

# PERFORMANCE

## EXAMS

### GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

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# Guidance for Parents and Carers

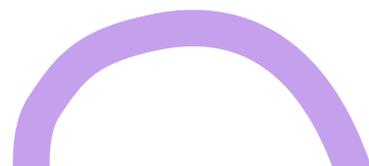
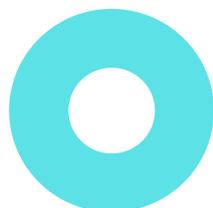
This guide is to support parents and carers as you prepare your child for a performance exam.

Our exams are open to ALL children and young people in Sheffield and not just those who learn with a Sheffield Music Hub Teacher.

It is essential that exam entry is done in partnership with your child's instrumental / vocal teacher. Their professional help and guidance is essential as they prepare your child for their performance.

Exams should only be entered on the recommendation of your child's music teacher.

We will check with all teachers after you have made your exam entry that they are expecting their pupil to take an exam before we allocate an exam day and time.



## ***What is an exam like?***

The exam will take place in our beautiful recording studios in central Sheffield. We want the experience to be completely positive for your child.

We want the children to perform on their instrument or voice with confidence and a sense of musical joy. Please encourage your child think of it as a performance to share what they love rather than an exam.

The exam will be led by an experienced music educator. Plenty of time will be allowed to help your child feel comfortable and ready. If they make a false start, we'll help them through it. We will offer constructive feedback and top tips for next steps. This will be sent to you in writing after your child's exam.

Your child will be able to warm up before their exam. It's best to arrive 30 mins before to allow time for sign in and warm up.

When it is time for your child's exam your child will be escorted into their exam room (along with their teacher/accompanist if they have one). Parents and Carers will need to stay in the waiting area and will not be able to accompany their child into the exam room.



## ***How to help your child prepare***

It is key that you communicate regularly with your child's instrumental teacher – they will help provide you with all the tools to make the experience enjoyable and successful!

Our other top tips are:

- Provide regular time and space for dedicated practice – playing every day is much better than one or two long sessions a week – even if some of the daily sessions are quite short.
- Find lots of opportunities for your child to share their performance with others before their exam – this can be to friends, family, at school or at other settings. The more they play in public before their exam the more comfortable they will be.
- Don't just focus on your exam pieces – encourage your child to finish their practice by playing through a piece that they find easy or that brings them joy.
- Encourage your child to make music with other children – if they aren't already.

## ***How are the exams graded?***

Your child will get a grade out of 100 for their exam. The grades will then fall into these categories: Pass, Merit and Distinction. The grades are divided as follows:

- 60 = Pass
- 76 = Merit
- 88 = Distinction

## How the exams work

Each exam is 20 minutes. This gives the young musician the time they need to perform confidently and gives the examiner time to write up meaningful feedback.

We ask each student to prepare 4 different things. You can work with your young musician to prepare 4 areas to perform from the following:

- 4 x pieces of music

OR

- 3 x pieces of music and 1 x set of scales / arpeggios (pre agreed by the teacher)

Your teacher will help your child choose the right level of music for the grade they are entering – please do work closely with them here.

We'd like an authentic performance experience. All pieces must be accompanied\*, this means:

EITHER

- Piano accompaniment – Your teacher will help you to organise an accompanist. This must be done in advance, and we highly recommend you have at least one practice session with your accompanist before the exam. You will need to pay for an accompanist.

OR

- Backing track – If your child is playing to a backing track, we ask that you have this ready on exam day on a device that can be connected via Bluetooth. Please liaise with your instrumental teacher here.

OR

- Duet with teacher / pupil – Your teacher will let you know if they are planning to be with you on your exam day.

\*solo instruments - we recognise that some instruments perform on their own in these settings (piano, guitar, drums etc) – in these instances there is no requirement for an accompanist, especially for pianists – guitarists and drummers can choose as appropriate. Please talk to your child's teacher about this.