**** South West Music

Regional Conservatorium

# STUDENT INFORMATION HANDBOOK

Revised January 2016

Version 1

*To promote, foster and develop the playing, learning, appreciation and availability of music through out the region*

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## 1.Tuition

South West Music Regional Conservatorium provides quality music education and the opportunity for students to learn an instrument, develop their performance, and participate in ensembles. Music is a fundamental part of every culture and is an activity that can unite a community. Students are offered individual lessons but are also encouraged to participate in group lessons, ensemble or band lessons and rehearsals.

## 2.Teachers and Staff

Music teachers enrolled with SWMRC have appropriate teaching qualifications. SWMRC Board is responsible for ensuring the quality of tuition.

All music teachers engaged by SWMRC are required to provide evidence of the Working With Children Check and Police Check. They are also required to attend annual training updates as directed by the organisation. All staff and teachers are mandatory reporters under the provisions of the NSW Children and Young Persons (Child Protection) Act 1998.

## 3.Student Concerts

SWMRC will ensure that there are regular performance opportunities for its students each year, ensuring that all students are given fair and equitable access to these opportunities. Regular student recitals are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 6:15PM. Students are also encouraged to perform at community functions, including Deni Club Muso Night, which occurs on the 1st Friday of every month.

Some students will also be invited to perform at the annual SWMRC Christmas Concert, which is held on the first Sunday in December.

## 4.Examinations

Students may be invited, by their teacher to enter for examinations (e.g. AMEB, ANZCA, RCMAC), eisteddfods or competitions. Examinations should be a positive learning experience and we encourage students and parents to use them as feedback on how well the student is doing. The Conservatorium is also working towards a Music Accreditation Certificate (RCMAC) that will allow internal assessments to be carried out.

## 5.Visiting Performers

SWMRC, with the assistance of the DEC in collaboration with South West Arts organise an annual professional concert series in Deniliquin and the region. We encourage our students to attend live music performances as often as possible as these experiences are an important part of their music education. Some of the performers generously offer time for workshops and master classes.

## 6.Early Childhood Music

The Conservatorium offers early childhood music classes in the form of introductory piano in a group environment, as well as fun activities for children of certain ages and skills, such as the Young Musicians Club.

## 7.Video Conference Lessons

Some students are studying an instrument for which there are no teachers locally. SWMRC in partnership with other regional conservatoriums is able to deliver lessons via videoconferencing. This is a very effective method of lesson delivery and is usually supplemented by some face-to-face component. It is also an effective way to eliminate vast distances that willing parents must travel in order to receive quality music education.

## 8.Enrolment

All students/parents/guardians engaged in SWM services must complete and sign an enrolment form before tuition can commence. Any change of address or circumstance must be conveyed to the Administrator as soon as possible. An invoice for the coming term will then be issued and once payment has been received the lessons will commence.

Information about the student's learning needs is shared as required with the teacher and with the approval of the student/parent/guardian.

## 9.Tuition in Schools

Student tuition in schools is only possible with a close working arrangement between the school (administration and teachers), parents and the music teacher.

Music classes are scheduled at regular times and these can clash with excursions, sports days or other events in the school calendar. Parents are requested to keep the music teacher informed of absences from music class due to changes to the school timetable and program.

South West Music teachers will ask for a copy of the schools newsletter each time they attend so they can be as informed as possible.

South West Music strongly supports lessons in school time so that students who live out of town and students whose parents work long hours can have the opportunity to learn.

## 10.Students'/Parents' Rights and Responsibilities

Parents and students should not hesitate to seek clarification of practice expectations and student progress.

Parents and students should ensure that student absences are communicated to the teacher at least 24 hours in advance, as a matter of courtesy. A make up lesson should be negotiated with the teacher. The teacher is not obliged to conduct a make up lesson in the case of a student absence where notice has not been advised.

It is the responsibility of the students/parent to ensure that the student arrives at the designated time and leaves promptly at the conclusion of the lesson.

Students under 18 years of age must wait inside the building until collected by the parent.

Parents and students should ensure that books, diaries and instruments are brought to the lesson.

Students should follow recommendations for daily practice.

Parents and students should read newsletters or other communications from the Conservatorium.

Parents/Students should familiarise themselves with the SWM Enrolment Terms and Conditions and follow the correct enrolment procedure.

Parents/Students should ensure payment of fees is made by the due date.

Teachers and students have a right to be free from bullying and harassment.

Students who are taught in schools are expected to adhere to normal school rules and disciplinary expectations.

Students should be encouraged to wash their hands before lessons and not come to the lesson if they are sick or infectious.

## 11.Student Absences

It is SWMRC policy not to offer make up lessons or refunds for lessons missed by the student, where no notification has been tendered. If the absence is due to a family holiday, protracted illness or a debilitating injury then the student/parent must contact the SWM office immediately. In these cases the Director may use his/her discretion to approve a credit.

## 12.Teacher Absences

Students are eligible for a make up lesson when the teacher is absent for any reason. It is the teacher's responsibility to directly advise the parent/student that they will be absent and no supervision will be provided. The teacher must provide at least 2 opportunities to organise a mutually convenient time to schedule a make up lesson. If the student declines these 2 separate occasions then the make up lesson will be forfeited.

All make up lessons need to be completed prior to the commencement of the following term, where practicable.

## 13.Behaviour During Lessons

Students will behave politely and display appropriate care for their instrument in lessons. If the student is behaving inappropriately the teacher may terminate a lesson at any time and inform the director who will contact the parent immediately. The enrolment of a student whose behaviour is unacceptable may be terminated.

## 14. After School Lessons

Music teachers will not leave the South West Music complex if there is a student under 18 years of age that has not been collected by his or her parents. Children will not be permitted to wait outside the building. Parents are welcome to wait and collect their children from inside the building.

## 15.Practice

Each teacher will have a method for recording what practice the student needs to do each week and what equipment or books they need to bring. It is helpful if parents can take the time to listen to practice at home and be encouraging. Mistakes are part of learning; practice builds the skills and muscle memory so that the mistakes become fewer.

Playing an instrument and singing should be fun and students should be encouraged not to just do their practice but to do it and have some exploration and fun time.

Teachers will have all sorts of ideas and techniques that are right for the age of the student to keep the fun happening and to encourage the student to do the technical and challenging parts of learning and performing music.

If there are any problems with practice time, talk with the teacher. If practice starts being a struggle, something is wrong and it is best to talk with the teacher and let him or her know.

## 16.Withdrawing from Lessons

When a student decides to cease lessons, three weeks notice must be provided to the Office Administrator. If a student withdraws from lessons during a term with the appropriate notice, a refund will be given for lessons not received.

No refunds will be given when a student withdraws from group or ensemble lessons.

The Director may use their discretion to approve a credit where a protracted illness or debilitating injury occurs and is supported by a medical certificate.

## 17.Fees

In order to secure the financial stability of the SWM Regional Conservatorium, all students must pay for arranged lessons in advance of lesson commencement and by the due date. Where an account is outstanding, lessons may not recommence until full payment has been received.

An administration fee is charged to each family each term.

Where an account is unpaid the student's position on the timetable may be forfeited.

Please contact the Administration Officer immediately if you have any difficulties in paying your invoice. The Administration Officer has the discretion to arrange payment plans for individual lessons where there is serious financial hardship. Payment Plans cannot be offered for group tuition of ensembles.

## 18.Instrument Hire

SWM offers a small range of instruments for hire. Please see the Administration Officer for availability, cost and the process for hiring instruments.

## 19.Photocopying, Scanning or Reprinting Music

Copyright laws are strict. Only music teachers are permitted to use the photocopier and they do so in full knowledge of Copyright requirements.

## 20.Photography and Publicity

You will be asked to give permission for the student to be photographed so that South West Music can celebrate student achievements and promote events like student concerts. The permission form is part of the enrolment process and is therefore updated each year.

## 21.Communication and Feedback

South West Music appreciates feedback and ideas from parents and students. Communication is key to achieving successful music education programs. SWMRC works hard at communicating with students and parents through regular personal and telephone contact, the quarterly Newsletter, email, our website and the newspaper.

## 22.Complaints

If a student or parent thinks something has happened which is unfair or unreasonable that is “a complaint”. When you have a complaint we need to know about it and the ways to get your complaint resolved are:

1. Talk directly with the teacher or staff member involved and state that you have a complaint.
2. If the matter is not resolved immediately the teacher or staff member will report to the Director who will contact you within seven days. The Director will listen and seek to resolve the matter. They will write to you and attempt to resolve the issue.
3. Where the complaint involves the Director then this should be forwarded to the Chairperson of the Board

## 23.South West Music History

South West Music Inc, (now SWMRC) was established in 1984. It is a not for profit organisation whose aim is to provide accessible, quality tuition to the people of isolated rural communities in south-western NSW.

SWMRC provides students with access to a network of musicians and musical activities throughout the region. These include community orchestras and public performances and with the support of local organisations and businesses, South West Music will arrange visiting artists to provide concerts in the region.

South West Music activities are made possible through the assistance of the NSW Department of Education, as well as it’s generous sponsors. South West Music Regional Conservatorium is a member of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatorium.

*South West Music Inc is a registered charity and all donations are tax deductible.*

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