



Northumberland County Council

Music Partnership North Online/Remote Learning - Guidance for Parents, Guardians and Students Updated 24/04/20

Learning online is a good way to help students continue to enjoy the many benefits of music education when it is not possible to attend school. Although it is not the same as face-to-face music activities or lessons, it is still very effective for learning.

For those who do not have a fast-enough internet connection for live online video lessons, Music Partnership North (MPN) tutors will be able to recommend resources, and support students' practice at home by other means such as phone and email. But for the majority of people, live online lessons, using a parent/guardian's email or phone will be the best way forward. We will only deliver lessons using a parent/guardian's email or phone and not directly with a student.

This guide sets out what is needed to make online and remote learning a fun and safe way to continue a musical education. Should this document be modified, for example after the publication of Government guidance on remote teaching and learning, parents and carers will be informed immediately.

This guide will look at:

- How to get set up - devices, apps and internet connection.
- How the tutor will invite learners to the lesson.
- How to get the most out of a lesson - setting a space aside for the lesson, and having the instrument ready.
- How to stay safe online - and how to treat the lessons in the same way that you would in a school.
- What we expect of parents and guardians.

Getting set up

MPN uses the Google meet app for online/remote music lessons and activities. The music tutor will send an email link to the parent or guardian's email address, along with a date and time for the start of the session. At the time for the lesson the parent just has to click the link which will open Google meet, click the button to join the meeting and the tutor will be visible to the parent and student.

Equipment needed

You will need a PC, Mac, a tablet or a smartphone. Whichever it is, it will need to have a built-in camera, or a webcam attached. It will also need to have a built-in microphone and speaker, or for better quality you can use a headset with mic, or a pair of headphones that have a built-in mic (as often used for phones).

Internet connection

For most people the internet connection should be fine for good quality video and audio. It is worth testing this with friends or family before starting the first lesson. If it seems slow there are several things you can try:

- Move your PC/device closer to the router (if you're far away the wi-fi signal is not as strong). Or use a network cable to connect your computer to the router.
- Check that other people in the house are not using the internet at the same time (e.g., streaming video or TV).
- Test the speed of the internet connection, for example, here: <https://www.speedtest.net>
- If there is a temporary problem with your line, you can contact your service provider to ask them to check for faults on the line.

Not everyone has a fast broadband internet connection, or good mobile data signal. This can result in lower video quality, but generally the sound will be prioritised so you should be able to hear the tutor. If the speed is permanently slow (for both landline and mobile data) where you live then there are alternatives for distance learning as mentioned.

Inviting students to lessons - how it works

Once you have signed up and MPN have received a signed copy of the parental consent form, the tutor will email the parent/guardian to ask them to get in touch to arrange a mutually convenient day and time for the lessons. The tutor will then send a link which the parent should click on when it is time for the lesson to start.

The link will open a webpage and you then click on the 'join meeting' button. It may take a short while before the tutor, video and audio all connect.

How to get the most out of a lesson - setting up a space for learning

Although homes may not have much “spare space” and may have other people around, it is helpful to think about where the student is going to be and have things set up before each lesson. This should make it easier, quicker and safer to enjoy the lesson. The tutor will likely have other students after the end of each lesson, so being set up and ready on time means you can make the most of the lesson. It is also useful to have your instrument set up and ready to play so you can make best use of the lesson time. Warming up beforehand is particularly useful for some instruments.

The space should be somewhere:

- With a parent or carer present
- That is an appropriate place. Not a bedroom.
- With room to play your instrument and see your music, and to set up your laptop/PC/tablet or phone
- Where you can focus, and not be disturbed (e.g., not with a washing machine on, or a TV, or other people coming and going)

Staying safe online - treating the lessons in the same way you would in school

There are some other things to think about as lessons will be taking place in the informal space of people’s homes rather than in the more “professional” setting of a school. It is important for the learning experience and for the student’s safety that the same behaviour is expected in online lessons that would be expected at school.

Responsible behaviour and dress.

To help make lessons safe and enjoyable, a parent or carer must be present in the online lesson. Just as in a school or other face-to-face lesson, students are asked to:

- Dress appropriately (e.g. not wearing pyjamas). Students are asked to wear clothing that would normally be worn in public
- Follow the teacher’s instructions
- Ask the teacher before leaving the session (e.g. to go to the toilet or get a drink of water)
- Not take phone calls, message others, or use devices that are not requested by the teacher for learning
- Not have other browsers or apps open during the online lesson to reduce the risk of inappropriate content being visible
- Not take screenshots or record video of lessons
- Have a neutral background that does not show any personal information (e.g., screens with social media profiles), or personal items (e.g., laundry drying) and does not have anything that might offend others (e.g., posters with inappropriate language)
- Ensure there isn’t a TV/screen showing in the background where there’s a risk of age-inappropriate content showing

Chat or instant messaging

Chat is available on Google meet but this will not be generally used as there are risks of students:

- Becoming distracted by chat
- Sharing personal information such as phone numbers or social media accounts
- Using inappropriate language (such as swearing) or bullying

Students will be reminded to only use chat when directed to by the tutor, and that the same standards of behaviour are expected during online lessons as would be expected in school. If any behaviour becomes a distraction to a student the tutor will ask for this to be stopped and contact the parent/guardian to explain.

If the student or parent/guardian has any concerns

A parent or carer must be present for the duration of the online lesson. Students will be told that if they have any concerns before, during, or after a lesson they should ask the parent/guardian for help. This could include for example:

- Technical issues with the computer or internet connection
- Practical issues, such as arranging the appropriate space to play their instrument
- Other issues, such as not being comfortable with what is happening in a lesson
- Tuning of, or problems with the instrument

The parent/guardian should be aware that any safeguarding concerns should be reported to:

Jacky Craig - Lead Officer, Music Partnership North
jacqueline.craig@northumberland.gov.uk
01670 624040

If the tutor has any concerns

If the tutor feels the student has not followed the kinds of behaviour expected in a school environment, in spite of prompting, or is concerned about something (inappropriate dress or language, for example), the tutor will stop the session for that student, and then contact the parent/guardian to explain, and to help resolve any issues. The tutor should also report this to their line manager.

What we expect of parents or guardians, and their involvement in lessons

Having the support of a parent/guardian is one of the key factors in young people's musical development.

Support from a parent or guardian in setting up the online lesson is often needed. And being present in the lesson is important for safety as well as for practical help. This helps the tutor make sure the lesson can run smoothly and parents and carers know at the end of each session about plans for practice and the next lesson.

The level of involvement of the adult during the lesson will depend on the age of the student. Younger children may need the person in the room to help keep them focused and safe, particularly if it is a new activity. But too much parental involvement can also be distracting or cause shyness with older students.

Finally

MPN looks forward to continuing with your child on their musical journey, learning and progression. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact your tutor, or the MPN office.

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