

**REGULATIONS AND CONDITIONS for
GROUP INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC LESSONS from APRIL 2011**

This is a document for parents and carers; "you" refers to "you, the parent or carer". You can ask us to send you information about the Music Service in an alternative format by telephoning 01243 642361. Throughout this document, the terms 'instrument' or 'instrumental' should be understood to include 'voice' and 'singing'.

1. How group lessons are organised

Lessons are 30 minutes long and are taught to small groups of pupils normally during school hours. Where an individual pupil continuing with lessons cannot be accommodated satisfactorily within a group, or where very few pupils are learning within a school, alternative arrangements may be put in place to provide lessons. The arrangement could be for lessons to take place outside the school day at another school or, where this is not practical, pupils could receive a shared lesson with another pupil in school. In this case each pupil would receive individual tuition for part of the lesson. In rare cases where there is no other pupil to share the lesson, a 15-minute individual lesson will be provided on a temporary basis until a group lesson can be provided. No pupil learning privately with another teacher will be provided with lessons on the same instrument under the County scheme. This is to ensure that there is no possibility of different teaching approaches causing confusion or conflict for pupils. Pupils will be expected to take part in school ensembles appropriate to their musical development and will be encouraged to attend activities at area or county level.

2. How pupils are accepted

Before applying for lessons, you should check which instruments are taught at the school because it is not always possible to offer teaching on the full range of instruments in every school. The instrumental teacher will be told about each new application and, together with the school, will decide when lessons can start. This depends on the spaces available, which is why lessons may not always be able to start immediately. You will be told as soon as a place becomes available and you will then be sent a bill for that term (see paragraph 5). As it takes time to set up the arrangements, it is not usually possible to pay for the first term of lessons by Direct Debit. We will check with the school before a pupil can be approved to learn a second instrument.

3. The cost of lessons

As allowed by Section 56 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, a fee is charged for the lessons. The fee from April 2011 is £74 for a course of lessons for a term. The County Council will review the fee in April 2012. For pupils learning from the start of the Autumn Term, the standard course of teaching is 30 lessons in a full school year. If more than 30 lessons are given, there will be no extra charge. For pupils starting lessons later in the school year, the charge will be reduced pro rata according to the number of lessons remaining. Please note that the termly lesson fee is for the lessons only and does not include any entitlement to an instrument or to County groups or Music Centre membership, for which a separate application needs to be made.

4. Help with the fees

Providing your child attends a West Sussex local authority maintained school, there is a scheme to help with the lesson fees for your child to learn **one** instrument as follows:

- 100% reduction for families receiving Income Support or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related); the Guarantee element of the State Pension Credit; or Child Tax Credit only, with an assessed income below the threshold for entitlement to Free School Meals (£ 16,190 from April 2011);
- Where a pupil learning an instrument through the Music Service is taking an AS or A2 level course in music and where performance on the instrument being learned is a requirement of the examination, the school will be responsible for paying the fees. Schools will be asked to confirm the eligibility of pupils before these arrangements can be implemented;
- 100% reduction for tuition and the provision of an instrument without charge for children in care.

Parents should contact the Music Finance Office if they believe they qualify for any of these reasons. The entitlement to benefit must be current on the first day of the school term, even if lessons do not start until later in the term, and recent documentary evidence must be provided.

5. How to pay for lessons

The termly fee must be paid in full before lessons can be given. **Please do not send any money until you receive the bill.** The quickest way to pay the bill is on-line through the WSCC website by credit or debit card at www.westsussex.gov.uk/payments or by telephoning 01243 777505 with the invoice number, amount and card details. If you wish to set up a Direct Debit to pay for future terms' fees please contact the Music Finance Office after the current bill has been paid. We need to plan before the school holidays to arrange teaching from the start of term, so bills will be sent out before the end of term for lessons in the following term. The parents of pupils on the waiting list will not be asked to pay any money until the starting date for lessons is confirmed.

6. What happens if payment is late?

If full payment does not reach us by the date shown on the bill, the pupil will not be entitled to have lessons until the payment has been received. This may mean that important elements are missed which could affect the pupil's progress. Once the teacher has been told that payment has been received, lessons can then start again providing that the lesson place has not been filled. No refund or credit will be given for any lessons missed because of late payment. Please note that, if any part of an account remains unpaid, this will affect all other services provided by the Music Service, including lessons, ensemble membership and instrument hire.

7. If you want to stop lessons

You must write by half term to the Music Finance Office, Financial Services, County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1RG, e-mail pupilifs@westsussex.gov.uk or fax 01243 538569, if you wish lessons to stop at the end of that term. If we do not receive sufficient notice of withdrawal or if a pupil decides to stop part way through a term, there will be no credit or refund of fees already paid. **It is not enough just to tell the instrumental teacher or the school; the Music Finance Office also needs to be notified. If you pay by Direct Debit, you must cancel this at your bank unless you have other children also learning.**

8. If the teacher misses a lesson

The standard course of teaching is 30 lessons in a full school year. If fewer than 30 lessons have been offered between September 2011 and July 2012 because of teacher absence and another teacher has not been provided, a refund will be given if you apply to the Music Finance Office by December 2012. The amount of the refund will be calculated according to the shortfall in the number of lessons and will be made at the end of the school year, not on a term-by-term basis. For pupils who start lessons part way through the year, the amount refunded will depend on the fees that have been paid and the number of lessons that have been offered.

9. If the pupil misses a lesson

Where lessons have been missed because the pupil has been absent, a refund will not be given except for special reasons such as prolonged illness. Refunds will not be given because the pupil has been absent due to occasional illness, school trips, examinations, study leave, school closures or similar reasons. Any refund will be made at the end of the school year, not on a term-by-term basis. Section 8 above explains how to claim the refund. In the case of prolonged pupil absence through illness, you need to inform the Music Finance Office at the **beginning** of the period of absence in order to be eligible for a refund.

10. Reporting on progress

Progress will be monitored continuously and a written report, or a parents' meeting instead of the mid-year report, will be provided twice a year. Regular contact should be maintained between teacher and parent by means of the weekly *playing diary*. Where a pupil is not progressing at a reasonable rate, you and the school will be consulted and targets set for improvement. If these targets are not met, the Service reserves the right to discontinue lessons. After the first ten lessons, a *special first term* report will include a recommendation on whether or not to continue with lessons. Payment for the following term should not be delayed until you have received this report but would be refunded if you decide to stop lessons and contact the Music Finance Office (see paragraph 7) within ten days of receiving this special report.

11. Obtaining an instrument

All pupils will need to have an instrument for lessons and to practise between lessons. Schools often have instruments available and there are a number of local music shops that offer a range of hire schemes. The Music Service also has a limited stock of instruments that can be hired for £15 a term by e-mailing us or phoning the Music Office on 01243 642361. Priority for these instruments will be given to pupils whose families find it difficult to afford to buy or hire an instrument. If you cannot provide your own instrument, there may be a delay in starting lessons until a hire instrument is available. Final arrangements to hire or buy an instrument should not be made until you know when lessons will start. The instrumental teacher should be able to suggest a suitable make and model of instrument. You are recommended to insure your own instrument under an *all risks* or specialist musical instrument policy such as Allianz Cornhill (0870 2400 303) or Assure UK (0800 107 4815). Please label the instrument and case clearly and keep a record of its make, model and serial number.

12. Other costs

You are expected to provide music and accessories and to pay for any external examination for which you wish your child to be entered, including accompanist's fee, even if the examination is part of a programme of study.

13. Enquiries, questions and contacts

For enquiries about your bill or payment, please contact the Music Finance Office by e-mail to pupilifs@westsussex.gov.uk or telephone 01243 752855, fax 01243 538569. For general questions, please contact the instrumental teacher either by e-mail to music@westsussex.gov.uk (and we will forward) or write a note on the *playing diary* for the next lesson. For all other matters, please e-mail the County Music Office at music@westsussex.gov.uk or telephone 01243 642361, fax 01243 642637.

Please remember to tell the Music Finance Office if you move house, change your phone number, or if your child moves school during the year. We aim to provide lessons in the new school but we need to know immediately about the change in order to make the necessary arrangements.