



OXFORD
HIGH SCHOOL

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GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

15th June 2022

To parents of pupils who have individual Music lessons at school.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Timetabling of individual Music lessons at school

I am writing to clarify the school policy about timetabling lessons with Visiting Music Teachers at school, especially for those with daughters in Years 7-9.

It is our view that learning to play an instrument is enormously beneficial to pupils, both for its own sake, as a skill that enables lifelong participation in music making, and also because of the evidence that children who learn a musical instrument tend to perform better in almost all other school activities as a result. If you are interested in seeing the evidence for this claim, browse through Susan Hallam's [The Power of Music](#), which is a survey of recent academic research on the subject.

To offer instrumental and singing lessons at school, we need to be able to run them throughout the school day, which means that pupils may need to miss other lessons in order to attend their music lesson. Our policy on who misses which lessons is designed to ensure that pupils' progress and exam results in timetabled subjects are not adversely affected by their participation in Music, whilst enabling Music teachers to construct workable timetables.

Our school policy on missing lessons to attend individual Music lessons is:

- Pupils in Years 10-13 should have their Music lesson during a study period if possible. If this is not possible, lessons will be before school, at lunch or after school. (This is because pupils in these year groups have more study periods on their timetable; they are also closer to taking external public exams).
- Pupils in Years 7-9 are allowed to miss lessons in any subject to attend individual Music lessons, provided they do not miss the same subject more than twice per term¹. Pupils should make the effort to catch up on work missed, including any homework set during the lesson. Music lesson times will normally rotate, in order to avoid hitting the same lesson too many times. Music teachers must keep a record of which subjects are missed, in order to ensure that the limit of two missed lessons per term is not exceeded.
- If a pupil has lessons on two instruments (or Speech and Drama or individual sports coaching) in school, then the limit of two missed lessons in any given subject applies to the total time missed between all the 'extra' subjects. One instrument is likely therefore to be at a fixed 'non-contact' time.

Mrs Marina Gardiner Legge, MEd, MA (Oxon), Headmistress

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A pupil will therefore miss no more than 70 minutes per term of any subject. Given that students here are academically able, and are developing skills in independent learning, missing these two lessons should have no adverse effect on her progress.

Occasionally Visiting Music Teachers report to me that they have received requests from parents to avoid scheduling lessons to clash with certain subjects. Unfortunately, if the Music staff were to comply with such requests, it would result in the two-lesson limit being broken in other subjects, or would force other pupils to miss more of certain subjects than they should, or would simply make it impossible for teachers to fit all their pupils into the day. I would therefore ask parents not to request special variations of the school timetabling policy for their daughters, since this tends to put members of the Music staff in an impossible position. It is our view that the current school policy creates the best solution, whereby your daughter can enjoy the benefits of learning her instrument, without any negative impact on her progress in other subjects.

I hope your daughter continues to enjoy her music making, and to fit it comfortably around her other interests and commitments.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Peter Foster
Director of Music

ⁱ 'Term' in practice means a 10-week period, counted from the first teaching week of the year. This is because three terms are not all the same length, and also because most Visiting Music Teachers charge for tuition in 10-week blocks.

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