



aitken
COLLEGE
In Mind and Spirit

Instrumental Music

HANDBOOK 2026

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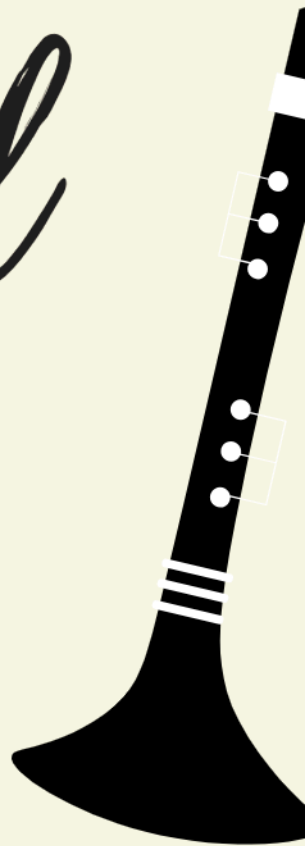


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Getting Started

Here is everything you need to know about enrolling in the Instrumental and Ensemble Program at Aitken College.



Before completing the application process, **thoroughly read through** the contents of this document; making sure that you understand fully the commitment required of your child and the terms and conditions of enrolment.



Have a conversation with your child as to the instrument they might like to learn. When deciding which instrument to choose, you should take into consideration the age, size and interests of your child. As a general guide, please refer to the table on Page 5 'Instruments Available for Tuition'.



Nominate whether you wish to hire an instrument. Hiring an instrument is an affordable option available for Woodwind, Brass and String instruments. Hire is not available for Guitar, Bass Guitar, Piano and Drums, these instruments are strongly encouraged to be purchased for home practice.



Participating in an ensemble is an important part of a child's musical development. Ensembles are available for all instruments. Beginner students are encouraged to develop their skill level and have the opportunity to participate in an introductory ensemble.



Complete the Online Enrolment Application Form, located on AIMS. (Late applications may be offered during the school term, however, will only be accepted for future vacancies).

SECTION A: INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Instrumental Music Tutors

Specialised music tutors deliver music lessons to students at Aitken College.

Instrumental Music Tutors provide all students with the experience, expertise and care necessary for their ongoing development and growth as musicians. Many of our tutors enjoy productive careers as professional musicians and are well- respected artists, performers and composers within the wider musical community.

Instruments Available for Tuition

Aitken College has a large variety of instruments available for tuition. Tuition is available on woodwind, strings, and contemporary-popular instruments, including contemporary voice. Each instrument has a unique technique and approach, and different physical requirements. Therefore, careful consideration in selecting an instrument is required. For example:

- *Bass guitar: larger scale length than a guitar, requires an amplifier*
- *Saxophone: can be heavy and requires neck support*
- *String Instruments: (Violin, Viola, Cello) come in different sizes (3/4, 1/2, 1/4 etc.) so are suitable for a range of age groups*
- *Percussion Instruments: requires space, practice pads and materials at home for practice*

If you have any questions about specific considerations for an instrument, please discuss these with members of the Aitken College Music Department.

Table 1: Instruments Available for Tuition

	Tuition Available to Students in Year Levels			
Instrument	P to 2	3 to 6	7 to 12	Available for Hire
Woodwind				
Flute	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clarinet	✗	✓	✓	✓
Alto Saxophone	✗	✓	✓	✓
Tenor Saxophone	✗	✗	✓	✗
Strings				
Violin	✓	✓	✓	✓
Viola	✗	✓	✓	✓
Cello	✗	✓	✓	✗
Contemporary - Popular				
Voice	✓	✓	✓	✗
Piano	✓	✓	✓	✗
Guitar	✓	✓	✓	✗
Bass Guitar	✗	✓	✓	✗
Drumkit	✓	✓	✓	✗
Percussion	✓	✓	✓	✗

Private Instrumental Music Lessons

Enrolment in private instrumental music tuition is on a **yearly** basis, charged at **8 lessons per term which will equate to 32 lessons over a full year**. Fees are payable, in full, at the commencement of each term.

To assist parents and tutors, Aitken College facilitates lesson timetables and provides its premises for the lessons. Correspondence with Instrumental Music Tutors will be made through the Performing Arts Administrator and appropriate methods of communication will be organised accordingly.

Instrumental Music Tutors plan lessons for students incorporating a variety of music experiences such as performance, theory, ear training and sight-reading skills. Tutors may supply supplemental material of a variety of styles based on students' interest. External examination certificates are also available and encouraged.

Students are withdrawn from class for half a period (30 minutes) once a week during the school term. Lessons occur on a rotating basis. There is limited availability for fixed before and after school times with priority given to VCE students. As such, there are no guarantees for lesson times to be fixed.

Music Practice Diary / Journal

Students are expected to record information regarding their lessons, including lesson times and homework, in a music journal. Tutors expect students to bring their music journal to each lesson.

A music practice journal will be supplied by the College at the beginning of each year and included with first term tuition fee (one off payment of \$10.00). If students start lessons during the year, the music practice journal will be added to the term's billing. If a student loses their diary during the year, they will be provided a new one and charged an additional \$10.00 for the replacement.

Lesson Attendance

Students are expected to attend every lesson unless officially excused, e.g., College activity or illness. Where students are absent due to illness, please give as much advance notice as possible by emailing the Performing Arts Administrator **and** the Tutor. The Music Department must be informed of any absences by **7:30am the morning of the lesson**. Failure to inform a tutor of an absence will result in a marked absence and a make-up lesson will not be owed.

Lessons that are eligible for make-up due to sufficient notice of absence will be organised by the Tutor in conjunction with the Performing Arts Administrator.

Tutors are not expected to make up lessons that students miss through family holidays during school terms or for students forgetting to attend their lesson. Tutors will make every effort to locate students for their scheduled lesson according to the College timetable.

Tutors are also not expected to make up lessons if notification of absence is sent after the daily cut-off time.

From time to time, school tests may clash with a music lesson. Students are still required to attend their scheduled music lesson, negotiating a rescheduling of the test or lesson with the class teacher and tutor. Make up lessons will not be given. Year 12 students doing a SAC are exempt from this; however, they need to notify the instrumental tutor of the time and date of the SAC (at least 2 weeks in advance if possible). If no notification is given, no make-up lesson will be rescheduled.

Students should attend their lesson punctually and be fully prepared with their instrument and all appropriate materials including their Music Diary and any other resources or sheet music.

When an instrumental music lesson is scheduled midway through an academic lesson, as a matter of courtesy, the student should alert their classroom teacher at the beginning of the lesson that they will be leaving halfway through. Tutors also complete an attendance roll.

Students must always make sure that teachers know where they are at all times.

Make Up Lessons

We are committed to provide students with 32 lessons across the entire year. Some terms are short and some are longer however, Tutors will teach every week throughout the 39 week school year up until the 32 lessons are met.

Schedule of Fees

All students participating in the Instrumental Music Program at Aitken College are expected to pay fees, levied at the beginning of each term, to cover the tuition and instrument hire (where applicable).

Students wishing to undertake tuition on a woodwind, brass or string instrument who do not currently own an instrument are able to hire an instrument from the College at very reasonable rates.

For more details, please refer to the table below:

Type	\$/Lesson	\$/Term	\$/Year
Individual Private Lessons	\$42.50	\$340.00	\$1,360.00
Instrument Hire • <i>Woodwind</i> • <i>Strings</i>	n/a	\$50.00	\$200.00
Practice Journal/Diary			\$10.00

Payment of Fees

Instrumental music fees are paid per term, prior to commencement of lessons. Lesson fees and the one-off music diary are billed with Term accounts. When completing an enrolment form, parents/guardians authorise this payment via College term fees.

Withdrawal from Lessons

We encourage students to persist with their chosen instrument for at least a year. Learning an instrument can be challenging, however, if a student wishes to cease instrumental lessons, the College must receive notice in writing via a completed **Cancellation of Enrolment** form. Please ensure you have read this document for withdrawal dates. Cancellation of Enrolment forms are available on AIMS.

Tuition shall cease at the end of the respective term, provided the signed Cancellation of Enrolment form is received by the following dates:

- **Friday 13 March for withdrawal at the end of Term 1, 2026**
- **Friday 5 June for withdrawal at the end of Term 2, 2026.**
- **Friday 28 August for withdrawal at the end of Term 3, 2026.**
- **Friday 27 November for withdrawal at the end of Term 4, 2026.**

If the Cancellation of Enrolment form is received after the due date, the full-term amount is still payable. Refunds are not able to be processed.

Ensemble Participation

Aitken College offers extensive ensemble program for students to partake in such as Choirs, Percussion Ensembles, Guitar Ensembles, String Ensembles and Jazz Ensembles.

All students learning an instrument at Aitken College are encouraged to participate in an ensemble as this will develop their band skills, extend their playing, introduce them to playing their instrument in new contexts, and offer more performance opportunities.

Ensemble participation can be arranged through discussion with the Instrumental Tutor, the Ensemble Director, or the College Music Coordinator. Students have the option to participate in more than one ensemble, however the ability to commit to all ensembles equally should be considered before making this decision.

When a student joins an ensemble, it is expected that they commit to the ensemble in the same way they commit to an instrumental lesson. This includes practicing ensemble pieces at home, checking communications from the Ensemble Director on AIMS, arriving to rehearsals promptly with all required materials, and notifying the Ensemble Director if they will be absent. Ensemble members who do not commit as required will be removed from the ensemble at the discretion of the Ensemble Director.

The rehearsals for each ensemble are organised by the Ensemble Director. Members of an ensemble should speak to their Ensemble Director regarding specific rehearsal protocol such as set up and pack down of the rehearsal space, as well as asking questions directly related to the ensemble.

Performance Opportunities

Aitken College offers a variety of performance opportunities to students who participate in the Instrumental Music Program. These opportunities include annual concerts, instrumental music recitals, and performances at the students respective assembly. Students in the Instrumental Music Program are strongly encouraged to be involved in as many performance opportunities as possible.

AMEB Practical Exams

Students may sit an external exam if they wish. The Australian Music Examination Board (AMEB) exams will be selected at the tutor's discretion. AMEB holds 5 exam sessions spread throughout the year and instrumental music students generally sit the 5th session in October or November.

Additional information about AMEB exams can be found on the Victorian website: www.ameb.vic.edu.au

Whilst AMEB exams are optional, they will incur additional fees. Fees are adjusted depending on the level of the student and whether a piano accompanist ~~will be~~is required.

For a student to sit an AMEB exam, parental consent must be given in writing. They can also be enrolled directly through the website.

SECTION B: MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Purchasing an Instrument

Students who play instruments which are not offered as hire instruments are expected to purchase their own instruments for home practice. Instruments will be available for use within the lesson, however; will not be allowed to be taken home.

If you are purchasing an instrument for the first time, please speak to your child's Instrumental Music Tutor, Music Coordinator or the Performing Arts Administrator for advice. There are many considerations in purchasing the right instrument for your child and the Music Department can offer advice that will suit your individual circumstances.

Hire of Instruments

Instruments hired to students are not covered under the College Insurance Policy. Reasonable care must be taken against the instrument being damaged, lost or stolen.

The hirer is fully liable for the instrument during the hire period and loss or damage of the instrument during this period will incur full replacement costs.

We recommend that parents consider insurance for loss or theft. It is highly recommended that parents register the instrument with their insurance provider.

The following conditions apply to the hiring of all Aitken College instruments:

1. An Instrumental Hire application form must be completed before an instrument can be hired for the year. This can be requested via Performing Arts Administration. The Instrumental Music Tutor and Music Coordinator will assign the hired instrument to the student.
2. The annual hire fee must be paid to the Accounts Department before taking the instrument home. This payment covers ongoing maintenance, reasonable wear and tear of the instrument and allows for the replacement of older instruments.
3. Students must return an Aitken College instrument to the Music Department in person immediately after cessation of lessons or a holding payment will be charged.

4. Any repairs necessary due to damage caused through negligence must be paid for by the hirer. **In no circumstance may the student or any person attempt repairs or adjustments to the instrument.** Any damage or defects to the instrument must be brought to the attention of the Music Department immediately.
5. All accessories such as reeds and strings must be replaced and paid for by the hirer if necessary.
6. When at school, the instrument must be stored in the student's homeroom (Prep-Year 6) or the music storeroom in P33 for Years 7-12.
7. No person, other than the student or their tutor, may be allowed to play or handle the instrument.
8. At the end of the hire period the instrument must be returned to the Music Department personally, in clean condition and in good working order. Failure to do so will result in additional maintenance or cleaning fees.

All instrument cases should be clearly labelled with the student's name and contact details and a record kept of the instrument's serial number.

SECTION C: SCHEDULES

Timetables

Timetables will be emailed out to parents prior to the beginning of each term and will also be in student timetables on AIMS. Lesson times must be recorded to ensure students bring instruments and tutorial materials to scheduled lessons.

Parents and students should check AIMS regularly to be aware of any updated important information. This includes concerts, excursions, workshops and rehearsal information.

Please be aware that the timetable is of utmost importance for the College community and as such, tremendous care is given to the organisation of it. Therefore, once the timetable is finalised, changes can only be made under consideration from the Music Administrator.

SECTION D: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

What Parents Can Do to Help

Most importantly, supporting home practice is vital for the success of all students. To best support your child in their practice, the following is recommended:

- Establish a regular, consistent, realistic practice routine. This will include accounting for other commitments throughout the week to ensure the practice routine can be maintained. A good practice routine will allow for frequent, short practice sessions (eg. 15 minutes five times a week) rather than one or two long practice sessions in a week.
- Where possible, create an area specific for practice in your home. This space should have the equipment required for practice (eg. A music stand or power supply if required), and minimal distractions.
- Ensure appropriate storage of the instrument in between practice sessions. Many instruments have an associated stand which would negate the need to set up and pack down the instrument.
- Encourage mini – performances of the pieces your child has been working on at home for family and friends to enjoy.

Additionally, we welcome family and friends to attend College performances to discover the plethora of opportunities we offer. From College Assembly performances to Concert Events, and even the College Musical, encouraging your child's participation in College performances and extra-curricular activities will increase their confidence as musicians and performers.

SECTION E: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Can my child take part in the Instrumental Music Ensemble Program even though they learn music outside of the school?**

Yes! Participation in the Instrumental Music Ensemble Program is open to all students at Aitken College.

- **When do the ensembles start?**

Ensembles commence in week 2 of Term 1.

- **Can we choose the ensemble in which my child participates?**

Ensemble participation is at the discretion of the Ensemble Director and Music Coordinator. Students will be assessed by a music teacher to ascertain the most suitable ensemble for them to participate in and will be asked to attend a rehearsal.

- **Can my child learn more than one instrument?**

Yes, students may learn more than one instrument.

- **If my child learns an instrument, including voice, at school, do they have to participate in an ensemble?**

We strongly encourage this. This is an essential part of the music student's development and an integral part of the Music Program.

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