

**Instrumental Music Program**

**Information for Parents and Carers**



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The Instrumental Music Program (IMP) is a branch of the ACT Education Directorate and works with schools to provide quality music education through group instruction. All IMP teachers are ACT Education Directorate teachers and work alongside your school to teach brass and woodwind bands (including percussion), ukulele groups, string groups and high school concert bands.



Dear Parents and Families,

The ACT Instrumental Music Program (IMP) is an educational unit of the ACT Education Directorate. The aim of IMP is to provide to primary school students the technical and artistic skills to enjoy ensemble performance of music.

The Instrumental Music Program is a Section of the Education Directorate that provides to your primary school a package of services designed to supplement the music education of up to 23 selected children in each of Year 5 and Year 6. The IMP has been operating in the ACT since 1973 and is unique to Canberra. It has attracted a great deal of national and international interest because of its methods, organisation and achievements.

All IMP staff are qualified teachers employed by Education Directorate. IMP teachers work with students in schools to provide opportunity to learn an instrument in a group setting. Students are placed into special classes in associated primary schools where instruction is given on woodwind, brass and percussion instruments, or on ukuleles. The size of these classes is limited to a maximum of 23 students. This is for education and practical reasons. To learn more about how students are selected please see the student selection. section The IMP does not provide individual lessons to students, nor does it operate school bands.

IMP partially funded by the Education Directorate. The Directorate meets the cost of the IMP premises, most office equipment, and utilities. All other costs incurred in the operation of IMP are met from contributions from associated schools. These other costs include the purchase of instruments and print music, staff travelling allowances incurred in their day-to-day teaching, instrument repairs and maintenance and office costs.

In each associated primary school, there are 2 IMP classes, one containing Year 5 students and the other with Year 6 students. An IMP teacher instructs each class twice each week for 45 minutes. Students are withdrawn from regular classes to attend the instrumental classes. If you school is part of the Ukulele program an IMP teacher instructs each class twice each week for 45 minutes. Students are withdrawn from regular classes to attend the instrumental classes, or if your school is part of the High School Concert Band program an IMP teacher will visit once per week for 45 minutes.

IMP lends to each associated primary school sufficient instruments for the classes to operate. The school lends these instruments to the selected students. In addition, IMP accepts the responsibility of the repairs and maintenance of these instruments due to ‘fair wear and tear’. The cost of other major repairs or replacement of instruments due to loss, theft or unusual damage is met by the schools, subject to any agreement that they have with the borrowing families.

IMP provides all necessary print music to the students for instruction.

This program is unique and has been operating successfully in the ACT since 1973. Thousands of students have been involved, many of whom have taken their newfound enthusiasm for music well beyond their Year 6 Band Class and now have chosen musical performance and music teaching as their profession. Even more have continued to be involved in music at an amateur level as well into their adult life. Canberra has many community bands and orchestras of which our past students are part of.

Kind regards,

Naida Blackley   
Principal

Instrumental Music Program

**Instrumental Music Program Aims**

* To enhance the education of children through their involvement in a quality music program
* To provide a strong motivation for children to continue to engage in music activities
* To develop cooperative learning, social interaction, and performance skills
* To develop in children an awareness and appreciation of many musical styles and genres
* To develop instrumental and ensemble skills
* To encourage children to strive for excellence
* To provide the tools for positive experiences in ensemble musical performance to students at a young age.

Further information about the Instrumental Music Program can be found at imp.act.edu.au

**Contact Details**

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**Student Selection for Band**

**Overview**

The selection process for students being offered band membership is based on two data points. The Year 4 Classroom Teacher Assessment, worth 40% of overall assessment score and Music Perception Survey, worth 60% of overall assessment score. This selection process was reviewed in 2019 by Dr Anita Collins and the recommendations from this review have been incorporated into this year’s process.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Step** | **Action** |
| 1 | Assessment for Year 5 Band. A school-based assessment under 4 categories. Completed when students are in year 4, by year 4 classroom teacher |
| 2 | Music perception survey |
| 3 | Ranked list provided to schools, highlighting suitable students |
| 4 | Offers made and accepted or declined, until there are 16 to 22 band members |
| 5 | Allocation of instruments to band members |

**Please see following information for a detailed description of this process.**

**Year 4 Classroom teacher assessment is completed by teachers of year 4 cohort** focusing on

* + Work Habits
    - Positively accept a learning challenge
    - Persevere with new and more difficult concepts and tasks
    - Show resilience in learning
    - Respond to correction and modification in learning
  + Group Etiquette
    - Maintain self-discipline and impulse control in classroom situations
    - Contribute positively to efforts of the team
    - Show leadership and support in helping others around them to learn
  + Reading Skills
    - Current reading skills
    - Ability to decode new and increasingly difficult texts
    - Wiliness to attempt new reading tasks
    - Ability to preserver when the learning is complex or difficult
  + Independent Home Learning
  + Organised and prepared for learning
  + Have required resources for the day i.e. required school uniform, hat and jumper, water bottle, books, any other item from home (craft project/ sharing session)
  + Arrives to school having completed home reading and other home task if required

**Music perception survey**

At the beginning of Year 5 the IMP will work with staff at your school to administer a music perception survey. Your child will be asked to answer some questions about music that is played to them. This is designed to determine each child’s ability to hear differences in the sounds of notes, melodies and rhythms and is merely another aspect of the selection process.

**School Based Principal’s Selection**

IMP staff are not familiar with individual school students and do not make any final selection of students.

Using the above two sets of information the Principal of each school, in conjunction with classroom teachers (who may ask IMP staff to be involved), selects up to 23 students to whom positions in the band class are offered.

As the band class is essentially a class for beginners, the Principal is asked to set aside the names of students who are currently having (or have had for some period of time) lessons on a band instrument. Where students are currently learning a non-band instrument (piano, guitar, stringed instruments, etc) the parents should be advised of the additional workload in practice time that will be required and asked to consider whether their child can cope with this. It is not unusual in this situation for progress on one or both instruments to suffer due to this split in dedicated focus.

**The Band Class**

Principals will offer up to 23 students a position in the band class. Usually they also give a date by which acceptances must be received. If the offer is declined by any of the first 23 students, further offers will be made until such time as the class has the required number. If less than 15 students accept the offer, the Year 5 Band Class will not commence in that calendar year.

Inevitably, there will be keen students who miss out. While this is disappointing for the student and family it is also the case with sporting teams and other organisations where the size of the group is limited. For educational reasons it simply is not possible to make band classes open to all who want to be included.

**The year 5 and 6 IMP Package**

As a member of the IMP band class students receive -

The loan of an instrument allocated by IMP staff for the two years that they are members of the band class. The value of this instrument could be between $800 and $6,000. This may not be the same instrument for the full period, as instruments are replaced with another if they need repairs or maintenance. The cost of normal repairs and maintenance needed on the instrument as a result of ‘fair wear and tear’ is included in the package.

All of the print music required for tuition is bought by IMP and supplied to the students. This becomes the property of the student. If it is lost the student must pay to replace it.

IMP lends band music to schools to use in performances. This music remains the property of IMP and will be returned by the school after they have finished with it.

Two group lessons each week approx. 45 minutes each for a minimum of 27 weeks in each year. That’s a minimum of 54 lessons per year – PLUS a number of special lessons called ‘Combined Practices’ with Band Classes from other schools.

Opportunity to audition for a place in the Primary Concert Band during Year 6.

The Instrumental Music Program does not operate your school’s band. Your student will be in an Instrumental Music Class operated by the Instrumental Music Program. If your school chooses to operate a school band, it will be administered and directed by a school-based teacher and may include students from the IMP class along with any other students in the school with appropriate skills on suitable instruments.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**How much does it cost to be in the Band Class?**

IMP is required to fund its own day-to-day running costs. Each associated primary school purchases the package of services see ‘The Package’, from IMP on behalf of the interested families in the school. Currently, the cost of purchasing this package is $5,900. The package allows the school to offer positions in the band classes to a maximum of 23 in each of Year 5 and Year 6. Each school individually decides what amount to charge each member of the band classes to recoup this cost. There may be other costs added to this amount – buses, music stands, uniforms, etc – so each school may calculate that a different amount is required from families to fund the classes.

Please ask at your student’s school what the cost of the band class membership is. Some schools include other items such as music equipment and excursion costs in their amounts. IMP cannot answer this question accurately.

**What instruments does IMP teach?**

IMP teaches band instruments – woodwind, brass, and percussion. IMP also teaches ukulele, strings (violin) and high school concert bands in selected schools.   
For educational reasons band classes in schools have EITHER woodwind and percussion OR brass and percussion.

Instruments in those schools with woodwind and percussion include flute, oboe, clarinet, and tuned and untuned percussion in Year 5. During Year 5 some students are moved on to one each of bass clarinet, alto saxophone and tenor saxophone.

Instruments in those schools with brass and percussion include trumpet, trombone, euphonium, tuba and tuned and untuned percussion in Year 5. Later in their first year up to two students are moved on to French horn.  
  
Schools who are part of the Ukulele program are given a Ukulele at the beginning of year 5 which is to be used for the duration of their lessons.

**Which instrument will my student learn in band class?**

After the students are selected for the band class (see ‘student selection’) IMP staff will work with school-based teachers to allocate instruments to students. Instrument are allocated based on observation of physical characteristics that, from our own experience and overseas research, may deter or enhance success on an instrument. The shape of the mouth, the formation of the teeth and actual physical stature are all factors taken into consideration. While this is not a guarantee of success, these considerations, along with a student’s own efforts can increases the chance that learning the instrument selected by IMP staff will be a positive experience for the child.

**What commitment must we make as a family to the Band Class?**

As the class size is limited, students and families are asked to make a commitment to the band class for 2 years. The selection of your student may mean that another student, who is equally suitable for the band class, has to be left out. There can be no replacement of students who leave the class after the end of the first semester in Year 5 – any students who joined the class after that time would be so far behind in instruction as to be detrimental to progress of the other students.

Parents and Carers are also asked to ensure that sufficient home practice is supported to allow progress on the instrument to happen. You will be advised from time to time what amount of practice is required. Refer to the ‘Helping your Student’ section in this booklet.

Schools will probably ask parents and carers to accept some financial responsibility for the care of the instrument that is loaned to your child. In the case of some of the larger or less common instruments we can be looking at around $6,000 as the replacement cost of the instrument loaned. Most commonly, trumpets flutes and clarinets have a replacement cost in the vicinity of $900 - $1,100. Lost books, cleaning rods & reed guards will need to be replaced by you.

**What if my student changes schools?**

If the school to which your student moves is also associated with IMP, your students will be issued with the same instrument at their new school and continue instruction at the new school (whether woodwind or brass).

If your student moves to a school that is interstate, or is in another education system, or is not associated with IMP, the instrument must be returned to the lending school. As a general rule, no refund of money paid to the school is given for that part of the year. Students are able to keep any print music that has been given.

**Will my student be required to take private lessons?**

We ask that students who are in the IMP band class do not seek or receive private lessons for the duration of their time in the IMP band class. We ask that students do not receive private lessons because group tuition begins from a different starting point than that which would be used in one-to-one tuition. Your student will have two different teachers teaching different things. That can only be confusing and, perhaps, detrimental to the child’s progress. They will also have two sets of homework or practice to do to get full value from each teacher.

Secondly, it is detrimental to the progress of the band class as a whole to have students at different levels of skill. The social aspects of group tuition will have each student encouraging the others to reach their capabilities and progress will be amazingly rapid.

After the 2 years of band class, if your student wishes to continue with their musical performance, it makes absolute sense to then seek private tuition. It also makes sense for them to continue with their band performance at the high school that they attend. Enquire at your local high school about their band, music and ensemble programs.

**Cleaning instruments**

Students will be shown how to clean their instruments during band class. If any issues with instruments arise please do not try to repair at home but bring to next band session or contact your teacher.

**Ukulele, String and High School Bands**

**Ukulele Groups**

Ukulele classes commenced in 2012 as an additional musical offering for group learning. This accessible and popular instrument suits a wide range of age groups.

IMP administers a valuable pool of resources that allow a number of schools to offer group lessons on ukulele. These resources include skilled and qualified teachers, musical instruments and print music.

Students in Ukulele classes work on chords, note reading and singing in a group setting. A school based teacher assists with the management of the class and is the director of the school ensemble at performances.

**What does the student receive**

The students are supplied with their instrument –ukulele – and they become the property of the student. If they are lost they will need to be replaced by parent/carer/student to continue with the class.

All of the print music for tuition is purchased by IMP and supplied to the students. This becomes the property of the student. If lost a replacement must be purchased.

IMP lends ensemble music to the school for use in performances. This music remains the property of IMP and will be returned by the school after they have finished with it.

Two group lessons each week for at least 27 weeks in the school year, approx. 45 minutes. That’s a minimum of 54 lessons per year – plus a number of special lessons called ‘Combined Practices’ with ukulele classes from other schools.

**Who pays for this?**

Whilst the end user – the student and their parents/carers – make a contribution to the costs involved, the majority of the expenses required to run IMP are met by the ACT Education Directorate and your school’s contribution. Costs to parents/carers for these programs vary from school to school depending on inclusions – eg excursions, music stands, etc. Speak to your school about the exact cost of this program.

**Working with others**

Students will participate in performances with their ensemble at their school and related events – assemblies, fetes, etc. They will participate in combined practices with other ukulele schools from the IMP across Canberra. Other performance opportunities will be coordinated by school and IMP staff.

**High Schools**

IMP works in a number of secondary schools – both high schools and P-10 schools – to build and develop their band programs. This can be a pathway for students who have completed the years 5 and 6 program, or for students who are new to band.

High School bands are often programmed online and are electives which students can select. Talk with your school about how the High School Band works at your school.

**What does the student receive?**

The student receives their instrument provided from either the school resources, or from IMP. Instruments are loaned directly to schools for the purpose then schools will loan to individuals.

All of the print music for tuition is purchased by IMP and supplied to the students. This becomes the property of the student. If lost a replacement must be purchased.

IMP lends ensemble music to the school for use in performances. This music remains the property of IMP and will be returned by the school after they have finished with it.

One group lessons each week for at least 27 weeks in the school year (approx. 45 minutes). Plus a number of special lessons called “Combined Practices” with high school band classes from other schools.

**Who pays for this?**

Whilst the end user – the student and their parents/carers – make a contribution to the costs involved, the majority of the expenses required to run IMP are met by the ACT Education Directorate and your school’s contribution. Costs to parents/carers for these programs vary from school to school depending on inclusions – eg excursions, music stands, etc. Speak to your school about the cost of this program.

**Working with others**

Students will participate in performances with their ensemble at their school and related events – assemblies, fetes, etc. They will participate in combined practices with other schools from the IMP across Canberra. Other performance opportunities will be coordinated by school and IMP staff.

**String Groups (violin)**

Violin classes for year 3 & 4 students run in a small number of schools at this time.

IMP administers a valuable pool of resources that allow the students to access an instrument and print music as part of the program. Expert staff from the IMP team deliver small group lessons on school sits during school hours.

Students will participate in performances with their ensemble at their school and related events – assemblies, fetes, etc. They will participate in combined practices with other schools from the IMP across Canberra. Other performance opportunities will be coordinated by school and IMP staff.

**Extension Ensembles**

The staff of the IMP operate, on a voluntary, after hours basis, a number of what we call System Ensembles. These are combined school bands and ensembles and each of them rehearses at the Instrumental Music Program Centre in Kaleen one night each week of school terms. They are self-funding groups. Each participating student has a membership fee and any tours that the bands do are paid for by the families of the members. These ensembles access music from the IMP’s library. Some of the larger, specialist instruments are loaned to the members by the IMP. These ensembles are not community ensembles. Each group has specific requirements as to who can audition for membership. To ensure that standards are maintained, all positions in all of the bands/ensembles are declared vacant at the end of each year and new auditions are held.

As you would expect, because students are selected by audition all of these groups run at a higher musical standard than regular school bands and ensembles of these age groups. The experience and development of skills gained from membership of these ensembles benefits the school groups from which the members are drawn.

**ACT Primary Concert Choir**

This group began in 2014 to provide extension opportunities in a larger choir setting at a more advanced level. It contains students from Years 4-6 in ACT public schools and performs at Directorate and IMP events including the Bandstravaganza Ensemble Showcase evening. The Primary Concert Choir undertake other performances at Eisteddfods, Step into the Limelight and community events in Canberra. Auditions occur in Term 4 and more information can be found on the IMP website.

**ACT Senior Concert Choir**

This group commenced in 2017 to provide extension opportunities in a choir setting at an advanced level for secondary students. It contains students from Years 7-12 in ACT public schools and performs at Directorate and IMP events including the Bandstravaganza Ensemble Showcase evening, National Eisteddfod and Step into the Limelight. Auditions occur in Term 4 and more information can be found on the IMP website.

**ACT Primary Concert Band**

The IMP staff saw the need to provide extension and more challenging music to some students in the Year 6 IMP band classes in associated schools. It was decided to form a special after-hours band for this purpose. Membership is by audition and students who are in IMP band classes are eligible to apply for audition on their band class instrument. Auditions occur at the end of year 5 for commencement during Term 1 in year 6. Primary Concert Band undertake day tours in which they perform 3 concerts in one day. The Primary Concert Band also performs at the annual Bandstravaganza concerts.

**ACT Junior Concert Band**

The Junior Concert Band (JCB) began life in 1975 as the ‘Junior Military Band’ and has operated continuously ever since. Students who are in Years 7 and 8 in ACT public schools may apply to audition for the JCB. Each year the JCB goes on tour for 3 days, usually in country NSW, where it performs for schools and the public. The JCB is often called on to perform at official functions of the Education Directorate and community events and also performs at Bandstravaganza concerts at the end of each year. Auditions occur in term 4 and more information can be found on the IMP website.

**ACT Senior Concert Band**

Students in ACT public secondary schools who are in Years 9 to 12 are eligible to apply for audition for membership in the Senior Concert Band (SCB). Formed in 1980, the SCB offers extension to the fine work being done by music teachers in the Territory’s high schools and colleges. The SCB also undertakes national and international tours on an irregular basis. The ACT and Nara share a love of music and the IMP and Ichijo Senior High School, Nara, Japan have a special bond. Over the years we have held exchange tours sharing music, homestays and concerts with both communities. The SCB represents the Education Directorate and ACT Government at official functions, as well as community and public events such as Floriade, Canberra Nara Candle Festival, Olympic Parades and ANZAC Services for schools. SCB also performs at the annual Bandstravaganza concerts at the end of the year. Auditions occur in term 4 and more information can be found on the IMP website.

**ACT Senior Jazz Band**

Our Jazz Ensemble is formed from students within the SCB once the band has been chosen. It performs many concerts during the year including local jazz festivals and community events, including the Merimbula Jazz Festival. In 2010 they travelled to Nara, Japan. This band is selected from students from the seniors concert band though an additional audition.

**ACT Percussion Ensemble**

This group began in 2012 to provide extension opportunities in a specific ensemble setting. It contains students from Years 7-12 in ACT public schools and performs at Directorate and IMP events including the Bandstravaganza Ensemble Showcase evening. They undertake a day tour of local/regional schools during Term 3. Auditions occur in Term 4 and more information can be found on the IMP website.

**ACT String Ensemble**

This group commenced in 2023 to provide extension to students in years 4 -6 from the IMP string/violin program in our public schools. The ACT String Ensemble is an excellent opportunity for hard-working, skilled and committed young string players to work together in an enriching environment. The ensemble will perform at Directorate and IMP events including the Bandstravaganza Ensemble Showcase evening. Auditions occur in Term 4 and more information can be found on the IMP website. Students will be required to re-audition for the String Ensemble each year if they wish to continue.

**Special Events for ACT Schools**

**Bandstravaganza**

Bandstravaganza is an annual concert that is presented in the evening at the ANU School of Music. All students who are in Year 6 Band Classes perform on one of the nights, along with a Primary Concert Band, the Junior Concert Band and the Senior Concert Band. Refer to the IMP website for dates. Extension bands, choirs and ensembles also perform at this event.

**Step into the Limelight**

A system wide arts showcase including music, dance, drama, film and visual arts events. Each year a theme is chosen and the major events - Art Exhibition and Gala Showcase – are held in Term 3. All public school can be involved in the events. Step into the Limelight is coordinated by the IMP annually.

**Crescendo**

Crescendo concerts may occur in schools at the end of the year to celebrate music learning from IMP ensembles and other school based music groups. These will be held on school sites for school communities to attend.

**Helping the new musician**

If you are a family who has not yet supported a student learning an instrument here are a few tips on how you can help your student

**At home:**

* Show an interest in the music study of your student - be generous in your praise and encouragement. Take a positive attitude towards their efforts - never make fun of the strange sounds that are produced; they will improve
* Arrange a regular time for practice in a quiet place with good light and a music stand. Try to keep practice times free of interruptions by the TV, by outdoor play, and other family members. Help with practice as much as possible - for example, by counting
* Help the student keep a daily practice record and sign it at the end of each week to help show the value that the family places on regular practice. IMP will provide journals to each student for this purpose
* Ensure that your student has a safe and secure place to store their instrument
* Encourage your student to be organised to take their instrument and music to school on the required days
* Encourage your student to play for others when the opportunity arises in the home
* Keep a record of the student’s various music activities - try to attend as many performances as possible
* Be respectful of family and neighbours when choosing a time and place to practice as there are noise limit regulations – see ACT Environment Protection Legislation

**Music Education & Brain Development**

At the beginning of the 21st century, neuroscientists started using technology that enabled them to watch our brains working in real time. They started doing experiments and found that when the participants listened to music their brains worked in ways that hadn’t been seen before. Then they started comparing the brains of musicians and non-musicians. What they found was amazing.

These comparative studies, which began with adult musicians and then moved to children, found that the brains of participants who have been exposed to musical training at an early age (4 - 12yrs) by learning a musical instrument in weekly lessons with a specialist teacher were better at things like:

* Storing and retrieving information
* Learning and understanding language
* Regulating logical and emotional responses
* Understanding and responding to sounds
* Working in teams
* Creating ideas and working creatively

These types of brain developments are associated with the following types of behaviours:

* Improvements in thinking and analytical skills
* Improved academic performance across different subject areas
* Improved social interactions
* Improved attention span
* Improved ability to understand and accept confusion and discomfort when learning new and difficult concepts
* Improved resilience and the ability to cope with change
* Improved brain health that can last into later life

These types of behaviours lead to:

* Greater capacity to maintain positive levels of well-being throughout life
* The ability to solve problems and find creative solutions that has been identified as a behaviour in high performing professionals and effective leaders
* The ability to adapt to new working
* Environments and continue to learn and advance across their working life
* Greater capacity to make considered choices
* and to be more discerning about career choices, relationships, and pathways

Essentially this means, a well rounded human being who can learn effectively and efficiently, perform at a high level academically and professionally while finding creative solutions to problems, understand and be discerning about their own behaviour and maintain healthy levels of brain function into later life.

Brain research tells us:

* Musicians can make memories quickly, so they don’t need to have things repeated
* Musicians can retrieve memories quickly, so they can quickly recall something they have learnt before when they need it
* Musicians improve their memory by using the skills they learn through music rehearsal, so through practicing their instrument or rehearsing in a musical group improves their memory

This information section developed by IMP staff with permission from Dr Anita Collins.

Website - https://biggerbetterbrains.com/



**Parent meeting video links**

Whilst we have previously held in person parent meetings in schools we have moved to a suite of online videos for parents to gather further information about their student’s IMP program and teaching staff.

Please go to the Our Community page, parents & carers page on the IMP website to find the videos.

<https://www.imp.act.edu.au/our_community/parents_and_carers>

Here you will find short videos for you to watch alongside the information provided in this booklet.

* + - * + Welcome from IMP Principal
        + Teacher introduction videos
        + Program videos – band, ukulele, choir, strings and music mentor classroom program

**Contacts**

My IMP teacher is

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My school based teacher is

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