



Playing a Musical Instrument or Singing

A Guide for Parents and Carers

www.kent-music.com

Welcome to Kent Music

This guide contains all the information you need to know about your child learning a musical instrument with Kent Music. Our team of specialist teachers provides high quality tuition and there are musical activities and ensembles available at all levels for your child to take part in.

I am sure you are aware that learning to sing or to play a musical instrument can be an extremely rewarding experience and we hope that this introductory booklet will help to guide you in supporting your child throughout their musical learning.

For more information on tuition and ensembles please visit our website www.kent-music.com. If you would like any further advice, please contact us at Kent Music.

Best wishes,



Trevor James
Head of Education, Kent Music



The benefits of music

Music education, including learning to sing and to play a musical instrument, provides enormous benefits for young people in terms of their intellectual, social and emotional development, motor skills, language, and overall literacy. All children can enjoy and respond to music and everyone can become involved in music to some degree.

What are the social benefits?

Music for pre-school children can help their transition into primary school

Introducing music to children at an early age can improve their learning ability and memory as well as skills such as sharing, creativity and concentration. These are all invaluable skills when they enter a new school where they begin to form new friendships and develop social skills.

Learning to sing or to play a musical instrument impacts greatly on personal and social development

Learning to sing or to play a musical instrument can provide motivation and a great sense of accomplishment. It improves coordination, motor skills and teaches discipline through regular practice. It can greatly increase confidence and self-esteem by progressing each week through encouragement and support from a teacher and through performing in front of peers or an audience. For children who have difficulty communicating verbally, music provides a way to express themselves in a non-verbal way.

Playing in a group or ensemble teaches discipline, teamwork, cooperation, self-confidence, responsibility and social skills

Singing in a choir or playing in an ensemble is an essential part of a child's musical learning. In a group they learn to cooperate, listen and respond to each other musically and take responsibility for learning their own part. It is a fun, sociable and supportive environment for learning where they can meet new friends and feel like part of a team. Socially they learn important life skills such as the ability to relate to others, working as a team and appreciating the process and end result that comes from working together to stage a concert.

“When young people make music together, they work toward a common goal that has the potential to change lives profoundly for the better.”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-importance-of-music-a-national-plan-for-music-education>

What are the academic benefits?

Music can help to improve a child's reading ability

Learning to read music can improve a pupil's ability to remember words and therefore can improve vocabulary and enhance language development. Music involves constant reading and comprehension. When you see notes on a page, you have to recognise what the note name is and translate it to a pitch of note, finger position or slide position. At the same time, you also have to read what rhythms the notes are arranged in, and if playing a brass or woodwind instrument force your tongue to produce the correct pattern.

Music can help to improve a child's numeracy skills

Reading music requires counting notes and rhythms which can enhance mathematical skills. The learning benefits derive from the similarity of rhythms and patterns and the ability to decode notes and symbols. Even at an earlier level, playing musical games or rhythm games can bring positive learning as the child follows simple or complex rhythms.

Musical activities can count towards Children's University, Duke of Edinburgh, Arts Award, Scouting & Guiding and other Awards

Music lessons and other musical activities, such as being a member of a group or attending a course at Kent Music Summer School, can qualify as part of badges or awards. Your teacher will be happy to sign off any activities as appropriate, or if you have a query, please email hellokent-music.com.

Kent Music is a Learning Destination for Children's University, meaning that many of our groups count as part of the 'Media, Arts and Crafts' awards category. The group leader can sign your passport at the end of a term or when needed.

You can gain additional UCAS points for entry to higher education

Music exams taken through the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), Trinity College of Music and Rockschooll from Grades 6-8 can amount to 5-30 UCAS Tariff points. Trinity College London also award 35 UCAS Tariff points for Gold Arts Awards. For more information please visit: www.ucas.com and www.artsaward.org.uk.

"Learning a musical instrument...is associated with improved wider educational outcomes for children, from their early years through to secondary school."

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Arts_Education_Review.pdf

The role of the pupil

Learning to sing or to play a musical instrument can be an extremely rewarding experience that requires commitment and consistent practice. The pupil should be prepared to:

- Attend lessons with the appropriate equipment and music
- Practice at least five days a week as recommended by their teacher
- Maintain their instrument as instructed by their teacher if appropriate
- Participate in school and ensemble activities appropriate for their level where available
- Perform for friends and family



The role of the parent/carer

The role of a parent/carer of a child learning a musical instrument is extremely important in helping them reach their potential. This can be achieved by:

- Encouraging them to practice at least five days a week and monitoring their attendance at lessons, supporting any feedback from the teacher
- Informing Kent Music and the teacher of any additional needs or support they may require
- Allowing them the appropriate space to practice away from distractions such as pets, televisions etc. The ability to concentrate and listen is very important
- Providing the necessary resources such as music, strings, rosin, reeds, valve oil etc. where appropriate. It is important to provide a music stand or a similar arrangement which allows the child to sit/stand properly. Bad postural habits can affect the child's technique or, if learning a woodwind or brass instrument, their breathing technique
- Ensuring that you have collected their Kent Music hire instrument (if appropriate) before the lessons commence and being aware that it is the child's responsibility to look after their instrument
- Having an active involvement in their development and sharing their enthusiasm
- Encourage them to perform often at home for friends and relatives
- Take an active interest in their practice



Care of instruments

Specific information about the care of each instrument is available on the Kent Music website www.kent-music.com for strings, woodwind, guitar and brass instruments.

Parents/carers should be aware that musical instruments are fragile and expensive and that it is the child's responsibility to look after their instrument. For instruments hired from Kent Music, any damage beyond wear and tear may result in the parent/carer being liable for repair costs.

For these reasons, we would recommend that you:

- Ensure that the instrument is treated with care at all times as directed by the teacher and, if on loan, is returned in good condition when requested
- Allow the instrument to only be used by the pupil to whom it belongs
- Ensure that space is made available for the safe keeping of the instrument and when it is not being played it should be kept in its case

Hire

Instrument hire is available through Kent Music for all students, with a reduced rate for students receiving tuition through Kent Music. Instruments are free for those pupils receiving a bursary - see page 9. Parents are required to collect the instrument from the Kent Music office in Maidstone, signing a hire agreement. The instrument is required to be checked by the Instrument Department when being returned to Kent Music. You can either make an appointment in advance to have the instrument checked or return the instrument and your receipt will be marked that it is still to be checked.



Insurance

We recommend that you insure your instrument, whether it is on loan or your own, so that if the instrument is damaged, lost or stolen you are protected financially.

Compare musical instrument insurance here:

<https://www.money.co.uk/home-insurance/musical-instrument-insurance.htm>

Buying an instrument

If you are considering buying your child a musical instrument, we strongly advise that you speak to your child's teacher who will advise you which instrument is best for your child. Our teachers are all specialists in their field and have a vast knowledge of the appropriate make and price of instrument suitable for the level of your child. Young people still at school are eligible to purchase VAT-free instruments through their school saving the cost of the VAT (20%).

Alternatively, Arts Council England offer interest-free loans for the purchase of musical instruments through their Take it Away scheme. You can find out more at www.takeitaway.org.uk.



Repairs

Kent Music will fulfil any repairs required to instruments on hire due to general wear and tear. However, accidental damage and any damages caused by negligence or otherwise will result in the parent/carer being liable for the cost of repairs. We are unable to accommodate repairs on instruments which do not belong to Kent Music, however, we can recommend local instrument repairers who can help.

Contact

For advice or to arrange the hire, insurance or repair of instruments, contact:

Nick Finlinson
Instrument Repair & Administration

Office Hours:
Tuesday to Friday, 12-5pm

Tel: 01622 358407
Email: nfinlinson@kent-music.com

Payments

Music lessons are billed termly and you will receive an invoice just prior to the beginning of the autumn, spring and summer terms. The payment of lessons and/or instrument hire can be made by cheque, card payments by phone or online, standing order or by single transfer to Kent Music. You will receive details of these payment methods along with each invoice. If you do not wish to renew lessons for the next term, we ask for half a term's notice to avoid your being charged a cancellation fee.

If you have any queries, please contact us

Tel: 01622 691212

Email: customerservices@kent-music.com

Financial Assistance

Kent Music is committed to enabling children and young people to access musical opportunities. The Kent Music Financial Assistance Scheme provides financial support to 5-18 year olds, living in Kent who meet the financial criteria as detailed on our information sheet.

Full criteria and information can be found at

www.kent-music.com/financial-assistance

For further information please contact Gail Batty

Tel: 01622 358413

Email: gbatty@kent-music.com



Local ensembles at our Music Centres

Kent Music offers a variety of ensembles including orchestras, wind bands and choirs available for all ages, a Summer School and local music centres throughout Kent providing tuition and ensembles. You can find details of these via the Kent Music website or alternatively please contact our team at musiccentres@kent-music.com.

County Groups

Kent County Junior Singers (school years 4-6) & **Kent County Junior Choir** (school years 7-9) meet throughout the year with day rehearsals that are held monthly and a three-day residential course in the summer ending with a concert for family and friends.

Kent Youth Choir (ages 14-21) meet three times a year on residential courses that end with a performance for family and friends.

Kent Youth Wind Orchestra is for players aged 11 to 19 at grade 6 standard and above. They meet for full and sectional courses throughout the year and end with a five-day course in July.

Kent County Youth Orchestra is for players aged 13 to 21 at grade 7 standard or above. They meet three times a year for residential courses and concerts.

Orchestra ONE

Orchestra ONE (ages 8-18) ... Orchestra of New Experiences.... is a music group for young people from all backgrounds to write and perform their own music, influenced by their own tastes, styles and instrumentation. Orchestra ONE has three projects a year and is open to all young people in Kent.

You can find details of our County Groups via the Kent Music website or alternatively please contact our team at countygroups@kent-music.com.





Kent Music Summer School

Kent Music Summer School takes place at Benenden School in the heart of the beautiful Kent countryside, with nine courses from two to six days spanning three weeks over the summer. It is an excellent opportunity for young people who love music to develop their instrumental and vocal skills and to enjoy making music with others.

We welcome students of all abilities - no auditions are necessary to take part. Courses range from jazz to musical theatre and from songwriting to symphony orchestra. Every course involves time working in small groups to focus on individual skills and interests and finishes with a celebration concert for family and friends.

For more information about Kent Music Summer School visit www.kent-music.com/summer-school.

"I just want to say a big thank you to all of the staff for making it such an enjoyable experience for the boys, year after year without fail."





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