



Essex County Council

# Essex Music Service

Financial Assistance Policy  
2023-24

This edition: June 2023

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# Essex Music Financial Assistance Scheme

The Essex Music Financial Assistance Scheme is available for children and young people aged 5 – 18 years, living in Essex (excluding Thurrock or Southend) and attending an Essex maintained school (local authority, academy, or free school).

This scheme is supported by our music hub funding from the Department for Education to assist with music lesson fees, ensemble membership fees and instrument hire. It is separate from other funding you may be eligible for from Essex County Council to support young people in other areas such as free school meals or childcare vouchers.

Financial Assistance is provided for instrumental and vocal lessons provided by Essex Music Service tutors only and does not support any other private or agency provider. It can also be used to support access to all Essex Music Service community provision and to be a member of any of our ensembles.

Families eligible for Financial Assistance can receive a discount between 50% and 66% depending on the type of provision. Families may be subject to a means test to determine eligibility.

All Essex Music tutors are recruited and employed by Essex County Council in line with the Department for Education's [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Existing beneficiaries will be contacted via email during the second half of the Summer Term and asked to confirm continuation of lessons within the new academic year. If lessons are not continued, but then restarted later in the year, previous beneficiaries will need to reapply, and will not be prioritised.

Applications will open for the start of the new academic year during the second half of the preceding summer term. Allocation of Financial Assistance is subject to funds being available and cannot be guaranteed. Where insufficient funds are available, a waiting list of applicants will be formed.

New applications can be made at any point during the school year, but any allocated funding will not be backdated and will only apply onward from the term the application is received.

Applicants are reminded the fund is limited and we reserve the right to close the Financial Assistance fund allocation at any point. Any debt not covered by an approved allocation from the Essex Music Financial Assistance Scheme will be the responsibility of the payee to provide.

All applicants whether successful or otherwise will be contacted via email within one month of their application being received.

- Your child must not commence lessons if you are relying on the funding to pay for the lessons or instrument hire fees, and this has not been confirmed. Allocation is subject to approval and cannot be guaranteed.
- Applicants should only apply for financial assistance if intending to access provision from Essex Music Service.

Financial assistance is not paid directly to the beneficiary, a discount will be reflected on the parent/carer invoice showing as a reduction.

Applications for students living out of the Essex Music Hub Area but attending a school in the Essex Music Hub area are unfortunately not eligible to apply for financial assistance via the Essex Music Service Financial Assistance Scheme.

## Summary of our provision

- Financial assistance is only provided to those students for whom this provision is requested at the point of application for lessons.
- Once Financial Assistance has been granted, all future invoices will have the discount automatically applied to them.
- All users in receipt of Financial Assistance will continue to receive the funding until either funds are no longer provided by the Department for Education, or the young person is changing key-stage in their education, or lessons are stopped at which point the Financial Assistance application will need to be renewed if required.
- You must have applied for financial support before or at the same time as applying for any of our instrumental or vocal activity, joining an ensemble, attending one of our Music Centres or before requesting the hire of an instrument.
- Financial support cannot be retrospectively applied for previous terms lessons within an academic year.
- It is necessary to re-apply for financial assistance at the end of the summer term in readiness for the new academic year when you are changing Key Stage. Existing recipients of the scheme who need to renew will be contacted directly via email.
- Continuing eligibility is subject to satisfactory attendance and continued musical progress.
- Financial assistance is subject to funding availability so please note that applying for Financial Assistance does not guarantee financial support will be provided.
- Essex Music Service operates a waiting list once all available funding is fully allocated.

## Eligibility Criteria and Application Process

All applicants who believe that they qualify for Financial Assistance need to tick the box while completing their application for any of our provision. We will then liaise with internal teams to confirm your eligibility. We will then follow one of two approaches:

### Level 1 – Automatically provided

Financial support will be awarded automatically for young people in receipt of any of the following benefits:

- Children and Young people eligible for Free School Meals (Year 3 or above)
- Young people who receive Pupil Premium funding support (evidence provided by school)
- Young people who have received Pupil Premium funding support in the last 3 years. (evidence provided by school)

Where we have the internal evidence to award financial support, we will confirm this in email and all future invoices will be reduced by the correct amount as set out below.

Where we do not have the internal evidence to automatically award Financial Assistance, applicants will receive an email requesting further information to complete our means testing process.

### Level 2 – Means tested

Financial support is awarded for parents/guardians in receipt of any of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit or any other benefit detailed below where Universal Credit is not in place
  - Child Tax Credit– providing that you receive more than the basic £545.34 per annum (excluding any childcare element)
  - Housing Benefit
  - Council Tax Support (not including second adult rebate)
  - Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance
  - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
  - Working Tax Credit
  - Income support
- Incapacity Benefit
- Pension Credit

Where the joint household income is less than £24,000, financial support will be offered.

To receive funding through the means testing process, we need to receive copies (images) of documentation from an official source outlining the benefits received by the applicant, for example a Universal Credit Monthly Award notice. This must be dated within the last 12 months.

Successful applicants will receive financial support in the following ways:

- 66% reduction on in-school tuition fees
- 66% reduction on fees at Community Music Centres (1 x package only)
- 50% reduction on instrument hire scheme termly rental fees
- 66% reduction on fees for County Music Groups workshops, courses and tours
- 50% reduction for Band-It! small group Rock and Pop tuition fees and small group Learn It Together Beginner lessons

## **Look After/Post-Looked After Children**

Thanks to generous financial support provided from Essex Virtual School, we are also able to offer all Looked After and Post Looked After Children in Essex support to access our instrumental and vocal provision and to hire an instrument.

Once Financial Assistance is awarded for LAC, this continues until the child is 18. There is an online application process, including the submission of our short application form (and subject to approval from Essex Music Service), for students in the following situations:

- Looked After Children (LAC).
- Children subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO).
- Children subject to a Child Arrangement Order (CAO).
- Children adopted from care.

**Carers, social workers or teachers may apply on a young person's behalf.**

Successful applicants can then access the following provision:

- free individual or small group (10 weeks x 15mins per week per child per term) tuition in Essex schools with a Music Service tutor; or
- free individual or small group lessons (10 weeks x 15mins per week per child per term) tuition in one of our Essex Music Schools; or
- free Essex Music Service Community Music Centre lesson package, run out of school hours during evenings or Saturday mornings,
- free instrument hire (deposits are not discounted, but the delivery of the instrument to school would be free of charge)
- free membership of County Music Groups including attendance at workshops, courses and tours

**Please note:**

For extra lesson time beyond 15 mins, and lessons on an additional instrument will be charged at the 66% discounted rate.

**Key Dates**

Applications can be made at any point during the year and is subject to availability. Below are the key dates for activity for those who apply for lessons and are seeking to receive our financial assistance.

**Summer term 1:**

- Summer term lessons begin for all who have requested lessons
- Notice period emails will be sent to inform us should you wish lessons to cease
- All current recipients of Financial Assistance will be emailed to confirm their current end date.

**Summer term 2:**

- Invoices will be sent out for the autumn term with payment needed before the start of next term.
- Lessons will cease at the end of this term for all who gave notice by the half-term period, and the discount provision will be awarded to another young person.
- Applications will open for the next academic year.

**Autumn term 1:**

- Autumn term lessons begin for all who have requested lessons
- Notice period emails will be sent to inform us should you wish lessons to cease

**Autumn term 2:**

- Invoices will be sent out for the spring term with payment needed before the start of next term.
- Lessons will cease at the end of this term for all who gave notice by the half-term period, and the discount provision will be awarded to another young person.

**Spring term 1:**

- Spring term lessons begin
- Notice period emails will be sent to inform us should you wish lessons to cease

**Spring term 2:**

- Invoices will be sent out for the summer term with payment needed before the start of next term.
- Lessons will cease at the end of this term for all who gave notice by the half-term period, and the discount provision will be awarded to another young person.

Should you have any questions regarding our Financial Assistance provision, please contact us directly on [musichub@essex.gov.uk](mailto:musichub@essex.gov.uk)

This information is issued by:  
Essex County Council

Contact us:  
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