

# St Margaret Mary's College

## 2026 Instrumental Handbook



# BENEFITS, INSTRUMENTS OFFERED AND STRUCTURE

## 10 Benefits of Students Learning a Musical Instrument

- Teaches Patience
- Creates Responsibility
- Boosts Self-Esteem
- Improves Reading Skills
- Exposes New Cultures
- Enhances Coordination
- Promotes Math Skills
- Encourages Self-Expression
- Increases Memory Capacity
- Aids Social Skills

## Instruments on which tuition is offered:

**Strings** – Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass

**Guitar** – Acoustic Guitar, Bass Guitar

**Piano** – Students require their own piano/keyboard for practice

**Voice** – Singing

**Flute** – Students require their own flute

*Other instruments as per demand*



## Program structure

Instrumental lessons are held in our Music Block (H block) and all are 30-minute duration. Students will have lessons timetabled in a rotating timetable during the school day to avoid missing the same lesson each week and will have their times listed on Compass in advance. Students will receive a MINIMUM of 15 lessons per semester/30 per school year.

Students who are in an ensemble also attend rehearsal on the scheduled day (scheduled out-of-school time).

Students are encouraged and invited to be part of our ensembles when at an appropriate level of playing. All instrumental students (and those learning an instrument outside of school) are welcome and encouraged to perform at our various music events throughout the year when at a suitable level of playing.

## Required Materials (Some instruments are available to borrow)

- **Guitar** – Appropriately sized Nylon string guitar/footstool/ Chromatic Clip-on tuner, music stand for home practice. Classical Guitar Method Book by Paul Henry published by Hal Leonard.
- **Violin/Viola** – Instrument and bow (sized correctly), shoulder rest/rosin, music stand for home practice.



- **Cello, Double Bass-** Instrument and Bow (sized correctly), black hole, rosin, music stand for home practice.
- **Piano-** Piano or keyboard with 88 keys, fully weighted.

All students of strings/piano/flute will also need to purchase a tutor book to be advised.

## Lesson Policy

**Instrumental music lessons** are scheduled on a rotating basis. Students will leave their regular classes for 30 minutes each week to attend lessons in the H block music rooms. Timetables for each term will be emailed, and times will appear in Compass, allowing parents, students, and classroom teachers electronic access to their timetables. The music teachers will mark the students' attendance at each lesson. Students are asked to check the timetables/emails regularly so that they remember to attend their instrumental lessons as scheduled and to be aware of any swaps due to assessment/sickness etc. that can happen on the lesson day.

Although every effort is made by instrumental music teachers and classroom teachers to support the students in attending lessons, ultimately it is the student's responsibility to remember their lesson time. This is an extra-curricular activity so students should be proactive in catching up on any work missed during their music lesson (a study buddy is great!).

Students who wish to learn more than one instrument at school must negotiate this with the Arts Coordinator.

## Lesson Attendance

**STUDENT ABSENCE:** Students attend lessons every week and are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own learning. This is a fundamental requirement for success in music. If a student is unable to attend a lesson for any reason, it is important to inform the Instrumental Music Staff as soon as possible. This may be done in person, over the phone or via email. If a reasonable explanation is offered, in appropriate time BEFORE the scheduled less, we will endeavour to reschedule that lesson for another time. If a student is ill on the day of the lesson, the music tutor and Arts Coordinator should be emailed by 8am on that day. Students who continuously miss lessons may be required to vacate their position in the instrumental music program.

**TEACHER ABSENCE:** If an instrumental teacher is absent, they will endeavour to reschedule the missed lesson for another time (or day where available). If they are absent for a few weeks and are unable to reschedule lessons, students will only be charged for the lessons given.



## Student Expectations

Having music lessons during school time is a privilege and ALL students enrolled in the program must meet the following expectations:

- Students who have a music lesson part way through a regular class lesson should inform their teacher at the beginning of the lesson, then leave quietly 5 minutes before the start of your lesson.
- Students who have a music lesson immediately after lunch or at the start of a period may go directly to their music lesson.
- Students must practice their instrument regularly (at least 15-30minutes, 5 times a week or as directed by the teacher)
- Students should not have long/false fingernails when learning most instruments.
- Complete all homework that is set by your music teacher.
- Attend all ensemble rehearsals if applicable.
- Students who must be continually reminded of lesson time or are not progressing will have their enrolment in the program reviewed.

## MUSIC ENSEMBLES and CHOIR

### Co-Curricular Music Ensembles

#### Bella Voce Choir

All students involved in the instrumental program are encouraged to also be part of Bella Voce Choir. Our choir is a non-auditioned group that is open to every student at the College. The choir is funded by the College and there is no additional fee to participate. There is an expectation that students participating will attend all designated rehearsals on time as well as scheduled performances. The Choir has several performances throughout the year outside school time. The full program for the year is advertised early for planning purposes. In the future, we plan to reintroduce Choir Tours and Camps to regional and interstate locations.



Rehearsals for 2026 will be held on Thursday mornings before school from 8am-8.55am. Additional Thursday rehearsals may be added in before performances and times will be added to Compass. Students are marked off the roll, hear morning notices and finish rehearsal in time to attend period 1 class. Students involved in choir need to make rehearsal and performance attendance their priority. If students are unable to attend any rehearsals or performances, parents/caregivers are to advise staff as a courtesy.

## **REHEARSAL TIME FOR CHOIR in 2026 – THURSDAYS 8 am-8.55 am IN THE THEATRE L01.**

**\*Students who are considering being in choir must be able to attend before-school rehearsals starting at 8 a.m. SHARP one morning per week (two mornings per week in the lead up to performances). Students will be required to learn the lyrics of songs in between rehearsals. Please carefully consider the commitment that being in Choir will be for your family. Additional lunch-time rehearsals may be called in the lead up to performances (to be advised).**

Choir Conductor: Miss Taylor Fitzgibbon. Choir Accompanist: Ms Suzy Sheriff. Choir Admin: Mrs Nancy Nicholson

## **INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLES**

All ensembles are funded by the College and are a great way for musicians to improve their musical and performance skills.

## **GUITAR ENSEMBLE**

Rehearsals are held on Tuesday mornings before school: 8.00am to 8.55am. with our teacher Miss Casey Dufficey. Students learning Guitar will be invited to attend ensemble once at an appropriate level of playing. Students learning outside the college are most welcome to be part of our Guitar Ensemble.

## **ROCK BAND**

Rehearsals are held one afternoon (to be advised) – after school 3.15-4.30 pm in H02. Membership is via audition and usually reserved for senior students although students who play a rock band instrument or have a strong singing voice are welcome to try out. Rock Band vocalists **must** be part of Bella Voce Choir. Rock Band usually plays at informal school lunchtime concerts and at Maggies' Festival of the Arts. Teacher: Ms Suzy Sheriff

## **TAIKO DRUMMING GROUP**

Rehearsals are held each week – time to be advised. The group has been asked to play at several special events such as the Japanese Embassy Opening, Awards Night, Maggies' Festival of the Arts and Chinese New Year Celebrations.

## **COMBINED SCHOOLS' MUSICALS**

St Margaret Mary's College students join forces with students from Ignatius Park College and St Patrick's College to stage a full-scale musical each year in the Civic Theatre. This is a fine tradition that has been going on for over 20 years!

In 2026, Ignatius Park College will be the organising school and 2027 will see St Margaret Mary's College take the reins once again. Information on auditions for Year 7s in 2026 will be held early in Term 1. Keep an eye on the newsletter for information on this.

## CONCERT DRESS:

For some performances, Bella Voce Choir wears their full Academic Uniform (without hats). Other ensembles usually wear performance blacks, long black pants, socks, shoes, and Arts shirts. We also have a supply of white blouses and concert vests (loaned out) to be worn with black pants (supplied by students). TAIKO has its own dress requirements with special TAIKO shirts. Performance dress will be advised before all performances. Our SMMC ARTS Shirts are usually worn for our Maggie's Festival of the Arts in August. Our choir uniform is a white blouse and vest which is supplied, and students will be required to have their own long black dress trousers (not jeans) and black shoes, and black socks/hosiery. Guitar Ensemble members wear Black Arts Shirts and black long pants with black shoes/socks for formal performances.

## ENCOURAGING GOOD PRACTICE SKILLS

- Practice your instrument regularly (at least 15-30 minutes, 5 times a week as per teacher instruction)
- Complete all homework set by your music teacher
- Have a music stand available at home (Guitar, Strings and Flute)

## PRACTICE TIPS

- Set a specific time and room without distraction to practice in and always use that time and place.
- Set yourself small goals each practice so that you achieve something each day.
- Listen to yourself with a critical ear and strive to achieve your very best.



## FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

- It is very important as a parent/caregiver to support your child's musical development through your attitude, the emotional support that you give, and your involvement in their musical pursuits. This is a key factor in a child's ability to successfully learn to play and enjoy music. The guidelines set out in this booklet are designed to assist you in giving your daughter the best support possible for her musical endeavours.
- Always keep in mind that your support is an essential element in your child's success with music study. Encourage your daughter to schedule practice times. Encourage persistence! Musical achievement requires continual attention over and long time. The time spent in lessons and ensemble rehearsals is limited. What your child learns at school needs daily personal practice time at home for these new skills to be developed.

## REPORTING PROCEDURE

- Instrumental music teachers will issue progress reports via Compass at the end of each Semester. Teachers can be contacted at any time via email if there are any concerns, comments, or clarification needed about any aspect of instrumental music lessons.

*For further information on Instrumental Lessons/music ensembles, timetabling issues, or Choir, please contact Mrs*

*Nancy Nicholson, Co-ordinator for the Arts Department*

*[nnicholson@smmc.catholic.edu.au](mailto:nnicholson@smmc.catholic.edu.au)*

*Phone 47264900.*





## ENROLMENT FORM 2026 | Co-curricular Instrumental Music

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

NEW ENROLMENT [ ] CONTINUING ENROLMENT [ ]

To be enrolled in the Instrumental program commencing Term \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

| Instrument to be studied:<br>PIANO/GUITAR/STRINGS/VOICE/FLUTE/OTHER | Do you own an<br>instrument? | Prior Experience with instrument? |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                                                                     |                              |                                   |

As a parent/guardian, I understand that:

- Fees for lessons will be charged to school fees account at the rate of \$610 per semester charged at the start of each semester (terms 1 and 3) and must be paid by the due date.
- It is my daughter's responsibility to attend lessons and rehearsals (if part of an ensemble)
- I understand that students are to commit to one semester of lessons initially. If my daughter ceases lessons during the first semester, I will be liable to pay the full amount that semester.
- I understand that students should participate in an associated ensemble and music events when at the appropriate level of playing.

**Note:** Students must commit to one semester of lessons. Following one semester, lessons will continue automatically. Students wishing to withdraw from second-semester lessons are to advise the Music Office TWO WEEKS BEFORE the end of term 2. In Semester 2, (terms 3 and 4) if the student wishes to withdraw from the program, 4 weeks' notice is required to the Co-ordinator of the Arts Dept: [arts@smmc.catholic.edu.au](mailto:arts@smmc.catholic.edu.au) phone 47264900. Students starting in Semester 2 must also commit to a full semester of lessons.

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE PRINT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**(Parent/Care Giver - must be the signatory on School Fees Account)**

**(To be completed by the student)**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, wish to be part of the College Instrumental Music Program.

- I must attend all lessons, rehearsals, and performances with all necessary equipment
- I must notify the school (Music Office) or teacher of known absences/timetable changes in sufficient time to make a change – preferably before the lesson day. I understand that lessons missed without notice through forgetfulness will not be made up by teachers.
- It is my responsibility to complete any classwork that I might miss.
- I agree to check my timetable against my assessment schedule for any clashes ahead of time.

**STUDENT'S SIGNATURE:**

Please return this completed form directly to Nancy Nicholson Co-ordinator for the Arts Department [arts@smmc.catholic.edu.au](mailto:arts@smmc.catholic.edu.au) or return it to the school office.