



FALKNER HOUSE
LONDON

Falkner House Music Notes

2025 - 2026



Boys

20 Penywern Road, London SW5 9SU

Girls

19 Brechin Place, London SW7 4QB



Music Notes

Music is a key part of life at Falkner House. Class music allows for all children to have one (Years 4 – 6) or two (Nursery – Year 3) lessons per week. The class music curriculum covers singing, percussion, composition, aural training and preparation for shows and the carol concert. The individual music programme allows children from Year 1 onwards, to learn an instrument at school. Falkner House has a team of visiting specialist peripatetic musicians who give pupils individual music lessons during the school day on a rotational basis. The older children have priority in terms of not missing key academic subjects, but every effort is made to look at each individually so as to ensure that the inevitable compromises are kept to a minimum. Children will only learn one instrument in school, though a second could be started after the conclusion of the secondary school exams in Year 6.

It takes maturity for a child to cope with the discipline of coming in and out of lessons as well as the requirements of daily practice and parents are asked to take advice in advance, from their child's form teacher as regards the timing of starting an instrument. If in doubt it is better to postpone! We are always happy to discuss the options available in terms of which teachers have capacity to take on a pupil and which instrument would be best. Your child may also have strong views and indeed learning an instrument should not be "imposed". To help in the choice, towards the end of Reception, trial lessons are offered on all instruments.

Parental Involvement

Whatever the instrument, parental involvement is key. Not only is daily practice essential but intelligent support of practice is also crucial. Instruments and music also have to be in the right place at the right time! Regularity of practice is more important than time (one hour's practice the day before the lesson achieves little). Your child may need extra tuition/help at home, especially before an exam or performance. We would be more than happy to recommend a "FH approved" tutor who will work under the guidance of the school music teacher. It may also be possible that the school teacher can help at home.

Lesson Fees

Lessons are charged on a termly basis (in arrears). The intention is for there to be 10 lessons per term and/or 30 lessons per year. Please see the details of costs in the fees section. If there have been less than ten lessons in a term on account of school trips, pupil illness, external examinations, etc. every effort is made to "catch up" potentially in a subsequent term but this is not guaranteed. If it is possible to give additional lessons then parents will be asked as to whether they would like this to happen – each additional lesson would be charged on a pro-rata basis.



Trial Periods

We have found it very helpful when starting an instrument for children to have a trial period of five lessons. At that point, if you would like your child either to change or stop learning an instrument you would not be charged for any further lessons. Subsequent to that, a term's notice of cancellation is required before giving up or changing instruments, to avoid fees being charged in lieu. If, however, there is a waiting list for the instrument, the notice requirement may be waived.

Contacting Music Teachers

Parents will have direct contact with their child's individual music teacher to liaise about lessons, practice, etc. Each child's musical progress is analysed and discussed on a regular basis. The music staff are happy to discuss the appropriate size and quality of instrument as well as the hire or purchase options (see below). Any music books required will be ordered by the music teacher with the cost being included in the subsequent term's invoice.

Performances

Children have plenty of opportunities to perform. We have regular assemblies a week, mini concerts and formal/evening concerts. Our piano teacher will always be available to accompany and you will be emailed in good time so that, hopefully, parents and family can join the audience. This should not be seen as a "performance"; instead, an opportunity to play in front of a very supportive group of friends. Details are found on the school website Fixtures Calendar. We also run two string orchestras (junior and senior) and two choirs which meet once a week, and children are invited to join one of these when deemed appropriate. These are charged for on a termly basis. Punctuality is important for the pre-school groups and children must arrive before 8.00 am to allow time to tune all the instruments.

Many Falkner House pupils are selected for the Junior Departments of the Royal College of Music, Royal Academy of Music, Guildhall School and the National Children's Orchestra, and we are proud of their success.

ABRSM Grade Exams

Children are entered, as appropriate and if desired, for ABRSM grade examinations sat at Falkner House – please see **Music Exam guide**.



Purchase or Rental of Instruments

String Instruments

For string instruments it is recommended that you rent anything up to and including quarter size; from half size onwards, it makes more sense to purchase. When moving up a size, some shops (like Stringers) will allow you to offset at least some of the cost of the new instrument against the cost of the old one. Second hand instruments are often better than new ones and they tend to be cheaper.

In all rental or purchase and buy back arrangements, parents need to set up a contract and pay the outlet themselves. Parents should insure all instruments and label everything including bows, cases, etc.

Violin, viola and cello

Stringers of London

www.stringersmusic.com

99 Lisson Grove

London

NW1 6UP

020 7224 9099.

Ian, the shop manager, is very helpful as is Maureen- they know Mr Andrei and Falkner House very well!

Guitar

1/2 sized classical nylon string guitars are perfect beginner instruments for Y1-Y4

3/4 sized are good from Y3-Y6

www.londonguitarstudio.com

Best quality budget option: Valencia 12

More expensive option: rodrigo-12-480mm

Footrest: essential for good posture, black footstool model 14670

Case

A good case with a pocket for music is quite important. It is nice to add a keyring or ribbon to them so the pupils can tell them apart. E.g. Classical cover basic size 12



Wind Instruments

Recorder

Yamaha is a good choice for beginner instruments, they have great intonation and make a good sound for their price e.g. Yamaha YRS 32B Descant Recorder, Baroque Fingering System. A cleaning rod is also required.

Flute

Yamaha is a good choice for beginner instruments, they are well made and will probably take you a little further than the Jupiter and Trevor James models. However, this comes at a slightly steeper price.

Clarinet

The beginner Buffet Crampon instruments are good quality instruments (B12 will get you further than a cheaper model). Jupiter makes cheaper though slightly less good quality instruments.

Reeds

Rico Orange or Vandoren blue strength 1 1/2

Saxophone

All children will start with the alto saxophone and Yamaha, Trevor James and John Packer brands are recommended. The Yamahas are usually a little more expensive, but they are a good brand from beginners all the way up.

Slings/harness: should not be too long or short - the mouthpiece should be guided straight towards the mouth: the student shouldn't have to move towards the mouthpiece.

Mouthpieces: Selmer mouthpieces C*/C** are of a good standard - try a couple of each out and see what works best. The Yamaha 4c is also an option and Yamaha instruments usually come with a mouthpiece.

Reeds: Rico Orange or Vandoren Blue strength 2



Kensington Chimes Music (for recorders only)

www.chimesmusic.com

9 Harrington Road

London SW7 3ES

020 7589 9054

Howarth of London

Excellent for the purchase of B flat clarinets (the standard instrument) and a trusted place for repairs.

Call the repair department in advance to discuss the problem and to make a booking.

www.howarth.uk.com

31 Chiltern Street

London W1U 7PN

020 7935 2407

Wood, Wind & Reed

Good for Amati C clarinets and Elkhart C clarinets, (sometimes used in the initial stages by young players who cannot reach the keys of the more usual B flat clarinet). Options for buy back when ready to move on to the B flat clarinet.

www.wwr.co.uk

106 Russell Street

Cambridge CB2 1HU

01223 500442

John Packer Ltd

www.johnpacker.co.uk

141 Staplegrove Road

Taunton Somerset TA2 6AF

01823 282386

Useful for John Packer C clarinet and simplified C clarinet hire and purchase which can be useful on a temporary basis for young players with small hands.

All Flutes Plus

www.allflutesplus.com

afp@allflutesplus.com

6 Northampton Street

London N1 2HY

020 7388 8438



Reeds Direct Cambridge

Rapid delivery of reeds
0800 0969 440

Piano

All children learning the piano need to have a piano at home. The piano can be a keyboard so long as it is full-range (88 keys) with fully weighted keys.

Chappell of Bond Street

www.chappell-bond-st.co.uk
152-160 Wardour Street
London W1F 8YA
020 7432 4400

Jacques Samuel Pianos

www.jspianos.com
142 Edgware Road
London W2 2DZ
020 7723 8818

Electric pianos

The best and longest lasting electric pianos are Yamaha Clavinova P90 or Yamaha Auris.



Suggested Concerts, Workshops and Courses

Child-friendly Concerts: In the afternoon and at the weekend

Please check Southbank Centre, Cadogan Hall, Barbican, Royal College of Music and Royal Academy of Music websites, searching for “family events”. We will also notify parents if we hear of future suitable events.

Orchestra Courses : Christmas, Easter or Summer

Stringwise

Non-auditioned 4 day holiday course for children aged 6-14 including orchestra, chamber music, singing, games and instrument technique www.stringwise.com

National Children’s Orchestra of Great Britain (NCO)

Audition-based orchestra course for children aged 8-14 offering in-person coaching with incredible tutors, musicians and conductors, as well as performing opportunities for different orchestras within the organisation www.nco.org.uk

Dulwich Youth Orchestra (DYO)

Music course in South London (JAGS) involving different orchestras meeting every morning for a 5 day course during the holiday www.dyodulwich.com

London Youth Conservatoire

Saturday orchestra, ensemble and choir course based in Parsons Green www.londonyouthconservatoire.org.uk

South London Youth Orchestra (SLYO)

Orchestra course meeting 3 times a year during school holidays at JAGS, offering coaching and performing opportunities

Stoneleigh Youth Orchestra

Meeting in Wimbledon every Sunday (term-time) and performing 3 times a year www.stoneleighyouthorchestra.org.uk

Choir Workshop: Easter

The Junior Choral Course, choir, all ages thejuniorchoralcourse.co.uk