



Music Ensembles

We encourage all students to participate in a group ensemble to gain experience in performing as a group. These lessons take place at either recess, lunchtime or after school, depending on the ensemble. These experiences provide a wonderful opportunity for your child to represent our school in the proudest way possible - through music!

Ensembles include:

- *Senior String Ensemble;*
- *Junior String Ensemble;*
- *Senior Choir; and*
- *Junior Choir*

"Praise the Lord with the harp; make melody to him with an instrument of 10 strings."

Psalm 33:2

How to choose the correct instrument for your child's age

At Claremont we encourage students to begin learning piano, guitar, violin or drums in Year 1. Learning the piano is a good starting point for all instrumentalists. Here you learn the foundations of music theory and other elements, which helps with all future musical ventures.

Woodwind and brass instruments should start once your child has a mouth full of adult teeth - typically about 7 or 8 years of age. This allows them to position their lips and teeth correctly around or in front of any mouthpiece. If your child has any dental issues or missing teeth, learning a brass instrument is not encouraged. Clarinet is a good starting point for children in Year 1 or 2 who can then move on to Saxophone in Year 4 or 5. Maturity-learning an instrument takes patience. The initial process is a slow one and requires concentration and maturity, particularly with an instrument like the violin. However, learning an instrument can in turn also help develop concentration.

Space

An upright piano takes up 8 square feet in a room. You may consider trying a digital piano instead, but it's important to invest in one that has 88 weighted keys. Always check that your chosen instructor is comfortable with your choice before you purchase one.

Drum sets can be purchased but take up space. An alternative is to buy an electronic drum set which saves space! Consider the size of an electric guitar, cello, saxophone, or euphonium related to the space available in your car. Also consider your child and their ability to carry around a large instrument like a cello.

Budget

Be sure to take into account what you can reasonably afford to rent or purchase. We encourage students to rent instruments initially when learning rather than buying straight away.

Passion

Choose an instrument your child is passionate about. Watch YouTube clips and listen to musical excerpts to determine which sounds they gravitate towards. If your child is interested in that instrument, that is the best way to start.

Research instruments that may match the personality of your child. An extravert may instantly connect with a trumpet, guitar or drum, while an introvert may prefer a flute, clarinet or violin. Make sure you can tolerate listening to the instrument being played poorly! You will be hearing this level of musicality around your house on a daily basis when you first get started. Some digital instruments have headphone inputs so that you don't have to listen to every rehearsal.

Physical Traits

- *Breath control - children that have trouble breathing through their nose and/or are asthmatic may experience difficulty obtaining breath control in learning the flute, saxophone or brass instruments. There are, however, strategies that can be implemented to assist students in developing their breath control. Clarinet can be a much easier instrument to master if one has poor breath control. Alternatively, choose a violin.*
- *Posture - good posture is needed to play the flute and violin and the ability to hold arms high at shoulder level.*
- *Size - Children should be physically ready to handle large, heavy instruments such as the saxophone, trombone and euphonium. The full weight is taken around the child's neck and small children find this difficult.*

Whichever instrument you ultimately choose, your child will need your encouragement to continue practising - especially in the beginning. Start with about 10 minutes of practice once a day and try to increase the time in 5 minute increments with a goal of approximately 30 minutes a day. As their competency improves, you shouldn't need to nag them to practice, since much of the motivation to practice and advance their knowledge will come from inside. This said, it helps to have a cheering section during and after their daily practices so that they know that their musical talent is valued by their family.

Practice Tips

- *Help your child set up a special place at home to play the instrument.*
- *Establish a time each day to play. Some children are at their best in the morning, before school. Set a time after the evening bath when the child is relaxed, but not tired.*
- *Consider using the phrase 'playing time' rather than 'practice time'.*
- *Be a positive part of your child's playing time. Sit with your child while they play and ask, "Show me what you're learning." Or consider learning to play the instrument with your child.*
- *Praise your child for each step forward.*
- *Never make negative remarks about how your child's playing sounds. It takes time and effort to produce musical sounds.*
- *Encourage family members to applaud child's efforts. Positive attention is a motivator.*
- *Remember that there are always peaks and valleys in the learning process. You and your child should expect times of discouragement, accept them, and focus on the positive fact that they are learning to make music. Remind them that everything worth doing takes time and effort.*
- *Provide positive role models. Bring your child to hear amateur or professional musicians perform. Take your child to movies that show musicians in a positive light, such as "Music of the Heart."*
- *Use stickers or wall charts to reward consistent practice.*

Terms and Conditions

1. Students are taken out of classroom lessons on a rotation basis. Please note that children may miss the occasional Maths or English lesson.
2. Subjects are taken and payment is made for a whole semester (2 terms).
3. Tutors provide 14 lessons during each semester. Extra lessons can be negotiated with tutor.
4. Lessons for children in Years 1-4 are held during school time. Lessons before school, at lunchtime and after school are generally reserved for Years 5-6.
5. Fees are payable in full, prior to the commencement of each semester. Lessons may be withheld until payment is received.
6. Payments must be made to the tutor directly. A receipt will be issued upon request.
7. Fees are non-refundable except where the subject is withdrawn by the individual tutor.
8. Where a child is absent from the school, the lesson is forfeited. The lesson will, however, be made up if the tutor is absent. Prior day's notice of absence is appreciated. Lessons will be made up should the tutor be contacted directly prior to 9:00am on the day of the lesson.
9. A full term's notice in writing must be given prior to withdrawal from private tuition. Insufficient notice will necessitate payment of term's fees. No refunds will be given for the remainder or part of the term where insufficient notice is given.
10. Enrolments will be processed by the tutors in order of receipt of application forms. Where the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, allocation will be made at the tutor's discretion. Initially priority will be given to continuing students, but otherwise, places will be allocated on the basis of the receipt of application.
11. Fees for Concert Band will be charged by the school directly to the student's term account each semester. Fees for String Ensemble will be invoiced directly by the string ensemble coordinator.

Suggested age for instruments

Kindy, Year 1, Year 2 (Kindy from Semester 2 onwards only)

- **Guitar** - Year 1 and Year 2
- **Drums** - Kindy (from Semester 2), Year 1 and Year 2
- **Piano** - Kindy (from Semester 2), Year 1 and Year 2
- **Violin, Cello** - Kindy (from Semester 2), Year 1 and Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6
- **Flute** - Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, Year 6