



Welcome to Yarrawest Young Musicians!

We hope this document has all the information that you need, but if you do have any questions please drop us a line at ywyoungmusicians@gmail.com and we will help. Please read the details of this document carefully as it forms the terms of our agreement once you enrol.

Who are we?

Current staff are: Leah Oliver, Paul Hughan, Jarrad Brown, Steph Brett, and Margie Francis. All teachers have a current Working With Children Check and hold insurance for their teaching activities. You can see information on all the teachers on the school website:
<https://www.ywps.vic.edu.au/page/67/Yarrawest-Young-Musicians>

What instruments are on offer?

Piano/keyboard, guitar, bass guitar, singing, ukulele, flute, trumpet. You can combine singing with piano, guitar and ukulele too.

How do lessons work?

Lessons are weekly, individual and 30 minutes long. Your child will be allocated a music teacher and a regular day for their lesson. The music teacher will collect your child from class on the specified day. We rotate lesson times each week so that your child does not miss out on the same part of their classroom lesson every week. This means that sometimes your child will have their lesson at recess or lunchtime - it's important they understand that this is part of the deal!

How much does it cost?

Lessons are \$45 each. There is a concession rate of \$35. If you have more than one child learning the rate per child per lesson is \$43. These rates include a \$2 room hire surcharge. You will be paying your music teacher directly so all communications regarding fees should be direct with your teacher. Your teacher will invoice you termly in advance. Please contact your teacher if you need to pay in instalments, this can be arranged.

It's a bit like having a private teacher, just located at school. We each operate our own business from the school premises, but we are collaborating on certain aspects, including concerts/bands/ensembles - more about that below.

What if my child misses their music lesson?

Students may miss lessons for many reasons. Illness, family holidays, excursions, incursions, school camps, fire drills etc etc.. We work with the school and do our best to schedule your lessons around these events and we are mostly successful!

We genuinely care about the progress of all of our students and so we do try to make up missed lessons during our allocated teaching days wherever possible, but as each teacher's schedule is full this often depends on another student being absent. Which is why it really helps us to know as soon as possible about absences.

Please SMS your music teacher as soon as you know your child will be absent for their lesson. The more notice we have, the more likely we are to be able to use that time to make up a lesson for another student (which could be you one day!). Knowing in advance also means we don't waste time or disrupt their class in the process of coming to collect them.

We will try and let you know in advance about makeup lessons, but if we have a chance to make up a lesson for your child unexpectedly we will - this may mean that we come and collect your child for a makeup lesson on a different day to normal even if they do not have their instrument or books, or we may give them a double lesson to make up time.

No refunds or credits will be given for student absences for any reason. If a teacher is absent and cannot make up the lesson during that term you will be credited or refunded for that lesson.

A note about family holidays: Student absences due to families choosing to take holidays during term time will be the lowest priority for makeup lessons - we will try and make up lessons missed due to school events or illnesses first. Family holidays where 1 or 2 lessons are missed must be paid for. For family holidays where 3 or more lessons are missed we can charge 50% of the missed lessons to hold the spot for the student - but parents must give us reasonable notice.

What equipment do I need?

Your child should arrive to each lesson with the following, you could pop your child's lesson day on the family calendar to help everyone remember!

- A notebook or exercise book, provided by you, that the teacher can write lesson notes in. This is a major form of communication between teacher and home, and will contain details of what practice the student needs to do during the week. When students have this notebook every week it forms a log of their progress, practice and achievements, and the child's progress is improved. When they don't have it lesson notes very often get lost and children forget what they need to do.
- Their instrument if applicable, no need to bring a piano :)
- Any instrumental 'method' books they have
- Some teachers like to work with loose sheet music or lyric sheets, and if this is the case a display folder (the kind with lots of plastic pockets) to keep them together and damage-free is essential.
- It's a good idea to keep all books/folders together in a bag (any kind will do), which comes to the lesson each week.

Do I need an instrument at home?

Most definitely yes! For beginner piano students a 61-key keyboard will suffice at the outset. Yamaha and Casio brands are good. Be sure to purchase a keyboard with 'touch sensitivity' - this means that when they press a key softly they get a quiet sound, and when they press hard they get a loud sound. This is important and not all entry level keyboards have this feature.

For guitar or ukulele it's a good idea to take your child into a music shop to try instruments for size. Guitars come in full size, $\frac{3}{4}$ size and $\frac{1}{2}$ size, and ukuleles come in four different sizes. For beginners it's good to go with an instrument with nylon strings rather than steel. They will need a case to transport it to school, and a music stand is an excellent investment too.

You can always contact your teacher for advice on instrument purchases.

Here are two relatively local and comprehensive music shops you can try:

Scarlett Music, 284-288 Ballarat Rd Footscray:

<https://www.scarlettmusic.com.au>

Angkor Music, 4/6 Drake Blvd, Altona VIC 3018

angkormusic.com.au

What about practice?

Practice at home is essential to the development of musical skills, both physical and conceptual. When students practice their progress becomes its own reward, and a lovely learning loop can develop - student practices, achieves a goal, feels pride, has fun, and is motivated to practice more.

The golden rule for beginners is that short and frequent practice sessions work far better than 1 or 2 long sessions a week. So 5 -10 minutes 4-5 times a week for beginners is a very good start. Students who are more advanced or preparing for exams will need to set aside more time each session. Your teacher will be more than happy to advise you of their recommendations!

Working these practice sessions into home life will be different for each family. Some people find mornings better, some evenings. For most students a routine of some kind works well. It can be a good idea to link short practice sessions with some other daily activity, e.g. after you've brushed your teeth, after dinner or breakfast, before you watch TV or go on the computer/iPad. What does work very well is to have the instrument set up and easily accessible (i.e. not in its case under the bed). Some students do well when advised that they can fit their practice in by simply trying this: instead of walking past your instrument, sit down, play a piece for 1 minute, then keep walking. Try and do this a few times most days, then you don't have to actually find a specific time to practice! Of course, this needs monitoring by parents, and if it's not working for your child another approach will be necessary.

Your child doesn't only have to practice what your teacher recommends - they can practice older songs, and make up music too! If your child is doing any songwriting your teacher can help encourage and develop this.

What about ensembles?

We run a senior school band for grade 5 and 6 students. The band performs at school events and sometimes community events and is extremely popular!

Rehearsals are weekly during lunchtime and require students to make the commitment to attend each week and practice their parts.

Our music teachers will recommend some of their grade 5/6 students to join the band. These will be students who have shown consistent commitment to their lessons and their practice. If there is space for other students after the teacher recommendations are made, we will open spots up to other grade 5/6 music students who want to join. Students who are having private music lessons outside the school may also join if there's space. YWPS students who are not learning an instrument will not be able to join.

Participation in the school band will incur a cost to parents of \$17 per week which will be charged termly in advance. There are no refunds for student absences. If the teachers can't run

a rehearsal in a given week we may offer an alternative rehearsal day – but if we can't you will be credited for that week.

Band rehearsals won't start until a few weeks into term 1 to give everyone a chance to settle in to the new year. If we have selected your child as a potential band member you'll be sent an offer early in Term 1.

What about concerts?

We run a series of lunchtime solo concerts at the end of the year. Some senior students also had the opportunity to perform at various school events. Younger students have been given the opportunity to perform for their classmates during music lessons with Bryce or for the regular classmates. We are always on the lookout for opportunities to share our work!

My child wants to stop their lessons - what should I do?

If there are any issues or barriers for your child that we may be able to overcome please speak to your child's teacher - sometimes we can adjust our methods to suit, or perhaps your child may do better on a different instrument.

If your child really does want to stop, please give us two lessons notice during term time (or let us know at the end of term) to give us time to organise a replacement student for your teacher. If your child does not want to attend these last two lessons they will still need to be paid for.

Can my child enrol?

New enrolments are only open to students in grades 2-4. Students in grades 5 and 6 can only learn an instrument if they were enrolled in grade 4 and are continuing. Students in grade 1 are welcome to go on the waiting list to start lessons in Grade 2. We do not take enrolments for students in Foundation/Prep.

We work with the school and with classroom teaching staff to minimise disruption to classroom time. The school places a limit on how many students from each grade can have music lessons. This means that if you enrol and your child's grade/class already has the maximum number of music students, you will go on our waiting list. In grade 2 the maximum number of music students from any one class is 3, in all other grades it is 8.

Each student is limited to one lesson per week, but may combine two instruments in one lesson, see above section "What instruments are on offer?"

Is there anything else I should know?

All communications regarding Yarrawest Young Musicians should come through us and not the school. For initial enquiries please contact us via email. Once your child is placed with a Yarrawest Music Teacher all communications and enquiries regarding fees, absences or anything else should go to your music teacher. This is to avoid creating further workload for school staff.

Once your child is having lessons there is no need to re-enrol at any point. Lessons will continue until you tell us to stop them.

OK I am keen! How do I enrol?

Great!

Fill in the form at this link: <https://forms.gle/7kPrQkR6X9sznUKU7>

If you have any issues with the form please contact us at ywyoungmusicians@gmail.com.