie, sporting opportunities).

My child has "lost" their instrument, how can we track it down?!

Firstly, the chances are that it's somewhere very sensible! As soon as you realise, check around your home and child's classroom to see if they missed it when looking. With almost 300 instruments around the school, many with similar cases, we provide a key ring for each child to be attached to the case as a way of marking your child's case non-permanently. Please regularly ensure that your child's name is always visible on this tag. Another child may have accidentally taken it and a clear name will help them notice and return it. If it's still not anywhere obvious, leave a note in the school office for Miss Campbell, who will be able to investigate further.

We had an accident at home with the instrument, should we get it repaired?

No. Once again, please leave a note for Miss Campbell who will decide the best way forward in terms of repairing the damage - usually by sending the instrument to one of our preferred repairers. However, as stated in your contract, you may be invoiced to cover the costs. We do recommend that you have your borrowed DHJS instrument put onto your home contents insurance, particularly important for the more expensive instruments.

I've heard that music exams take place at DHJS, when will my child be put in for an exam?

We hold Associated Board (ABRSM) music exams only once a year, in April. This is exclusively for pupils who learn with us at school. Music exams are one way of assessing pupil progress and for some children they prove to be a focus and structured way of developing their musical ability. However, for others it is not a route that they are interested in. Music Tutors will invite pupils to take an exam when they are ready, but we will not insist that any child take an exam who doesn't want to. It usually takes children 2/3 years of learning an instrument at DHJS before they are entered for an exam; it is incredibly rare for a Year 3 child to take one. It is not possible for our tutors to prepare children for exams at other times of the year and request that you don't enter your child externally for an instrument they learn at school.

My child isn't really enjoying their instrument. Can we swap to another one?

Learning an instrument is really hard work! Once the children have got to a certain point through lessons (with lots of practise in between!) they often begin to really enjoy what they are doing and it becomes less hard work. We try to provide extra support for children whose interest is waning but it is essential you keep us informed of how they are feeling so we can help. If we have done all we can and the child is showing us they are really trying to make the most out of their instrument, then there is the possibility we will be able to swap them to something else, usually at the beginning of a school year. If you decide that your child should stop taking lessons with us, it is important you let us know **in writing to Miss Campbell** with at least a **half term's notice** before the lessons and payment owed will cease. This provides us with enough admin time to manage the situation, including seeing if we can try to reignite their interest.



Dulwich Hamlet Junior School



Supporting Your Child's Instrumental Tuition at School



For further information about music at Dulwich Hamlet
please contact:

Miss Campbell
Music Coordinator
scampbell17.210@lgflmail.org

School office Tel: 020 7525 9188

A practical guide
for parents and carers

Congratulations!



Your child has just embarked on the exciting journey of learning a musical instrument with us at DHJS. We hope that this will be just the beginning of an enjoyable experience that will contribute towards a life-long love of music.

Support and encouragement is essential from both school and an adult at home who is involved with practice to enable our 'budding' young musicians to make steady progress.

As they improve, your child will value what they are achieving and have a strong sense of the positive effect that their music creates around them. They may even be invited to join one of our ensembles after a year or two of learning!

We hope that this leaflet will be a useful guide to you as parents and carers in supporting your child's early stages of learning a musical instrument.



Children will receive a weekly group lesson from one of our team of peripatetic music tutors in the music room specified on the timetable.

Lessons are usually organised on a rota timetable system - the idea being that the children do not miss the same part of a curriculum lesson every week.

Copies of the music timetables are provided as a hard copy for the children to take and keep at home. Copies can be found in their classrooms and outside the main music room. They are also available to download from our website: www.dulwichhamletjuniorschool.org.uk

It is ultimately the child's responsibility to get themselves to their music lesson on time, however, all staff members will support children if they ask for help in working out their lesson time. We have clocks available in all classrooms and outside in the playgrounds for them to check.

It is particularly helpful if you can look at the timetable together at home the night before, or before you come to school in the morning before a lesson, so that they can be prepared.

It is essential that your child remembers to bring their instrument, green music contact book and music to every lesson. Lessons cannot be re-scheduled and it is not possible to borrow a spare instrument at school.

If your child is aware in advance that they will not be able to attend their lesson for whatever reason, we do expect them to communicate this with their tutor. If they have forgotten their instrument they should still attend the lesson as they may still be able to participate and learn other elements of musicianship that will support their learning.

We will try to communicate with you if your child does not attend their lesson or forgets their instrument and/or green book so you are aware and we can support them together.

Communication with the Music Tutor:



Your child will have been given a green music contact book at one of their first lessons. Music Tutors will record brief notes at each weekly lesson, specifying what is to be practised during the week.

The tutor may also write in this book any music that needs to be purchased as soon as possible by yourselves.

We would like parents and carers to also record weekly practise in this book, to comment and to sign. You may wish to include information about how the practise sessions went, including what your child enjoyed, found difficult, any technical issues with the instrument and/or other pieces they may have worked on.

Please use this contact book for any brief queries/questions that you may have for the tutor. For any other, more complex issues, you may wish to contact Miss Campbell via the school office or email. Parents and carers will receive a short written report on their child's progress along with the annual school report in July.

Where and When?



Top Practice Tips:



(How can I keep my child motivated to practise?)

- Regular short bursts of, ideally, daily practice is the best way to make steady progress. We recommend that beginners should start with 10 minutes at least three times a week.
- Endeavour to provide a 'Practice Environment' where your child can concentrate and ignore any distractions.
- Encourage your child: sit with them and show an interest in what they are doing.
- Ask them if they would like to record part of their practice, so they can listen to what they are playing. Play this back in a few weeks and get them to see what progress they have made.
- Have a strategy for practising:
 - * tackle short sections at a time
 - * work at the tricky bits, not the bits that are easier to play
 - * practise slowly at first - only speed up when 'note perfect'
 - * then...practise pieces right through and keep going even if a mistake is made
- Encourage your child to play their favourite 'fun' pieces and the more serious 'tricky' ones
- Encourage your child to make up music on their instrument. It may be best to stick to two or three notes to begin with, but enjoy playing around with rhythms, loud and quiet (dynamics) and fast and slow (tempo).
- Encourage your child to have mini concerts: not at all formal, where you can invite family and friends to listen to new pieces that your child has learned.
- Comment in your child's Communication Book each week so the tutor is able to get a picture of what they have been doing. You may wish to include information about how the practise sessions went, including what your child enjoyed, found difficult, any technical issues with the instrument and/or other pieces they may have worked on.
- If your child is struggling with any element of playing their instrument or a particular piece, encourage them to work with one of our Year 6 Music Mentors, whose role in the school is to support other students in a friendly peer-to-peer situation with tips and advice.
- If you feel that it's all becoming a chore - back off for a while, liaise with their Music Tutor or Miss Campbell and devise a strategy to re-energise their commitment.

