

# MCPS After School Music Program

## Guidelines for Parents and Tutors

### **1. Purpose**

The MCPS After School Music Program has been developed with the aim of providing an opportunity for all students as they progress through Merri Creek Primary School to develop their interest in music and build their music skills.

This document sets out an overview of the program and details responsibilities of participants to each other.

### **2. Availability**

The program runs from Monday to Friday, between 3.35pm and 5.55pm. The program is open to all current Merri Creek Primary School students from years 1 to 6 inclusive.

### **3. The program**

The program is facilitated by parent volunteers who coordinate the offering of lessons by various tutors to students. The tutors provide their lessons in a private capacity that is independent of the school. The school licences the tutors to provide their lessons at the school immediately following the end of the school day.

The school does not supervise the tutors or the provision of the lessons.

The program aims to offer students access to lessons in a variety of instruments.

Lessons begin in the second week of Term 1 and end in the second last week of Term 4. The last week of Term 4 is sometimes used for make-up lessons.

The appropriate age for music lessons depends to some degree on each student's strength, maturity, size, coordination, and the instrument chosen. There are some age-based restrictions in the program, including brass and woodwind instruments from Year 3 onwards.

Individual lessons are offered as a 20 minute or, in some circumstances, a 30 minute lesson. The default and starting lesson is 20 minutes.

Older students who have been learning an instrument for more than 2 years may be offered a 30 minute lesson. The demand for the program will ideally not prevent the offering of 30 minute lessons if the tutor and parent believe the student will benefit from this longer format.

Paired and group lessons (3 students) are offered for recorder and voice. Beginner piano lessons may also be offered as paired lessons.

Year 2 students and above may learn more than one instrument. It is generally recommended that students learn the same instrument for at least 2 years, however there may be exceptions.

## **4. Concerts**

Two concerts are held each year, one mid-year and the other at the end of the year. Every student in the program is invited and encouraged to play and to attend and be appropriate listeners at the concerts.

The dates for the concerts are set at the start of each year.

Each concert is a series of soiree style performances, followed by ensemble performances.

## **5. Enrolment**

### **Enrolment applications:**

- 5.1 All students must (re)enrol in order to seek a place in the following year's program. No student places are guaranteed.
- 5.2 The online enrolment form for the following year is usually available from the end of October for a 4-week period.
- 5.3 Enrolments close on a nominated date at the end of November.
- 5.4 The music coordinators endeavour to ensure that families are notified of the opening of the online enrolment process via the school's usual information channels and the link to the form is available through the school's website. It is the responsibility of families themselves to ensure they obtain necessary information on (re)enrolment.
- 5.5 Submission of an enrolment form constitutes a commitment to learning an instrument for a full year. In the event of an unexpected change in circumstances, a minimum of a full term's written notice to both the tutor and the music coordinators is required. If a replacement

student cannot be found for the lesson, then the fees for the remaining balance of that term are forfeited to the tutor.

- 5.6 Families should receive an acknowledgement of the enrolment application within 48 hours of completion of the online form. If an acknowledgement is not received, the family should follow this up with the music coordinators. Note that this is simply an acknowledgement of receipt of the application and not a confirmation of the enrolment itself.

### **Confirmation of enrolment:**

- 5.7 Within approximately two weeks after the enrolment closes, families should receive confirmation of their child's enrolment via the email address provided in the enrolment form.
- 5.8 The confirmation of enrolment email will contain information about:
- a. instrument;
  - b. day and time of lesson; and
  - c. tutor's name and class room for lesson.
- 5.9 If the lesson is no longer required, families must contact the music coordinators as soon as possible, noting that we often have a waiting list of other students wishing to obtain lessons and the tutors are dependent on these lessons for income.
- 5.10 If the allocated time or day is absolutely unworkable, families can get in contact with the music coordinators who will then try to arrange a swap with another family. However, a swap is not guaranteed.
- 5.11 Families who have been unsuccessful, will receive a notification about being placed on any waiting list.

## **Waiting list**

- 5.12 A waiting list is created when one or more students have been unsuccessful in obtaining a lesson in a particular instrument due to high demand.
- 5.13 It is not uncommon for vacancies to open up – especially towards the end of term 1 and term 2. However, the After School Music Program cannot guarantee that students on the waiting list will ultimately be offered a spot.

## **Preference in enrolment**

The program is coordinated by parent volunteers and accommodates over 200 students. Understandably it is not always possible to cater for all families' preferences regarding timing of lessons, availability of instruments and tutors.

The program endeavours to meet all requests for music tuition, however lessons are allocated taking into account factors including the following (in no particular order):

- 5.14 “first in, best dressed” principle. The submitted online enrolment form has a timestamp which shows when the enrolment was received by the music coordinators. This can be particularly critical in terms of highly popular instruments;
- 5.15 year 1 students are allocated one instrument only. Year 2 students and above can be allocated up to a maximum of 3 instruments but preference is always given to ensuring that all students are allocated at least 1 instrument;
- 5.16 preference is given to a student who has played the instrument before in the After School Music Program; and

5.17 preference of tutor is taken into consideration but may not always be able to be met. This refers to preference of day, time and sibling considerations as well.

The day and time allocated to a student may vary from year to year. When there are multiple requests for a time-slot consideration is given to:

5.18 the age of the child (e.g. a lesson straight after school is not always the best option for younger children as they may benefit from a short break and something to eat, older children who walk themselves home may take preference for an earlier lesson);

5.19 attendance at OSHC (the first lesson is not appropriate for a child in OSHC as it is too rushed to get them signed in and out, generally children in OSHC can have later lessons);

5.20 scheduling of siblings; and

5.21 individual circumstances.

## 6. Payment

### **Tutors:**

Tutors in the program charge at Victorian Music Teachers' Association (VMTA) recommended rates for individual lessons and ensembles. For paired/group lessons, tutors offer a discounted rate. Tutors invoice parents and parents pay tutors directly, at the beginning of each term for that term. An account is issued by the tutor to the family early each term. If payment is not received within the 14-day payment terms of the invoice, the tutor is entitled to suspend lessons until payment is received. Tutors are responsible for following up any overdue accounts.

## **Administration fee:**

There is also an annual administration fee payable to the school for each student in the program. These funds are used for the general purposes of the program including providing payment for the tutors on concert nights, maintaining, tuning or replacing the pianos, keyboards and drums as well as purchasing other equipment for the program. This fee is required to be paid to the school to confirm enrolment. A reduced administration fee is charged for students commencing lessons in term 3 or 4.

## **7. Instruments and use of equipment**

All students must have their own instruments.

The tutors and students provide all equipment necessary for the lessons, with the exceptions of:

- pianos and keyboards; and
- drums (students must provide their own drum-sticks).

Other music equipment in the music rooms is not available to be used in the program.

It is the responsibility of tutors to ensure that all equipment is returned to its usual place after lessons and the concerts so as not to interrupt classes the following day.

## **8. Tutors**

Tutors are responsible for:

- 8.1 **missed lessons:** if at least 24 hours' notice is given that a student will not be able to attend a scheduled individual lesson, then the tutor may elect to offer a credit to the next term's account or, if feasible, provide a 'catch-up

lesson'. Only one credit per term is given. If insufficient notice is given, or if it's not practicable, tutors are not obliged to provide a catch-up lesson. No catch-up lesson offered to paired or group of 3 lessons;

- 8.2 **contact details:** tutors should ensure that families have their contact details. Family contact details will be provided to tutors by the coordinators;
- 8.3 **school values:** tutors must teach students to the best of their ability and treat students, families and all members of the school community with respect and in accordance with the School Values;
- 8.4 **progress reports** should be provided for students on a regular basis either verbally or in writing;
- 8.5 **class rooms:** tutors must ensure that they use the class room allocated to them and leave the room in the same way it was found (e.g. the arrangement of chairs and tables) after lessons and the concerts so as not to interrupt classes the following day. Tutors should ensure particularly that no food is left behind. Lights should be turned off, doors locked and windows shut when leaving the room;
- 8.6 **keys** can be collected from (and returned to) the OSHC coordinator;
- 8.7 all tutors need to be familiar with the **Emergency Evacuation Procedures** and the **OSHC sign in/out procedures** and comply with same;
- 8.8 **concerts:** tutors are expected to attend both concerts and to assist with the coordination and the set-up before and tidying up after the concerts; and

8.9 **meetings:** 2 meetings of the tutor group and music coordinators are held each year prior to each of the concerts. Tutors are expected to attend these meetings.

**Working With Children Checks are mandatory for all tutors. Tutors are required to specify Merri Creek Primary School as one of their places of work on the MyCheck website.**

Tutors may also be asked to provide an up-to-date Police Check or a copy of their VIT registration. Working With Children Checks and Police Checks remain valid for three years and teacher registration needs to be renewed annually.

It is at the discretion of the coordinators whether tutors are invited to continue to offer their services. If demand for lessons in a particular instrument drops, for example, a tutor may not be invited to return.

## **9. Parents**

Parents are responsible for:

- 9.1 ensuring their child has the **equipment** required for the lessons;
- 9.2 prompt **payment** of the administration fee on enrolment and term fees directly to the tutors;
- 9.3 ensuring that students are **on time** for the start of their lesson as well as collected promptly after their lessons – noting that delays have a real impact on tutors and other students in the program. Lessons end at the appointed time regardless of students having commenced their lessons late;
- 9.4 **non-OSHC students:** parents are responsible for managing the gap between school finishing and a music

lesson beginning. Students can be brought back to school for their lesson or wait with a parent in the yard – but only until 4pm. Parents are responsible for the supervision of their child before the lesson and for collecting them after the lesson. **Children cannot be left unsupervised at school outside lesson times.**

- 9.5 **OSHC students:** parents must complete and submit the appropriate form to OSHC to enable their child to be signed out by the music tutor to attend their music lesson and then signed back into OSHC. Time spent by the tutor locating students is part of the lesson time. It is up to students and parents to make it as easy as possible for the tutor to locate the student quickly in order to minimise the lesson time lost.
- 9.6 advising of student **absences** directly to the tutor, as early as possible.
- 9.7 in the event of an unexpected change in circumstances necessitating a withdrawal from the program, parents will give at least one term's written **notice** to both the tutor and the music coordinators. If a replacement student cannot be found for the lesson, then fees for the remaining balance of the term are forfeited to the tutor. It is not appropriate to stop lessons at short notice, as it affects timetabling of other student's lessons, and may change the cost of shared lessons; and
- 9.8 **school values:** parents must ensure that they treat all participants in the program including tutors, the coordinators and all members of the school community with respect and in accordance with the School Values.

## 10. Coordinators

The coordinators are volunteer parents who are the key contact point between the tutors and the school.

The coordinators are responsible for:

- 10.1 **managing enrolments** and the **scheduling** of the program;
- 10.2 providing scheduling and **parent contact** information to tutors, and lesson schedule information to parents and tutors;
- 10.3 organising at least two **meetings** of the tutor group each year, generally before each concert;
- 10.4 assisting the tutors with the promotion of and programming for the **concerts**, and the smooth running of the events. This includes preparing a flyer with information for parents and asking tutors to distribute these to their students at least 3 weeks prior to the concerts and arranging for the dates of the concerts to be notified on the school website and through other school communication channels;
- 10.5 **attending** the concerts and assisting the tutors with the set-up before and the tidying up after the concerts;
- 10.6 ensuring **tutor contact** details are kept up to date;
- 10.7 **responding** to any queries regarding the program within a reasonable timeframe;
- 10.8 **liaising with the tutors, the school liaison, OSHC and the school office** regarding matters to do with the program;
- 10.9 managing and updating the shared student **timetable** as well as the OSHC timetable when any changes occur (eg

late cancellations, swaps, replacements, extra days etc);  
and

- 10.10 **school values**: coordinators must ensure that they treat all participants in the program including tutors, families and all members of the school community with respect and in accordance with the School Values.

## 11. School office

The school office is responsible for:

- 11.1 receiving, following up and administering the annual **administration fee** collected from each student;
- 11.2 **payment** of tutors for concerts and administrative meetings;
- 11.3 payment for the maintenance and purchase/replacement of **equipment**;
- 11.4 monitoring the working with children checks and prompting tutors if **WWCCs** have or are about to expire;
- 11.5 updating the school website and **distributing information** via the school's usual communications channels as requested by the music coordinators; and
- 11.6 **printing** flyers and posters as required by the coordinators.

## 12. School liaison

The school liaison is responsible for:

- 12.1 liaising with class room teachers regarding the use of their rooms;

- 12.2 managing the purchase and maintenance of equipment required by the program;
- 12.3 promoting the program to students and families; and
- 12.4 working with the coordinators to ensure the proper running of the program.