



Congratulations on your child's interest in learning to play a musical instrument!

This information has been developed to assist you make the right decisions when purchasing a quality instrument.

When looking to purchase an instrument for your child, there are two options to consider. You can:

- purchase a new instrument outright;
- purchase a second-hand instrument; or
- investigate purchase plans or rental programs.

Always consult the instrumental music teacher before making a decision.

Purchasing a new instrument

- There is a range of brands available on the market, with some retailers acting as agents for specific brands. Keep in mind that you can always upgrade instruments when your child is more advanced and that a student model is ideal for starting out.
- The best place to start is by checking the local music shops. It is important to shop around and compare brands, models and prices. Once you have found a suitable instrument, compare prices on that brand and model to make sure you have the most competitive price.
- Ask for the student price.
- Look for shops that offer a trial period – this will allow your child to play the instrument to make sure it is suited to him/her. If not, it can be returned or exchanged as part of this service.
- Enquire about the warranty and clarify if arrangements can be made for the maintenance and repair of your new instrument if required.
- Instruments hold value well if they have been carefully looked after and serviced when necessary.

Purchasing a second-hand instrument

- Check that the instrument has been serviced regularly before you purchase it and whether it is under warranty. This will save you from constant repairs and adjustments.
- The best places to find second-hand instruments are online marketplaces and music stores. Alternatively you could check with your local school to see if any older students are trading up to a more advanced instrument.
- Play the instrument first to see how it feels and sounds.
- Stick to a well known brand when buying a second-hand instrument.
- The rule of thumb when purchasing a second-hand instrument is that it should cost between one-third and one-half of the retail price of a new instrument, depending on age and condition.
- Instruments that are in poor condition are likely to cost you more in the long run. Check out shops that offer advisory services which will look at the condition of the instrument for you and advise of any repairs that may need to be done.
- Make sure you have access to a reputable and reliable repair service for your instrument.
- When using internet sites to purchase an instrument, parents should be aware that the instrument may be of inferior quality. The lack of warranty protection is also an important consideration when purchasing online.



Purchasing a musical instrument

A guide for first time buyers

STRINGS
(Violin, Viola and Cello)



Purchase plans or rental programs

- Some music retailers will provide you with a purchase plan to allow you to pay for an instrument over a period of time.
- It is possible to rent an instrument, particularly if it is only required over an interim period.
- Make a few telephone calls to get the best comparison of conditions and costs of either purchase plans or rental programs.

Once you have your instrument

Once you have a musical instrument for your child it is recommended you organise instrument insurance and make sure your child knows how to care for their instrument. It is also essential you record the instrument's serial number if present.

During music class, the teacher will advise students what they need to do to keep their instrument in top condition and will let parents know if servicing or maintenance is required. If you have any queries, please contact your child's teacher.

What to look for in a quality student violin, viola or cello

Instrument

- The body of the instrument must be neat and solid, with no cracks or open seams.
- Ensure the strings are not a poor quality with broken winding.
- The bridge should be well fitting and conforming to the curve or finger board. It should not be warped.
- Pegs should be well fitting and not slipping.
- The fine tuners should be long enough and the screw should be easy to turn and not be bent.
- The cello end pin should be long enough and the screw holds should tighten easily.
- The tone quality should not be muffled, should be even throughout the range and should be responsive.
- There is a wide range of brands and models available, and prices vary. If in doubt, always wait until you can consult with your child's teacher.

Bow

- The wood of the bow should have a good arch and be straight and not bent.
- There should be a good amount of hair and it should be tidy, not loose at the tip or frog.
- The frog should allow easy movement and not be too stiff or loose.
- The screw should be easy to turn and your child should be able to loosen or tighten the hair.

Cases and bags

- The bag should not be too big or small for the instrument.
- The material/outer cover should be durable with no open seams. Padded cello cases are better than canvas.
- Hinges and zippers should both close properly and hold well.
- The compartments and bow holders should be well fastened and not weak.

What size do I need?

Your child's teacher will advise you on the correct size of instrument. If you are unsure, please ask again.

An instrument that is too large will be uncomfortable for your child, damaging playing technique and causing muscle strain. Keep in mind you can always upsize as your child grows.

Violas come in 11 inch to 15 inch sizes with the smaller models more suitable as a first instrument. The actual size of cellos may vary depending on the country of origin.

The information in this guide has been prepared by Instrumental Music School Services to assist in purchasing a musical instrument for your child. No recommendations are made for a particular supplier or brand of instrument.

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