

Looking after the instruments

Please try and give the school instruments their due respect and care (keeping them in cases when not in use, not allowing younger siblings to use them as toys, etc.) but if an accident does happen, please report it to your child's instrumental tutor. More often than not, the problems are rectifiable. (breaking a string on a guitar or violin, etc.)

Good habits include:

- Cleaning instruments with a soft cloth after playing
- Not eating or drinking near the instruments or during practice!
- Storing the instrument in its case in a specific place in the home
- Avoid placing your instrument on a table or slippery surface where it might fall to the ground



Important dates

Nottingham Nativity	6th December
Leeds Nativity	7th December
Derby Nativity	8th December
Christmas fair	9th December
LK2 concerts	12th December
UK2 concert	13th December
KS1 concert	14th December
EYFS concert	16th December
Instrumental and Choir Carol concert	14th December



Information about Music @ Millfields



At Millfields we have a fantastic music department and are proud to be able to offer a wide range of instrumental lessons alongside choirs and ensembles and bands using children from across the school.

We are lucky that the school is able to subsidize the cost for parents/carers but we do have to charge a termly fee to keep it accessible to all our parents. This fee of **£50 a term guarantees 10 lessons** a term (though we usually get about 12) and this is provided during the school day in groups of 2 or 3.

We will always try and keep these lessons on the same day for convenience but due to trips, absences, change of class schedule (ie. swimming, tennis) etc. sometimes we will have to swap days around. We will always try to inform the child of this beforehand.

KS2 choir is currently on Monday lunchtime and KS1 choir on Wednesday Lunchtime and are open to all.

Rock and Jazz bands run on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday lunchtimes and are by invitation only. Ukulele Club is currently on Thursday lunchtimes—open to all.

I hope the information in this leaflet will be helpful for parents/carers of children taking instrumental lessons and those interested in music department events. If there are questions please leave me a note at the school office and I will respond as quickly as possible.

Happy practicing!

Lessons and home practice information

We will be giving out exercise books to each of the children learning an instrument in school, these will be used for recording their progress and what they are required to practice each week.

For every lesson, your child must bring in their instrument and book (and any other sheets that they are currently working on).

Due to having 'practice' guitars in school, any children who are learning guitar, may choose to not bring their guitar in to school and instead, use one of the school guitars. (however they must still bring their book in).

To make progress, the children must practice outside of their lessons. We encourage you to help your child to practice for ten to fifteen minutes a day per instrument they are learning. This is proven to be most productive in short, frequent bursts rather than a longer time less often...

Please help your child establish a routine that includes practice times daily.



Tom Tattersall

Hi, I am Tom and I teach guitar at Millfields. I play guitar and sing professionally in a few bands. Here are my top tips for guitar players:

1. Make sure you practice! It's easy to fit in 5-15 minutes practice a day, just get your child to play wherever has been worked on in their most recent guitar lessons.
2. If you are hearing a buzzing noise when playing a note, it's almost always to do with the pressure in the left hand. Make sure the thumb is behind the neck of the guitar, then squeeze between the thumb and the finger holding the string. That should produce a clearer note!
3. Strings do break! If one of them does break, don't panic, ask your child to bring the guitar in to me and I will replace it. Whenever a child brings in a guitar, I will tune it as well. If it needs tuning, bring it in!

Faith Taylor



Hi - I am the piano tutor at Millfields. In the past I have played keys professionally, and my current musical focus outside of school is playing in two regularly touring bands as lead guitarist. I also play violin and facilitate the school ukule-

le club.

Here's my advice to parents and carers of piano students:

Practice is the only real way to succeed in learning the piano. Since beginners are immediately learning how to read two clefs, regularly seeing notation - however basic - is vital to learning how to understand written music and its relationship to what is heard. I usually write notes/instructions with the date on a child's music book. and feel free to drop me a note this way too if something is unclear etc.

Regular, short bursts of practice can be very effective. Going through a couple of scales and a recently taught piece every day is adequate preparation for weekly lessons. Without practice, weekly lessons become about reminding the student about the previ-

ous week, and progress is significantly stalled.

Playing from memory is only worth it once you've learned a piece with every single tiny nuance! Getting into the habit of keeping your eyes on the page as you play is so vital to progressing as an accurate and attentive player.

Maria Chatzipoliou



Hello, I am Maria and this is my second year teaching the violin at Millfields. I am a classical trained musician with experience in playing in orchestras and small ensembles.

My tips are:

- I would say that instead of asking your child to practice just remind them to do so by asking them to play the violin for you. Even 10min three times a week is better than a 1 hour practice before the lesson.
 - Praise them during their playing and try to boost their confidence specially when they first attempt to play with the bow. - If the violin gets out of tune please don't try to fix it. Bring it to the school and we will tune it.
 - Remind your child to keep the violin flat on their shoulder.
- Violin is fun but can be tricky for young violinists. I would say that supporting and encouraging them during their learning is the most important thing of all.

Lawrence Tatnall

Hi I am the brass tutor at Millfields and several other schools in Hackney. I play the trombone professionally but also conduct and direct several groups including the Hackney Borough Youth Orchestra.



Here are my top tips:

- Try to encourage your child to practice regularly – 10mins every day is much better than an hour the day before a les-

son. Practice makes a huge difference to progress.

- Sometimes the valves stick, the mouthpiece gets stuck or other things go wrong with the instrument. In those cases DONT try to fix them yourself. Wait till your next lesson.
- Air is your friend – if it sounds weird or the note isn't right the chances are that you aren't blowing hard enough.

Please check your child's practice notebook regularly. If you want to contact me directly about a problem please feel free to write in your child's notebook and I will read it in the next lesson.

Above all ENJOY! A little patience is often required to begin with but its well worth it in the end

Simeon May

Hi my name is Simeon May and I am the new saxophone tutor at Millfields. I play the saxophone professionally in many groups, and I am avid in giving all children the same opportunity to excel at music and discover its rewards. When it comes to practicing, here are my top tips.

- Look after your reeds! Don't leave them outside their plastic holders or they can dry out. They are usually around two pound fifty as well so they are worth looking after!
- Practice a little every day. Playing the saxophone is hugely physical, and it is important to build up your stamina like an athlete.
- Breath deeply and relaxed. You should feel your diaphragm push down and stomach push out - it will make playing easier and the sound much better!
- Listen to players you like regularly. To learn the language of jazz or classical saxophone is like learning any other language, and you wouldn't try to speak French without listening to the French! To hear players you love will always inspire you and so is as essential as any practice.
- Have fun with it! As you progress, it will only get more and more enjoyable as new doors are opened up to you! It is an exciting journey.