



Abbey Gate College

July 2022

Dear parents

The final message of this term is from Mr Andrews, our Head of Music, who writes to share some exciting news for our new Year 7 pupils!

“Whilst not wishing to while away the summer holidays before they have even started, I am certainly looking forward to September. After several months of discussions and planning, I am delighted to now be in a position where I can launch a fabulous initiative for our new Year 7 cohort. Starting within the first few weeks of the autumn term, we are thrilled to offer an instrumental lesson trial scheme; whereby each individual member of Year 7 will receive 6 weeks of free tuition on an instrument of their choice. The instruments offered are the full range of orchestral instruments and are provided by the College, at no cost, for a whole term. I am immensely grateful for the generosity and good will of our College’s ‘Founders’ Fund’, which is making this brilliant provision possible.

And this is not just about music. While musicians often create beautiful sounds for our ears, they are also benefiting an important part of their own bodies: their brains. Extensive research has shown that not only does playing a musical instrument increase blood flow in your brain, but it also contributes to an enhancement in brain development and long-term memory abilities. Playing a musical instrument requires a person to employ a high-working memory load, which helps to expand our working memory capacity. This, in turn, leads to improvements in overall cognitive abilities.

And there’s more. In 1956, educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom created a now widely used model and classification of educational learning objectives relating to how children learn. Music education and performing allows children to develop their higher order thinking skills, frequently having to use their knowledge to create; whilst simultaneously evaluating and analysing their performance. This continual self-evaluation and appraisal, alongside the regular practice of music and learning from mistakes over and over again, aid in intellectual development by creating a powerful foundation for a variety of different and readily transferable skills.

As a final plus, children can become more involved in collective groups with their peers, such as concert bands or orchestra. Because of the numerous hours of practice, events, and trips, many pupils form friendships with students in other year groups, and friendships which began as a common bond of the enjoyment of creating music often turn into much more longer-lasting relationships.

If you have never had the chance to experience something, you may not know that you may love it. I can only hope that our new initiative may provide an unexpected inspiration for some of our pupils to engage with something creative and challenging, which they may otherwise not have done.

I will share more details in due course, but we thought it would be good to head into the holidays with fresh news of another exciting development at Abbey Gate College.”

Wishing all of our families a safe and enjoyable summer break.

With thanks for all of your wonderful support throughout the year.

Craig Jenkinson
Head