



BARNARD CASTLE SCHOOL

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to Barnard Castle Senior School! Music is a hugely important part of life here at Barney, and we really hope that your son/daughter takes advantage of the many opportunities that are on offer. This letter is designed to share some key information with you in advance of September, but please do get in touch if you have any queries at all.

Learning an instrument

Here at Barney, we have a range of experienced and inspirational Visiting Music Teachers who are able to teach a range of instruments (as well as singing) and a variety of musical styles.

Lessons take place during the school day on a rotating system, meaning that pupils do not routinely miss the same lesson. Pupils are informed each week when their next lesson will take place, and timetables are shared in good time via the Practice Pal app, our music lesson platform accessible by all pupils and parents. Over 250 lessons take place every week, and the Music School is like a second home for many of our pupils. Those who take instrumental lessons are expected to take part in any ensembles that relate to their particular instrument.

For the full list of instruments currently offered, and for full Terms and Conditions, please see our Music Department Information Pack, which will be sent separately via email.

To sign up for lessons, please fill in the Individual Music Lessons Application Form, which can be found online here: <https://forms.office.com/e/oUtcV3jHWC>

Or by scanning the QR code here with your phone's camera:



Music lessons for all new pupils to the Senior School who sign up for lessons before Saturday 26th August will begin the week of Monday 11th September 2023, the second week of the Michaelmas Term. Any pupils signed up following this date will begin during the week commencing Monday 18th September 2023.

Instrumental Schemes

We also run several schemes each academic year, designed to support pupils in getting started on an instrument they have not played before. The schemes in place at the beginning of the 2023-24 academic year are as follows:

- **Young Organist Scheme** – set up in 2019, the Young Organist Scheme offers free lessons to pupils each year who wish to start learning the organ. This coming year, there are 6 places available to pupils in years 4-12.
- **Endangered Instrument Schemes** – Our 'Endangered Instrument Scheme' has been set up to encourage pupils to learn an instrument that is less commonly played, but still hugely rewarding. In fact, pupils that learn a slightly rarer instrument often end up with more potential opportunities, as they become so in demand! Pupils will receive a free taster lesson and free instrumental hire for the year. There is also the opportunity to have lessons in pairs. The instruments that feature as part of the 'Endangered Instrument Scheme' for the 2023-24 academic year are:
 - **Brass** – Trombone, French Horn
 - **Strings** – Viola, Cello, Double Bass

If you would like your son/daughter to be considered for one of the instrumental schemes outlined above, please fill in our online form here: <https://forms.office.com/e/ZcxazBGDkL>

Or here by scanning the QR code with your phone's camera:



Joining an Ensemble

Making music as part of a group is one of the great joys of being a musician, and joining an ensemble provides so many unforgettable memories.

A wide variety of musical groups rehearse each week, catering for young musicians of all levels. Our ensembles have regular performing opportunities: the whole school community have recently performed at the Sage Gateshead, and we return to the Sage again on Wednesday 13th March 2024. The Chapel Choir have recently sung at Durham Cathedral and York Minster, the Wind Band and Big Band have performed in Durham City Centre and in the Bowes Museum, and overseas tours are always a highlight. In fact, over 50 events feature in the Music Department's calendar each year. Whatever your son/daughter plays, there is an ensemble for them! Please see the full list of ensembles in the Music Department Information Pack.

If you would like for your son/daughter to sign up for an ensemble ahead of starting in September, please do send me an email. We will be sharing exciting information with those who have signed up in advance ahead of the Michaelmas Term.

I very much hope your child's music will thrive here at Barney. Again, please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any queries.

With all very best wishes,

Richard Dawson

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