



Stockport Music Service, The Fairway, Stockport, SK2 5DS
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3 April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

UPDATE ON STOCKPORT MUSIC SERVICE SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

As we reach the Easter break, I wanted to update you on what has been happening behind the scenes with the music service.

PRINTED RESOURCES

Your child's teacher has been working on resources for pupils that are now being sent out via email, either directly to parents where we have that email, or via schools if we do not. These resources include scale sheets, pdfs of practice routines, suggestions of what and how to practice and some printed music where copyright allows this. Fortunately, most of the publishers are allowing us to make copies in this slightly unusual time so this has at least become easier to do during the last few days.

If you have not provided a parental email address and would like to receive these resources directly, please get in touch via music.service@stockport.gov.uk and we will add you to our records.

VIDEO RESOURCES

Staff are also creating pre-recorded videos that will be posted to a private YouTube channel. These videos include warm ups, technical exercises, scales and pieces that should help your son or daughter to keep playing during the current school closures. You can be sent a direct link if your teacher wants you to use a particular video but the channel can be found here if you want to have a sneak peek; https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJERbAAceQQAWAljX_v9jQ

MUSIC CENTRE GROUPS

If your son or daughter also attends one of the music centre ensembles, you might also have been invited to submit some recordings of your current ensemble pieces, which we will try to splice together into a performance montage when they are sent back to us.

SONG WRITING COMPETITION

You might also be interested in a song writing competition we are holding. Information and application forms can be obtained by emailing samantha.yates@stockport.gov.uk

LIVE VIDEO LESSONS

As a team, we are also investigating the use of Skype, Zoom and other video conferencing platforms and a few teachers and pupils have trialled this during the last few days to see how effective this might be in the coming weeks from a reliability and technological point of view. There are some teething problems that we are working through, such as audio cutting out due to the volume of some instruments seeming to overload the inputs on a laptop or tablet, and the inevitable glitches that can be found when transmitting over the internet if connections aren't great. Overall, we seem to be getting these sorted though, so hopefully the technology can cope once set up properly, at least for small groups or individual lessons.

However, even once we have sorted out the technology, as a music service working within the local authority (LA) education service, our primary concern is for the safety and wellbeing of your children so we are also working with the local children's safeguarding board and information officer to ensure that any video lessons are safe for both pupils and staff and fully GDPR compliant. We are now waiting for approval from the LA and live video lessons will only go ahead once this has been received. We will obviously keep you informed as and when this is in place and, in the meantime, we will continue to send out other resources.

INVOICING AND BILLING

At present we do not know when music lessons will commence in school and it may be that the live video lessons become the norm for the Summer term. At this point, despite the early closure of term, most pupils will have received the pro-rata 22 weeks of tuition during the Autumn and Spring terms so unless we have individual circumstances where this is not case, we will not be issuing any refunds for the lessons we were not able to provide at the end of the Spring term. Once we know what is happening in the Summer term, we can decide what charges might be applicable and, in the event that any refunds are due for the Spring, these will be processed then.

Finally, we hope you have a good Easter break and that everybody is still smiling, singing and playing their instruments and we'll get back in touch after the Easter holiday with more news and updates.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Craig Eastwood". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Craig" in a cursive script and the last name "Eastwood" in a more blocky, slightly cursive font. There is a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the signature.

Craig Eastwood
Head of Music Service