

**BOROUGH  
MUSIC  
SCHOOL**

**Parents Handbook**

**2012**

## **Contents**

1. Introduction
2. How to contact us
3. Services provided
4. Music curriculum and lessons
5. Attendance
6. Probation period
7. Timetable
8. Instrument
9. Concerts and Performances
10. Conduct
11. Exam and grading
12. Parental support and engagement
13. Fees
14. Complaints procedure
15. Friends of BMS
16. BMS Holiday Courses
17. Competition
18. Equal Opportunities

## 1. Introduction

Borough Music School aims to provide individual and group music tuition, in short lessons, to children of primary or early secondary age in Southwark, at subsidised cost, targeted to parents who cannot afford private fees. Sessions are on Saturdays 9.30-1.30 at Snowfields Primary School and on Mondays 3.30-5.30 at Cathedral School of St Saviour's and St Olav's Primary School (term time only).

This Handbook provides the guidelines and information to assist with the organising and teaching of instrumental/vocal lessons Borough music school.

The Schools Handbook will evolve as we continue to learn how to best serve the needs and expectations of individual pupils, parents, schools and teachers.

Contact us any time with feedback or use the form at the back of the handbook.

## 2. How to contact us

- **Saturdays** 9.30-1.30 at Snowfields Primary School Kirby Grove, London, SE1 3TD
- **Mondays** 3.30-5.30 at Cathedral School of St Saviour's Primary School, Red Cross Way, London, SE1 1HG .
- **Mailing address:** C/o Blackfriars Settlement, Pegasus House, 90-94 Great Suffolk Street, London, SE1 0BE
- **Email:** [admin@boroughmusicschool.org](mailto:admin@boroughmusicschool.org)
- **Website:** [www.boroughmusicschool.org](http://www.boroughmusicschool.org)

## 3. Our Activities

- **Instrumental and vocal lessons:** Choir, Violin, Viola, Recorder, Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, Guitar, Piano, Keyboard, Percussion, Choir, group lessons, Wind, Brass and String bands
- **Borough-wide Activities and Events** – Projects, Recitals and Ensemble concerts, Borough market Christmas Concert, Frost Fair, Southwark Youth Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra – Animate Orchestra, Southbank Centre, Special events, workshops
- **Instrument Hire** - Instruments are available for hire to pupils taking lessons with Borough Music School at a low cost. This is however, subject to availability.
- **Links with national and local organisations** - Southwark Music Services, LPO, Better Bankside, Borough Market

## 4. Music curriculum and lessons

- BMS provide weekly, 20 and 30 minutes individual and group lessons, in a range of instruments such as: recorder, keyboard, guitar, violin, viola flute, clarinet, saxophone and percussion. Beginners may be taught in pairs, and we offer group

lessons, including theory and musicianship classes. Pupils are being entered for ABRSM and Trinity Guildhall exams.

- The Curriculum Manager assigns students to an appropriate tutor, organise the ensembles within the group and check the progress of all students.
- The progress of all students at BMS is carefully monitored throughout the time that they are at the school. The Curriculum Manager is kept informed of students' work and frequently discusses progress with students, tutors and parents alike. Tutors write an Annual Report in July on each student which is distributed to parents may be shared with schools and funding bodies.
- Borough Music School provides ensemble opportunities in various instruments. Pupils learn from each other and can gain confidence by playing with others. They develop listening and communication skills and can benefit from helping each other.
- 10 lessons are provided within a term. Timetable will remain unchangeable throughout the term, except in special cases, to be considered by Curriculum Manager.
- Students attending BMS are expected to maintain a regular practice routine throughout the year. Tutors will advise students of the recommended length and content of their daily practice; this will vary depending on age and experience and will be outlined within the Record Sheets in the student's Music Diary.
- Musicianship classes at BMS help students develop the skills they need to improve their music making. Performing with others requires musicians to do a number of things at the same time - listen to themselves and others, play in tune with other people and follow a conductor, as well as play the instrument and follow written scores. In musicianship classes tutors separate these activities and use a wider range of teaching styles to enable students to develop specific skills. Students are taught to hear music in their heads as they read it and shown how to internalise rhythms as well as consolidating their understanding of basic music theory. Musicianship classes are taught using practical work, reading and listening.
- In addition students learn about the history of music and explore issues of style and culture. These supporting studies help students to understand the context of music that they hear around them as well as the different styles they learn to play on an instrument.
- Musicianship also prepares students for the Grade Theory and the Aural requirements of grade exams.
- Aural Test - Aural tests form part of any practical exam and test the ability to:
  - recognise and sing back melodies
  - recognise rhythms and clap them back
  - recognise and describe intervals
  - talk about music using the correct (mainly Italian) terms
  - recognise musical styles (higher grades only)

## **5. Attendance**

- BMS requires at least one term's notice of withdrawal of students from the music school.
- BMS operates a 3 strikes rule – 3 consecutive absences will lead to termination of place held at the music school.
- BMS requires all payments of fees to be paid in full at the beginning of term
- Timely attendance at all rehearsals and performances is mandatory. Children must sign in and register at the reception desk upon arrival for lessons, and will need to get to classes early for the lessons on their timetable.
- Absences must be reported to the Curriculum Manager as soon as possible. A student may be excused in case of an unavoidable emergency or personal illness, but the Curriculum Manager and the Administrator must be notified. Parents should be informed that their children may be required to make up any work missed during a term in extra practise time at home. Persistent absence without due notification or explanation will lead to termination of music place. In this instance, the next child on the waiting list will be awarded the place.
- Regular practice at home is the key to a child's progress. Children will be given practice books for parents to sign after each practice. Tutors will write progress reports at the end of each year to be sent to parents.
- Some concerts or ensembles may take place out of school hours; parents will always receive ample notice for concerts and out of hour engagements. There may be several special rehearsals for such performances, of which ample notification will be given. Please mark your calendar and make arrangements for these required rehearsals/events.
- Failure to turn up for lesson, 3 times consecutively within a term will result in termination of your music place.
- The school reserves the right to terminate a music place at any time, following a process of consultation and as agreed by the board of Trustees.
- BMS requires at least half a term's written notice from parents for withdrawal of children from a music place.

## **6. Probation period**

- Families who apply to the Music School for lessons must undertake two things which are essential for progress:
  - Regular and punctual attendance
  - Regular practice between lessons at home.
- Individual lessons are in great demand and the board of trustees, through consultation with Tutors, reserve the right to discontinue lessons to pupils who continually fail to make this regular commitment. Failure to practise regularly at home will have an impact on students' progress. Such students will have a review of their lessons and progress at the end of term, if there is not an improvement in progress, and regular practice, we may discontinue lessons. The placement will go to another student from the waiting list

## 7. Timetable

- A calendar of scheduled individual and group lessons will be provided to each student at the beginning of term. Vocal and instrumental lessons will follow a strict timetable set out for individual and group lesson.
- It will not always be possible to change individual or group timetable. Timetables are reviewed at the end of each term and will only be changed in exceptional circumstances. Please consider the timetable when planning other family activities or doctor appointments. Please note, excused absences must still be made up by way of extra practice time at home.
- The pupils' timetable will be set and organised by the Curriculum Manager, in collaboration with Tutors and should be adhered to by parents.
- Tutors may use their professional discretion to place the pupils in appropriate groups.
- Tutors will make up for any lessons missed, by providing extra lessons.
- When tutors are unable to teach lessons due to illness or unforeseen absence every effort will be made to supply a deputy.

## 8. Instrument

- Each student is responsible for having his/her music notes, instruments and diary for every lesson.
- A music stand is also required for home use. Instrument cases, should be clearly marked with the student's name and telephone number. Please be aware that personal instruments and belongings are brought to BMS are at the owner's risk; do make sure that they are adequately insured. If an instrument is not insured we would strongly recommend that you contact **Allianz Insurance plc** who specialise in musical instrument insurance. Their website is: [www.allianzmusicalinsurance.co.uk](http://www.allianzmusicalinsurance.co.uk)
- Fines will be charged for lost BMS music book or hired instrument, which will be equal to the replacement value of the music or instrument.
- The hire charge will be collected from parents and will continue until an instrument is returned.
- Pupils must have a pencil and rubber for use at each lesson. Music must be marked in pencil – never use pen.
- It is recommended that students have an instrument to practise at home, where parents cannot afford to purchase instrument, the school will hire out instruments, if available. Contact the Curriculum Manager regarding hiring fees.
- Hiring of instruments is subject to availability; parents will be liable to any damage or repair costs.
- For some instruments, parents will be responsible for the safety and care of instruments and should have the instrument insured.
- BMS hired instruments are not transferable between pupils.

- In most cases instruments will only be available for one year after which parents will need to purchase an instrument. Child-sized instruments and very valuable instruments will be exempted and cases of financial hardship will be taken into consideration.

## **9. Concerts and Performances**

- Each student will express their responsibility by turning up in concert wear during concerts and performances, unless otherwise advised.
- The uniform for concerts will be: Black trousers/skirts/dress, white/black shirt/blouse – preferably all black, black tie or bow tie, black socks or tights, and black shoes.
- For other informal performances, the BMS T-shirt will be worn. Students who fail to comply will not be allowed to perform.

## **10. Conduct**

- Smoking is not allowed on the school grounds.
- No gum or gum chewing.
- No running.
- No food or drinks in the class rooms.
- Parents of little children are asked to keep them from disturbing lessons.
- Have all materials at your seat – music, notebook and pencil.
- Destructive, disruptive or disrespectful behaviour or speech will not be tolerated.
- Marking on stands, chairs or walls is strictly prohibited.
- Do not touch equipment, or rearrange the room set-up. Please leave each room as you meet it.
- Deposit all trash in proper containers.

## **11. Exams and Grading System**

- Student's grades are determined by the following categories:
  - Concert & rehearsal Attendance
  - Quiz & Test Grades
  - Singing & Playing Test Grades
  - Sight Singing/Reading
  - Notebook & Concert Critiques
  - Participation & Attendance in class
  - Musicianship in class and attendance of Music Fundamentals

- Students being entered for graded exams will be notified at least 2 terms ahead of exams.
- An Accompanist is available to students for exams, usually with prior appointment. When it comes to exam times tutors will ensure that student do have rehearsal with the accompanists prior to their exams.. Students and Parents are encouraged to use this valuable opportunity to practice with the accompanist on a regular basis before exams are taken.
- It is likely that students will be entered for graded exams during their time at BMS. Students can only be entered for external exams when the tutor decides it is appropriate. No BMS student must enter themselves privately without the full consent of the Curriculum Manager.
- Exams are taken after the end of each BMS term. The entry fee must be received with the completed entry form by the due date, or the candidates will not be entered.
- Students are encouraged to perform in Recital concerts as part of their preparation for an exam as this can help to develop performance skills and confidence about playing in public.
- Exam results normally take up to 6 weeks and are forwarded to BMS. Both Associated Board and Trinity Guildhall forward a detailed report and also a certificate. Details of the syllabus for the various exams can be obtained from the BMS Administrator.

## **12. Parent Support and engagement**

As this is a charity led mainly by parents who have volunteered their time and efforts, there are many opportunities and ways for parents to become involved. Some jobs take special people, some special talents, while some jobs just require willing hands. Everyone is encouraged to share their time and their talent. Volunteers are always welcome. Parents are welcome to help in the following areas:

- Fundraising/Donations
- Setting up and clearing at the end
- **Tuck shop:** There is a Tuck shop at the Saturday school at Snowsfields. The Tuck Shop is organised by the Friends of BMS and staffed by volunteers and all profit goes to benefit the work of BMS. Food on offer each week includes: A selection of sandwiches, fresh bagels, pastries, homemade cakes, flapjack, crisps, fruit, sweets and chocolate. Drinks include a variety of teas and coffee, hot chocolate, cartons of fruit juice and water. Students may also bring their own food.
- Admin duties – printing etc
- Providing transportation to all concerts and exams
- Donate/Purchase music
- Donate/Purchase needed equipment and instruments



### 13. Fees

- Grants from a number of very supportive funders have made it possible for BMS to provide music tuition at a subsidised rate. Parents in receipt of benefits are welcome to apply for bursary, based on available bursary grants or funding.
- Full payment **MUST** be made at the beginning of each term in arrears. Instalments can be arranged, contact the Treasurer for details. Please make cheques payable to the **Borough Music School**, with your child's name at the back for reference..
- Please note that fees are non-refundable.

Recommended starting age: 6-7 Yrs	Recommended starting age: 7-8Yrs	Recommended starting age: 7-8Yrs
Violin Viola Choir Piano/ Keyboard Recorder Percussion	Guitar	<i>Trumpet Trombone Saxophone</i>

### 14. Complaints procedure

- Any complaint should be dealt with informally and within the school whenever possible. All complaints should be directed to the schools' email address: [admin@boroughmusicschool.org](mailto:admin@boroughmusicschool.org) In all cases your feedback is always welcomed.
- There are BMS notice boards in the foyer of the building on Saturday and it is vitally important that students (and parents) make a habit of checking the notice boards immediately they arrive. Any changes to lesson times, venues, or tutors will be displayed along with weekly notices about lunchtime concerts, exam information and forthcoming events.
- BMS's termly newsletter produced jointly by the Friends/Trustees and giving you up to date news and information on BMS activities and can also be found on the BMS website [www.boroughmusicschool.org.uk](http://www.boroughmusicschool.org.uk)
- The BMS Administrator/Curriculum Manager will occasionally send out forms to be completed and returned. Please do this promptly! If at any time you or the student changes your address, telephone number or move school, please inform the Administrator immediately. Changes of address or school may affect your funding situation at BMS so it is a good idea to check with the BMS Office if you are unsure.
- Students are expected to attend every BMS sessions – Saturday or Monday (even during exam time). When there is an unavoidable reason for absence you should notify the BMS Office **IN ADVANCE**. If approval is given, students should advise all their tutors of their absence **IN ADVANCE**. If absence is due to illness, please telephone the BMS Office as soon as possible. Absence notified on a Saturday should only be as a result of sudden illness or emergency.
- Good communication with your student's tutor is to be encouraged. The BMS Handbook is an excellent vehicle for two-way communication. An occasional

appearance either at the start or end of a lesson is a good idea if a matter is best discussed face-to-face but do bear in mind that as they will still be teaching, a telephone conversation later in the day may be easier. Write a note in the student's practice diary or talk to the tutors themselves and see what they suggest. Generally a tutor will be very glad to prepare a piece to be played or sung in a school concert or similar event especially if given sufficient notice.

- Concert dress is normally a combination of black and white but students are also informed of the dress requirements before a concert.

### **Who do I talk to if there is a problem?**

- It is very important that problems/concerns are aired as they arise. If the problem is musical, and it cannot be solved by the instrumental tutor, please speak to the Curriculum Manager.
- For all other matters, speak to one of the Trustees or the Administrator, or complete a 'Parent Request Slip' and drop this in the Request Box at Reception. If you are unhappy with the response to your query, please contact the Curriculum Manager or the BMS Chair of Trustees in writing or by email to arrange an appointment.
- If the problem is a financial one contact Phillip Vermeiren, BMS's Treasurer, as soon as possible by email: [admin@boroughmusicschool.org.uk](mailto:admin@boroughmusicschool.org.uk).
- If you withdraw your child from the course at any time during the year the full term fee (or proportion of term fees if your child started after the commencement of the academic term) will still be payable unless dispensation has been granted by the Coordinating Trustees. In the first instance, you must send a letter to the Coordinating Trustees stating when your child will be leaving giving full details of reasons. A full term's notice must be given, at least. Notification of any dispensation in fees offered by Treasurer will be given in writing.

### **15. Friends of BMS**

- The unique sense of community that is generated at BMS has much to do with the involvement of parents. The Friends of BMS (FBMS) supports all aspects of BMS's work, whether it be the Saturday sessions on Monday's, offering parents and carers the chance to express their views and to volunteer help.
- The termly newsletter, shares news items, pupils successes and is distributed to all those with an interest in the work of the organisation including students and parents, schools, local authorities and other funding bodies, as well as subscribing Friends of BMS.
- All parents and carers of students currently attending BMS are automatically members of the Friends and we invite you to help to further support your child at BMS by taking an active part in the various activities we undertake.
- The Saturday Tuck Shop, at Snowfields School, is one of FBMS's fundraiser and is staffed entirely by parent volunteers, so is the entire administration of operations at BMS. Inevitably, with over 90 students and 15 tutors at BMS each Saturday, running this facility is a big undertaking. This is why the pool of volunteers who help run the canteen and provide sandwiches and cakes during term time is crucial to the smooth

running of the operation. In reality this means that if we have sufficient helpers, most people will only be asked to commit themselves to one Saturday morning or afternoon session each term. We also need volunteers for the Monday sessions at Cathedral School.

- There are many other tasks which members undertake from time to time:
  - selling or donating second-hand music,
  - selling concert tickets
  - assisting on Open Days,
  - serving refreshments at concerts/special events,
  - setting up and clearing away at every session and concerts
  - stewarding, chaperoning students to events
  - Marketing, fundraising and termly newsletter production.
  - Admin duties for both sessions
  
- In addition we are always looking for additional skills to help us with new projects such as:
  - graphic design,
  - video/photographic
  - sound recording
  - marketing and fundraising.
  
- If you are able to assist with any of the above on a regular or occasional basis, please contact us at [friends@boroughmusicschool.org](mailto:friends@boroughmusicschool.org).
  
- Getting involved with the Friends and helping need not be a huge commitment, but is a great way to meet other parents and tutors and is also good fun! If you know of friends and family who enjoy music and are encouraged by the excellent work of BMS and would like to support the musical education of young people in the Southwark please ask them to consider becoming a '**Subscribing Friend**'. Annual membership costs just £20 and subscribing friends receive copies of the Newsletter three times a year which keeps them abreast of news and activities, together with a free ticket and programme to for BMS's Annual concert at the end of the summer term.
  - For more details about becoming a **Subscribing Friend** please contact Miranda Newsom at [friends@boroughmusicschool.org](mailto:friends@boroughmusicschool.org) or view the FBMS pages on the BMS website.

## 16. BMS Holiday Courses

- In addition to the out of school sessions, BMS have in the past occasionally organise holiday courses which are open to all young musicians regardless of whether they attend BMS during term time. These are unauditioned open access courses, which offer a stimulating, friendly, and highly enjoyable musical experience for children aged from 6 to 18.
  
- The courses are led by specialist tutors working alongside a caring team of pastoral staff and are designed to provide a progressive musical pathway for children, complimenting their regular term time activities both in and out of school. The courses culminate in an informal performance open to parents and friends. Applicants are placed in appropriate groups according to age and ability.

- Junior Course (approx Grade 1-3)
  - Senior Course (approx Grade 4-7)
- 
- Holiday Course dates for the coming year and more details can be found on the BMS website. Holiday course fees are kept as low as possible and the organisation will make every effort to assist any gifted pupil to attend these courses who has difficulty in meeting the fees themselves. Please contact the BMS Administrator or the website for details and costs.

### **17. Competition**

- An annual competition is open to students aged 9 or over who attend Saturday BMS or Holiday Courses, and takes place toward the end of the summer term. Prizes are awarded to help students to further their musical development. The winner receives a prize of vouchers, and the two other finalists each receive a voucher too. We will send notification regarding this in due course.

### **18. Equal Opportunities Policy**

- Young musicians are offered a high quality musical training irrespective of the means to pay. BMS will take appropriate measures to ensure that it does not operate in a way that discriminates amongst applicants, students or employees on grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation or disability. In addition BMS encourages the mutual respect of all students, tutors, trustees, the administration team, parents and all associated with the service. For a copy of our Equality policy, kindly send a request to [admin@boroughmusicschool.org](mailto:admin@boroughmusicschool.org).