

Geelong High School

Music Department



INFORMATION HANDBOOK 2023



Introduction

At Geelong High School we know that it's almost always the students involved in learning music that do the best academically. The research behind the cognitive benefits of a young person learning music is well documented. Alongside these benefits sit the development of skills and experience such as teamwork, leadership, camaraderie, listening skills, performance, dedicated practice, persistence, grit and many others that learning and playing music fosters.

Our Music Department at Geelong High School has a unique vision. We have been busy building a musical and educational hub that brings together an extensive range of musical opportunities for our students. In 2020 Geelong High School began its first full year officially focused on an Orchestral Program.

The Music Department has recently become home to Orchestra Geelong and in 2021 we have become the base of the newly created Geelong Youth Orchestra.

Geelong High has joined in partnership with the Geelong Youth Orchestra to be able to offer Geelong High students the opportunity to be a part of a wider musical community that supports its participants with opportunities for growth and development.



Why Learn an Instrument?

The benefits of learning a musical instrument are many.

They include the development of fine motor co-ordination, superb aural training, and the development of a sense of discrimination. In addition, the art of learning to read music and transfer the symbols on the printed page into the physical act of playing is very beneficial for the intellectual development of the child. As the student progresses, they will develop a greater sense of aesthetic and cultural appreciation.

Other benefits include the social involvement of making music with others, the development of self-discipline required to practise, enhanced self-esteem, and appreciation of music at a far higher level than could ever be learnt or experienced just from passive listening.

Playing a musical instrument can be a lifelong source of enjoyment. While relatively few students decide to make a full-time living from professional performing, many continue to play (or sing) at university and later in community orchestras, choral societies, and play chamber music with friends.

In addition, the music one experiences at school includes some of the great classics, and the appreciation and insight experienced from performing this music remains with the student to permanently enhance their quality of life.



Getting Started...



At GHS our students commence lessons in Year 7 after attending our *'Try the Instruments Night'* at the beginning of year.

This is an important night of the year for the Music Department. It is our chance to meet students and parents who wish to become involved in the music program at GHS.

It is also a great fun night where the students try the instruments under expert guidance and supervision.

After the *'Try the Instruments Night'* we take 3 significant factors into consideration when allocating instruments to the students:

1. Which instruments a student likes the most,
2. Staff assessments,
3. Ensemble balance.

Ensemble balance is an important component that guides the subsequent allocation of instruments. We make sure that we end up with balanced ensembles. There is little sense in having

twenty students learning the saxophone if there is no-one playing trombone, flute, violin or clarinet. The resultant imbalance does not produce a good musical result. We want our students to be happy about how they sound and to be excited and encouraged by it.

Costs

- Lessons:** **\$480 per year** (covers a minimum of 8 lessons per term).
- Method Book:** **\$20** (approximate cost).
- Music Levy:** **\$50** (one-off levy).
- Instrument Hire:** **\$200 per year** – for Wind/Brass instruments.
 \$120 per year - for all String instruments.

All fees are to be paid prior to the commencement of lessons. If required, a payment plan can be organised through the Administration Office.

The purpose of our hire system is to allow the parent and student time to evaluate whether the student wishes to continue playing the instrument, thus avoiding the expense of buying an instrument outright.

Tuition

Students learning at GHS have one 30-minute individual lesson per week on a ***rotating timetable through the day***. Teachers make sure that lessons are on Compass so that students can see when their lesson times are. It is the student's responsibility to know when their next lesson is and to arrive 5 minutes prior to the scheduled lesson time. There are a minimum of 8 lessons per term.

Absences

It is the student's responsibility to ensure their instrumental teacher is aware of any school excursions, camps, tests/exams, or assemblies that will prevent them from attending their lesson. If they are unable to attend a scheduled lesson, 24 hours notice needs to be given to their instrumental teacher by email. If adequate notice is not given, the cost of the lesson will be charged even though the students did not attend.

Missed lessons through illness will be made up at the **discretion of the instrumental teacher**. These lessons may be able to be made up at some stage throughout the term, but no guarantee is given as to these make up lessons. 12 hours prior notice to staff is needed for all absences through general sickness.

Termination of Tuition

Tuition, once commenced, will continue until notification in writing of its termination is received. Ten school weeks (one term) notice is required; this also applies to discontinuation at the end of the year.

Ensemble Participation

Ensemble skills are a vital part of learning an orchestral instrument, particularly in relation to intonation, aural awareness, rhythmic precision, and fluency in reading.

It is **compulsory** for all students having individual lessons at GHS to participate in the relevant large (core) ensemble group.

Ensembles are run during lunchtimes, with Orchestral practice occurring after school.

Year 7 students will be part of either Training Band or String Lesson groups in Semester 1, and then Chamber Orchestra in Semester Two. These rehearsal times are entered into Compass and an attendance roll is marked.

If students are away an initial text will be sent home to parents in the session, with a follow up email the day after the scheduled rehearsal. The ensemble program is very important to the development of the whole music department.



Returning Students - *new 2023 forms need to be signed.*

If your child is continuing with lessons, please complete the 2023 Music Enrolment Form (enclosed). Once signed documents are received, lessons will re-commence.

Lessons start in the **second complete week** of the school year. This is to allow time to arrange the timetable and inform students. Some Senior School students may start earlier, however these students will be contacted directly by the teacher. Enrolment and Hire forms must be completed before lessons start for 2023.

Security and Care of Instruments

Hired instruments are insured while they are on school property, or when in use during an outside school activity, however, are the responsibility of the parents once they leave the school.

Therefore, parents are responsible for the replacement cost of an instrument resulting from any **loss or damage** whilst in the student's custody outside of school/school activities.

In the case of privately owned instruments, the school's insurance does not cover these at all. It is important therefore to make sure that your child's instrument is properly insured, and that the instrument is left in the appropriate places whilst at school.



Music Teachers Roles & Individual Lessons

Music teachers are very important in terms of helping a student to become a better musician. However, teachers cannot **make** a student a better musician; they can only show a student how to improve. Actual improvement is the student's own responsibility and is achieved mostly in their own time.

Music lessons are the opportunity for the student to show the teacher how they are doing at that point in time. The teacher will tell them what they need to work on next, and how to work on it.

Hints on taking the pain out of practice:

- Establish a regular practice routine of one or two sessions per day. With young students it is usually best to supervise the practice and ensure that everything in the record book is worked through.

- Where practical, it is helpful if the student does not have to put their instrument away in its case. Most orchestral instruments can be quite safely left assembled providing that younger siblings are not playing football in the same room!
- Be encouraging to your son/daughter, even if the sound being made is not always music as you know it! These exercises may be for developmental purposes rather than for musical intent. (e.g.) Breathing or tone strengthening studies.

Basic Structure of the Department

The Director of Music, Mr Andrew Kypriotis, is responsible for the Music program at Geelong High School.

He is assisted by the Heads of the various departments:

Director of Music	Mr Andrew Kypriotis
Assistant Director of Music/Head of Strings	Mrs Andrea Kypriotis
Head of Woodwind	Ms Fiona Morris
Head of Brass	Mr Dan Ballinger
Head of Choirs & Voice Studies	Ms Linda Morrow
Head of Guitar & Bass	Mr Steve Hobbs

We all look forward to working with you in the Geelong High School Music Program in 2023.



If you have any questions about the Music Department or the Instrumental Music Program, please contact our Director of Music, Mr Andrew Kyriotis on ph: 5225 4100, or via email: Andrew.kyriotis@education.vic.gov.au