



ROYAL

COLLEGE

OF MUSIC

London

JUNIOR DEPARTMENT PUPIL/PARENT HANDBOOK 2026-27

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WELCOME TO THE RCM JUNIOR DEPARTMENT

Welcome to RCMJD. The Royal College of Music (of which you are now an important member) is one of the finest music education institutions in the world: a place of enthusiasm, enjoyment and opportunity. The RCM Junior Department is a place and a community of people where we hope you will feel happy and fulfilled, both as a musician and as a person. If this is ever not the case, we want to know. So, please always communicate with us because that is the best way of working together to achieve great things.

This handbook is designed to give you an introduction to Saturdays at RCMJD – starting with getting here and how to find your way around on a Saturday, then moving on to more musical matters such as where you sit in orchestra and what musicianship classes are about. We hope it will answer many of the questions you may have as you begin your journey as an RCMJD student and let you know how things work here, as well as what to do if you are unhappy or concerned about something. If there is anything you're still unsure about, just ask.

PARENT POINT – What are these boxes?

You will see boxes similar to this one at various points throughout this handbook. The information contained within these boxes is generally aimed at parents, however it might also be of interest to some of our older students.

All this information (as well as all our Regulations, Policies and Procedures and a host of other useful documents throughout the year) is available on our web pages specially designed for you, our students, here:

www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/rcmjdcurentstudents/

It's a good idea to save this link to your phone, tablet and/or on your computer so you always know where to find the information you need.

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The following additional documents/details will also be available on our website:

- RCMJD regulations
- RCMJD code of conduct and disciplinary procedure
- RCMJD behavioural policy
- RCM child safeguarding policy
- RCMJD online safety policy statement
- RCMJD absence policy
- RCMJD fire evacuation procedure
- Musicianship curriculum document
- Ensemble guidelines (information for orchestras, choirs & chamber groups)
- List of RCMJD competitions and eligibility criteria
- Guide to the RCM Library and your borrowing rights
- Term dates and concert calendar(s)
- Box Office ticketing arrangements and opening dates/times
- Fees and bursary/financial support information
- Code of fair practice for copying & photocopying music
- Assessment requirements

GETTING HERE AND SECURITY

Students come to RCMJD from all over the country. Our closest tube stations are South Kensington and Gloucester Road, which are both approximately 10 minutes' walk from the RCM. Buses 9, 23, 52 and 452 pass the Royal Albert Hall, whilst the 70 comes along Queen's Gate. The 360 stops directly outside the RCM on Prince Consort Road.

When should I arrive at RCM?

Try to arrive with time to look at the noticeboards and settle yourself – say hello to friends, wash your hands, have a drink of water, go to the toilet etc – before your first timetabled lesson. You will be packing a lot into your day here so your next break might be a few hours away.

What should I bring?

It is best to take as little as possible with you to RCM because you will need to carry everything you bring around with you all day. There is nowhere to leave your belongings as we use every available space. Just make sure you have your instrument and any music you need (clearly labelled with your name and the fact that you are a JD student), pencils and manuscript paper for musicianship classes, and food and drink (or the means to buy it) to last you through the day. The less you can bring, the less there is to lose!

PARENT POINT – Parking & Transport

Parking around the RCM is metered and charged at rates reflecting its central London location. In addition to some on-street parking, spaces in the Imperial College car park (main entrance on Exhibition Road; occasional entrance on Prince Consort Road) are normally available – current hourly rates are published on the Imperial College website (<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/property/travel/car-parking/>). The Imperial College car park is a public car park at weekends so RCMJD does not have exclusive use – the car park authorities can restrict access or close the car park at any time, and this is outside our control.

If you want to drop off/pick up students from outside the RCM you should be aware that may be a Westminster City Council CCTV parking camera in place opposite (and pointing at) the College – according to direct communication from WCC, motorists are permitted to stop on the double yellow lines (NB not the area with zigzag lines directly in front of the RCM, due to its proximity to the pedestrian crossing) to load and unload from private vehicles for a maximum of 20 minutes. Loading and unloading activity must be observed throughout, otherwise a penalty notice/fine may be issued.

If you wish to be put in touch with others who travel to the RCM from your area, in order to explore potential mutual travel arrangements, please contact the JD office. If you travel by public transport, you should keep an eye out (particularly on the tube) for details of engineering works which may affect your journey to RCMJD – you may need to allow extra time for your journey if there are works taking place. The Transport for London website (<https://tfl.gov.uk/>) helps you to plan your journey, gives detailed information about engineering works and also offers an emailing service to let you know in advance of any planned transport disruptions in London.

I play a big/heavy instrument. Is there anywhere I can leave it when I don't need it?

There is no 100% safe place to leave instruments (or any other belongings), but many students find it helpful to leave big/heavy instruments at the back of the Concert Hall and some teachers are willing for students to leave instruments in their teaching rooms. You just need to be aware that wherever you leave anything, it needs not to be a hazard for any other users of the building, and it should be clearly labelled with your name and a contact number. In all situations, your property remains your responsibility, and we can't guarantee its safety.

What do I wear?

Wear what you are most comfortable making great music in – but remember to bring your concert clothes (see page 21 for details of what to wear for concerts) if you have a concert that day! The only thing we ask (as a matter of courtesy to others) is that you don't expose too much – in particular, cellists/bassists/bass-clarinetists should wear longer skirts/trousers.

Do I need a security pass and what if I forget or lose it?

Yes, you need a security/ID pass when you come to RCM; your parents/guardians will need one too, and all teachers and staff also have one. Security passes should be worn on the green lanyard provided at all times. New students and parents will receive their security passes on introductory day (if the appropriate photos have been provided sufficiently far in advance). Student passes provide swipe-access to teaching rooms and other specific controlled areas of the building and must be shown on request.

If you lose your pass or it stops functioning properly, please contact Emily in person or via jd@rcm.ac.uk as soon as possible – please note that if you have mislaid your card, you will usually be expected to pay for the replacement. At present, younger siblings do not need their own security pass but are expected always to remain with parents.

May I bring a friend or extended members of my family to hear me play in Performers' Platform/a competition at the RCMJD?

Yes, but only with prior permission from the RCMJD team. You must let us know by emailing their name(s) to jd@rcm.ac.uk by 1 pm on the preceding Friday so we can add them to the list of people allowed in at the security desk.

Your visitor will need to bring a form of photo ID to prove they are who they say they are, and they will need always to be escorted by someone with an RCMJD parental ID card. They should only use the public toilets in the Britten Theatre Corridor (see page 27 for more information about bathroom facilities).

People coming to ticketed concerts do not need to be on the security list or to bring photo ID as these are public events (tickets available from the RCM Box Office – for more information see the performance opportunities section on pages 21-22).

PARENT POINT – Absences

Please refer to the RCMJD's full Absence Policy, which can be found here:
www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/rcmjdcurentstudents/importantdocuments

We expect all students to attend RCMJD every term-time Saturday (including on end of term make up days if required), and to follow their full programme of musical activities. However, we realise that there might be the odd occasion when they cannot attend, eg owing to an essential school commitment or significant family event.

If a student needs to be absent for anything other than illness, their parent/guardian must submit an absence request, stating the reason for the absence, to the JD office in writing (by emailing jd@rcm.ac.uk) at least 4 weeks in advance of the absence. If absence is approved by the JD team, we will notify teachers, though as a courtesy students/parents should remind them a few days beforehand too. Please note that teachers/tutors cannot provide authorisation for absence.

If a student is ill and can't get here (including on make up days) their parent/guardian must inform the JD office by email (jd@rcm.ac.uk) or phone (020 7591 4334). They should leave a voicemail message explaining the situation if they are unable to speak directly to a member of RCMJD admin staff).

For information regarding partial absences, late arrivals/early departures, and absences for those taking school exams, please see our full Absence Policy (link above).

Whilst teachers will make up lessons (or send in deputies) for any lessons for which they are absent (see page 15 for more information on teacher absence), please note that they are not obliged to make up lessons for which a student is absent.

FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND

As soon as you arrive, the first thing you must do is check the noticeboards in the foyer/public areas. These give important information about each Saturday's events, including any changes to arrangements for teaching locations or rehearsal venues, announcements about orchestral sectional rehearsals etc. They are also our main way of communicating with you on a Saturday; for example if we need to see you to speak with you, we will put a message on the noticeboard asking you to come to the JD office. **You should check the noticeboards every Saturday when you arrive and regularly throughout the day.**

What should I do as soon as I arrive at JD?

Check the noticeboards! If you come to the JD admin team to ask a question to which the answer is on the noticeboards, we will send you back to the noticeboards! The noticeboards can be found in the main RCM foyer until 10am, and then after that at the back of the café, near the Exchange door.

I'm lost! Please help me.

The buildings that make up the Royal College of Music campus can be confusing so if you don't know where you're going or you feel lost, just ask somebody. The chances are that they got lost during their first days here too! When you have been here a year or two, newer students will be asking YOU the way. There's a list of the room abbreviations at the back of this guide (see page 26).

Please may I use the lifts?

Not on your own. Students are only allowed to use the lifts if they are accompanied by an adult or have special permission to do so from a member of JD admin staff.

I've forgotten where I'm supposed to be. What should I do?

Don't worry – there is a copy of everyone's timetable in a folder in the foyer (until 10am) and then in the Exchange so just search in it for your own name and it will tell you the room, teacher and class/lesson you are supposed to be attending. If you need any of it explaining to you, please don't be afraid to ask.

My teacher/lesson isn't in the room I think it's supposed to be in. What's going on?

It's most likely that your teacher is away or unwell, or there has been a room change for your lesson. Either way you should find the answer on the noticeboards. The noticeboards in the foyer/café (depending on the time of day) will tell you if there are any changes to teaching or rehearsal rooms, and there is also an absence list displayed prominently in the foyer (until 10am) or on the door of the Exchange (from 10am) which should tell you if your teacher is absent. If you have checked both places and you are still confused, ask any member of the JD admin team. Please do not presume your lesson is cancelled until you've checked all notices AND asked at the JD office.

Is there an empty room I can practise in please?

Usually there is, yes. Just ask at the JD office and we will give you details of rooms that can be used. Please don't just use any empty room you can see, as we may have other plans for it!

I have lost something. What shall I do?

Think back to where you last had it and retrace your steps. Check all the other places it could be. Is it in your instrument case or music pocket? Is it at the very bottom of your bag? Are you completely sure that you actually brought it with you to JD?! If you are sure it is lost within the RCM campus then visit the RCM's Reception Desk (in the main foyer) and give them as much information as you can about your missing item.

If after a Saturday, you will need to ring the Facilities team on 020 7591 4315 or email them via facilitiesstaff@rcm.ac.uk. It is rare that property lost on a Saturday gets handed into JD staff unless it obviously belongs to a JD student (eg it has a Junior Department sticker on it or is an item of clothing far too small to fit an adult). Please be aware that the RCM buildings are open 7 days a week, but if you contact only the JD team, we are unlikely to be able to respond until the following Tuesday at the earliest.

PARENT POINT – Should I accompany my child to the RCMJD on Saturdays?

We are absolutely delighted to welcome RCMJD parents into the RCM building, and we appreciate that parents of our youngest students may wish to be on close hand for their children. However, we have the following security protocols, to keep everyone safe.

Parents are very welcome to visit the **RCM Café**, the **RCM museum and library**, and to attend Performers' Platform (3pm-5.15pm in the **Performance Hall**). Parents should use the **public toilets only** in the Britten Theatre Corridor, accessed via the Library atrium – they are clearly signposted from the main foyer.

In line with safety protocols in all mainstream schools and music schools, **parents do not** have electronic/immediate access to secure areas of the building, including **teaching corridors or teaching rooms, the Concert Hall and other performance spaces** (except for public concerts/competitions). The RCM café, museum and library will be open to members of the public, so a clear distinction needs to be made between public and private areas of the building for everyone's safety and security.

Parents may enter teaching corridors if:

- a. **they are escorting their child (in Years 1-5) to their music lesson**
Please drop your child off and return to wait in the public areas until their next break/end of their day, when they will come and meet you
- b. **they are attending a Sparks Juniors Pupil & Parent class**
- c. **they are dropping off/picking up a heavy instrument for their child, such as mini-bass or tuba**
Please return to the public areas as soon as the instrument has been dropped off or collected
- d. **they have been invited to attend a lesson by a JD teacher and are escorted by a JD teacher/Sparks Juniors mentor to and from the teaching room**
- e. **their child has a disability/significant SpLD**
Parents of disabled/vulnerable children of any age who need to accompany their children to teaching rooms can apply to access educational spaces on a regular basis if necessary – please contact Emily via jd@rcm.ac.uk to request this access.

Members of the RCMJD admin team will always be available to answer questions from parents/students in the main foyer every Saturday until 10am. After that they will be based in the Exchange which is currently accessible to students only. However, we are still here to help/advise! If parents would like to speak with a member of the JD team, please ring 020 7591 4334, email jd@rcm.ac.uk or approach staff at the RCM main reception desk. We will be very happy to come through to see you as soon as possible, or to make an appointment for you.

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

If you feel happy and healthy you will perform better – not just as a musician but as a person. Therefore, please do try and look after yourself by keeping yourself appropriately supplied with food and drink, taking a moment to stop and relax where possible during your RCMJD day, and not trying to move or lift heavy instruments/furniture in rehearsal rooms, even if you are simply trying to be helpful. If you have any problems with regard to your welfare such as forgetting your lunch, or feeling unwell/upset, please do come and talk to us in the Exchange.

Is there anywhere I can buy food/drink?

Yes. The RCM café is open on Saturdays – default opening hours are 8.30am-4.30pm, with extended opening on most days where there are after-JD events in the Concert Hall. The RCM café accepts most credit/debit cards, and it is also possible to pay via the Neal Street Rewards app, though please be aware that they do not take cash. There are also vending machines in BaRCM (South Building) that can be accessed when lessons are not taking place in this area. You can find water machines/fountains on most floors of the RCM buildings.

Please bear in mind that members of the public attending the museum/library may be present in the café and, whilst there are usually members of JD staff in the café, we cannot supervise students eating lunch in public spaces. The area at the back of the café, near the Exchange door, is reserved from 12pm for use by RCMJD students and staff (NB not parents). If your parents are not at the RCM with you then we recommend you eat your lunch in this space. If you would prefer to eat your lunch in a private space, behind the security doors, please speak with a member of the JD admin team and we will let you know which spaces are available.

May I eat my own food at RCM?

Yes, though we would ask you not to take food or drink into the Concert Hall, Recording Studios, Room S303 (multimedia room) or anywhere else where there are signs indicating that food and/or drink is not allowed.

I have no food and no means to buy any. What should I do?

Please do NOT just go without food. It is most important that you have sufficient food and drink to get you through the day so if, for whatever reason, you haven't got food or the ability to buy it, come to the Exchange and we will help.

I have a break in my timetable. Where can I go/sit?

All students are welcome to make use of the RCM café seating, though we do expect that RCM-related users of the space will give priority to students/teachers who need to eat/drink items they have purchased from the café itself. Between 9am and 1.45pm students are very welcome to use the library as a quiet study/reading space, and there are other various small seating areas throughout the secure areas of the College. Please just remember when holding conversations with your friends that there will be teaching going on in surrounding rooms!

May I go and listen to whatever's going on in the Concert Hall?

Rehearsals in the Concert Hall are closed to parents/the public but open to all students. Please be silent (and turn your mobile phones to silent) and do not bring food or drink into the Concert Hall.

I don't feel very well and/or have had an accident. What should I do?

Whatever you do, don't suffer in silence. Come to the Exchange (or if you are very unwell and can't move, send a friend to the Exchange to tell us where you are) where there are trained members of staff who can assess the situation and phone parents as appropriate, making use of our First Aid and other support facilities if necessary.

PARENT POINT – Medical & Emergency Contact Information

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure the JD office always has up-to-date and complete medical and contact information (including emergency contacts) for students. Students who are less than completely well before starting their journey to RCMJD on a Saturday should be kept at home please (for the benefit of other students and staff, as well as their own) and it is of utmost importance that students have sufficient food and drink (or the means with which to purchase them) for the whole day.

For further information about RCMJD Health and Safety, please see the Junior Department Regulations which you will have signed when you accepted a place here. A copy can be found on our website:

www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/rcmjdcurentstudents/importantdocuments/

What do I do if I hear the fire evacuation alarm ring continuously?

- Leave the building immediately by the nearest exit. This will be signposted by green fire evacuation signs
- Unless you are already in them, please do not use the corridors/walkways between the Blomfield building and the South building – there will be a closer fire exit to you than going through them!
- Close doors behind you
- Do not take anything with you – it will slow you – and others – down
- Do not run or use the lifts
- Try to keep silent so you can hear any orders a member of staff may give you with regards to your safety
- Assemble in the car park in Callendar Road, Imperial College
- If you have limited mobility, use the nearest telephone to dial extension 4315 (or call 020 7591 4315 from your mobile) and alert the reception desk of your location. Move to the nearest corridor to await assistance from the Facilities Staff

What do I do if I discover a fire?

Immediately locate the nearest fire alarm call point and break the glass to press the button. If the fire is small, it should be extinguished using nearby equipment only AFTER sounding the alarm. Powder extinguishers (coloured RED) must not be used for fat-fuelled, petrol or electrical fires. Use fire blankets and CO2 (BLACK) extinguishers for these.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

- Full details of evacuation routes and staff responsibilities can be found on our website (www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/rcmjdcurentstudents/importantdocuments/) and it is expected that all students and parents will familiarise themselves with evacuation routes from their usual timetabled rooms. Fire evacuation procedures are practiced regularly
- Smoking/vaping, alcohol and drugs are strictly prohibited
- The RCM is a community in which students and staff have the right to work, study and use facilities without fear or discrimination
- Allegations of misconduct will be regarded as a serious matter and will be dealt with under formal disciplinary procedures, which are available to view on our website (www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/rcmjdcurentstudents/importantdocuments/)
- 'Misconduct' includes a failure to obey the Junior Department's Policies or Regulations, behaviour that upsets or is disrespectful to other students or staff, damage to or taking property that is not your own, and behaviour that lowers the reputation of the College

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE UNHAPPY OR UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT SOMETHING

The RCM Junior Department is a place and a community of people where we hope you will feel happy and fulfilled, both as a musician and as a person. However, we also realise that studying at a high level can come with challenges that you may not be able to manage alone. For instance, you might feel unhappy or frustrated, or that you are being treated unfairly or bullied. Maybe someone is behaving to you in a way that makes you uncomfortable, or you are experiencing problems at home or school that are affecting your studies. Whatever you are concerned or unhappy about, please remember that you don't need to cope alone and there is always someone who you can talk to. Sometimes you may feel as if nobody could help you, or that you yourself are the problem but this is rarely ever true. It is far better that you share your concerns or unhappiness with someone than not telling anyone at all.

Is there a friend who could help?

A friend could help by listening, and maybe making some suggestions of other people you could talk to. They could help by coming with you to talk to an adult if you don't want to talk to an adult on your own.

Is there a teacher or member of Junior Department staff you feel you could talk to?

If you want to talk to an adult, remember that you don't have to do it alone and that you could bring a trusted friend with you if you want to. If you want to speak to any member of the JD team, you don't have to do it in front of everyone else in the Exchange; you can ask if you can speak to them in private.

Would you feel happier talking to someone outside RCMJD about it?

How about your parents, or a trusted school teacher? If you don't feel able to talk to them either, there are organisations you can contact who specialise in listening to and helping young people, including:

Childline: 0800 1111 or www.childline.org.uk/get-support/

Samaritans: 116 123 or www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/

Mind: www.mind.org.uk/for-young-people/

(more information can be found in our dedicated 'What to do if you are unhappy' leaflet, available here: www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/rcmjdcurrenstudents/importantdocuments/)

Have you tried to speak to somebody but felt that they didn't help you and you are still upset?

You can speak, or write if you prefer, to Miranda Francis, Head of Junior Programmes and Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will then make sure that the matter is dealt with appropriately but will always make sure you are comfortable with proceedings. Miranda Francis's contact details are:

Email: miranda.francis@rcm.ac.uk

Telephone: 020 7591 4334

You can also speak or write to Gill Redfern, JD Operations Manager and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. Gill is also a qualified Youth Mental Health First Aider. Gill's contact details are:

Email: gill.redfern@rcm.ac.uk

Telephone: 020 7591 4798

If you feel that the Head of Junior Programmes or JD Operations Manager is involved in what it is you are concerned about then you can speak or write to the RCM Director of Programmes, Diana Salazar:

Email: diana.salazar@rcm.ac.uk

Telephone: 020 7591 4312

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

The RCM supports the principle of freedom of speech and expression within the law. It has regard to the need to ensure that students and staff have freedom to question, test and to put forward new ideas and controversial opinions without placing themselves at risk.

Free speech includes written materials, both physical and digital, and other forms of expression, including social media posts, images, symbols and works of art; it is not limited to the spoken word.

Unlawful speech is not protected, and speech is permitted unless restricted by law.

The College maintains a Code of Practice explaining how we protect and promote Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom, which can be accessed on the RCM website (www.rcm.ac.uk/about/strategies-values/quality-learning-research/). It applies to:

- all staff of the College, and individuals and companies undertaking duties on its behalf, including members of the Council
- all students of the College
- all live and recorded activities, including events, meetings and all education and research activities, that are held, endorsed, organised, funded or branded by the College, or by individuals, groups or societies using the name of the College, or that use College managed spaces or digital platforms, whether or not they involve an external speaker
- visitors speaking at, taking part in and attending events in College-managed spaces or digital platforms

Nothing in this document should be read as undermining or conflicting with the free speech code of practice; in the case of any conflict the free speech code of practice will take precedence.

YOUR INDIVIDUAL LESSONS

Your individual one-to-one lessons are at the heart of your studies here. Our teachers are all experts in their field and have many years of experience in tutoring talented young musicians so you should be guided by them in all aspects of your lessons and practise. There are certain recommendations that we ask you to follow, though if you find that a particular approach is not working for you or you are uncomfortable with it, talk to us about it and we will work to find the best way forward together.

How much practice am I expected to do during the week?

The focus of your studies here are your one-to-one lessons, and we expect that you will work hard in this area during the week. There is no set amount, so be guided by your teachers. Remember, though, that quality is always more important than quantity.

May I make my first and second study instruments joint first study?

This is a big commitment to make, so first talk to your teachers and see what they say. If they agree, you can then ask the Head of Junior Programmes to audition for joint first study. Please bear in mind that we can't always provide chamber music and/or orchestral tuition on both instruments, and that changes can only be made after an audition/assessment process.

Can my parent sit in on my lesson?

If you want your parent/guardian to be there and the teacher agrees to this then yes, of course, but please respect your teacher if they wish for parents not to be present.

May I change teachers?

We have allocated you a teacher who we think best suits you and we hope that this learning relationship will be fulfilling for you. If you feel you need a change of teacher, your first port of call should please be a chat with one of the JD admin team. M holds responsibility for all artistic/musical matters relating to the JD programme, and she will make the final decision regarding teacher allocation.

Will I take grade exams?

We ask that you only take grade exams if/when your teacher suggests that you do, and also that you don't take any exams during your first term with a new teacher. It is also a good idea not to take more than one practical exam per term. We do not hold practical exams here, so your teacher/parent will need to enter you for exams your teacher feels you are ready to take.

What happens if my teacher is away?

Sometimes teachers need to be absent from RCMJD. When this happens, they will either use deputies or make up the missed time on 'make-up day', a Saturday after the last teaching day of most terms. Though the presence of a deputy teacher can be a very positive experience, providing a fresh perspective, the use of deputies will be kept to a minimum, and deputies will be drawn from a list approved by the Head of Junior Programmes. If you are offered a lesson on make-up day but are unavailable to attend the lesson will be no longer owed to you.

In exceptional circumstances, teachers might offer you a digital make up lesson, but only if it is impossible for the lesson to take place in person at RCM. Digital make up lessons can only take place by mutual agreement between teacher/parents; strict safeguarding guidelines exist for digital lessons (see www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/rcmjdcurentstudents/importantdocuments/).

What happens if I am away?

If you are away for any reason, we regret that teachers are not expected to make up your lessons.

YOUR CLASSES & ENSEMBLES

You are here to make music and to develop as a musician and performer. This means learning how to rehearse and perform in a group as well as individually, and gaining the skills required to make the most of the talent you have. As with our teachers, our ensemble coaches, conductors and class leaders are all experts in their field and have many years of experience in tutoring talented young musicians such as you, so you should be guided by them.

Do I have to do everything on the timetable as well as my individual lesson?

Yes. We craft your timetable to be most appropriate for you, so if we have put you in an ensemble or class it is because we think this will be good for your musical development. If you are unhappy about it, please come and speak to us.

How are ensemble seating plans decided, and what do I do if I'm unhappy with mine?

Seating plans are made after careful discussion between the Head of Junior Programmes, relevant conductors, tutors and teachers. They are NOT based only on ability, and it is important to have good players placed throughout a section and throughout the various ensembles so please do not view your ensemble placement competitively or negatively and remember that we always have the best interests of our students at heart. However, if you are unhappy with your placement you should speak to your section tutor in the first instance. Ensemble placings are published via noticeboards in the Concert Hall on the first day of the academic year, but can change at any time due to need, or to give players different experiences – tutors will advise students as appropriate.

Do I need to practise my chamber music/orchestra pieces too?

Ensemble playing is about working as a team, and all teams work best when every member is giving their best. We expect you to put in sufficient work during the week to ensure that you are an equal team member in rehearsals each week, so if you're finding a particular piece or section difficult then it would be wise to do some work on it during the week.

May I take my orchestra/ensemble music home to practise?

Yes. Orchestra parts must be signed for on the form inside the orchestra folder every week. If you are not taking the part home, you should leave it neatly inside the folder on the stand – not on the chair or on the floor. We are here to support you, not to clear up after you! Ensemble parts are handed out and collected back in by the ensemble tutor so you should discuss this with them. In either case, if you lose music that you have taken home, you may be asked to pay for its replacement. This usually means replacing the whole set of parts, not just your own, and is likely to be expensive so please look after any music you take home!

Do I have to take a musicianship class?

Yes – we expect all students to attend at least one (usually 45-55 minute) musicianship class (if there is space in their timetable) as they are a core part of our JD programme, and we offer an exceptional range of courses to complement your practical musical studies. We do not expect you to take any theory exams. You can find out more about the musicianship curriculum on our website (www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/rcmjdcurrentstudents/musicianship/).

SUPPORT & RESOURCES

Being a great musician is not just about how much practice you do (though that helps!). It is also about taking care of yourself and all aspects of your craft from practice to performance. We have various resources that are available to you to help you do this. They include Alexander Technique classes, performance practice workshops called Performers' Platform, and full access to the RCM library with its fantastic collection of music and recordings.

What is the Alexander Technique and how might it help?

The Alexander Technique works by helping you to identify and prevent the harmful postural habits (how you stand, sit or move) that contribute to, or may be the cause of, stress, pain, or performing less well than you could.

How do I join an Alexander Technique class?

In almost all instances you will need to be referred for Alexander Technique classes by your teacher, but you can also pay for shared or individual lessons. Demand is high, so there is usually a waiting list. There are limited number of free lessons available to students who receive bursary funding; priority is given to students with the most urgent need and to those requests made/endorsed by teachers; inclusion is also subject to us being able to fit it into your timetable.

What is Performers' Platform?

Performers' Platform is a performance practice workshop session that takes place most weeks in continuous fifteen minute slots between 3pm and 5.15pm. These are opportunities for students to perform solo or ensemble works before an informal audience and with tutorial guidance on performance practice. Performers' Platform is an informal 'turn up and play' session with no preparatory rehearsals beforehand. Students should arrive at least five minutes before their allocated slot so that they have sufficient time to unpack and prepare before their performance. This is a wonderful opportunity to play alongside one of the country's finest accompanists and all students are encouraged to perform during the course of the year. (NB for safeguarding and copyright reasons, it is not possible to make audio or video recordings during Performers' Platform.)

How do I book a Performers' Platform slot?

If you would like to take part in a Performers' Platform, please first discuss this your teacher. Your teacher will then nominate you for a slot by contacting Mitch, Performance Manager, either in person or email (jd@rcm.ac.uk). Your Performers' Platform slot should not clash with any other aspect of your RCMJD curriculum (unless your teacher has suggested you do a Performers' Platform' during their lesson and will be present themselves). External teachers can nominate you for a Performers' Platform slot – they simply need to write to Mitch via jd@rcm.ac.uk to do so.

Because these opportunities are popular you may only book one slot per term. Slots, particularly towards the end of term, get booked up well in advance so you and your teacher will need to think ahead. If for any reason you need to cancel a Performers' Platform slot, you/your teacher need to let Mitch know as far in advance as possible so that the slot can be offered to another student.

May I use the RCM Library?

Yes – the RCM library is available for you to use and borrow from on Saturdays between 9am and 1.45pm. Your security card is your library card too so you will need it to borrow music. Library induction sessions for all new students take place on Introductory Day in September where further details will be provided. Students joining mid-year may be given a brief induction session the first time they borrow music from the library so please make sure you have the time for this on your first visit.

How much may I borrow from the Library?

Full information on what you can borrow from the library and for how long, will be given to you at your library induction; you can also ask any member of RCM Library staff.

Am I allowed to go to the undergraduate/post graduate events if I want to?

Yes of course. Our students, parents and teachers are strongly encouraged to support the activities and events that are organised by the RCM. Details of these are published termly in the RCM Events Guide and via www.rcm.ac.uk/events, and tickets can be booked via the RCM Box Office.

I have done something brilliant or interesting. Who can I tell?

The RCM regards RCMJD students and teachers highly, so if you have any news about which you'd like to tell the readership of the RCM magazine, Upbeat, please do send it to the RCM's Marketing team via news@rcm.ac.uk (please copy your email to jd@rcm.ac.uk) and they will do what they can to include it.

PROGRESSION

We are delighted that you have come here to progress your music making and to fulfil your potential. Every student is treated as an individual with their own priorities, needs and potential and as such there is no set route of progression. However, we do expect you to work hard to become the best young musician you can be, and we will work with you to monitor and support your progress and achievements. Our aim is to help you achieve a level where you can apply successfully to a higher education music course should you wish to do so, be this Conservatoire or University, though we will wholeheartedly support you in whatever route you choose, whether it be a musical one or not.

How will I know how I am doing?

You should have a good idea of how you are doing on a week-by-week basis from talking to your teachers and tutors. You will also get written reports at the end of each year from your teachers, sent to your parents. Assessments will usually take place for all students in year 8 (Spring term) and year 11 (late Autumn term/early Spring term), though your teacher or the Head of Junior Programmes can request an assessment any time if there are areas of concern.

Mini-bass students will be assessed/auditioned for entry into the full JD programme either during school year 8, or during their third year of RCMJD study (whichever is later).

In all cases, you will be assessed by the Head of Junior Programmes and an instrumental specialist. You need to pass this assessment in order to progress. We will give you plenty of notice of your assessment and support in preparing for it and hope that you, like us, will regard it as a positive rather than a negative experience.

What do I need to prepare for an assessment?

Full details of what you need to prepare for an assessment are on the current students section of our website: www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/rcmjdcurentstudents/assessments/

Please talk to your teacher as soon as you know about your assessment to ensure that you have appropriate pieces to play/sing (composers may be required to submit a portfolio in advance).

What happens if I don't pass my assessment?

It is relatively rare for a student to fail their assessment, as we monitor progress very carefully in consultation with your parents and teachers, and we will usually speak with you before an assessment if we are concerned about any area of your playing. If you don't pass you may be offered another assessment opportunity at a later date, in consultation with the Head of Junior Programmes, in order to allow you the chance to improve your skills, although this is not guaranteed.

Unfortunately, we are not able to offer year 8 mini-bass students a re-assessment opportunity, as these assessments are effectively an audition for the full JD programme.

I want to ask about making a slight change to my timetable. Who do I ask?

Contact the JD office on 020 7591 4334 or email jd@rcm.ac.uk with your requests/concerns and we will do our best to address them.

I'm concerned about my progress – what should I do?

In the first instance, the best person to talk to is your teacher. If you'd rather not talk to them for any reason, please contact Miranda Francis (M, Head of Junior Programmes) or you can talk to any member of the JD team privately. See page 23 for how to contact us.

Is there any careers guidance available?

Yes – and we are delighted that you are thinking ahead to your next steps. We offer a Higher Education options event for students in years 11 and 12 at the start of the summer term, and additionally students in year 12 are all offered the opportunity to attend a one-to-one meeting with the Head of Junior Programmes to discuss onward steps. This is an informal discussion aimed at helping rather than judging you. The JD team themselves have many years of experience and contacts within the music industry and outside it; please feel free to talk to us at any time and we will always do our best to help and guide. We are always delighted if we can help a student with planning for their future.

Are there any prizes awarded at RCMJD?

Whilst we host several competitions (see page 22), we don't award any other prizes at the end of each academic year. Instead we celebrate the achievements of all students!

PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES AND COMPETITIONS

Performing and learning how to present yourself in a formal concert setting is a very important part of the training of any young musician. We schedule around 100 concerts per year for our students as well as sourcing external performance opportunities where appropriate. The RCM has its own professionally equipped 500-seat concert hall of which the RCMJD has use on Saturdays, as well as more intimate performance spaces. We try to offer performance opportunities across instruments/disciplines and age range but inevitably some may perform more than others in any given academic year.

How will I know what performances I am involved in at RCMJD?

We publish an annual performance schedule that gives details of all the groups performing each term and the dates on which they are performing. You are expected to be available for RCMJD concerts and rehearsals as required. If you do not attend the relevant rehearsal on the day of a JD concert, you may not be able to perform. We may also not be able to let you perform if you miss three or more rehearsals in a term.

PARENT POINT – Those learning their first study with an external teacher

Performers in specific-genre concerts (such as Piano Concert and Composers Concert) are selected by teacher recommendation and notified in advance of the concert. In the rare situation where a student's first study is learned outside of RCMJD, parents should proactively enquire about the involvement of their child in these concerts. Please contact Mitch, Performance Manager, via jd@rcm.ac.uk.

What do I wear to perform in a JD concert?

Part of being a good performer is looking like a good performer so please make sure you dress carefully and appropriately for concerts, taking care to look neat, tidy and professional before you step onto the stage. We have different concert dress codes for different ensembles, and it is your responsibility to make sure you are wearing the correct clothes depending on which group you are performing in. We may not let you perform if you are in the wrong clothes, and even if we do you are likely to feel rather uncomfortable if you are the only person wearing something different! Details of the required concert dress for each performing group is on our website (www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/rcmjdcurentstudents/ensembleschoirs/) and can also be found on our Saturday noticeboards.

On concert days, please arrive in your concert clothes if possible as we cannot provide changing facilities. If you need to change during the day, please use the gender neutral/accessible/single-occupant toilets in the Basement/Lower Ground Floor of the South Building.

PARENT POINT – Filming/photography/audio recording

The filming/photography/audio recording of children or professional musicians (including teachers) is strictly prohibited, unless written permission to do so has been sought from, and granted by the RCM, which retains the rights to any performance presented under the RCM banner. Teachers and other JD staff must not photograph, video or record students, without the advance approval of the Head of Junior Programmes.

Do I need permission to take part in performance opportunities not organised by JD?

We strongly encourage you to discuss all external performance opportunities (such as concerts, competitions, masterclasses or even television auditions/appearances) with your teacher before committing to them. This is so that they can make sure that the opportunity is appropriate for you and can make sure you are well prepared and able to do your best.

What if an external concert/event clashes with a JD concert?

Concerts that you are scheduled to be involved in at JD should take priority over external/school concerts and competitions unless agreed in advance both with your teacher and the JD office. We try hard not to clash with major organisations with whom our students are likely to be involved (eg NCO and NYO); in the event of a clash, please contact Mitch, our Performance Manager, as soon as possible so that he can liaise directly with the organisation to work out the best solution.

Do you hold competitions at JD?

Yes – we run various competitions for different ages and instruments (including voice and composition) throughout the year. Details of these competitions including entry criteria, competition deadlines, and dates, and the regulations for entering for them, are published early in the Autumn Term.

Can I enter competitions or take part in solo performances outside JD?

You should be guided by your teacher. They can help prepare you to perform to the best of your ability or gently guide you towards a more suitable goal or event if they feel that a particular competition or performance isn't right for you just yet.

PARENT POINT – Concert Tickets

JD concerts advertised in the RCM Events Guide (available from the RCM or online via www.rcm.ac.uk/events) are open to the public. Tickets are required for all concerts held in the Concert Hall, Performance Hall or Recital Hall (plus elsewhere if specifically advised). Tickets can be obtained only from the RCM Box Office team directly: the easiest way is via the RCM website, though they can also take bookings by telephone (020 7591 4314) and in person on weekdays (1pm-4pm). The Box Office will be open for in-person bookings and returns an hour before each JD concert. Most credit/debit cards are accepted but they do not take cash.

Tickets for JD concerts will go on sale a few weeks before the first concert of each term ('on sale' dates are published and communicated to parents in advance). Subject to availability, parents are entitled to two free tickets per student for concerts. Additional tickets may be purchased for £5 each (NB ticket prices will be advertised as £6.50 each, but this includes a £1.50 booking fee which will be waived at checkout). Each family is able to book a maximum of six tickets for each concert (ie two free tickets and four tickets which must be paid for). Ticket bookers must advise at the time of booking if any wheelchair spaces will be required. NB the Balcony of the Concert Hall is reserved for teachers, staff members and special guests only, unless otherwise advised.

If your family has more than one student in the Department, or you experience any issues with making online bookings, please contact the Box Office team directly via boxoffice@rcm.ac.uk or 020 7591 4314 (weekdays 1pm-4pm only). For full details of the RCM Box Office's terms and conditions (including returns/refund policy) please see www.rcm.ac.uk/events/boxoffice

In accordance with the requirements of Westminster City Council, persons are not permitted to sit or stand in any gangway or stairs of the Concert Hall during performances.

THE RCMJD STAFF TEAM

The Junior Department is run by a busy team dedicated to helping you, our young people, become fulfilled and successful musicians. We are always happy to answer your specific questions and queries but strongly encourage all our students to take the first step to becoming independent young musicians by helping themselves to the vast amount of information available on our website and in this handbook. If you are upset or worried about anything, please see page 13 for what to do and who to talk to.

For all general enquiries:

- Web: www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/rcmjdcurrentstudents/
- Email: jd@rcm.ac.uk
- Tel: +44 (0) 20 7591 4334 (24hr voicemail)
- Contact hours: Tuesday – Friday 11am–3pm and term-time Saturdays 8am–5pm

The general email is the best way to contact us as this means your message will be answered quickly and by the most appropriate person.

Miranda Francis – known as M

M is the Head of Junior Programmes and oversees everything that goes on as part of the Junior Department and the Learning and Participation programme, RCM Sparks. M is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the musical programme at the RCMJD. In addition to being a senior academic professor at the RCM, she sometimes teaches musicianship and/or coaches ensembles and is also the RCMJD Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). You can contact M via Emily Irvine (see below). If you need to contact her directly because you are unhappy or uncomfortable about something, please see page 13.

Gill Redfern

Gill is our Operations Manager and is also the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). She will respond to questions relating to timetables, finance, assessments, competitions and auditions. Gill works Tuesday – Saturday and can be contacted via gill.redfern@rcm.ac.uk or on 020 7591 4334.

John Mitchell – known as Mitch

Mitch is our Performance Manager. He will respond to questions relating to all concerts and performances including Performers' Platform, the instrument collection, advance absence requests, rooms and facilities, health and safety, and first aid. Mitch works Wednesday – Saturday and can be contacted via john.mitchell@rcm.ac.uk or on 020 7591 4345.

Emily Irvine

Emily is our Administrative Coordinator. She will respond to general queries including enquiries for M and questions relating to visit days, website, ID cards and student data/reports. Emily works Tuesday – Saturday and can be contacted via emily.irvine@rcm.ac.uk or on 020 7591 4334.

JD Teachers

You are encouraged to be in contact with your teachers but please ensure you ask them how best to contact them and make a note of these details somewhere safe. Please respect your teachers' privacy and do not contact them at anti-social hours or during their breaks on Saturdays unless you have been invited to do so.

If students wish to communicate directly with their teacher(s), emails should be sent to the teacher's RCM email address and must be copied to the student's parent/guardian email address (see below). Responses from the teacher to the student must also be copied to the parent/guardian for the full duration of their JD studies (even when the student is over 18).

Teachers, students and parents must **not** contact one another via social media/text message, in accordance with the RCM's Safeguarding Policy (available to read in full from www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/rcmjdccurrentstudents/importantdocuments/).

PARENT POINTS

Communications from the JD admin team

Please note that our systems are only able to hold one parent/guardian email address per student – this is the address to which we will send all email correspondence (we suggest exploring auto-forwarding if there is an additional parent/guardian who would find it helpful also to receive correspondence).

Especially if you are not in the habit of checking your email junk/spam folders regularly, please ensure that you have added emails with the RCM domain (@rcm.ac.uk) to your 'safe senders' list.

Contacting the Finance Office and paying fees

Annual fee invoices are issued by email (to the parental email address held by JD) approximately two weeks before the start of the academic year, and payment is due by the first day of the year. An email will be sent from the finance office before you receive your invoice with details of how you can organise/arrange payment(s).

Any queries regarding the payment of fees (including instalment arrangements) should be addressed initially to jdfinance@rcm.ac.uk. Further details about the payment of fees are in the RCMJD payment terms and conditions, to which you will have signed your agreement when you accepted your child's place here – these can be found on our website:

www.rcm.ac.uk/junior/rcmjdccurrentstudents/feepayment/

If you have questions regarding the breakdown of your invoice, please contact Gill Redfern (RCMJD Operations Manager) via gill.redfern@rcm.ac.uk.

Providing documents via email

When sending us any form of documentation electronically (eg financial documents, graded examination mark sheets, competition feedback), PDF attachments are preferable. If you are unable to send documents as PDFs, please save and send it as a JPEG instead. We cannot guarantee to be able to read documentation sent in other formats.

FRIENDS OF THE JUNIOR DEPARTMENT

The Friends of the RCMJD is a separate charity run by parents, similar to the PTA at a school. The Friends make a great contribution to life at the JD, not just financially through their fundraising efforts but also personally by providing and serving refreshments for events and giving friendly parent-to-parent information for those considering sending their children to the JD. They are also at the heart of the thriving social scene amongst the parents of JD students.

What is the Friends of the RCMJD charity for?

Their stated aim is to 'provide for the charitable purposes' of the Junior Department, 'so as to advance the education of young persons in the art and science of music'.

How do they raise money?

The Friends of the RCMJD organise various fundraising initiatives in addition to monies raised via their annual membership fee (currently £5 per year, with an option to make additional voluntary contributions).

What do they spend the money on?

The financial support of the Friends allows the JD to make financial outlays that wouldn't otherwise be possible. These include:

- The purchase, care and maintenance of JD instruments and equipment
- The purchase of sheet music for JD choirs and orchestras
- The commissioning of new music/experiences for JD students
- The hiring of major external venues

Who makes these decisions?

The Friends are run by a committee made up of members. JD staff are also invited to attend meetings of this committee but do not have a vote. The committee provides financial support for the JD in consultation with the Head of Junior Programmes but on occasion may also suggest and carry out its own initiatives.

What initiatives are do they undertake?

Current activities organised by the Friends include:

- Saturday Shop - selling JD merchandise (including hoodies/zoodies and t-shirts) as well as other useful items
- Annual social evening(s) and concert(s) featuring performances from JD students and teachers, with refreshments
- Provision of refreshments at selected events throughout the year including the organisation of fundraising events

How do I join?

To join and for more information please email jdfriends@rcm.ac.uk (email address only checked on term-time Saturdays).

ROOM INFORMATION

The room numbering system at the RCM is fairly self-explanatory; below is a list of which rooms can be found where:

BLOMFIELD BUILDING

Lower Ground Floor	Rooms LG01 – LG20 inclusive
Ground Floor	Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall (CH) Rooms G01 – G15 inclusive
First Floor	Rooms 101 – 117 inclusive
Second Floor	Rooms 201 – 214 inclusive
Third Floor	Rooms 301 – 313 inclusive
Fourth Floor	Rooms 401 – 403 inclusive Carne Room (CR); Parry Rooms (Inner – IPR; West – WPR)
West Tower	Rooms 501 & 601
East Tower	Rooms 502 & 602
Access from foyer to	Café (NB open to the public)
Use spiral stairs from foyer for	RCM Library (Lib) (NB open to the public) RCM Museum (NB open to the public) Performance Hall (PH) Performance Studio (PS) Recording Studio (RS)

SOUTH BUILDING

Basement	Dressing Rooms 1 & 2 (DR1/DR2)
Lower Ground Floor	SU Common Room (BaRCM) (Bar; SLG01)
Ground Floor	Exchange (EX; SG01) Rooms SG02 & SG03
First Floor	Recital Hall (RH)
Third Floor	Rooms S301 – S316 inclusive
Fourth Floor	Rooms S401 – S408 inclusive (including Percussion Suite)

OPERA SCHOOL

Access via Concert Hall (Stage Left) or Theatre walkway (via Blomfield Building West Staircase)

OP01 – OP06 inclusive

(NB Opera Practice Suite rooms (OP11 – OP17 inclusive) are for use by senior College students only and are off-limits to JD)

Access via Blomfield Building West Staircase

Britten Theatre Foyer (BTF)

Britten Theatre Cloakroom (OPC)

TOILET FACILITIES ON SATURDAYS

It is important that adults and children use separate toilet facilities on Saturdays for safeguarding purposes.

Toilets on the ground floor of the Exchange (Male, Female and Gender neutral/accessible) and the gender-neutral/accessible toilets on the ground floor/second floor of the Blomfield building are designated for **staff use** only.

Parents must only use the public toilets in the Britten Theatre Corridor (accessed via the library atrium) - they are clearly signposted.

Students must **not** use staff or the public toilets in the Britten Theatre Corridor, but should use the following:

BLOMFIELD BUILDING

Lower Ground Floor	Female
First Floor	Male/Female
Second Floor	Female
Fourth Floor	Gender-neutral

SOUTH BUILDING

Basement	Gender-neutral
Lower Ground Floor	Gender-neutral
First Floor	Male/Female
Third Floor	Male/Female

A full list of RCM washroom/toilet facilities is available on request.

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+44(0)20 7591 4334
jd@rcm.ac.uk

www.rcm.ac.uk/junior

Office contact hours
11am – 3pm Tuesday – Friday
8am – 5pm term-time Saturdays