



SATURDAY MUSIC CLASSES

Our long established popular Saturday Music Classes for children aged 4 - 12 take place during term time at St Mary's Music School. In a safe, caring and relaxed social environment, some 150 children discover the wonders of music, helped by experienced staff, all highly qualified in working with children through the arts. Senior pupils of the school can act as class assistants. Kodály classes begin for children in their final pre-school year, encouraging musicianship and listening skills, nurturing their enjoyment of music and building their confidence. We offer choirs for children from Preschool to S2. Group instrumental lessons (up to 4 pupils per group) are available on a wide range of instruments. Taster sessions for all classes are available, and if you decide not continue there will be no charge. Classes are child-friendly, fun and engaging. There is a café for parents to buy refreshments while waiting.

Kodály (Final year of Pre-School- S2)

The Kodály Method uses rhythmic movement, hand signs, and vocal sounds to develop musical understanding and development in a manner that is appropriate to the age and stage of the child. Studies have shown that the Kodály Method improves intonation, rhythm skills, music literacy, and the ability to sing in increasingly complex parts. It has also been shown to improve perceptual functioning, concept formation, motor skills, and performance in areas such as literacy and numeracy.

Singing & Choirs (Final Year of Pre-School- S2)

Preschool/Year 1. Young singers will be encouraged to pitch match in a range suitable for their age and stage. Kodály hand signs will be used to practise early musicianship. Rhythm and listening skills will be developed.

Year 2. Children will extend their range and be encouraged to make a lovely sound. Skills in listening, concentrating and memory will be practised. Early aural skills will be encouraged. Kodály hand signs continue to help musicianship.

Year 3. Children will be introduced to part singing. Kodály signing will be used. There will be opportunities to sing individually if wished. Early notation, posture, breathing and sound production will be practised.

Year 4 +. Pupils will sing regularly in 2 or 3 parts. Music notation will be used and recognised choral repertoire will be covered. Aural skills will be practised.

Beginner Group Instrumental Lessons

It is an advantage for children starting an instrument to have attended Kodály classes, and more developed co-ordination and physical size are important. Instrumental group lessons can be started as early as P1 in some cases (violin/viola, recorder, flute and accordion), while a later start (from P4 or P5) is more suitable for others (clarinet, saxophone, Double Bass). Group instrumental lessons are offered for beginners for up to three years of tuition.

Theory

Theory forms the basis for reading music and is taught in small classes. 'Beginners' introduces Grade 1, 'Intermediate' encompasses Grades 2 and 3, and 'Advanced' deals with Grades 4 and 5. Pupils should provide their own books (ABRSM publishing, "Music Theory in Practice" by Eric Taylor, appropriate grade, and "Theory is Fun" by Maureen Cox, appropriate grade).

Ensembles

Playing in an ensemble is a rewarding and enriching musical experience, and a wonderful way to enhance learning an instrument. Ensembles foster a strong sense of community, which provides great motivation for learning and progress.

We strongly recommend our ensembles for any pupil who learns an instrument, and would encourage all of our pupils to join an ensemble from the second term of learning onwards. (An ensemble class is included in our combined-class Instrumental Programmes.)

Playing in ensembles helps children learn teamwork and co-operation, and develops musical skills, improving rhythm, intonation, and note reading. Children learn to listen attentively, blend their sound with others, and to follow a conductor. They gain exposure to different instruments, learn to appreciate the unique qualities of each, and develop a deeper understanding and love for music.

Our Ensembles:

Beginner Strings (for violin, viola, cello players in the first two years of learning)

String Ensemble (for more advanced players; violin, viola, cello, Double Bass)

Recorder Ensemble

Woodwind Ensemble (flute, clarinet, saxophone)

Mixed Instrument Ensemble (guitar, clarsach, accordion)

Instrumental Programmes

In September 2023, we introduced a new scheme for all pupils who learn an instrument in a group class at SMC, that offers a combination of our classes at a great value price. Our aim was to encourage pupils to come to SMC to participate in a range of different activities. Our instrumental lessons, ensembles, choir and Kodály classes develop complementary skills, and we believe that in combination they offer an excellent and well-rounded musical education for young people.

Year 1 Programme

Any pupil who joins a Year 1 instrument group class is eligible for our Year 1 Instrumental Programme.

In the first term, this consists of three 30-minute classes (1.5 hours in total):

- A 30-minute group lesson on your chosen instrument
- A 30-minute choir class
- A 30-minute Kodály Musicianship class

From the second term, pupils also join a 30-minute ensemble class.

There are four different ensembles for beginners: Beginner Strings (violin, viola and cello), Recorder ensemble, Woodwind ensemble (flute, clarinet and saxophone) and a Mixed Instrument class (for clarsach, guitar and accordion).

Year 2 + and Year 4 + Programmes

Our **Year 2 + Instrumental Programme** is for pupils who already learn an instrument at SMC.

This has the same components as the Year 1 Programme. Pupils receive:

- A 30-minute group instrument lesson
- A 30-minute ensemble class with
- A 30-minute choir class and
- A 30-minute Kodály musicianship class.

Pupils join all of the classes (2 hours in total) from the first term.

Our **Year 4 + Programme** is for pupils who have been learning for more than three years, offers the same combination of classes (ensemble, choir and Kodály) with an individual instrument lesson replacing the group instrument class.

We believe the Instrumental Programmes have a wide range of benefits for everyone: pupils, parents and teachers. Pupils learn alongside their peers in different classes, and can develop skills together as they grow, fostering a strong sense of community. There is a clear sense of development within each activity, and in tandem with other activities too, as teachers can share expectations of skills for each pupil, which builds strong connections between different groups at SMC. Parents benefit from a thorough and immersive music education for their children at a discounted price.

Term Dates 2025-2026

Autumn Term 2025

13 September – 13 December (12 weeks)

Half Term Break: 11 & 18 October

Spring Term 2026

10 January – 28 March (10 weeks)

Half Term Break: 7 & 14 February

Summer Term 2026

25 April – 20 June (8 weeks)

Half Term Break: TBC

Fees 2025/2026**SMC Fees 2025-26 (inclusive of VAT)**

Fees are payable in advance of the first class and we require 4 weeks notice of any withdrawal.

	Duration (minutes)	Term 1 £	Term 2 Inc VAT £	Term 3 Inc VAT £
Year 1 Instrumental	1hr 30mins	312.48	260.4	208.32
Year 1 Instrumental	2hours	n/a	312	249.6
Year 2 or 3 Instrumental	2hours	374.4	312	249.6
Year 4 Instrumental	2hours	576	480	384
Kodály and Singing (all levels)	30mins	124.8	104	83.2
Instrumental Group Lessons	30mins	208.08	173.4	138.72
Instrument Hire (per term)	-	48	48	48
Individual lessons (30 minutes,	30mins	432	360	288

Fee Assistance

Reduced fees are available according to need for families who may struggle to afford SMC fees. If you would like to find out more about fee assistance, please contact smc@st-marys-music-school.co.uk. Please note that fee assistance is means-tested and you will be asked to provide evidence of family income to the School Bursar.

PLEASE NOTE: CHILDREN MUST RE-APPLY EVERY ACADEMIC YEAR

Saturday Music Classes Rules & Safety Information

We ask for your co-operation in observing the following rules which help to make St Mary's Music School a safe and pleasant environment for all our children.

Please:

- do not bring cars into any part of the school grounds, even for a moment
- use the door by the Chapel as your entrance to the building
- use the Dining Hall as your waiting area
- keep any children who are not involved in a class with you
- do not leave any obstruction e.g. prams or musical instruments, in corridors or stairways
- supervise your children if they are playing in the grounds
- observe signs
- consume food and drink only in the Dining Hall, not in the corridors or classrooms
- respect the privacy of St Mary's Music School pupils, many of whom are boarders at Coates Hall

Procedures

Classes finish promptly – please arrive in good time to collect your child at the end of their class. Please wait outside the classroom until you are invited to go in by the teacher.

If you are delayed, your child will wait in the class for 5 minutes. After this time, your child will be escorted to the school office from where you can collect them.

If your child wishes to use the toilet during class, a class helper will accompany them.

If any problems arise during the class, the teacher will attend to your child while the class helper assists with other pupils. Pupils may be looked after in the office while you are telephoned, if serious.

Fire Safety

In the event of the Fire Alarm sounding, teachers will guide their classes safely and quickly to their assembly point. Parents who are in the school should leave the building by the nearest exit and proceed to the North East Lawn with any children who are not in class. Please stand away from the doors in order to allow others to leave the building. Please assemble on the North East lawn beside the Principal's House. See map on right.

DO NOT attempt to collect your child from their class/group as this will considerably delay the clearing of the school.

DO NOT remove your child from their class/group – staff will inform you when you may collect them from their class/ group.

Car Parking

Please note that young children may be near the school entrances and **parents are not permitted to use the school car park on Saturdays. Parking is strictly for STAFF ONLY.**

