



## 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;
- purchase a second-hand instrument.

You will get the best performance from a new instrument, however if you are considering purchasing, or planning to use a pre-owned instrument, please carefully read the information in this brochure and consult your child's teacher.

### **Purchasing a new instrument**

- There is a range of brands available on the market, with some retailers acting as agents for specific brands.
- 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.
- 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.

### **Purchasing a second-hand instrument**

- Check that the instrument has been well cared for and is in good condition.
- 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 term.
- When using internet sites to purchase an instrument, parents should be aware that the instrument may be of inferior quality and not suitable for IMSS students. The lack of warranty protection is also an important consideration when purchasing online.

*Purchasing a musical instrument*

*A guide for first time buyers*

**CLASSICAL GUITAR**



## What to look for in a quality student classical guitar

- When looking at a classical guitar for your child, check for construction quality including the neatness of the joints, quality of the finish and woods used. The body of the instrument must be neat and solid, with no cracks or open seams.
- A classical guitar has six nylon strings, three wound in metal and three are see-through.
- Steel string guitars are not suitable. Steel string guitars cannot be strung with nylon strings.
- The guitar should be full size, not three-quarter or smaller.
- The minimum standard should be a solid timber instrument with a solid cedar or spruce top. This instrument will retain its value and last your child for many years.
- The cheaper guitars are usually made of wood-pulp. These are often identified by their colours (red, green, blue, pink etc.)
- Common problems with these guitars are that they are difficult or even impossible to tune; difficult to play; do not last as long and have poor tone quality. They will also not be suitable for secondary school should your child wish to continue learning in the IMSS program.
- Folk, jazz or electric guitars are not suitable for classical guitar lessons.

Prices can vary widely, depending on the brand and model. Based on our experience we have found the following brands to be reputable; Yamaha, Esteve, Cordoba, Katoh and Alhambra.

However, this is not an exhaustive list and you may find other brands to be of a similar quality. If in doubt, always wait until you can consult with your child's teacher.

## 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.

Guitars should have the strings replaced at least once a semester.



Other requirements for classical guitar lessons:

- A classical guitar footstool. Metal is best.
- Guitar tutor book. Your child's teacher will advise which book to purchase. A new book will be required for each year of learning.
- A good quality guitar case.
- A music stand.
- Spare, good quality, nylon classical guitar strings.

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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