



FOREST SCHOOL

11+ Music Scholarships at Forest School

Frequently asked questions

How do I register?

When you register your interest in Forest there is a box to tick on the form to indicate that you would like your child to be considered for a Music scholarship. You will then be contacted by the Admissions office who will ask you to complete a form giving information about the musical details of your son/daughter. The auditions will take place over three days in early January – the 10th, 11th and 12th of January.

The Music Department will schedule the applicants and contact you to let you know when the audition will be – you will be able to indicate if any of the days are impossible for you on the application form and we will try wherever possible to match those preferences.

What can be awarded? What is the difference between an Exhibition and a Scholarship?

There are two types of awards: Exhibitions and Scholarship. An Exhibition is a monetary award that pays for the cost of instrumental or vocal tuition. It is equal to the cost of thirty lessons each of forty-minutes duration at the school rate i.e. one year of tuition. Exhibitions can be used for tuition with Forest music teachers and with external music teachers. However, if an external teacher costs more, the School will not pay any more than the Exhibition value. Pupils may hold more than one Exhibition. When an Exhibition is awarded it is given for the entire school career of the pupil.

Scholarship is remission from fees. We can award up to a maximum of 20% remission. Some candidates will be offered both Scholarship and Exhibition(s), some just Scholarship, and some only Exhibitions.

How many places are available?

There is not a fixed number of places for Music Scholarships. The Director of Music makes recommendations after the audition process. If no candidates meet the standard no offers will be made; if there are many strong candidates, then a panel of senior staff will decide how to divide up the offers.

Can I combine Scholarships, and can that extend beyond the 20% limit?

Scholarship awards can be combined. Many pupils have, for example, both Academic and Music Scholarship awards. However, the total combined award cannot extend above 20% remission.

What happens at the audition?

The audition will last between 15 to 25 minutes depending on how many instruments are offered and at what level. The Director of Music will schedule an appropriate amount of time according to the information given on the application form. Before the audition the candidate will be able to warm-up and briefly rehearse with the accompanist (if required). In the audition, the candidate will perform any accompanied pieces first, then any unaccompanied pieces, then will be given some aural tests and sight-reading. We will start these tests at a level equal to the last grade passed (or equivalent level) and then increase the level of difficulty depending on how the candidate reacts to the tests.

What grade does my child have to be?

This is really the wrong question to be asking. Better would be what musical skills and qualities are you looking for? To deal with the thorny issue of grades first: most of the big offers go to candidates who are already playing at a level beyond Grade 5 ABRSM. Many offers are made to candidates who are between Grades 3 and 5 but this is *dependent on many factors*.

There are no hard and fast rules about what grade is required – what we are looking for is evidence of musicianship and performances that are clearly the outcome of high-quality focused practice. The length of time a candidate has been learning is also an important factor, as is the instrument offered – some instruments are much harder to play than others.

Furthermore, we are looking carefully at how the candidates react to the tests in the audition, especially aural and sight-reading tests; it is not necessarily a case of getting things right first time, but a matter of how the candidate responds to coaching, questioning and mistakes that may happen in those tests.

What if my child doesn't do graded exams?

That is fine. We would simply need an indication of the equivalent level at which they are playing. This can be supplied by their instrumental/vocal teacher. We also request references from these teachers. For candidates who do not take graded exams, we would want to ensure that going forward they were receiving the correct technical guidance as a part of carefully planned programme of study, such as is provided by the various musical examination boards.

What is a principal study? What if I don't know? Is singing an instrument?

The application form asks for first (or principal) instrument, then also second and third. The first study will usually be the instrument that the candidate has been learning for the longest time. There is no necessity to offer more than one instrument, although most candidates offer two. Singing is considered an instrument and can be the principal study. If you are unsure which instrument is the principal study don't worry, just list them in either order.

How many pieces to play?

At audition the candidate should play two pieces on the principal study and one on any other instruments. If they feel they have a joint principal study, they could prepare two pieces on each. However, at the audition we may indicate to the candidate that we will stop them during the performance if the pieces are long – this never means we do not like what we are hearing! It just means we need to keep the auditions moving forward so we stay on schedule.

Do I need to use accompaniment? Can I use backing tracks?

If a piece requires accompaniment it should be performed with that accompaniment. Backing tracks are often used for drum-kit, pop vocals etc. and that is fine. Backing tracks should be brought on CD and/or a device with an minijack audio port (i.e. 1/8th inch jack – not Apple proprietary port).

Are there any instruments you don't consider?

Not really! We are open-minded. It is fair to say that our offering of tuition at Forest is mainly based around orchestral and band instruments; this includes electric guitar and bass, drum-kit and vocal studies in both classical and musical theatre/rock and pop styles. We have made awards to Hindustani and Carnatic instrumentalists and vocalists, folk musicians, and given awards for composition and song writing.

What is required of a Music Scholar?

We ask our Music Scholars and Exhibition holders to participate in at least two musical ensembles (although most of them are in more!) The successful candidates will be the ones who love music and are working hard - we just want them to keep doing that. By doing so and participating in the musical life of the School, they will be our leading lights, setting an example of enthusiasm, curiosity and dedication to the many other Forest pupils who are musicians but not award holders.

What is your best advice for preparation for the audition?

Listen to the advice of your instrumental/vocal teacher(s)! Play pieces that you know very well and enjoy playing. Do not try to play anything that is not ready, unprepared, half-done, or too difficult. By playing or singing pieces that you know and enjoy you will be able to show musicality. That means, the music will come to life, will be nuanced and expressive. Practice everyday but for a short-time and with focus; use a

metronome and set it to a slow tempo to ensure you learn the notes correctly; don't constantly do run-throughs but focus on the bits that need work.

Be honest when we ask you questions about music and what you are listening to – there are no trick questions in the audition, we just want to find out more about what makes you tick as a musician!

I don't want to put my son/daughter under too much pressure – what should I do?

We want to make the audition process as positive and welcoming as possible. We appreciate that the pupils will be nervous, but we will do what we can to put them at ease and give them encouragement. Ultimately, the decision to go for an award must be taken between you and your son/daughter. To gain advice about whether your child should apply you can arrange a pre-audition with the Director of Music.

What is a pre-audition? How can I arrange one?

During the Michaelmas term the Director of Music can meet with prospective candidates and their parents, subject to times being available. Candidates can visit Forest for a short pre-audition where the Director of Music and perhaps other specialist music staff will hear the candidate play in the presence of their parents and give them advice about whether they should be applying.

To arrange a pre-audition please contact

Mr James Bennett

Music Administrator

music@forest.org.uk

Tel: 020 8509 4988

When will we find out if we have been successful?

All the correspondence dealing with offers is sent during February half-term. Should you have any other questions or need more information please contact the Music Department using music@forest.org.uk



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