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Learn to play the Violin or Viola!

Dear Parent/Carer,

Following a demonstration at school recently, your child showed an interest in wanting to learn the violin or viola.

Why choose the Violin/Viola?

Learning to play the violin/viola is a challenging and rewarding experience that can be a lot of fun. It can often improve other key skills such as concentration, coordination, memory function, literacy, numeracy and general aural awareness.

Learning to read music and how to play melodies leads to a great feeling of achievement and can also increase creativity and confidence.

Once you can play the violin/viola, then participating in orchestras and smaller ensembles is available to you. With the flexibility of these instruments, there are many styles of music to be involved with, from Classical, to Folk, to Gypsy Jazz and even Rock music.

Who am I?

I My name is Mike Shaw and I am an experienced violin teacher and performer based in Leicestershire. For the last twenty years I have been teaching in primary and secondary schools across the county. Since September 2012 I became self-employed and teach in schools 5 days a week. I am also an experienced conductor currently working with one of the Leicester-Shire Music Services most advanced orchestras on a Saturday morning. I also coach several school ensembles, orchestras and string groups.

I perform regularly in various groups ranging from string quartets to theatre bands and have also led the Leicester Symphony Orchestra for several concerts and tours.

What is the difference between the Violin and Viola?

Visually there is no difference to start off with. They are taught in exactly the same way, the viola sounds lower in pitch than the violin but not as low as the cello. The only other difference is that a viola player reads music in a less common clef than a violin player.

Where can I get an instrument from?

Firstly, beware of the cheap internet deal! Sometimes Parents will order a very attractively priced instrument off the internet, these instruments are often inferior quality and some don't even come fully set up. A low quality instrument often won't stay in tune, be hard to tune and generally be harder for a beginner to learn on. If you are considering buying off the internet please consult the teacher first, providing links to the potential purchase where possible.

The most common way to start learning an instrument is to hire one. Local music shops can offer this service for a modest amount per month and some offer the option to purchase the instrument minus the rental costs already paid once you know your child is progressing and enjoying playing. More information can be found from:

ABC Music (Market Harborough) <http://www.mhmusic.co.uk/> 01858 463144

Leicester-shire Schools Music Service <http://leicestershiremusic.org/hire-instrument>

Please contact the service for further information on 0116 30 50 400

Timothy Batchelar is a trusted string instrument dealer based near Fosse Park. If you are considering buying an instrument then you can contact him on 0116 2899798 or <http://www.batchelar.com/>

How much will lessons cost?

At the outset, beginners are usually grouped into 3's or 4's depending on the number of pupils starting. However, individual lessons or groups of two may be the only option in schools with limited take up.

Below is a summary of all fees.

LESSON CHARGES FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2017-18

GROUP SIZE	LESSON LENGTH	COST (per pupil per lesson)
3 or 4 pupils	30 minutes	£5.50
2 pupils	30 minutes	£8.25
2 pupils	20 minutes	£5.50
Individual	20 minutes	£11

Parents are advised to follow the teacher's lesson lengths and group size recommendations.

If the recommendations are not followed, progress speeds may suffer.

What to do next?

Invoices for tuition are sent directly from me via email. Once you have decided to start lessons, please contact me to confirm you wish to go ahead. I will then send you some further attachments - an agreement which will need to be signed and returned, a contact information sheet so that I have your most up to date details and finally I will send you a tuition invoice which will need to be paid prior to the start of the first lesson. Please ensure you supply a valid and regularly checked email address, adding my details to any spam filters you may have in place.

If I have seen your child, I have determined they will need a _____ size instrument. Please arrange an instrument hire from one of the music shops or the music service as mentioned above **in good time before lessons commence** so that your child is ready to go from the first lesson. If I haven't seen them, then when arranging to hire an instrument, take your child with you and they can be sized up for an appropriate instrument.

I look forward to teaching your child very soon.

Yours Faithfully,

Mike Shaw