Strings Handbook 2015

Violin - Viola - Cello - Double Bass

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**Violin**
- Highest sound of all the stringed instruments
- Very popular orchestral instrument
- Usually plays the melody part
- Between 20-32 violinists required for youth orchestras
- Easy to learn at the beginning but initial progress can be slow
- Instrument sizes: 1/8, ¼, ½, ¾ and full size
- Recommended earliest starting grade is Year 1

**Viola**
- Same shape as the violin but slightly larger - student instruments are same size as violins
- Has a unique tonal quality with pitch lower than the violin and higher than the cello
- Has its own clef - Alto Clef
- Violists are in high demand for orchestras
- Usually plays the harmony part
- Easy to learn at the beginning but initial progress can be slow
- Instrument sizes: 13”, 14”, 15”, full size. Violins strung as violas can suffice for smaller sizes
- Recommended earliest starting grade is Year 1

**Double Bass**
- Most students sit on a stool when playing, but some advanced players prefer to stand
- Orchestras are always needing bass players
- Plays the bassline - often considered the engine of the orchestra
- Used for multiple styles of music: Classical, Jazz, Contemporary
- Easy to learn at the beginning
- Quite fun to play
- Instrument sizes: mini-bass, ½, ¾
- Recommended earliest starting grade is Year 3

**Cello**
- Players always sit down with the Cello
- Popular because it plays both the melody part and bassline
- Cellos are light to carry but are a little awkward due to the size
- Between 8-12 cellists needed for most youth orchestras
- Easy to learn at the beginning
- Instrument sizes: ¼, ½, ¾, full size
- Recommended earliest starting grade is Year 2
Type of lesson available

Individual Lesson: with one Student - 30 minutes
- Standard format for instrumental lessons.
- Repertoire and rate of progress is specifically designed for each student.
- Care and attention is taken to establish sound musical and technical facility on the instrument.
- Preparation towards A.M.E.B. exams can be covered in these lessons. The group Exam Class is a requirement for exam students. This class includes aural tests, general knowledge and sight-reading practice together with performance practice. (See section on Exam Class)

Shared Lesson: with 2 students - 30 minutes
- This lesson is designed as an introduction to the instrument where beginning students learn the same material.
- It is highly recommended that students move to Individual lessons after the first year of learning.
- Developing students often learn at a different pace and therefore may learn different material. In this case, the shared lesson is frequently divided into 2 x 15 minute sessions.
- The Teacher’s time is shared equally between both students. Their rate of progress will not be as fast as for students enrolled in individual lessons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strings</th>
<th>Violin &amp; Ensemble</th>
<th>Minimum starting grade - Year 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Viola &amp; Ensemble</td>
<td>Minimum starting grade - Year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cello &amp; Ensemble</td>
<td>Minimum starting grade - Year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Double Bass &amp; Ensemble</td>
<td>Minimum starting grade - Year 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lessons
- Lessons are timetabled throughout the School day.
- They are organized, whenever possible, not to clash with Specialist Class lessons.
- In 2015, students will receive 32 weeks tuition over the course of the year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle 1</th>
<th>Cycle 2</th>
<th>Cycle 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 weeks</td>
<td>11 weeks</td>
<td>10 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Before students begin to learn an instrument, it needs to be understood this requires a commitment of at least one cycle.
- A student who attends lessons on time and comes fully equipped, benefits most during the total lesson time.
- Prior to a performance, lessons may be grouped with other students in order for small ensembles to rehearse together. These will be arranged at the discretion of the Teacher.
Ensemble

Beginner Strings
- Ensemble for new students of the violin, viola, cello and double bass.
- Weekly rehearsals – length of rehearsals is governed by the number of students.
- Designed to reinforce technical grounding covered in lessons.
- Introduces reading, clapping and writing exercises.
- Opportunity for students to play the same material together.
- Generally students progress into Junior Strings after one year of Beginner Strings.

Junior Strings
- For students who have been learning between 6 months and 2 years.
- Listening exercises, dynamics and part playing are introduced.
- Parts are arranged to cover the level a student is currently playing.
- Technique, posture and tone development are taught through group exercises.

Chamber Strings
- Independent learning of parts is required to enable rehearsals to focus on the development of musical interpretation and understanding.
- Rehearsals pinpoint the articulation and attack required for each phrase and define the correct technique for building the group sound.
- Performance etiquette, awareness of stage plan, stage presence and support of other students, are developed throughout the year.
- Chamber Strings alternates with the Concert Band in playing the National Anthem in Assembly for two terms.

Performances/Concerts

The Skill of Performing
- Concerts encourage a student to focus on a goal.
- The experience develops the student’s ability to feel comfortable when performing.
- It highlights the progress of a student from year to year.
- Two major performances are arranged each year, as follows:

String Concert – Term 2
- Solos and/or small group items.
- Larger ensembles.
- Students organize the concert, learn stage management and announcing of items.
- Prior to the performance, rehearsals may change time in order for ensembles to rehearse together. These will be arranged at the discretion of the Teacher.
- A notice is sent to students a few weeks before the concert.

Music Showcase – Term 4 during October
- All school ensembles perform
- A combined strings ensemble is rehearsed and prepared for this concert.
- Prior to the performance, rehearsals may change time in order for ensembles to rehearse together. These will be arranged at the discretion of the Teacher.
A.M.E.B. Exams

- Australian Music Examinations Board (A.M.E.B.) is the organization that delivers independent examination services.
- Exams are available for: Piano, Singing, Strings, Brass, Woodwind and Theory.
- The majority of exams are held at the AMEB studios, 259 Auburn Road, Hawthorn.
- Should we have a considerable number of students sitting for the same instrument, we may request an examiner come to the School.

Instrumental Exams

- Exams are available for all stringed instruments.
- An applicant must be approved by the Instrumental Teacher.
- It is a requirement of all students preparing for an exam to enrol in the Exam Class.
- It is expected that students preparing for a Grade 3 or above exam receive weekly 45 minute lessons.
- Students are required to have established a regular practice routine, independent learning skills and the listed technical standard before preparing for an exam.
- It is important a student be in command of the material presented at exams to make the most of the experience.

Exam Class – compulsory for exam students

- A unique opportunity for participants to improve motivation and receive positive peer support whilst preparing for individual exams.
- Designed to cover additional exam requirements such as aural tests, general knowledge, and sight-reading.
- Performance practice is conducted parallel with preparation taught by the Instrumental Teacher.
- Exam Class is offered to students after approval from the Instrumental Teacher.

Theory Class

- A group class designed to prepare students for A.M.E.B. Music Craft or Theory of Music Exams (Theory Exams).
- A pass in Theory Exams is a pre-requisite for higher level instrumental exams and VCE Music Units 1-4. However, an earlier start is favoured at most schools.
- Knowledge of Theory supports a student’s understanding of notation, including intervals, rhythm, pitch and musical language for their instrument.
- Students are expected to complete set theory exercises during and outside class time.

Information for Exam Class and Theory Class

- Classes commence the week beginning 23rd February and end 13th November.
- Classes may be streamed into levels and run before and/or after School.
- The maximum number of students per class is 5.
- Please mark all possible available times on the enrolment form found in the Exam Class Handbook or Theory Class Handbook.
- Make-up classes will not be provided.
- Written consent from a parent needs to be received to change to a different class time.
Hire or Purchase of Instrument

String Instruments
- String instruments come in different sizes.
- During primary School, on average, a student might use:
  - 3 different violin sizes,
  - 3 different viola sizes,
  - 2 to 3 cellos sizes,
  - 2 double bass sizes.
- A student is sized at the beginning and throughout the school year.
- It is imperative a student plays on a correctly sized instrument, to prevent incorrect technique and posture.
- An instrument should be stored in its case in a cool dry place.

Hire from school
- The advantage of hiring an instrument from School is the availability of a larger instrument as soon as the need arises.
- It is recommended a parent insure the instrument under their house contents.
- A hire agreement form and instrument will be given to a student at the first lesson.
- A hired instrument is to be used only by the student whose name is written on the tag.
- An instrument comes with rosin and a shoulder rest.
- When damage occurs:
  - The Teacher will assess, and, if need be, take it to an expert repairer at your expense.
  - Do not try to repair it - modern adhesives can seriously damage both the sound and value of an instrument.
- When a new string is provided the parent should purchase a replacement for the School.
- Hire of a school instrument extends across term holidays.
- There is a small charge for hiring an instrument over the December/January holidays. Please email the instrumental Co-ordinator to make arrangements.
- A hired instrument is to be returned at a student’s final lesson for the year.

Purchase of an instrument
- Details of recommended string instrument stores can be obtained from the Teacher.
- Correct instrument size needs to be professionally managed. Contact the Teacher before purchasing a stringed instrument.
- A second-hand instrument is preferred as the sound has had time to develop.
- A shoulder rest, rosin and spare set of strings are required.
- An instrument should be identified with name and class, preferably with a key tag or directly onto the outside of the case.

Storage of Instruments at School
- All instruments are to be stored in the classroom. A student needs to talk to the class teacher to negotiate a safe place out of the way of regular traffic.
What you need

Music Record Book
- Each student is required to use the Music Record Book supplied by the School at the first lesson.
- Replacement books can be requested from the Instrumental Teacher and will be charged on your School statement.
- When a student fails to bring their Music Record Book to 4 consecutive lessons, a new book will automatically be provided and charged on the School statement.

Music Book
- A scrap book, usually 64 blank pages, can be purchased from the School for $2 or from a supermarket.
- Free scrap books (with a few used pages removed) are available from School.
- When a music tutor book is required, the Teacher will advise the name and price of the book and music shops where it is available.
- A display book with plastic inserts is necessary for ensemble rehearsals.

Music Stand
- A music stand for practice at home is essential for each student.
- To practice without a music stand involves the use of incorrect muscles and can result in playing becoming painful.
- Compact fold-up metal stands, available at most music shops, cost $30-40.

Music Bag
- An Essex Heights music bag is highly recommended to keep music books, scrapbook, ensemble folder and the Music Record Book together. They are available from the School uniform shop.
- The student’s name should be written on the bag.

Accessories

Violin and Viola
- Shoulder rests are not encouraged for beginner students
- The alternative is Poly-pad, a shaped foam cushion, available from School for $14

Cello
- Rubber stoppers attached to the end pin are recommended for daily use
- A round rubber disk called a ‘donut’ is recommended for playing during concerts, especially when on a wooden floor
- A chair/stool of an appropriate size will be recommended by the Teacher.

Double Bass
- Either a donut (as above) or a small wooden board with divots is recommended.
- A stool of an appropriate size will be recommended by the Teacher.
Practice

• Parents should encourage their child to establish a regular practice routine.
• Practice should be in a room with:
  o limited distractions,
  o a door that can be closed,
  o an area where a music stand can remain assembled.
• A student should aim to practise for 10 minutes for a minimum 4 days a week, with an increase in time as the student progresses. Regular practice is important for both the development of general music skills, muscle memory and co-ordination.
• Beginner students should play the exercises and pieces covered in the lessons 3-5 times and count aloud at all times whilst playing.

Missed Lessons

• When your child is unable to attend a lesson, you should notify the Instrumental Co-ordinator kennedy.alyssa.a@edumail.vic.gov.au as soon as possible prior to the lesson.
• Two (2) makeup lessons are permitted each term.
• A make-up lesson will only be granted under extenuating circumstances such as:
  o Illness – only when notification is received before 9am,
  o School Organized Events,
  o Industrial Action,
  o Public Holidays.
• Students are not permitted to request a make-up lesson.
• The student is to attend the make-up lesson or it will be forfeited.
• When a Teacher is absent, the lesson will be replaced.
• Should you be travelling overseas for more than two weeks, please notify the Instrumental Co-ordinator a minimum of 3 weeks before departure, in order to negotiate a possible change to your school statement charges.
• The Teacher will provide make-up lessons at the regular scheduled time at the end of the school year unless otherwise negotiated by the Teacher.
• Replacement lessons for a student enrolled in a shared lesson may be given as an individual lesson which will count as two shared lessons. This will be arranged at the discretion of the Teacher.

Helpful Hints

• A student should enquire at the Music Office when a Teacher cannot be located.
• The night before a lesson, a student should place the instrument, music and Music Record Book alongside the school bag.
• A student may wear a watch or bring an alarm clock as a reminder to go to a lesson.
Withdrawal from Lessons

- Occasionally a student loses interest in learning their instrument. These may be momentary lapses of enjoyment and with the right encouragement a student can persevere through these times. If you are concerned, contact the Instrumental Teacher to talk over how best to support your child.
- The Instrumental Co-ordinator may be contacted via email – kennedy.alyssa.a@edumail.vic.gov.au
- After discussion with the Instrumental Teacher, should you wish to withdraw from lessons, written or email notification must be received by:
  - end of Term 1, for not continuing into Cycle 2
  - end of Term 2, for not continuing into Cycle 3
- When a student discontinues lessons all make-up lessons due are forfeited.
## Payment Structure

### Violin – Viola – Cello – Double Bass & Ensembles

### Payment Structure and Schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Individual 45 Lesson &amp; Ensemble (AMEB Grade 3 or above)</th>
<th>Individual Lesson &amp; Ensemble</th>
<th>Shared Lesson &amp; Ensemble</th>
<th>Payment in full must be received by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cycle 1</td>
<td>$720</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$337</td>
<td>27\textsuperscript{th} March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle 2</td>
<td>$720</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$337</td>
<td>26\textsuperscript{th} June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle 3</td>
<td>$660</td>
<td>$460</td>
<td>$311</td>
<td>18\textsuperscript{th} September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$2100</td>
<td>$1460</td>
<td>$985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Instrument Hire | $60 per cycle Violin & Viola | $80 per cycle Cello & Double Bass |

### Accounts
- Charges for lessons and ensemble will be included in the school financial statement.
- This is an additional program outside the school’s curriculum and therefore prompt payment of fees is essential in order to maintain the financial management of the program and our commitment to the Instrumental Teachers.
- Lessons will be suspended if payment is not received by the due date.

### Example of how it will appear on your Account:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What you enrolled for</th>
<th>1\textsuperscript{st} Instrument Individual Lesson 2015 – Cycle 1</th>
<th>1\textsuperscript{st} Instrument Shared Lesson 2015 – Cycle 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual lesson &amp; Ensemble</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared lesson &amp; Ensemble</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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</table>
ENROLMENT FOR STRING LESSONS

Student Name

Class

Enrolment

☐ New
☐ Continuing

☐ Student has learnt this instrument elsewhere for ________ years

Instrument

Complete a separate form for each instrument.

☐ Violin  ☐ Viola  ☐ Cello  ☐ Double Bass

Type of Lesson

☐ Individual 45  ☐ Individual  ☐ Shared

☐ Assess student for suitability for an A.M.E.B. exam and forward Exam Class Handbook

☐ I need to hire a school instrument  ☐ I own an instrument

Parent/Guardian Authorization

I agree with the conditions set out in the Strings Handbook.

I have discussed the conditions with my child and the responsibilities are understood. The enrolment is ongoing until the School receives a withdrawal in writing or my child leaves the school.

Signature

/    /

I agree to my contact details being available to the Instrumental Teacher.

Name: (Please print) ____________________________  Mother / Father / Guardian

Phone: ____________________  Mobile: ____________________

Email: ____________________

☐ I agree  ☐ I do not agree

to my child’s image being used in promotional material for the music program and in the PowerPoint presentation at Showcase.

Office use: Received: / /  App. Number:  MM:
Ensemble:  CS  JS  BS  Hire: Yes / No

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