

Westland High School



Instrumental Music Lessons – Information Pack and Enrolment Form

Dear parent,

Your son/daughter has expressed interest in having instrumental music lessons at school. This information pack contains important information about how instrumental lessons are run at Westland High School.

There is also a separate enrolment/payment form included (see last page). This enrolment/payment form must be signed and completed before students can be assigned a teacher and begin lessons.

Some instruments are more popular than others. Students will be placed in lessons in a first-come-first-served basis. Whilst we are hoping to avoid a situation where we need to have waiting lists, the more popular instruments may fill up quickly. It is important to put down two preferences on the enrolment form – this will make it easier for us to make sure people don't miss out. If you don't get your first preference, Mr Shawcross will contact you and discuss if you still want to proceed with your second preference.

Once you have completed and signed the enrolment form, it can be returned to Mr Shawcross. We will be starting lessons the week of the 20/2. Once students have completed their forms they will be placed in lessons groups. Students will be informed when their first lesson is during Whanau time.

If you have any questions about the information or the program in general, feel free to contact Mr Shawcross.

Sincerely,

Mr Shawcross

Instrumental Music Program - General Information

1. Instruments

Instruments to be offered this year are:

Piano
Violin
Drums
Voice
Saxophone*
Clarinet*
Flute *

*If you wish to learn one of these instruments please come and see Mr Shawcross. Do not pay the levy/fee at this stage. The school currently has a small selection of these instruments available for hire, but all of them need to be repaired/serviced first. Lessons for these instruments will most likely start in 2nd term and a pro-rata levy for the year will be charged.

In the last few years we have been unable to offer guitar lessons at school. Last year we introduced a levy in the hope of funding a guitar teacher, however the majority of this money has gone to maintaining the instruments/equipment used in the instrumental program. We are once again accessing the feasibility of a guitar teacher this year, but it is highly dependant on the funding the school has available for instrumental tuition. Students will be updated should the situation change that we are able to offer guitar lessons.

At the moment we do not plan to offer brass instruments, however if you are interested in brass contact Mr Shawcross. There is currently a local junior brass band that rehearses regularly and offers group lessons (free of charge). The brass band can also provide instruments. Mr Shawcross can provide further details.

2. Lesson Times and Groups

Lessons will generally be on the same day each week. Most of our instrumental music teachers will only be employed for 1-2 hours. This will mean that, although there will be some rotation of the timetable, students will often end up missing similar classes each week. This is unfortunately unavoidable.

Lessons will generally be in groups of 2-5 students. Lessons will last 20-30 minutes. The allotted time per lesson will be determined once all students are enrolled and the groups have been timetabled.

NCEA music students **may** be entitled to a 30 min individual lesson. This will depend on student numbers and teacher availability.

3. Lesson Attendance

Lesson attendance is the sole responsibility of the student. Fetching students from class wastes both the teacher's time and the time of other students in the group. This means that your son/daughter must regularly check the posted timetables and ensure that they attend their allotted lesson times. There are

no makeup lessons. If a lesson is missed, students should seek to find out what was covered from other members of the group.

If a student misses two lessons in a row **without a valid reason**, the music department will contact home. Continued absence during lessons may result in **students being removed from the instrumental program with no refund** – especially if there is a waiting list for lessons.

If a student knows that they will not be able to make a lesson time (for example they have an excursion), they should endeavour to inform their music teacher ahead of time. It is possible if the teacher knows of a scheduled absence that they may be able to accommodate a student at a different time that week. This will not always be possible though.

If the music teacher themselves are to be absent, we will endeavour to provide a makeup lessons on an alternative day – students will need to watch the student notices carefully for this information. In some unforeseeable circumstances, such as illness, it may not be possible for teachers to make up a missed week. This is unfortunately unavoidable. In the event of a prolonged absence by the teacher alternative arrangements will be made.

4. Home Practice

Students must practice regularly at home in order to get the most out of lessons. Attendance of lessons without practicing the previous weeks material is a waste of both the students' and teacher's time. The instrumental teacher will inform you son/daughter of the exact amount of time required per week, but you can expect ten to fifteen minutes, five times a week as a starting point for a beginner. More advanced students should be practicing for longer.

5. Fees

As of last year we have been charging a levy for instrumental music lessons. The purpose of this levy has been primarily to fund also cover maintenance and other associated costs of the instrumental music program. Please note that this is not a 'per-lesson' cost and does not guarantee 'x' amount of lessons per term. (Realistically students will probably get around 16-18 lessons a semester – basically weekly but factoring in the odd absence, camp or other reason where a week might be missed etc).

The levy has been set at **\$50** per year. This levy covers the cost of learning one instrument at the school. If your son/daughter wants to learn more than one instrument then the levy is the same for each instrument. Ie, \$50 per year for instrument 1, \$50 for instrument 2 = \$100 per year for 2 instruments. In this case you will need to fill out two enrolment forms.

Students will not be placed onto the timetable or start fulltime lessons until the 1st semesters levy has been paid. (Students can attend their first lesson without paying as a 'trial' but will not be allowed to continue until the levy is paid.)

Please note that whilst lessons are not free of charge, students would be paying \$25+ **per half hour lesson** outside of school, so students are still getting excellent value here.

6. Instrument Hire

The school has limited instruments available for loan, mostly violins and a couple of woodwind instruments. There are no guitars available for hire. You will need an instrument to practice on at home.

Hire fees this year will be set at **\$50 for the year**. This in addition to the levy outlined above. This is a very economical way to have access to an instrument and much cheaper than buying one outright.

Drummers can survive with practice pads to start with but will eventually need a kit (They will of course need their own drum sticks).

Other instrumentalists must have access to an instrument at home to practice on. If you need help sourcing an instrument, contact Mr Shawcross – there are options available for hiring instruments from third parties (where the school can not provide one).

Hiring is usually a good way to go when first starting lessons as it allows a minimal outlay of money whilst allowing the students time to try the instrument out and see if it is for them. If you are thinking of buying an instrument and would like some advice, contact Mr Shawcross.

Sourcing an instrument can take time. It is not imperative that the students have their instrument at the first lesson (though it is preferable). Certainly you should aim to have an instrument sorted by the second lesson.

7. Bringing Instruments to School

Drum students will not need to bring anything except their sticks to school. Piano students will be learning on the school's piano. All other students will need to bring their instruments to school for lessons. Instruments can be brought to the music room in whanau time where I will store them in my office for the day. They can then be collected after school.

8. Lesson Materials and Further Costs

Instrumental teachers will specify what lesson materials their students will need. Beginning students will generally need to purchase an instructional book at the start of the year. They may then need to supplement this with further music/books as they advance.

Most instruments will have some sort of small ongoing cost associated with them. Guitarists and violinists will periodically need new strings, drummers new sticks and woodwind players reeds. Instruments will also occasionally need maintenance. It is important that instruments are in good playing condition, if not they will frustrate students and prevent them from making progress. If you are unsure on the condition of your son/daughter's instrument, the instrumental teachers will be able to access the condition for you.

9. Discontinuation of Lessons

If at any stage in the year your son/daughter decides that they no longer wish to take lessons, you should notify Mr Shawcross in writing as soon as

possible. Please note that there will be no refunds on the instrumental music levy, so the best time to discontinue lessons is at the end of semester.

Contact Details:

Tim Shawcross: Ph 755 6169

Email : timshawcross@westlandhigh.school.nz

Instrumental Lessons – Enrolment Form

Student Details

Student Name:

Year Level:

Whanau:

Parental Contact Number:

Instrument Selection:

Preference 1:

Preference 2:

Student Lesson History (this will help us organise lesson groups):

Please list any previous instrumental lesson history (included instrument and years that lesson took place. Eg: Piano, 2001-2005)

Declaration

I have read the enclosed information and am aware that my son/daughter _____ will be having weekly instrumental music lessons.

Signed _____ Date _____

Please return this signed form to the office along with a payment of \$50 for the year's tuition.