

Monmouth Comprehensive School



Instrumental Lessons
A Guide for Parents and Students



This Guide gives details about the instrumental lessons offered at Monmouth Comprehensive School. It is designed to help Parents and Students get the best from the service.

S Ellerington
September 2009

Who's Who

Head of Music	Mrs Sally Ellerington	
Upper Strings	Mr N Steel	(Wednesday/Thursday)
Lower Strings	Mrs Emma Archer	(Friday)
Flute	Mrs Julie Gibbons	(Tuesday/Friday)
Clarinet/Saxophone	Miss Aimée Winston	(Monday/Tuesday)
Oboe/Bassoon	Ms Elizabeth Major	(Friday)
Brass	Mr S O'Neill	(Monday)
Percussion	Mr Peter Morgan	(Monday/Wednesday)
Guitar	Mr John Whipps	(Wednesday/Thursday)
Voice	Mr Ian Dollins	(Wednesday)

Finance Officer Mrs Michelle Edwards

Staff may be contacted by telephoning the main School switchboard on 01600 775177. If it is not possible for staff to respond immediately, a message may be left and staff will return your call at the first opportunity.

Information for Parents

The provision of Instrumental Lessons is a Partnership Agreement between Parents and School to offer the widest opportunities for students to broaden their Music education. Students gain greatly from the study of an instrument, both intellectually and socially through membership of ensembles.

Parents agree to:

- Pay a contribution towards the cost of the service
- Provide an instrument [These are sometimes available to borrow from School or Gwent Music Support Service. It is also possible to purchase instruments at a discounted price. Please ask the instrumental teacher or Mrs. Ellerington for more information]
- Buy music as required [Parents are reminded that the photocopying of music is illegal]
- Pay for Graded Examinations
- Encourage regular attendance at lessons
- Encourage regular practice at home
- Encourage attendance at Orchestra and other ensembles as appropriate
- Encourage attendance at School concerts and other events
- Encourage attendance at District and County ensembles as appropriate
- Give a term's notice in writing if lessons are to be discontinued

The School agrees to:

- Provide a regular service of tuition and ensemble opportunities – **A minimum of 25 sessions per year**
- Monitor students' attendance and progress
- Provide an annual written report and an opportunity to discuss progress with the teacher
- Provide a piano accompanist for Graded Examinations at no additional cost to parents

There is always a high demand for instrumental tuition and if attendance and/or progress fall below a reasonable standard, the School reserves the right to ask parents to withdraw their child from the programme.

Arrangements for Graded Examinations

Graded Music Examinations are an important aspect of students' music education and development. The Examinations are accredited by QCA and the higher grades count towards points for UCAS University entrance.

When a student is ready to take a Graded Examination, parents will receive a letter from School together with information and a form from Gwent Music Support Service. This form should be completed and returned with the appropriate fee to Gwent Music Support Service by the closing date.

The School acts as a Centre for Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) examinations twice a year in December and May. This is when most students will take their examinations. ABRSM examinations are also held at other times in Monmouth town. Percussion and Brass Trinity/Guildhall examinations are usually held in Newport.

Commitment from Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend lessons regularly and promptly as per the rota situated in the Music area
- Inform subject teachers of the need to leave their lesson as soon as the lesson begins, not just when the instrumental lesson is due
- Produce the Music Pass, if asked, while out of class
- Return immediately to class after the instrumental lesson and ensure any work missed is made up
- Carry out regular practice at home
- Take Graded Examinations when appropriate
- Attend School Orchestra and/or other ensembles as appropriate
- Participate in School concerts and other events as required
- Give full support to District and County activities where appropriate

On the rare occasion it may be impossible to attend an instrumental lesson, the teacher concerned must be informed **BEFORE THE LESSON** either personally, or by leaving a note in the teaching room.

Failure to adhere to these expectations may result in the lessons being discontinued.

If problems are encountered with gaining permission from a subject teacher to leave their lesson, please inform Mrs Ellerington as soon as possible.

Care of Instruments while in School

As students have to move around the campus a great deal during the day, the School provides limited space for students to store their instruments. This is only possible with the co-operation of all those who use the facility.

- Instruments should be labelled clearly with the student's name on the outside AND the inside of the case.
- Instruments should be left tidily in the storage spaces in the Music area so that no damage is caused to other instruments. Please put smaller instruments on the shelves so there is room on the floor for larger ones.
- Great care should be taken to ensure the correct instrument is taken home – other students may have similar cases.
- Instruments are left at the owner's risk. The School will not take responsibility for loss or damage to any instrument.
- Instruments should not be left in School overnight, at weekends or during the school holidays.
- The School strongly advises that parents insure all instruments. This can often be included as part of the household contents policy. Please keep a note of the instrument's make and serial number.

Opportunities

Music flourishes as an extra curricular activity in School. Students have the opportunity to join the various groups according to their instrumental and vocal expertise. When they reach the required standard, they have the chance to audition for membership of County and National Ensembles. Several students have recently represented the school at National level.

Participation in ensemble performance is an important aspect of a student's musical development and all students are strongly encouraged to join whichever groups may be applicable to them.

Orchestra – All students of Grade 3 and above (lower for some instruments) are invited to join the Orchestra. This enjoys a high reputation locally and consists of over one hundred players.

Choirs – The Junior Choir, for Years 7 to 9, is open to any student who has a reasonable singing voice. Older students sing in the Senior Choir. Both choirs enable students to develop their vocal expertise and perform a wide range of repertoire.

Wind Band/Jazz Ensemble – These ensembles offers woodwind and brass players a chance to perform lighter music.

Strings, Woodwind, Brass and Percussion – The instrumental teachers tutor these groups and membership often varies depending on the performance being prepared.

Tours – Members of Orchestra and Choirs have the opportunity to participate in the Summer Music Tours. These have included visits to Germany, Austria and Italy. Concerts are given and excursions made to places of interest.

School Productions – Some students take stage rôles and others play in the band. Recent productions have included *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Guys and Dolls* and *Oh! What a Lovely War*.

Regular Musical Activities

The following ensemble activities take place on a regular basis. Students should check details of group membership with the teacher concerned.

Orchestra	Mrs Ellerington
Choir	Miss Manners/Miss Patterson
Wind Band	Miss Patterson
Jazz Ensemble	Miss Manners

Other Ensembles

Brass	Monday	Mr O'Neill
Clarinet/Sax	Monday/Tuesday	Miss Winston
Flute	Tuesday/Friday	Mrs Gibbons
Violin	Thursday	Mr Steel
Cello/Bass	Friday	Mrs Archer
Guitar	Thursday	Mr Whipps
Percussion	Monday	Mr Morgan

Other chamber ensembles meet on an *ad hoc* basis.

Grade Five Theory Class

Any student needing to take Grade Five Theory is able to join the Theory class on Thursdays at 3pm in Room 58 with Mrs Ellerington. This class will begin in September and regular attendance is essential. Students usually take the examination in the Spring or Summer term.

Important Musical Dates 2009-2010

These events have already been arranged for this year. In addition, the School is often invited to participate in charitable concerts in the town and wider community. Parents and students will be notified of these as and when they occur.

Thursday 10 th September	Awards Evening
Tuesday 29 th September	Open Evening
Wednesday 16 th December	Carol Service
Thursday 29 th April	Lower School Concert
Friday 14 th May	Y11 Leavers' Ceremony
Thursday 24 th June	Upper School Concert

Students will be made aware of which events apply to them.

Parents and friends are always encouraged to join the audience on these occasions to support the students in showcasing their collective talents.