

Essex Music Service **A Parent's Guide to Music Provision**

September 2023

Supported using public funding by



Congratulations on choosing music for your child!

Why music? Music can transform lives and improve the personal, social, academic, musical and wellbeing development of all young people.

As leading music organisation Music Mark outlines, Music:

boosts improvement

improves learning skills

fosters team working

builds life skills

underpins better behaviour

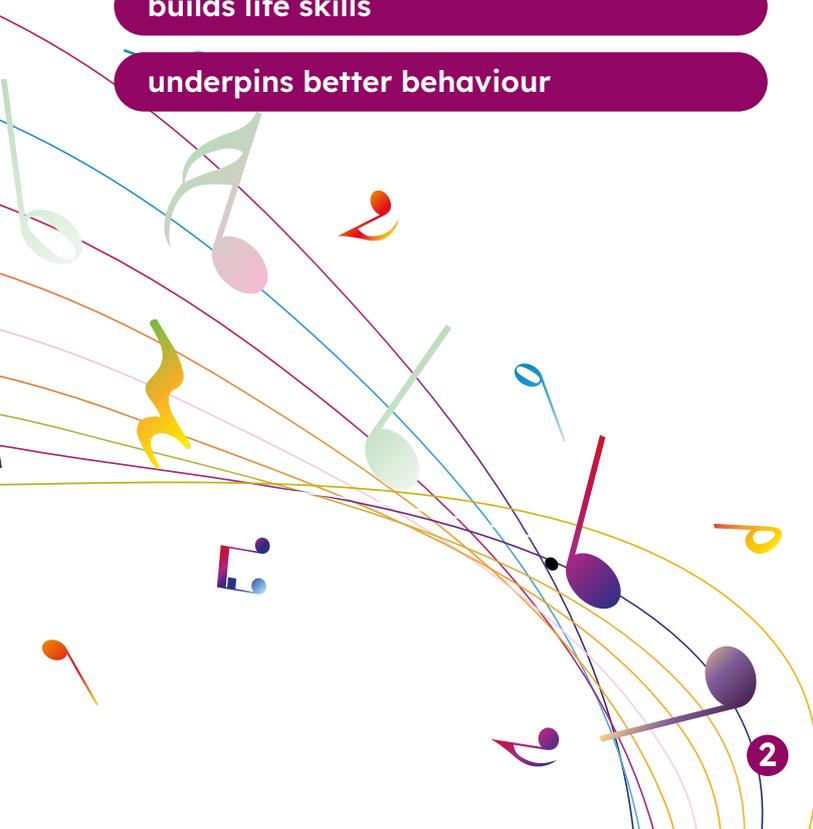
encourages creativity

is for life

is an educational building block

is fun

is for everyone



What are the costs?

Consider not just of weekly tuition, but of the instrument (we offer an **instrument hire** service), potential exams, and ferrying your child to and from tuition or events if learning or performing outside of school.

To see our current prices, please visit our **website** and choose either in-school or local music under the 'Parents' drop down menu.

We also offer financial assistance for low income families, in receipt of Free School Meals or for Looked After Children. Further details are available by clicking **here**.

Starting music lessons with Essex Music Service



Our lessons

We offer ten lessons per term on a weekly basis with provision continuing into the next term until we receive a parental request to cease tuition.

This is the same for the music provision in both our schools and our community music venues.

For beginners, depending on the set up in your child's school or local Essex community music venue, we can offer lessons in a small group of beginners so that your child gets to start their journey with their friends and classmates – this is cheaper, is more informal, and often you'll find each student motivated to practise so that they are better than their classmates!

If starting with group lessons, there will come a point where the progress of each child starts to accelerate differently, and we'd then suggest moving to individual lessons.

If starting with a 1-to-1 individual lessons, we offer a minimum of 15 minutes per week, with 20, 30 and 60 minute lesson options also available.

When your child passes the 'beginner' stage and is more confident, we'd suggest increasing that to 30 minutes so as to have the greatest opportunity to develop their instrumental skills, as well as their general musicianship.

Booking your lessons

It is likely that you are already in a school or have found a community music venue that offers lessons – you can follow the link given to book your child's lessons directly. If not, on our [website](#) you'll see a button marked 'Parents' which will give you a drop down menu including in-school and out-of-school tuition options.

Making music in school

Details of our in-school tuition, including costs and links to our instrument hire scheme and financial assistance scheme, are available by clicking [here](#).

For schools, if you haven't been given a direct link, you can find your school on our SpeedAdmin system page by clicking [here](#).





Making music near you

For our Community Music Centres and Essex Music Schools, you'll find your nearest out-of-school hours venue on our website by clicking [here](#).

Once you have found the right venue for your child, click the 'Register your interest' button, which will take you to our registration page on the SpeedAdmin system.

Lesson content

Your child's lesson will consist of technical exercises to develop their brain, their physical skills, and muscle memory.

It will also include looking at a range of repertoire chosen to be enjoyable and pitched slightly higher than the child's standard so that they have somewhere to aim for.

Some parents want an exam-focused learning method (through graded exams such as with the ABRSM, Trinity College London, or Rock School) that has a given progress structure, with an exam that scores the child's progress and marks it with a certificate.

Some parents don't want to have an exam-focused method, and focus on particular styles or enjoyment of the instrument without that formal examination style.

In both cases we encourage parents to communicate with the tutor as to your expectations of what the lesson content will be.

You may have none, in which they can help give some options, or you may be very clear about your desires - what's most important is that you form part of the conversation in your child's learning, and are both supported by our staff



Who will teach my child?

We have a team of over 200 experienced specialist music tutors

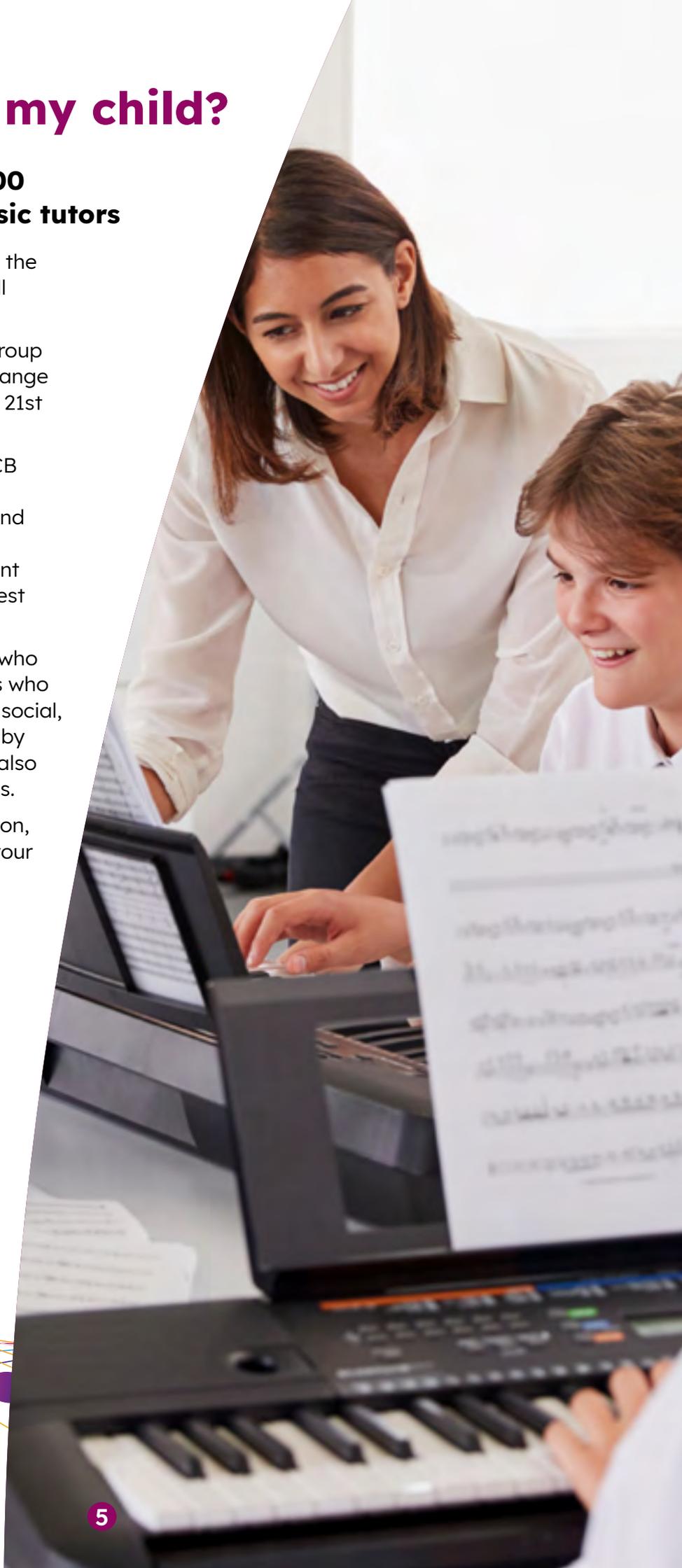
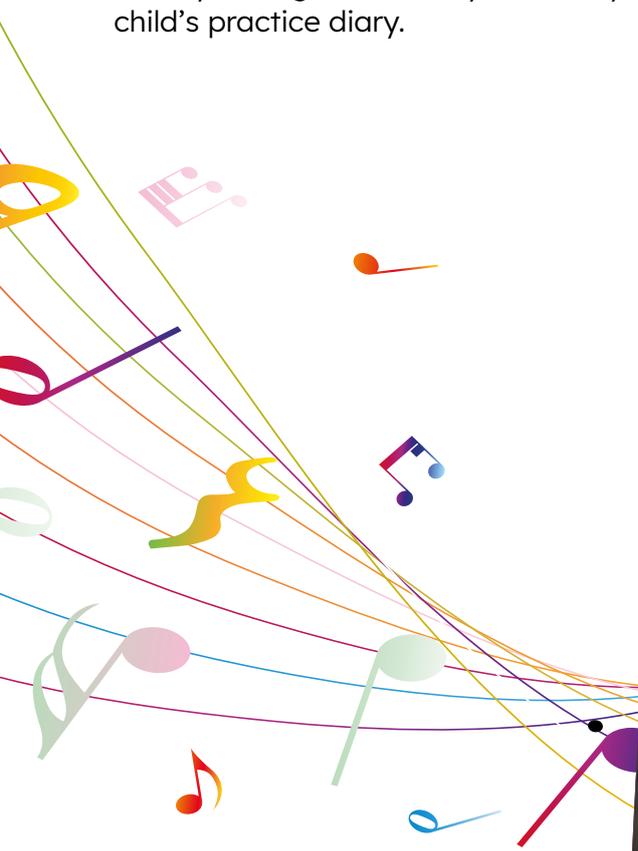
Our tutors tailor each lesson to meet the needs, aspirations and interests of all young people.

Lessons can be on an individual or group basis (see below), delivering a wide range of instruments, genres and styles for 21st Century students.

Our tutors are all covered by the ESCB Level 2 safeguarding training, yearly support and development training, and regular quality assurance as part of our ongoing support and development programme for staff to ensure the best provision for your child.

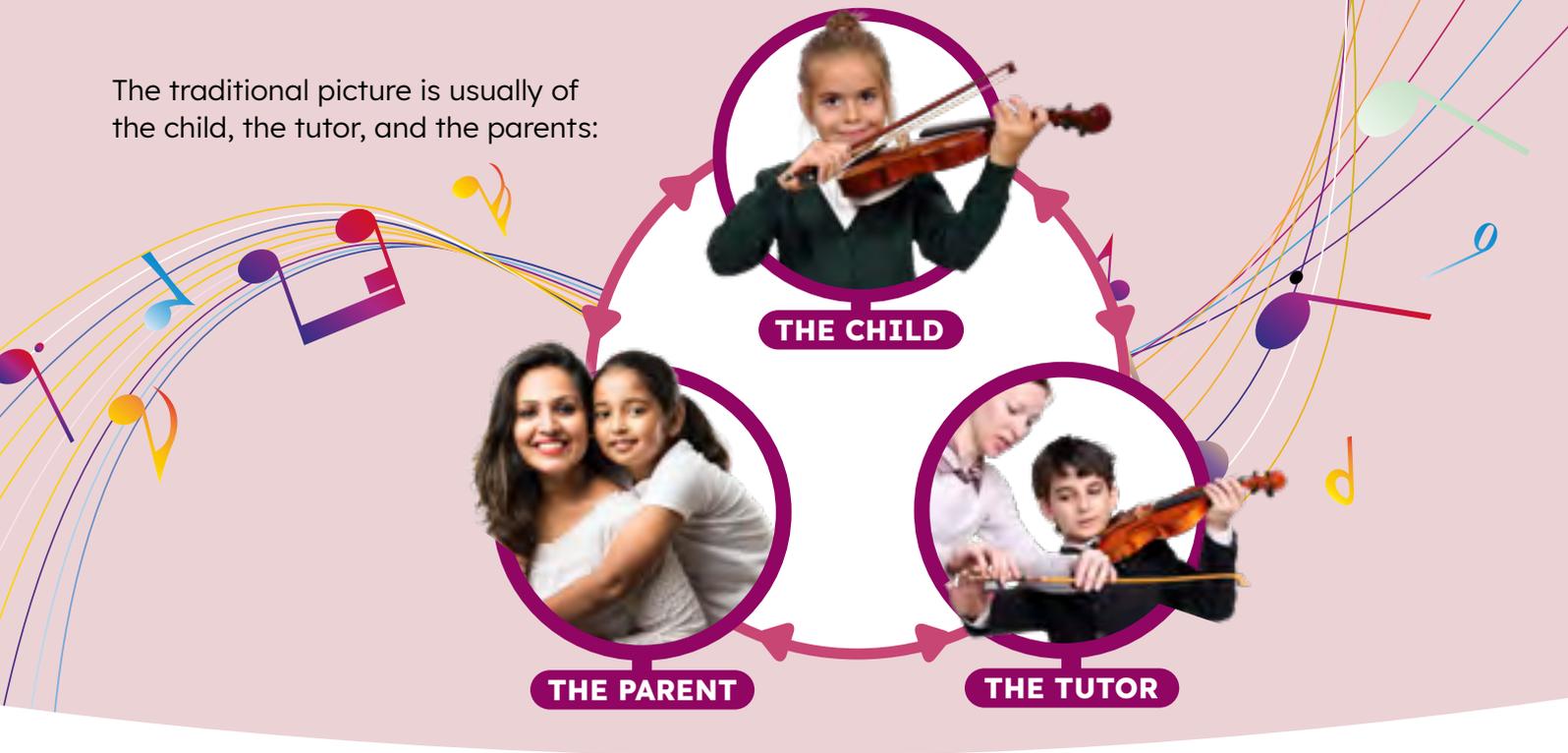
We pride ourselves on having tutors who first and foremost act as role models who are invested in your child's personal, social, academic and musical development by being fair, flexible, enthusiastic, and also sensitive to your child and their needs.

You can expect regular communication, usually through the weekly notes in your child's practice diary.

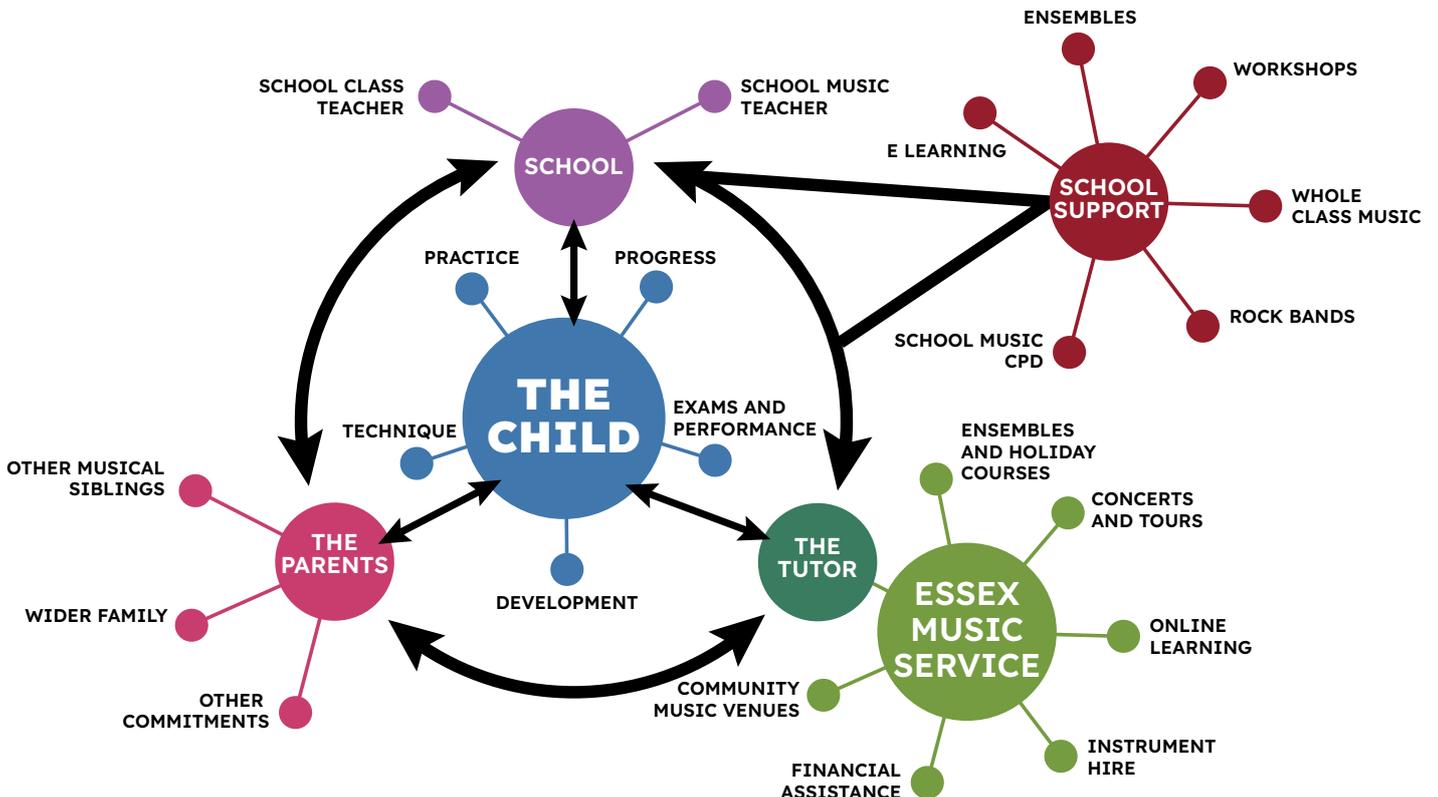


Who is involved in my child's musical development?

The traditional picture is usually of the child, the tutor, and the parents:



In the 21st Century this is a more complex model, and shows just how many people are involved in your child's musical development. Essex Music Service goes beyond just your child's tuition with their tutor, and here you can see the fuller picture of how we support young people, schools and their communities:



How can I help my child practise?

There are a lot of skills your child will be learning, including holding a new instrument, developing fingering positions, making a controlled sound, using music notation, using new keywords, and usually all at the same time – they will need you to be supportive, patient, and interested in their progress.

Some practical considerations to consider

Where will your child practise?

They'll need a quiet space, away from distractions and others where they can focus and make a noise.

Having a full length mirror is helpful so that they can really see their posture and movements.

When should my child practise?

You know your child best, so will know whether a fixed spot in their daily routine works, perhaps first thing in the morning away from the pressures of homework.

Some children can be protective of their 'free' time – time that isn't study or practice, so if there are fifteen minutes of unexpected time (such as "dinner is going to take a little longer to get ready, so why don't you do your practice now?").

How long should my child practise for?

Every music teacher will say 'little and often' – you're trying to encourage muscle memory and development in the brain, so it's not something that can be 'binged'.

Not every child will remember to practise, so may require a gentle encouraging nudge.

What does good practice look like?

Check the practice diary notes from your child's teacher as a starting point.

Ask your child what they find tricky, and encourage them to spend more time on developing that skill than playing through a piece without pausing.

Use the warm-up and technical exercises used by the teacher which will help your child's muscle and brain development.

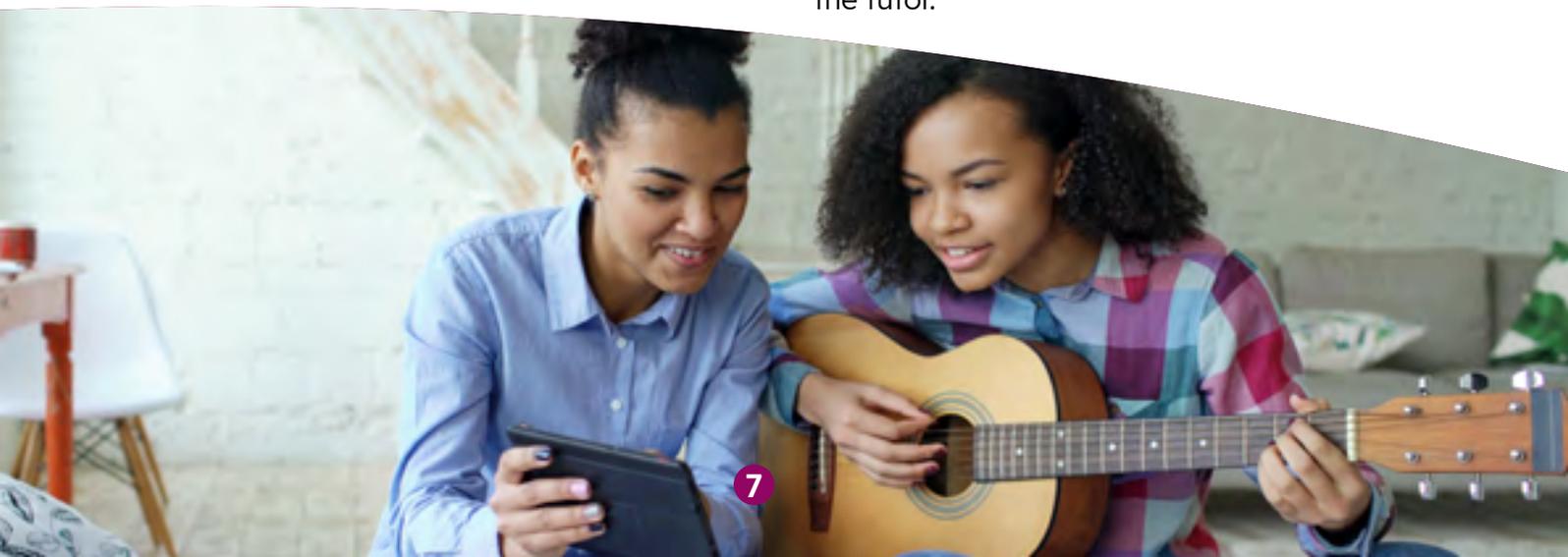
Once they're getting more advanced, avoid the child always starting from the beginning of the piece – start in longer sections from the end building back to the beginning.

How should I best support my child?

We would advise parents who are musical to be patient and be careful of making comparisons and demands as to your own development as a child.

For parents without a musical background, don't be afraid, and be interested – ask questions and get your child to explain what they are learning and doing so that you are involved in their progress and development.

You have trusted your child's musical development to the tutor, so use their guidance, and ask for their advice – ask them questions, follow up on any guidance, and if you don't understand what they're asking, ask your child if they can explain it, or go back to the tutor.



Tips for parents

Some general tips to encourage good practice

Be available

Be interested so that they have an adult at home who can be supportive and understanding

Give positive feedback, even for small developments

Be prepared and honest that a lot of progress will take time

Practical things to try:

'What did you study in your lesson? Can you show me?'

'What was the best thing in today's lesson? Can you show me?'

'Can you change the volume of the piece – let's play it loud, let's play it as quietly as possible!'

'How much do you think you can play from memory or with your eyes closed?'

'How slowly can you play the piece?' (because they will usually try to play it as quickly as possible without needing to be asked!)

Encourage creativity

What does the music they're learning make them think of – is it a story, a painting, something they've seen – broaden their learning outside of the piece to really embed it in their thinking and practice.

Some general tips to avoid

Practice is not a punishment

Don't force it otherwise it will become a negative experience for the child.

Being demanding or insensitive

Learning a new instrument is difficult, and each person learns in a different way – it may be that your way of learning is different to theirs, so learn with them.

Focusing on negatives or making negative comments

Praise what is being achieved – if the sound isn't great, focus on the technique, or 'I like that piece', 'that sounds better than it did yesterday'.

Children will get things wrong

Try a calm, supportive response – try saying 'Try again – let me hear you try it note by note and let's see what we can build together'

Making music outside of the music lesson

We firmly believe that Music is better when we make it with others.

That can be in a group, ensemble, or just performing to others.

At Essex Music Service we run a number of opportunities for our young people to come together in our community music centres, in joint-district groups, in masterclasses and workshops, and in our county level orchestras, choirs and groups.

Join our Community Music Centre:

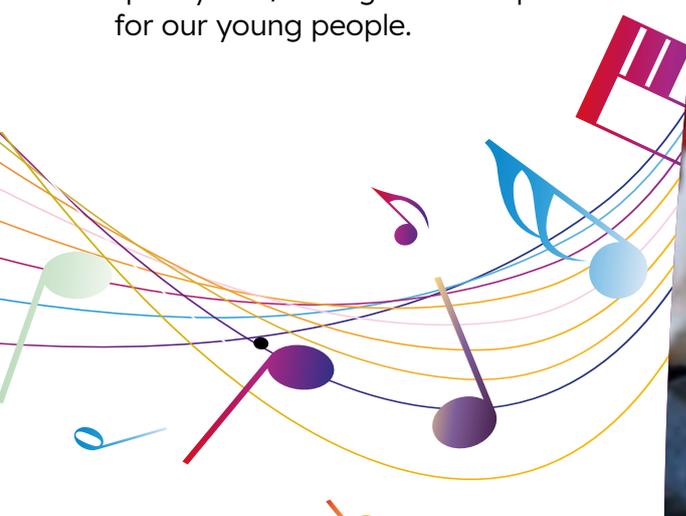
Outside of your 1-to-1 lesson, don't forget we offer ensemble opportunities to make music with other students of all ages and abilities - click [here](#) to find your local venue!

Join our Ensembles:

If you're looking for something more, why not look at joining one of our county level ensembles, bringing together students from across Essex to make music - click [here](#) to find your ensemble.

Beyond Essex Music Service:

We also work with a large number of partner organisations, as the lead organisation in Essex Music Hub, to provide a wide range of opportunities for beginners, intermediate and advanced musicians as part of high-quality and/or large-scale experiences for our young people.



This information is issued by:
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Published August 2023