

Managing Instrumental and Vocal Provision



Hampshire
County Council

Music Service

Guidance on pricing, charging parents and lesson groupings

Hampshire County Council's Music Service (HMS) is committed to providing high-quality, accessible music education.

HMS instrumental and vocal teaching is charged at £51.50 per hour for 39 weeks of the academic year.

$£51.50 \times 39 = £2,008.50$ for one hour each week across an academic year.

Depending on the instrument taught, groups of 4-7 pupils per 30 min lesson could keep the cost low whilst getting beginner pupils started. Pupils could then move to smaller, differentiated groups after their first year of learning.

An HMS iPlay book is available, free of charge, for every instrument, supporting pupils to make great progress during their first few months.

Pupils, per hour	Cost per pupil, per lesson	Cost per pupil, per term	Cost per pupil, per year
3 (3 x 20min individual lessons)	£17.17	£223.17	£669.50
6 (3x20 min lessons shared in pairs)	£8.58	£111.58	£334.75
8 (3 x 20min lessons shared between 2/3 or 2 x 30min lessons shared between 4)	£6.44	£83.69	£251.06
9 (3 x 20min lessons shared between 3)	£5.72	£74.39	£223.17
12 (3 x 20min lessons shared between 3)	£4.29	£55.79	£167.38

Pupils can hire instruments from HMS and can switch to appropriate sizes as needed.

Charging Parents

Pupil Premium funding from schools may be used for lesson support or instrument hire. For further information on our Financial Assistance for parents and carers, please visit [Hub website](#). Charging parents for the whole year in advance will avoid the school covering unexpected costs if pupils stop learning.

Alternatively, we advise schools to set pricing based on one or two fewer pupils per group to allow for natural drop-off. Any surplus could then be refunded to the parents at the end of the year or used to fund additional HMS provision.

We strongly advise against weekly charging. If charging per term, you may wish to refund only if a pupil receives fewer than 30 lessons per year.

HMS refunds all teacher absences except for PPA and staff CPD days, which schools may pass on to parents if they choose.

Managing Lesson Grouping



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Careful consideration of your groupings, taking into account the compatibility of instruments and the standard of the players within a group, will optimise the learning potential within the lesson.

Look at your provision as a whole. Larger numbers of guitar, keyboard or vocal students in a group could help to balance or subsidise the cost of an individual bassoon lesson or an exceptionally gifted pupil in your school.

Lessons shorter than 20 mins are not recommended, due to the limited impact on learning and progress. Ask your HMS Teacher to help you put your students into groupings of similar ability levels. These groupings may change during the year, so keep reviewing what works best for your pupils.

Group size	Amount of time recommended
1 - 3	20 mins
4+	30 mins

Space permitting, larger groups with compatible instruments and similar stage of learning are often more beneficial. For example, 4 pupils in a shared 30 min lesson, each being charged £83.69 per term.

Avoid grouping different instruments together where possible. Even though instruments like the clarinet, flute and saxophone all belong to the woodwind family, they each use distinct playing techniques and operate in different keys. Because of this, teaching them in the same group can limit efficiency and make consistent progression harder for pupils.

When a lesson involves only one instrument (for example, drum kit or piano), group sizes must be kept small enough to ensure each pupil gets meaningful hands-on time. For instance, in a 20-minute lesson with three pupils sharing a single drum kit, each pupil would receive a maximum of **approximately 6-7 minutes of playing time**.

Teaching space

Lessons involving large or bulky instruments, or multiple instruments, should be timetabled in a space that provides sufficient room for safe setup, free movement, and clear demonstration. Instruments such as drum kits, orchestral basses, and low brass require additional space to ensure correct posture, avoid congestion, and maintain a safe working environment for both pupils and staff.

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Instrument specific considerations for groupings

Your HMS Teacher or a member of the HMS Leadership team will be able to provide further advice – please contact music.service@hants.gov.uk

Group lessons should be arranged, where possible, with pupils who have similar levels of ability and experience. Your HMS teacher will be able to advise on the most appropriate groupings.

See below for instrument specific grouping notes:

Brass	• Trumpets, cornets, trombones and euphoniums can all learn together • Tubas and tenor horns can also be grouped together • It is preferable that French horns are grouped separately, however they can be put with tubas and tenor horns if required
Guitar (incl. Ukulele)	• Acoustic and electric guitars can learn together • Bass guitarists and ukuleles should be taught in separate groups
Strings	• It is preferable that violins, 'cellos, violas and double basses are all grouped within their instrument-type and not joined with others • Larger spaces are required for 'cellos and double basses
Keyboard	• Consider the amount of space required for each keyboard, keyboard stand, stool, as well as the availability for power supply when grouping keyboard students, ensuring a safe learning environment
Woodwind	• If possible, try to keep the groupings by instrument-type - If this cannot be achieved, mixed instrument groups would require a longer lesson time to allow for progression
Vocal	• Voices can be grouped in any combination, but wherever possible unchanged voices and changed boys voices should be taught separately
Percussion	• Often only one player can play the drum kit at any one time, so the advised maximum grouping size for drum kit is 6 per hour (3 x groups of 2). Larger groups would benefit from a longer lesson time

If you are unsure about any instrument groupings and would like to discuss with a member of the HMS team, please contact music.service@hants.gov.uk