

Music Exam Fact Sheet

THE EXAM PROCESS: A SUMMARY

Before entering your child for an exam, make sure that you are happy with all of the information on this page. Remember, if there's anything you are not sure of, just contact us.

When the exam entry form is open, you will be able to enter your child for the exam.

Encourage your child to work hard in their lessons and at home.

When you receive your child's exam date, remember to book in for the run-through session with the pianist.

On the day of the exam, make sure you have everything your child needs, but do your best to help your child to relax and enjoy the experience.

Wait for the exam result to arrive via email.

WHY DO WE OFFER EXAMS?

Although certainly not a compulsory part of a pupil's time with us, we believe that many pupils benefit from the opportunity to take external examinations. It gives pupils extra motivation, encourages extra practice (which is always a positive thing!) and also enables pupils to leave primary school with a qualification that other music services can relate to.

WHICH EXAMS CAN MY CHILD TAKE?

There are 8 'Grades', numbered progressively in order of difficulty from 1-8. Most pupils start at Grade 1, but it is not compulsory to take all grades, nor is it necessary to start at Grade 1. For example, a child who is doing really well might start with Grade 2 instead, miss Grade 3 and move straight on to Grade 4.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO ENTER FOR AN EXAM?

Entering your child in for an exam does come with some additional costs. The cost of the exam is dependent on the Grade you are entering for.

The fee that we charge includes the examination fee, the pianist fee for the day of the exam, and a pre-examination run-through with the pianist. You may choose to use your own pianist, in which case you should contact us before making your entry.

You will also need to provide original music once the pieces for the exam have been chosen. It might be necessary to buy 3 or 4 original books, which may cost between £5 and £15 each. Most books will have both instrument and piano parts, however some books may require the purchase of additional piano music. Where possible tutors try to suggest pieces from the same books in further grades. Your tutor will advise you which books you need to buy. Ideally books need to be purchased as soon as your exam entry is made, so if you are unsure of what you need, you can either email your tutor or contact us for advice. Books can be ordered from a variety of sources, including high street music shops, Amazon and MusicRoom. The use of photocopies is not allowed. Some music books have accompaniment CD's or download options so that pupils can practice their complete performances at home.

WHEN AND WHERE WILL THE EXAM TAKE PLACE?

We will tell you where your child is being entered when we invite you to make your entry. Once the exam entry has been sent off to the exam board, we have to wait to find out the exact venue, and the date is selected once all entries have been received, so we are not able to advise of the date before the entry is made. We will however have several weeks notice of the exam date and time, giving you plenty of time to make any necessary arrangements for getting your child there. Once we have received confirmation of the arrangements, you will receive an email with your child's exam details. The exam will take place between 9am and 5.30pm, and will usually take place on a weekday during term time. Exams are not held at your school, but at an external venue decided by the exam board. Where possible, candidates are entered in school groups so that parents can share transport, however it is the responsibility of each individual parent to make arrangements to transport their child to and from the exam. Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to change an examination date. Under certain extenuating circumstances, the exam board may be able to offer an alternative appointment and at their discretion may offer a partial refund (in the case of broken limbs etc). They will not transfer entry fees from one term to the next. We are never able to offer refunds if an exam date is inconvenient.

WILL THERE BE A CHANCE TO REHEARSE BEFORE THE EXAM?

Pre-examination Run-throughs with the appointed pianist are provided for each pupil, and we cannot stress enough how important these rehearsals are. Opportunities to practice accompanied pieces at school can be limited, and not having played with a piano or met their pianist can make a pupil worry unnecessarily about their exam. Run-throughs will take place outside of school hours and we will confirm the arrangements for this when we send your exam date to you. Please bear in mind that the pianist will most likely live close to the exam centre, so if you are having to travel a little for the exam itself, you will probably have to do so for the run-through as well. For Grades 1, 2 and 3, a simple 15 minute run-through of pieces will be more than enough for a well-prepared pupil. For pupils taking higher grades, a 20-30 minute run-through will be allocated. Once you have your run-through date, you will be asked to confirm your place. If you choose to use your own pianist, you will need to make your own arrangements for a run-through.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD CANNOT ATTEND THE EXAMINATION?

We will help parents as best we can to avoid the cancellation process, however in some cases we understand that withdrawing your child from the exam is the only option. Please bear in mind that once your child has been entered, we are bound by the rules and regulations set by the exam board. The current regulations are as follows: You may withdraw your child at any time, however we regret that no refund of fees can be given. Your tutor may withdraw your child at any time if they feel that they are not ready, however again we regret that no refund of fees can be given. If your child's exam date is inconvenient for any reason, unfortunately we are unable to refund the entry fee. We will however contact the exam board on your behalf to ask for an alternative appointment. There is no guarantee that an alternative appointment will be available. If your child is ill and needs to withdraw from the exam, a doctor's note must be forwarded to Head Office and the exam board may offer a partial refund. In all cases, entry fees cannot be transferred to the next exam period.

WHAT HAPPENS ON THE DAY OF THE EXAM?

Remember to bring with you the original music, including music for the piano player. Also, have some spare reeds if you are a clarinet or saxophone player, and valve oil if you play a brass instrument. You should arrive at the examination venue approximately 15 minutes prior to the exam time. A steward will welcome you and check your child's details. The steward will show the pupil and the pianist into the exam room. Exams can often run early or late, so don't worry if you're not called exactly at the time you were expecting! The examiner will probably be sat at a desk, surrounded by paperwork. The examiner is there to assess the pupil's performance, but they are always friendly and welcoming. The examiner may introduce themselves, and may ask the pupil their name. Pupils are expected to tell the examiner which pieces they are playing and who they are written by. When we send the email confirmation of the exam details, we will include a slip that you can print out for your child to give to the examiner which will show which pieces have been chosen. Usually the exam begins with the two accompanied pieces. The pianist will leave the room after the two pieces, and the pupil will proceed with the study, scales, sight-reading and aural tests in whatever order they choose (the examiner will usually ask the pupil which they would like to do first). The examination will end after all components have been completed. The times allocated for each grade are as follows:

Grade	Time
1	12 Minutes
2 & 3	14 Minutes
4 & 5	17 Minutes

AFTER THE EXAM - RESULTS

Results usually take between 1 and 2 weeks. Your child's mark will be sent to you via email. The examination carries a total of 150 marks, and gradings are as follows:

Mark Grading

Less than 100 Fail

100-119 Pass

120-129 Merit

130-150 Distinction

We will send certificates to your tutor or school who will make sure it is given to your child, often as part of a celebration assembly. We will only send certificates out to home addresses if you have submitted a particular request or if your child is in Year 6 and the documents arrive after the end of the academic year. If your child has private lessons with one of our tutors the result will always be sent to the tutor, regardless of your child's year group.