



20 July 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: GCSE Music 2018/2019

As the Head of Music at Icknield Community College, and your son/daughter's Music Teacher for Years 10 and 11, I am writing to share the content of the course with you, as well as some ideas for how you might be able to further support your child as the academic year progresses.

**This year, students will need to have completed their first composition, their solo performance and at least two past papers. You will receive a copy of their marks and their predicted grades.**

### How is the GCSE structured?

Units	What does it include?	How much is it worth?
Coursework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Two compositions (one free, one set to a brief by Edexcel)</li><li>• Two performances (one solo, one group)</li></ul>	<b>60%</b> of the GCSE
Exam (1 hr 45 minute)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 written exam comprising of listening and analysis tests based on 8 set works. (See below for details).</li></ul>	<b>40%</b> of the GCSE

### Some Important dates for your Diary

**Thursday 22 November** – All students to take part in a GCSE Music solo performance recital which will be recorded. No extensions can be given.

**Monday 14 January 2019** – Edexcel Exam Question Paper given to all students

**Monday 25 June 2019** – Edexcel Exam Question Paper given to all students

**Monday 25 March 2019** – Complete first draft of Composition 1 due. No extensions can be given.

**Monday 29 April 2019** - Feedback and provisional marks given for Composition 1

**Monday 20 May 2019** – Final draft of Composition 1 due. No extensions can be given.

### What work should my son/daughter be doing at the moment?

#### **Performance (30%)**

Students should be practising their instrument regularly and working on solo pieces. If at all possible, please support your child to take instrumental lessons as these have been shown to hugely benefit their marks at GCSE. Students should keep a practice diary to ensure they stay on track. Marks are given for expression and technique, so students should be mindful of these as they play.

## **Composition 30%**

Students should enjoy improvising their own music, either on their instrument or on music software, such as Garageband or Logic Pro. Students are encouraged to keep a record of their ideas.

Students are welcome to use our practice rooms and computer suite during breaktimes.

## **Listening and Analysis 40%**

Students will be studying the following set works:

**Beethoven** Pathetique Sonata, first movement.

**Bach:** Brandenburg Concerto no.5, Movement 3

**Purcell** 'Music for a while'

**Queen** 'Killer Queen'

**Schwartz** 'Defying Gravity' from Wicked

**Williams:** Star Wars Main Title Rebel/Blockade Runner

**Afro Celt Sound System** 'Release'

**Esperanza Spalding:** Samba em Preludio

Students are encouraged to make a playlist of these works and get to know them through listening. Going to see these works performed live is an absolute winner if possible! Wider reading can help enormously too.

## **What resources will help my son/daughter excel in music lessons?**

### **Set Work Guide**

Students are encouraged to purchase the following guide to the set works, which we use in lessons. (£14.99)

<https://www.whsmith.co.uk/products/new-gcse-music-edexcel-complete-revision--practice-with-audio-cd---for-the-grade-9-1-course/9781782946151>

### **Theory workbook Grades 1-5**

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/First-Steps-Music-Theory-Grades/dp/1860960901/ref=sr\\_1\\_fkmr0\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1531405325&sr=1-1-fkmr0&keywords=abrsm+theory+grades+1-5+workbook](https://www.amazon.co.uk/First-Steps-Music-Theory-Grades/dp/1860960901/ref=sr_1_fkmr0_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1531405325&sr=1-1-fkmr0&keywords=abrsm+theory+grades+1-5+workbook) (£4.91)

Students who have free school meals at school will have these purchased for them.

### **Stationery**

**Students should come to ALL lessons equipped with:**

Highlighters

Pencils

A rubber and a ruler

Coloured pens (for colour coded analysis work)

## **How can I help my son/daughter?**

### **Ask questions**

Talk to them about how they getting on with the tasks for composition and performance. Sometimes just talking will help them to manage their time and iron out any problems they might be having with priorities or ways forward. Take time to listen to them play and give them encouragement.

### **Homework**

Please check in with Show My Homework and progress sheets to see what they have been working on in class and what they should be doing at home. Encourage your son/daughter to work steadily and regularly rather than for hours and hours occasionally. This way they will retain confidence as the year progresses.

### **Be prepared for all lessons**

Please do make a point of finding out when their Music lessons are in the week and encourage them to check that they have all their work with them for each lesson. Students often waste valuable lesson time because they have left work at home.

### **Research opportunities**

Depending on the direction your son/daughter takes for their compositions and performance choices, they would really benefit from your ability to support/enable an independent visit to widen their musical experience. For example, this might be to listen to a band at a local venue, attending a concert or a trip to the West End to see a show. These experiences add a great deal to their work. Even listening to Classic FM or Radio 3 occasionally and talking about the music will help their listening work.

## **What more could they do?**

I am always available for advice and support at every break and lunchtime. In addition, you can make an appointment with me to discuss your child's progress. Your son/daughter can access and use the Music Department facilities and materials every breaktime and lunchtime and should be joining me for the **GCSE theory support club** every **Wednesday at 1.30pm** where possible.

I hope that you have found this letter helpful and that you will enjoy being part of your son/daughter's Music GCSE as the year progresses. I feel that an open channel between home and school is the most supportive way to help your son/daughter work towards achieving their GCSE potential. If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to email or give me a call.

I look forward to meeting you at Parents' Evening.

Yours faithfully



Ms A de Sybel  
Head of Music