



Kamaroi Music Booklet

Contents

1. Overview and Mission Statement
2. Class 2: Violin and Cello for a year
3. Class 3: Continuing or changing instruments
4. Classes 4-6: Wednesday afternoon ensembles
5. Tutors and instruments
6. Sourcing instruments
7. Parental involvement
8. PA support: Subsidising groups and buying instruments



1

Overview and Mission Statement



Music really matters at Kamaroi. Music is an art that inspires children to engage with their feelings and imagination. Music contributes to the emotional, social, academic and physical development of the child. Music is an integral part of our human-centred education, enhancing other areas of learning and ‘deepening the child’s sense of humanity, aesthetics, and beauty.’

International and national research clearly shows music education uniquely contributes to the emotional, physical, social and cognitive growth of students. Music promotes development of imagination and creativity, helping lift the individual beyond immediate/contextual constraints . . . an imagination, which ‘functions as a bridge between the material self and the aesthetic/spiritual self, between the individual and wholeness.’ (Nielson, 2002)

Learning an instrument can benefit your child in so many areas, such as maths and spatial awareness, dexterity and coordination – there is much literature on this.

2 Class 2: Violin and Cello for a year

Class 2 has a year of violin or cello lessons, as part of the Kamaroi school music curriculum.

Why Strings?

When playing violin or cello the child's ear is attuned to the finer nuances of musical expression. The child is, in effect, 'tuning' with every note. The right/left differentiation, which is established with fingering and bowing is not only musically important – it has an important neurological impact, feeding into, for example – development of maths, reading and memory (all the more important for children to be practicing violin/cello at home to make sure they benefit as much as possible from the school program).

In fact the violin and cello are considered the most challenging and 'musically holistic' of the instruments. Even if children do not continue with a stringed instrument, after the year's tuition the benefits are considerable.

Choosing Violin or Cello

Parents will receive a letter towards the end of Class 1 so they can indicate whether their child will play violin or cello. We will show the instruments to the children at this time to spark their interest. One factor when deciding which instrument to choose could be cost, as sourcing your own cello might be more expensive than hiring a violin. Another could be transportation, especially if your child regularly takes the bus.





When are the lessons held?

The children will be taught in small groups on Wednesdays. They will experience what it is like to learn a musical instrument and will learn much about music through this time.

If your child has already been learning violin or cello outside school we would still like them to come to the group lessons and the teachers will accommodate their level of ability.

At the end of the year parents will be asked to decide whether or not their child will continue with violin or cello or choose a different instrument.

3

Class 3: Continuing or changing instruments



At the end of Term 4, Class 2 will finish their year of learning violin and cello as part of the Class 2 curriculum.

At this time we encourage **all** the children to continue learning a musical instrument.

We especially recommend the **violin** or **cello** as they have already done a year of lessons. It would be a good choice to continue with this instrument if they are enjoying it and doing well. The choice to continue or change instruments should be made by the parents, ideally in consultation with their current violin/cello teacher. The teacher should have a good idea of whether the child may be better suited to a different instrument, or whether they should be encouraged to

continue. Bear in mind that children may be easily attracted to something 'new and different' when they may benefit more from sticking with their current instrument.

At Kamaroi we are also able to offer trumpet, sax, flute, guitar, clarinet and piano lessons as an alternative to or as well as violin or cello. You will need to source the instrument if you don't already have one. Please see Sections 5 and 6 for more information on instruments and tutors.

When are lessons held?

Lessons in all instruments will be in groups or individually from 11.00am mostly on Wednesdays and Thursdays.



Cost of Lessons

Tutors will charge normal fees. Less for lessons in twos and less again for larger group lessons. You will be invoiced each term by the tutor. Some tutors will add GST if they are registered. Please pay these fees promptly.

You may choose to find a tutor outside school to teach your child.

4 Classes 4-6: Wednesday afternoon ensembles

All children in classes 4, 5 and 6 take part in music ensembles on Wednesday afternoons.

Playing in an ensemble is often the most rewarding and satisfying part of learning an instrument. Players need to listen to each other, read the music, follow the conductor and express themselves musically as a team or a group.



At present we have five groups:

Ensemble
String Orchestra
Wind/Brass Ensemble (Band)
Guitar Ensemble
Percussion Group
Musical Theatre

Rehearsals run from 1.30-2.20pm every Wednesday. Parents are welcome to come and listen, or join in if they play the relevant instruments!

We are very grateful that PA is now subsidising these ensembles so that parents will only be charged a small amount per term. This will cover the conductors' fees and sheet music.

We hope to showcase these ensembles whenever possible. Our Festivals are always a good opportunity. All the children are proud and excited to show off what they can do.

5 Tutors and instruments

Tutors are chosen from their CVs, recommendations and experience.:

Instrument
Cello
Violin
Clarinet
Saxophone
Trumpet
Flute
Piano
Drums
Guitar

Drums and Guitar are offered from Class 4 upwards.

If you prefer your child to learn outside school or learn a different instrument and need some help, Karen is happy to advise you.

6 Sourcing instruments

Cellos/Violins

It is important that children are measured for their instrument as there are 1/2, 1/4 and 1/8 size cellos and violins.

Buying cheap instruments unseen from the internet is discouraged as they often are of poor quality wood and have not been set up or hand finished. Consequently they might need much more money spent on them.

Violins can be provided by the school for a hire fee for the year, which will be added to your account. Priority will be given to Class 2 students however there are additional violins available to rent. Some children have their own violin already.

If your child would like to start cello instead, you will need to source your own instrument.

Some of the older children may have cellos available – to buy, borrow or hire. Class 2 children will generally need a quarter size (unless they are very tall – in which case half size). Please contact Karen (preferably by email) if you need to, for advice on hiring/buying an instrument.

Recommended outlets for purchase and/or rental include:

- Sydney String Centre Chatswood
- The Violinery Lindfield
- Violins by the Sea Newport
- Musicorp Music megastore.

Flutes, Clarinets, Saxophones and Trumpets

It is a good idea to go for a well-known brand such as Yamaha.

Sourcing an instrument on ebay can be risky, but not impossible. It is best to try to find a good second hand instrument rather than a new 'cheap' instrument from China (eg a new Yamaha flute for \$199 – apparently these fall apart!)

Dickson's in Chatswood has a good range of student instruments.

Other options include:

- Mona Vale Music (formerly Billy Hyde)
- Mall Music, Warringah Mall
- KJ Music (check online for outlets)

You could also try any other large Brass and Woodwind shop.

More advice on buying or renting an instrument can be sought from the specialist teacher.



7 Parental involvement

As with most things in your child's life, learning a musical instrument will be much more successful if parents are involved. It isn't necessary to be a musician yourself as it mostly involves encouragement and appreciation from parents.

All parents are very welcome to attend their children's instrumental music lessons. This way you will be able to follow up on what the child has done in the lesson.

The same applies to our ensembles – parents are welcome to come to rehearsals to listen or to join in – if you are a player.

Practice

Class 2 – To support the curriculum, we ask that you encourage your child to practice for a short time at least three times a week.

We do specifically ask that the children make a commitment to practicing regularly. Obviously the more often they practice the better they will get and the more enjoyment they will gain. In the beginning we recommend 'a little and often.'

Again, attending your child's lesson, especially in the beginning, can really help you understand what is expected of your child when they practice.

Please remind the children regularly about their practice as otherwise those children will fall behind and hold back others in their group. Practice usually has to be encouraged by the parents. With the cello – if there is a safe place to keep it out of reach of little ones then it can be left out of its case, which makes practice easier.

Practice Tips

- New violinists/cellists may only need five minutes practice initially as they get used to holding instruments and bows – little muscles can tire easily!
- By half way through the first year 10 minutes, three times a week may be manageable and by the end of the year 15 minutes is fantastic.

- Be the audience – children love giving parents a ‘concert’.
- Ask your child to give you a ‘lesson’.
- Invite a friend over to practice together and inspire each other.
- Set regular days and times so it becomes part of the family routine.
- Leave the instrument out (if it’s safe) so it’s easy for the child to see and access.
- Help your child get the instrument out/set-up and music in order. Soon they’ll do it themselves with ease.

Caring for Instruments

It is important that the children take great care of their instrument. Both violins and cellos are fragile and cost a lot to repair if they are damaged. It is also not a good idea to leave the instruments anywhere in the heat – eg. in a hot car or near a heater. If you are able to attend one of your child’s first lessons, you can ask the tutor to show you how to care for the instrument – the dos and don’ts.

Tuning an Instrument

A common excuse for not practicing is ‘my instrument was out of tune.’ Often the instrument is fine. If you are not a musician it may be challenging to tune an instrument. Strings in particular are difficult to tune if you’re not a string player. Strings are easily broken and quite expensive to repair (eg. \$35-40 a set). There are a number of parents who play strings. You could ask a parent, or Karen, Anne or Genia if they could tune an instrument for you at school.

Supporting a child who ‘wants to quit’

Sometimes children go through ups and downs as they learn their instrument. They are bored, don’t have time to practice, or find it too hard. If parents can help their children push through the down times they will thank you for it later. (How many parents wish they had persevered – or had the opportunity to learn?)

It can be quite hard sometimes but like anything will reap rewards in the end.



Some suggestions for the child who wants to quit or change instruments:

- “Show me you can practice this instrument three times a week and we’ll talk about switching at the end of term/end of year”.
- Take your child to a concert – there are several great youth orchestras, which may inspire your child.
- Help your child get the instrument out and set up, music ready etc.
- Leave the instrument out (if there’s a safe place and no curious toddlers). Children are more likely to go to an instrument if it’s visible and easy to access.
- Set up a practice timetable. Children love rhythm so if they know they always practice their violin on a Tuesday before/after dinner it will become a habit.
- Ask your child to teach you how to play – you may be amazed as they suddenly become the ‘expert’.
- Talk to their teacher/tutor. Often tutors will be able to support children through the phase.

8 PA Support: Subsidising groups and buying instruments

PA has shown enormous support for the instrumental program at Kamaroi, including buying pianos and percussion instruments for the school and subsidising the ensembles. Parents will now pay a much reduced subsidised amount Phonics/Word Families each term for their child.

*“The man that hath no music in himself,
nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
is fit for treason, stratagems and spoils.”*

William Shakespeare
The Merchant of Venice





Kamaroi Rudolf Steiner School 220 Forest Way, Belrose, 2085
Ph: (02) 9450 1651 Fax: (02) 9450 1109 www.kamaroi.nsw.edu.au