



FALKNER HOUSE
LONDON

Music Notes Falkner House

2026 - 2027



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 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 one 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. There is also the possibility of having instrumental lessons before or after school. For pupils in Years 4 – 6, instrumental lessons will not be scheduled during core academic subjects. For pupils in other year groups, every effort will also be made to avoid core academic subjects, with each pupil considered individually to ensure that any inevitable compromises are kept to a minimum.

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!

At the beginning of the Summer Term in Reception, parents are invited to a music meeting, in which instrumental choices, performing opportunities and ensemble playing will be discussed. Teacher capacity and maintaining a balanced range of instruments across the school are also important factors in any decision. Your child may also have strong views and, indeed, learning an instrument should not be "imposed".

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 standard termly fee covers 10 lessons per term. However, as school terms will ordinarily extend beyond 10 weeks, lessons will generally continue on a weekly basis throughout the remainder of the term, unless parents expressly request that lessons be limited to the standard 10-lesson provision. Any additional lessons will be charged on a pro-rata basis.



Every effort will be made to deliver the full number of lessons for which a pupil is scheduled. Where, due to school trips, teacher absence, timetable clashes, or other circumstances, fewer than 10 lessons are delivered in a term, parents will be charged only for the lessons actually provided, with any corresponding adjustment reflected in the following term's invoice.

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. Please note that if you would like your child to stop learning an instrument for the autumn term you would need to give notice before the start of the summer term in April.

Contacting Music Teachers and Sourcing an Instrument

Parents will have direct contact with their child's individual music teacher to discuss lessons, practice, and other aspects of their child's musical development. Each child's progress will be monitored and discussed regularly. Music staff will advise on the appropriate size of instrument, where applicable, and will also provide guidance on sourcing a suitable instrument, including hire and purchase options (see below). Any music books or music material required will be ordered by the music teacher, with the cost included on the following term's invoice.

Performances

Children have plenty of opportunities to perform solo throughout the year, including in assemblies held several times each week, Mini Concerts and formal evening concerts. We believe in giving children the opportunity to perform from an early age, and often, after just 10 lessons, children in Year 1 will already have the chance to present a short piece to an audience. Our school pianists are always available to accompany pupils, and parents will be invited by email in good time so that, hopefully, parents and family members can join the audience.

In addition to solo performance, there are wider opportunities for children to perform as part of a group, including chamber groups and orchestras.

Chamber Music and Ensembles

We offer a range of ensemble opportunities for children, including chamber groups, string orchestras, wind bands and choirs. Chamber groups are offered at no additional charge and are typically scheduled during lunch breaks, while our orchestras, wind bands and choirs are charged for on a termly basis. Children will be invited to join an ensemble when their teacher feels they are ready. For example, after just one term, our string players may join the Mini String Orchestra.



Punctuality is particularly important for our pre-school groups. Children must arrive before 8.00am to allow sufficient time for all instruments to be tuned before the class begins.

Many Falkner House pupils are selected for the Junior Departments of the Royal College of Music, Royal Academy of Music and Guildhall School, as well as for the National Children's Orchestra. Our pupils have also successfully auditioned for music scholarships at secondary schools and have been prize winners in competitions in the UK and abroad. We are very proud of their achievements and the high level of musical development they demonstrate.

ABRSM Grade Exams

Falkner House organises private visits for ABRSM examinations, which are typically held on the last Saturday of each term at 19 Brechin Place. Children may be entered for these examinations, where appropriate and if desired, in consultation with their music teacher. Please see the Music Exam Guide for further information.

Purchase or Rental of Instruments

String Instruments

For string instruments, we recommend renting wherever possible, particularly while children are progressing through the smaller instrument sizes. Renting provides the simplest arrangement, as the rental contract continues as the child grows and, when they are ready to move to a larger instrument, the existing instrument can simply be exchanged for the next size.

For violins, there are two rental options. One of our peripatetic teachers has violins available for rental and can be contacted through the school, offering the convenience of having the instrument prepared and exchanged for the next size when required, without the need to visit a shop. The cost is the same as renting directly from Stringers Music Shop.

Alternatively, violins can be rented directly from Stringers Music Shop. From half size onwards, Stringers offers instruments for purchase rather than rental. Stringers also operates a buy-back scheme, whereby approximately 50% of the original purchase price of an existing instrument may be offered as credit towards the purchase of the next-sized instrument.

For violas and cellos, rental is available through Stringers Music Shop. When children are ready to move to a larger size, the instrument can be exchanged as they progress.

Where an instrument is purchased, second-hand instruments can often offer very good quality and may be more economical than buying new.



For all rental and purchase arrangements, parents are responsible for setting up the contract and making payment directly to the relevant provider. All instruments should be insured, and parents should ensure that the instrument, bow, case and other accessories are clearly labelled.

Violin, viola and cello

Stringers of London

The shop manager, Ian, is very helpful and he knows Mr Andrei and Falkner House very well!

www.stringersmusic.com

99 Lisson Grove London NW1 6UP 020 7224 9099.

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 e.g. Classical Cover basic size 12. It is nice to add a keyring or ribbon to them so the pupils can tell them apart.

Recorder

These are generally ordered through school from Chimes music shop, but another option would be 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.

All Flutes Plus

www.allflutesplus.com

afp@allflutesplus.com

6 Northampton Street, London, N1 2HY

020 7388 8438



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.

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.howarthlondon.com

31 Chiltern Street, London, W1U 7PN

020 7935 2407

Woodwind & Reed

Great for Amati and Elkhart C clarinets; these are used in the initial stages of learning by young players who cannot reach the keys of the more usual B flat clarinet. There are options for buy back when moving to a B flat clarinet.

www.wwr.co.uk

106 Russell Street, Cambridge, CB2 1HU

01223 500 442

John Packer Ltd

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.

www.johnpacker.co.uk

Summerfield Avenue, Chelston Business Park, Wellington, Somerset, TA21 9JF

01823 282 386

Reeds

Reeds Direct Cambridge

Rico Orange or Vandoren blue strength 1 1/2 for clarinet, and Rico Orange or Vandoren blue strength 2 for saxophone.

www.reeds-direct.co.uk

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.

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

Chappell of Bond Street

www.chappell-bond-st.com

152-160 Wardour Street, London, W1F 8YA

202 7432 4400

Jacques Samuel Pianos

www.jspianos.com

142 Edgware Road, London, W2 2DZ

020 7723 8818