

CARE & MAINTENANCE OF INSTRUMENTS

BRASS INSTRUMENTS

Valves & slides

Valves and slides are easily damaged and should be handled with care. It is essential that they are oiled/greased regularly. Only use commercial lubricant products especially made for brass instruments. Other lubricants are not suitable and may cause irreparable damage to the instrument.

Valve maintenance

- On valved instruments, only remove ONE valve at any one time. Clean off the old oil with a lint free cloth, apply a small amount of fresh oil and replace the valve.
- Ensure that the valve is replaced in the correct way. If you cannot get a sound when you blow through the instrument, try turning the valve until it locks into position. If you still cannot blow a note, take the valve out, revolve it through 180 degrees and replace it. Your child's instrumental teacher will teach the children how to replace the valves.
- If a valve becomes stuck, consult the instrumental teacher. **DO NOT** force the valve in any way!

Slide maintenance

Trombone slides are very delicate and should be cleaned weekly.

- Remove the outer slide completely and wipe the inner slide clean using a soft lint free cloth.
- Rub a small amount of slide grease or cream on to either saddle (the last 10cm of the slide, which is slightly fatter than the rest).
- Before replacing the outer slide completely, replace one slide at a time and rotate and move the slide in order to spread the lubricant.
- The slide should then be sprayed with water daily in order to keep the lubricant damp.

All other slides should be cleaned regularly and lubricated using either special slide grease or a small amount of Vaseline.

Care of the mouthpiece

The mouthpiece should be placed gently into the instrument and turned 90 degrees. **DO NOT TAP IT IN.**

If a mouthpiece becomes stuck **DO NOT USE FORCE** to remove it as this may damage the instrument. Take the instrument to your child's teacher.

Cleaning

If the inside of an instrument is not cleaned regularly then a coating will form which interferes with the sound quality and can harbour germs.

- Once a month, run lukewarm water with a little detergent (washing up liquid) through the instrument and then rinse with clean water.
- To remove all the water, hold down all the valves and keep rotating the instrument (lengthways), until all the water has emptied. **BE CAREFUL.**
- You may use a special wire pull-through brush (available from music shops) to clean the tubing. If the brush becomes stuck do not force it. If in doubt consult your teacher.
- Wash and brush out the mouthpiece in warm water and then rinse.
- To clean the outside of the instrument, use a clean duster. NEVER use Brasso or similar products on lacquered instruments (instruments that are a shiny golden colour), as this will erode the lacquer.

STRINGED INSTRUMENTS

GENERAL

- Violin/viola cases should be opened on a flat surface, cellos should be placed on their back to remove them and replace them to and from their cases.
- Keep a duster in the case to wipe the rosin off the instrument.
- Make sure the instrument case is properly closed before carrying it anywhere.
- Do not store the instrument in the sun or near a radiator or fire. The joints come apart.

Care of the bow

- Always remove the bow first from the case before the instrument itself and put it away last to keep it from bending and breaking.
- Never touch the hairs of the bow.
- Always loosen the hairs on the bow after use.
- Rosin the bow hair frequently.
- Only tighten the bow so that a pencil just fits between the wood and the hair at the centre of the bow.

Cellos and Bases

- Handle a cello by the neck, never by the strings, fingerboard, bridge or tailpiece. For the double bass you carry only by the c-bouts taking care not to hit the top of the instrument on doorframes.
- Never leave the instrument with the spike out.
- When not in use, rest the instrument carefully on its side on the floor, or upright in the corner of the room with the strings facing inwards. Do not lean against any flat surface e.g. a wall or a chair.
- Carry the instrument to and from school in the case, but leave it out at home, it is easier to pick up and play (unless you have younger brothers or sisters who might damage the instrument!).

WOODWIND INSTRUMENTS

Putting the instrument together

- In the early stages, grease the joints regularly (oboe, clarinet and bassoon only). If the joints of the flute are too tight, try cleaning the tenon and socket with a soft cloth.
- Use a gentle twisting action to assemble the joints.
- Always put the instrument away in its case after playing.

Cleaning

- Always clean the instrument after each time it is played – condensation left inside can cause the pads to swell and the keys to tarnish
- The outside of the instrument may be cleaned with a duster or soft cloth. Never put silver polish on the keys.

Care of reeds

- Reeds must be dampened before playing.
- Reeds are very fragile and must be handled with great care. Never touch the tip of the reed.

INDIAN INSTRUMENTS

Harmonium

- Keep in a cool and dry place and use a cover for storage so that dust does not get inside the harmonium.
- Don't tamper with the springs, action regulating screws or reeds.
- Don't turn the damper or drone knobs as this can cause air leakage.
- Use regularly, moving all the stops and playing all the keys

Sitar

- The gourds (tumba) on the sitar are particularly fragile and need careful handling.
- Don't expose to excessive heat or strong sunlight as this may cause cracking and warping
- Loosen all pegs and strings after use and place instrument carefully back in the case.

Tabla

- Always use the tabla rings to stand the tabla on and replace the drum head covers after use.
- Leave the tuning of the tabla to the instrumental teacher

Further guidance will be given by the instrumental teacher.