



St Joseph's

CHORAL & INSTRUMENTAL PROGRAM HANDBOOK



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Welcome Message

Dear St Joseph's Families,

A big welcome to all of our new and returning members of the Choral & Instrumental Music Program for 2026! I'm Adriana Di Bella and I have been the Classroom Music Teacher and Choral & Instrumental Coordinator here at St Joseph's, Mundingburra for the past 6 years, and I'm so excited to share another fantastic year of music with you and your children!

This handbook outlines the essential information for your child's involvement in the program. The opening sections provide details about the **Instrumental Program**, while later sections highlight the opportunities available through our **Choral Program**. Please take the time to read each section carefully, as some information may have been updated from previous years.

Should you have any questions or require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me via email. I look forward to a rewarding year ahead, filled with growth, achievement, and a shared joy of music.

I look forward to meeting you all and working with your children to ensure that their musical journey is a positive and rewarding experience.

Yours Musically,

Adriana Di Bella

**Classroom Music, Choral and
Instrumental Coordinator**



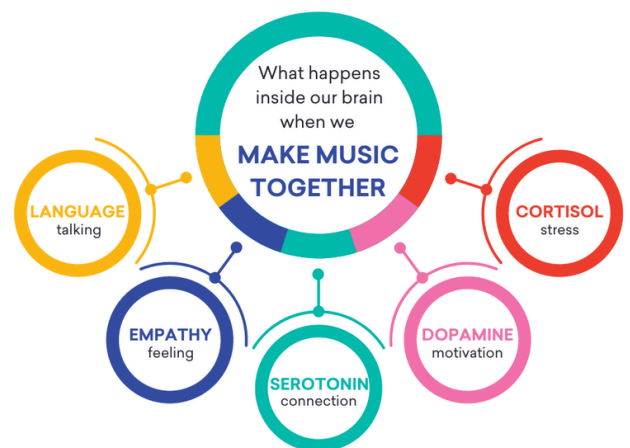
Why Music?

At St Joseph's, we recognise that learning to play a musical instrument is a valuable activity in any student's development. Extensive research shows it is beneficial in the areas of:

- **Reasoning ability**
- **Problem-solving skills**
- **Mathematics and language performance**
- **Memory capacity**
- **Self-confidence and self-discipline**
- **Social and teamwork skills**

SINGING

Professor Sarah Wilson highlights the effect that singing has on motor networks, listening networks, planning and organisational networks, memory, language, and emotional networks. Essentially, singing is a full workout for the brain! (ABC)



MUSIC AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Music and Language processing share an overlapping neural network. The connections between music learning and language acquisition through to highly developed literacy was one of the first breakthroughs in the neuromusical research field. (Bigger Better Brains)

Through supporting your child in their music learning journey, you are helping to develop a well-rounded student who will be equipped with many skills to tackle life's challenges when they move onto highschool and also beyond.



Instrumental Tuition



INSTRUMENTS OFFERED

Tuition in the following areas are on offer for students from Years 3 – 6 here at St. Joseph's Mundingburra.

INSTRUMENT	LESSON TYPE	YEAR LEVELS OFFERED
Piano	Individual	Years 3 – 6
Violin	Individual or Groups of 2	Years 3 – 6
Cello	Individual or Groups of 2	Years 3 – 6
Classical Guitar	Individual or Groups of 2	Years 4 – 6
Flute	Individual or Groups	Years 3 – 6
Clarinet/Bass Clarinet	Individual or Groups	Years 3 – 6
Alto Saxophone	Individual or Groups	Years 3 – 6

The Instrumental Coordinator, in consultation with the instrumental tutors, work together to ensure that these groups are formed based on not only students' year levels, but their experience of the instrument so that each child has the opportunity to get the most out of the group-style lessons.



Lesson

Information

FEES

Students will receive one 30 minute lesson per week for **8 weeks each term**. The current fees for the Instrumental Music Program are as listed below (please note the groupings that are available for each instrument on page 5).

\$120 per term for Groups of 3-4
\$180 per term for Groups of 2
\$360 per term for Individual lessons

These fees will be added to your family statement at the start of each term. Please note, places **will not** be offered if last term's fees are outstanding.

TEACHING STAFF

Listed below are the contact details for all members of our Instrumental Teaching Team. Please do not hesitate to contact them if you have any questions or concerns throughout the year. Should you have any general music and enrolment enquiries, please contact **Miss Adriana Di Bella (adibella7@sjmbtsv.catholic.edu.au)**.

TEACHER	POSITION	CONTACT DETAILS
Miss Adriana Di Bella	Instrumental & Choral Coordinator Classroom Music Teacher Piano & Strings Teacher	adibella7@sjmbtsv.catholic.edu.au
Mrs Laura Torrisi	Piano	ltorrisi6@sjmbtsv.catholic.edu.au
Mrs Joanne McCluskey	Guitar	joannemmccluskey@gmail.com
Mrs Angelene Bourne	Flute, Clarinet/Bass Clarinet, Alto Saxophone,	abourne2@music.tsv.catholic.edu.au

TIMETABLING

Students will have a 30-minute lesson each week for 8 weeks of every term, scheduled during school hours. Before each term begins, the instrumental coordinator will work with classroom teachers to select the best times for students to attend these lessons. These schedules will then be sent home so families are aware when students need their books and equipment ready for lessons. While tutors will call classrooms if a student hasn't arrived, students, especially in the upper grades, are expected to keep track of their lesson times. Each instrumental student will receive a desk tag to help remind them of their lesson day and time.

ATTENDANCE

For students to succeed on their chosen instrument, it is essential that they attend weekly lessons promptly and consistently. Since academic success is a top priority at St. Joseph's, the instrumental coordinator will collaborate with classroom teachers to ensure that students don't miss significant class activities or tasks during their instrumental lessons. Lesson times may vary throughout the term to accommodate this balance. If students forget their books or instrument, they **will not** receive a lesson, as it's an expectation for students to come prepared with their necessary materials to each lesson.

MAKEUP LESSONS

Makeup lessons will be provided if a lesson is missed due to teacher illness, public holidays, or school events, and whenever possible, parents will be informed in advance. If a makeup lesson is scheduled and the student does not attend without a valid reason, the lesson will be considered forfeited. **Please note that makeup lessons are not provided for student absences due to illness/travel. .**

Students with multiple unexplained absences may, at the discretion of the instrumental tutor, and in consultation with the Instrumental Coordinator and Principal, be asked to forfeit their place in the Instrumental and Choral Programs. This policy also applies to students who are consistently unprepared for lessons, frequently forget materials or instruments, or fail to complete assigned practice work.

WITHDRAWALS

Parents who wish to withdraw their child from the Instrumental Program should provide written notice to the Instrumental Coordinator at least 2 weeks before the end of the term and complete the required form linked below.

[Withdrawal from Instrumental Program Form](#)

Refunds are not provided if a student discontinues lessons or stops attending during the term. Parents will be responsible for a **full terms payment** with any mid-term withdrawals. They will then be taken off the tuition list for the next term.

PRACTICAL/THEORY OF MUSIC EXAMS

We offer the opportunity for eligible students to sit for Practical or Theory of Music exams on their chosen instrument. These exams are ideal for students wishing to deepen their musical knowledge or theory skills and can help prepare them for secondary school music programs and beyond. Please note that additional costs apply for these exams, and students will be expected to increase their home practice and written work to prepare successfully. For more information on your child's eligibility, please reach out to their tutor or the instrumental coordinator at the start of 2026.



Equipment

Each week, your child will need to bring their instrument (except piano) to school on their scheduled lesson day. They are welcome to leave it, along with their music bag, on the designated shelves in the downstairs area of the music room. Instruments and bags can be collected at the end of the day after the bell. To prevent items from going missing, please ensure that all belongings listed below are **clearly labeled on the outside with the student's name and class**. Regular checks will be conducted, and any unlabeled instruments or bags will be kept in the music room; students will need to see Miss Di Bella to retrieve them.

Most, if not all, of the Music items on this list can either be purchased locally from Arties Music Shop or The Keyboard Shop, otherwise online.

Please see the table below for a more specific list of the requirements for each individual instrument.

INSTRUMENT	EQUIPMENT REQUIRED
All Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A4 Display Folder• Music Stand for at home practice (except Piano)• Small pencilcase containing a pencil, ruler and eraser• Music Bag to hold method books and stationary, clearly labelled with student's name and class
Piano	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Piano or keyboard with 88 keys (fully weighted)• Method Books - usually last the first 3 terms, if not the whole year<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Year 3-4 Beginner - Alfred's Piano Prep Course Level A (Lesson Book, Solo Book, Theory Book and Activity Book)◦ Year 5-6 Beginner - Alfred's Piano Library Level 1A (Lesson Book, Recital Book and Theory Book)◦ Continuing students from 2025 will advance where they finished in the previous year and I will notify parents when new books are required to be purchased.
Violin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instrument and bow (sized correctly) - this can be purchased and sized at local music shops• Shoulder Rest (Everest)• Rosin• Soft cloth for cleaning instrument• Method Book<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Encore on Strings Book 1 (Blue) - clearly named

Equipment

cont.

INSTRUMENT	EQUIPMENT REQUIRED
Classical Guitar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yamaha nylon string classical guitar (correctly sized, usually 3/4 for beginners) – can be sized at local music shops. • Footstool – clearly named • Method Book <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Beginners – Progressive Guitar for Young Beginners Book 1 ◦ Continuing Students – TBC with tutor • Clip on Guitar tuner
Flute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flute (contact tutor for recommendations) • Method Book <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Beginners – <i>The Young Flute Player</i> (Book 1) ◦ Continuing Students – TBC with tutor • Jupiter Polishing cloth or cloth suitable for musical instruments from Music Shop (NOT cleaning cloth from laundry dept as they are often too rough), and large handkerchief (no chemical or jewellery cleaning cloths)
Clarinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarinet (contact tutor for recommendations – renting options available from various retailers) • Method Book <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Beginners – Sound Innovations – Book 1 for Clarinet ◦ Continuing Students – TBC with tutor • Cork grease (La Tromba brand – available from local music shops or online) • Pull through and polishing cloth • Mouthpiece protector • Thumb rest • 3 or 4 Reeds size 1.5 (constant supply required as they wear out)
Alto Saxophone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saxophone (email tutor for recommendations) • Method Book <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Sound Innovations – Book 1 for Alto Saxophone • Cork grease (La Tromba brand – local music shops or online) • Pull through body and neck cloth and polishing cloth • Mouthpiece protector • 3 or 4 Reeds size 1.5 (constant supply required as they wear out) • Neotech Neck Strap – ergonomically designed to reduce the weight of the instrument on shoulders – the most comfortable one available

Expectations

If you have any questions about the information above, please feel free to reach out directly to your child's specialist instrumental tutor, as they can best address instrument-specific questions. To avoid any disappointment, please wait to purchase any equipment until you receive confirmation that your child has been accepted into the program. Given the limited spots available, you will be notified in December/early January if your child has been enrolled in their chosen instrument. **Submitting an enrollment form does not guarantee a place in the program.**

INSTRUMENTAL EXPECTATIONS

As part of the St. Joseph's Instrumental Program, students are expected not only to attend weekly lessons, but also to establish at-home practice routines with guidance from parents/carers. These routines help students progress more rapidly in their skills and repertoire, as well as reinforce what they've learned during the previous week's lesson. At the start of each term, all instrumental students will receive a practice log, which tutors will check and sign during each lesson. Parents are asked to sign off on the dates and duration of practice sessions. The minimum recommended practice time is **four 15-minute sessions per week**, but the more time students dedicate, the greater their overall progress and achievement will be.

CHOIR EXPECTATIONS

Students who choose to join one or both choirs at St Joseph's will sign a contract outlining the group's expectations. These guidelines ensure that all members enjoy a positive, enjoyable learning environment while also building their skills and talents.

Expectations include, but are not limited to:

- **Attending rehearsals on time each week (a roll will be taken, and parents will be notified if their child is absent without notification).**
- **Showing respect for the conductor and fellow choir members by refraining from talking during rehearsal.**
- **Attending concerts and performances (or notifying the choral coordinator in advance if they are unable to attend).**

Students who do not meet these expectations may have their choir membership reviewed and could be asked to leave. Being part of the choir is a privilege, and respectful, positive behavior is required.



How To Enrol



Parents can enrol **new** students to be a part of the Instrumental Program in 2026 by completing the **Online Enrolment Form** which can be accessed via the link below. To avoid disappointment and your child missing out on the limited spots that are available, please complete this form as soon as possible. Students who do miss out on a spot can be put on a waitlist and in the case of any withdrawals throughout the year, parents will be contacted.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Instrumental Coordinator Adriana Di Bella via email: adibella7@sjmbtsv.catholic.edu.au

Please complete the Online Enrolment Form by **Monday 24th November**. After this date, applications for enrolment will not be accepted. This allows the Instrumental Team to begin planning and preparing groups and timetables for 2026. Parents who have re-enrolled their child/children from 2025 **will not** need to complete the following form.

**[CLICK HERE TO
COMPLETE THE ONLINE
ENROLMENT FORM](#)**



Ensemble Groups



Here at St Joseph's, students are provided with the opportunity to be a member of the Choral and Instrumental Ensemble Groups that are on offer. Taking part in any of these groups will open students up to a range of performance experiences, encouraging team spirit and fostering a greater love of music. Please note, there are no extra costs for your child to be a part of any of these groups. The 3 ensemble groups that will be on offer next year are:

Guitar Ensemble

Combined Choir (Grades 3 – 6)

Specialist Vocal Ensemble (Grades 5 – 6)

GUITAR ENSEMBLE

Students who are part of the Guitar program or learn the guitar at a proficient level are invited to join our Guitar Ensemble, at the recommendation of their instrumental tutor based on their skill level and potential. This group of students rehearse one lunchtime per week, preparing repertoire to perform at school assemblies and various events throughout the year, with the Townsville Eisteddfod being the highlight.

CHORAL GROUPS

Next year will see the return of the Combined Choir, which is open for Grade 3 – 6 students who enjoy singing, performing with a group and making music with friends. We will also see the continuation of a specialist vocal ensemble in which students are able to audition to be a part of as an extension to the general choir. Students will be informed about the process of joining these groups and the expectations that come with being involved in early Term 1. Students in both choirs have the opportunity to perform at various school events, liturgies and masses and also enter in the Townsville Eisteddfod.





Tips for Student Support

REPORTING

All students in the Instrumental Music Program will receive a Semester Report at the end of Terms 2 and 4 and these are distributed at the same time as their academic reports. Parents and carers are more than welcome to contact the Instrumental Coordinator or Instrumental Tutors at anytime to arrange an appointment to discuss their child's progress in the program.

AT HOME PRACTICE

In order for your child to achieve success in their chosen instrument, a level of at home commitment is required from both the student and also the parents/carers. Below are a list of ways in which you can support your child to develop positive at home practice routines.


- **Encourage effective practice routines**

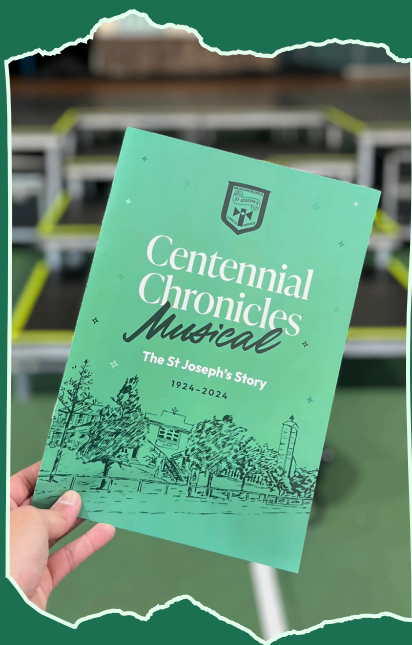
- Some students may think that playing through their pieces for 10 minutes once or twice in between lessons means they have 'practiced'. In order for students to see improvement in their skill development, it is important that they are practicing their set pieces at least 4 times per week for 15-20 minutes, minimum.

- **Put up timetables and reminders**

- These can be set up in places such as their bedroom and around the house where students are easily able to see them. This will ensure children remember their weekly lesson times, their practice schedule, and help them to bring their instrument and music equipment to all lessons.

- **Be present**

- Whether that be ensuring you are nearby while your child is practicing to make sure they are on task, or asking about their lesson that day/week and what they may have learnt, goes a long way for a child's success. One of the best ways for a child to improve their understanding of a certain concept/technique is to teach it to someone else.
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With music, one's whole future life is brightened. This is such a treasure in life that it helps us overcome many troubles and difficulties. Music is nourishment, a comforting elixir. Music multiplies all that is beautiful and of value in life.

– ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

