

2017



INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC HANDBOOK



FERRY HILLS STATE SCHOOL

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Welcome to the Instrumental Music Program.

Congratulations! You have been chosen to participate in Ferry Hills State School's Instrumental Music Program. This privilege carries with it certain responsibilities which must be met if you are to succeed in instrumental study. Lessons must be attended regularly and daily practice, as directed by your instrumental music teacher, must be undertaken, with an adult supervisor where possible.

Your instrument, whether school or personally owned, must be well cared for.

The learning of an instrument and the training at school will lay the foundations for a lifetime of rewarding musical endeavours.

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to the program, and wish you all the best in your musical pursuits.

Frank McLoughlin
Principal

INSTRUMENT HIRE AND LEVY

Ferry Hills State School allows students entering the Instrumental Music Program to loan instruments for one year. There is a hiring charge of \$80.00 for the school year.

After the first year students are expected to buy their own instrument.

The school also has a levy of \$80.00 which covers the cost of sheet music, photocopying fees, Fund Raising Levy, and entrance fees to competitions, repairs and upgrades to musical instruments.

A note about the instrument hire and levy will be sent home early next year.
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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GUIDELINES

At Ferny Hills State School we are obliged to follow the instructions laid down by the Queensland Department of Education. Before beginning our program you need to be aware of them.

1. Students who are not willing to participate in school ensembles are not eligible for inclusion in the instrumental program. (Administrative Instructions 930.2.4.3)
2. If a conflict of engagement and rehearsals arises between a local group and the school program, the student **must** be reminded that the school program takes priority. The school program should also take priority over any other school activity except by special arrangement with the school principal concerned. (Administrative Instruction 932.2.9.4)
3. Students who are unwilling to participate in the school band / orchestra are ineligible for inclusion in the instrumental program. (Administrative Instruction 932.2.9.3)

STUDENT GUIDELINES

The following rules are designed to benefit all students and staff. Please read them carefully and remember them at all times. Failure to follow these directions may result in exclusion from the Instrumental Program.

Lessons

Lessons are for small groups of students and take place in school time. Groups for instruction are formed according to the level of student ability and the range of instruments available. Each music instructor will make out a timetable of his/her groups and display it on the music notice board. It is the student's responsibility to present themselves for lessons at the appropriate time.

Failure to attend lessons without satisfactory explanations is most serious and will, in most occasions result in firm action being taken. Students are required to notify their class teacher of their absence due to instrumental lessons.

INSTRUMENTS

If children are allocated a school instrument, e.g. flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, saxophone, violin, viola or cello, this will be only on the basis of a one year term. The terms of this loan are outlined in the section on 'Instrumental Hire & Levy'. Children are expected to purchase their own instrument the following year (except in exceptional circumstances) so as to make school instruments available to students new to the program.

The school instrumental program is a school subject. Children are **NOT** allowed to withdraw from the school program as they would not be allowed to withdraw from any other subject in the school curriculum. If a parent has a problem with their child continuing in the Instrumental Music Program, a meeting must be arranged with the Deputy Principal, Music Coordinator and the Instrumental Teacher to discuss the problems in the hope that they may be resolved.

Each child will only be allowed to learn one instrument through the school Instrumental Program.

Once an instrument is chosen, the child will remain on this instrument throughout their time in the School Music Program, unless the Instrumental Teacher decides otherwise.

Percussion students will be loaned a glockenspiel from the school for the first year, but must also purchase the sticks, practice pad, etc. You will be given separate information about what you need to purchase.

Care of Instruments and Facilities

- Students must only use their instrument or the instrument allocated to them
- All school equipment must be handled with care and respect
- Each student must buy his/her own music folder (available from the Uniform shop)
- Students are expected to promptly purchase tutor books, strings, reeds, and rosin as required
- Students must borrow all sheet music through their Specialist Music Teacher.

CLUSTER CAMPS

There are 2-3 Cluster Music Camps held each year which include students from all schools in this area. These camps aim to enhance the learning process for all students as well as create social opportunities for students to interact with other local musicians, as well as work with different Music Instructors. These Camps include:

- Beginner Camp – Beginner tuition with an appropriate Specialist teacher; includes care and maintenance of the instrument and basic playing skills **(Week 1)**
- Intermediate Camp – Usually Year 6 students who did not audition for Advanced Music Camp **(August Show Week)**
- Advanced Music Camp – An auditioned camp for those students who are exceeding in their Instrumental learning **(June)**

PERFORMANCES

1. Students will have the opportunity to perform with their band/ensemble each year. Much teacher time and organisation goes into these events for you. For this reason, your full cooperation and support is essential if the performances are to continue. Unless students are available for all performances, they are ineligible for inclusion in the program.
2. Full band/ensemble uniform must be worn at public performances.
3. Adequate notice will be given for performances. **Students are expected to attend and play for the school.** If transport is a problem, organise with other parents to get your student to the performance.
4. Teachers are always keen to provide opportunities for students to perform in public. Appropriate behaviour and presentation must be observed at all times as the school is judged by the actions of its students.

Purpose of Performances

The purpose of performances is to encourage students to strive for excellence in performance and to gain valuable experience in performing, both as individuals and as an ensemble. Performances provide a wonderful opportunity for students to put all their hard work into practice. Students thrive on the opportunity to perform live in front of family and community members, and to win or gain a place is a bonus. Students also tend to improve and polish their ability to play an instrument when a performance is imminent.

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

1. Commitment to learning music needs to be strong. If students maintain a determined commitment to their performing group, their teacher and their own progress, they will find the program rewarding and of life long value.
2. Each student playing in a band/ensemble is part of a team, and any absence weakens the performance of the whole team. Absence from three consecutive rehearsals without satisfactory explanation will lead to serious discussion regarding a student's continued involvement in the program.
3. Rehearsals are important learning occasions. Normal classroom behaviour is expected – the same rules will apply.
4. All instrumental students are required to play in a school band/ensemble as soon as they are technically ready. Exactly when the student joins a band/ensemble will be after consultation with the student and teacher.

UNIFORMS

Full Band/Ensemble uniforms must be worn at performances.

The uniform consists of:

Boys & Girls

Black Slacks

White Music Polo Shirt with logo

Black socks

Black shoes

Dark Green hair ribbons or scrunchies (girls)

All items available at the School Uniform Shop.

Students are also required to purchase a music folder for band/ensemble, also available from the uniform shop.

ALL UNIFORMS MUST BE ORDERED BY EASTER!!!!

STUDENTS – HOW TO PRACTICE

What you need

- Instrument
- Music
- Music stand
- Chair with a straight back (standing is best for wind players)
- Pencil and eraser

Where to practice

- A quiet enclosed room – turn off the TV and the radio. It is best where there are no other people, or unknowingly you will ‘perform’ rather than practice.

How often to practice

- Daily – regular practice achieves more progress than irregular.

When to practice

- Early morning is best. Try to avoid late evening practice when the body and mind are tired.

How long to practice

- At least 15 minutes per day – every day – increasing the time to 30mins as endurance increases. Pacing the session is important. Play and rest in regular intervals.

What to practice

- You can go as far as allocating specific time intervals to certain segments of the sessions – but it should include warm-ups, flexibility exercises, technical work, specific pieces of music (solo or ensemble) and anything else required.

Why practice

- To solve problems
- To improve skills on what is already known
- To learn new things
- For enjoyment

Prepare the session

- Set goals to be accomplished
- Develop a warm up routine
- Review technical work, and review scales in the keys of the music to be practiced
- Before playing a new piece of music:
 - Check signature, time signature, tempo, and dynamic markings

- Scan the music, then read it again more carefully
- With your pencil mark unusual fingerings, accidentals, and rhythms that may be troublesome
- Check and go over sections with difficult or unusual rhythms

If you have some problems try to:

- Write out the counting
- Count out loud
- Count and clap the rhythm
- Play the rhythm on one note
- Play as written – slowly and accurately at first, then increase speed

How to play

- After preparing (as above), practice the music, stopping to correct mistakes where they occur.
- Identify the problem. Don't keep going back to the beginning – you only spend time on what you already know.
- Don't brush past the problem areas hoping to 'go back later'. You will never get around to it. Start with the problem.

Evaluation

Don't be afraid to ask for help if you feel you are not getting anywhere. The best players in the world do this. Listen carefully to what you are playing and try to recognize problem areas. Be critical of yourself. You are now your own teacher.

Music is a disciplined art

Without self-discipline and persistence there can be no progress or success. There are no short cuts and no magic wand. The recipe for success is 90% work, 10% talent and a dash of interest.

PARENTS

Your child is now a member of the music program.

His /Her progress will depend a great deal on what is achieved during daily practice sessions at home. Learning takes place in school, but proficiency is gained at home. You can use the following guidelines to help your child at home.

Time Schedule

Start with 10-15 minutes practices and increase steadily to a half hour as the student's ability increases. Establish with your child a weekly practice schedule. This time can be split into two or three shorter sessions. Practicing at the same time every day is good, but some flexibility should be built in to the schedule. Don't bring the world to a halt every morning at 6.30am because it is time for practice. Children need time for fun and relaxation just as adults do. If the situation merits, re-schedule the practice to an earlier or later time.

Practice Goals

While a sufficient amount of time per day is important, it is also important to have definite goals in mind for each session. These goals might include the improvement of tone on one note or the ability to play a lengthy tune exercise without a mistake. As a student gains experience on their instrument, a typical half hour session might be broken down as follows:

Number of Minutes	Material Practiced	Goal
3-5	Long notes, easy drills at a slow tempo	Warm up of embouchure (facial muscles, lips & mouth), breath and instrument; concentrating on producing good tone
5	Scales learned	Finger co-ordination
10	New material	Development of new notes, increased range, new rhythms and articulations, new key signatures.

IS YOUR CHILD PROGRESSING?

The field of Instrumental Music is new for your child. They are learning to use their facial muscles in a different way, and their breathing apparatus is being used for a different purpose. There is a new language of intangible symbols (notes) that require the use of their mind and body to translate into musical sounds. All this takes time. Even parents who have had band experience have probably forgotten the struggle of producing the first few notes. So the question arises "is he/she progressing as well as he/she should be?" Parents can evaluate practice sessions by asking themselves:

1. Am I hearing attempts at new material (such as higher notes, lower notes, new rhythms and new articulations), or am I hearing the same old tune day after day?
2. Is the tone quality becoming characteristic of the instrument or is the tone harsh, unmusical and unpleasant?
3. Does the familiar tune or exercise move along steadily in a fluent rhythmic manner; or is it halting and jerky?

If you reach a point when your evaluation consistently comes up negative, please contact the instrumental teacher. The student may be doing fine by beginning standards, they may have hit a temporary plateau, or they may be having difficulty in grasping a basic concept that could bring progress to a halt. This last problem may take a joint parent-teacher effort to overcome.

WHEN IT ALL SEEMS TOO MUCH

When you read this, you will probably be wondering why you thought it would be a good idea for your child to learn an instrument. Everyone goes through phases of boredom or rebellion about practicing, some more frequently than others. It is easy to lose sight of the goals.

Remember that music making is one of the most rewarding pursuits and also one of the most satisfying and time consuming. Playing an instrument is a form of relaxation cultivated by many of the world's greatest achievers. It can also be a lifeline to self esteem to the underachiever. The ability to play a musical instrument well is one of the most highly prized skills in the adult world. Music opens many social doors. It is often the dedicated who achieve these things rather than the most talented, who throw it all away in the heat of the moment.

Nothing breeds success like success.
Here are a few ideas to help your budding instrumentalist.

1. Practice is best done at a regular time, in a regular place. In this climate, the best time is usually first thing in the morning. However it is better to snatch any available ten minutes, than to miss a day completely. Ten minutes a day is much more valuable than 70minutes once a week.
2. Good posture is much less tiring than poor posture. Students should develop the ability to watch their playing in the mirror. This should be encouraged early. When reading music it should be on the music stand at the correct height – just below eye level.
3. Your child may require help, or at least encouragement, during practice sessions. Use practice time as a positive together time with your child, even if you don't play an instrument or read music. Do the ironing or peel the potatoes. If necessary, organize an incentive scheme for practice sessions: tick off days completed on a calendar; have a special treat at the end of the week or month; insist on no T.V. until after practice is complete.
4. Each piece, exercise and scale should be played through at least four times each practice session. To begin with, it should be taken at a very steady pace. If the same mistake happens twice, the student should stop and correct the bar or phrase, playing it many times, before proceeding with the whole piece. At the next practice session, time will be saved if this passage is repeated several times before attempting to put it in the context of the piece.
5. If the piece sounds very odd to you, or definitely out of tune, there are several possibilities. One, the instrument needs tuning, two, the student is learning the harmony part, not the tune; three, the child is not listening to themselves and is playing out of tune or out of time. Ask, can you sing it first? Are your fingers in the correct place? Is there a note you can check with? (This may be against an open string (for string players); or matching an octave or against a piano).
6. Getting on and learning a contentious piece is the quickest way to the next interesting phase. Ask your child to play something really well known, however simple. Then remind them that once they could not play that at all. Then decide on two bars of the contentious piece to learn today

Good Luck!