

Dear Parents,

I am pleased to be able to confirm arrangements for students participating in Performing Arts at RGS from September. Over the Summer, we have been able to put procedures in place to ensure that the Performing Arts school environment is as safe as possible for both students and their Visiting Teachers (VTs). In summary:

- Individual Music and LAMDA lessons will be taught again in school with some minor changes.
- Senior extra-curricular choirs and ensembles will rehearse again in school with more significant changes.
- All Junior class music lessons will be running as normal from the start of term.
- Junior extra-curricular music hopes to resume in a new format by the second week of term.
- The Junior Instrumental Trial Scheme is on hold, with a view to it starting after October half term, or in January 2021.

Outlined below are the changes that are being made in more detail, together with the rationale behind them. Although I appreciate that this is a fairly lengthy document with a lot of information to take in, I would urge you to please read and discuss the contents carefully with your children ahead of the start of term to ensure that they understand and are clear about what is required of them when we welcome them back.

Individual Music and LAMDA Lessons

Junior School Students

Individual music lessons for Junior School students will run in much the same way as usual.

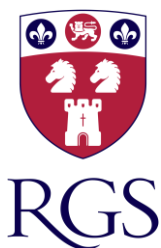
- VMTs will issue a timetable for lessons at the start of term.
- Most Year 3 and 4 music lessons will take place in the Lambton music rooms and children will be collected from their classrooms by their VMT.
- If a Year 3 or 4 music lesson is going to take place in the PAC, the student will be collected from Lambton by their VMT and returned to their classroom after their music/LAMDA lesson.
- Year 5 and 6 students are expected to make their own way to their music lessons whether in the PAC or Lambton (if the lesson is in Lambton, they will be crossed over the road by a member of staff).
- As the VTs are going to be working under essential but time-consuming cleaning regulations and in order to allow them to continue to teach all our junior students, music/LAMDA lessons will be permitted during PE and Games lessons. Students from all junior year groups will be collected from their PE/Games lesson and returned to the correct lesson by the VT.
- Music lessons will not be permitted during swimming lessons.

Senior School Students

Please note that students will not be able to use music practice rooms before school, during the lunch break or after school, unless they are timetabled to have a lesson with a VT.

Students will need to follow the cleanliness rules and disinfect their hands using the hand sanitiser provided before and after their lesson. All contact surfaces (e.g. music stands, pianos) will be thoroughly cleaned before and after each lesson.

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Information for Junior and Senior Students

What to bring

As before, students will need to bring their instrument, music books, scores and Music Tuition Record Books to every lesson. However, they will be advised not to share their music books, scores or their instruments (string, woodwind and brass) with other students.

In the room

We have carried out a health and safety check of all the music practice rooms, including ventilation. Portable screens, hand sanitisers and disposable paper towels will be put in every practice room. Social distancing between students and their VT will be observed.

Storage of instruments

The instrument store room in the PAC will be open as usual. However, this room presents additional possibilities for the spread of potentially infectious droplets.

Therefore, please make sure that your child's instrument is clearly labelled on the outside of the instrument case.

Extra-curricular music

Junior School

The Junior Music department is ordinarily buzzing with choir, orchestra and ensemble rehearsals from Day 1! Unfortunately, and it pains me to write this, our musical groups will not be able to start straight away due to Government guidance as well as a great number of arrangements and checks that need to be made before we know we can run these groups safely. In addition, due to our bubble system in the Junior School, children from different bubbles will not be able to come together for rehearsals. We hope to be able to begin extra-curricular music rehearsals, in an exciting new format, by Week 2 of term and further information will be provided once the plans are confirmed.

Similarly, the *instrumental trial scheme* for Year 3 and Year 5 children, which would normally start in September, is on hold. We hope to start the scheme after October half-term or in January, dependent on Government guidance and all the correct procedures being in place.

I'm sure you will agree that we simply must get this right and ensure absolute safety and minimal risk to our whole school community. But mark my words - Junior Music will be back with a BANG as soon as it is safe to do so!

Mrs Clappison

Senior School

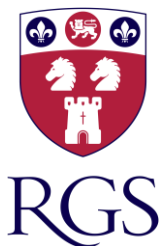
There are going to be restrictions in relation to all of our Senior extra-curricular music activities. As it stands, only students within the same year group (bubble) can rehearse together. We are therefore making plans to create new single year group ensembles.

In order to devise workable arrangements for these, I would be grateful if you could complete [the survey here](#) and encourage your child/children to participate in one of them. I strongly believe that now more than ever the purpose of learning a musical instrument is to share the music and play with others.

In addition to these new ensembles, we are hopeful that we can maintain the running of some of our flagship ones (Senior Choir, Symphony Orchestra, Big/Concert Band), but we will need to see how the rehearsals can be organised before we can confirm this.

In order to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission when playing in music

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ensembles, we shall be taking the following steps:

- Only students from the same year group will rehearse together.
- Social distancing will be observed when necessary, and students will be positioned back-to-back or side-to-side, not face-to-face.
- Rehearsals will only take place in large rooms with a limited number of singers or players, whilst continuing to take into account the ventilation of the space and the ability to social distance.
- All equipment will be cleaned and disinfected after use.

I think we can all agree that face-to-face teaching of LAMDA and music lessons will never be entirely free from the risk of contracting Covid-19. With this in mind, we are making every effort to ensure that possible risks are assessed accurately and steps are taken to minimise those risks where they have been identified.

I very much look forward to welcoming all our singers and instrumentalists back at the start of term and of course meeting all new musicians who are just starting their education at our school.

If you have any questions, my email address is z.fazlic@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk and I will be happy to help.

Thank you as always for your continued support.

Best Wishes,

Zlatan Fazlic

Head of Performing Arts and Director of Music