

PIANO GUIDE

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Learning a new instrument is exciting, rewarding and at times challenging for all beginners, however, we understand that there is pressure on the parent as well. Which is the right instrument to buy for home practice? What do they need for their lessons? What do you need to do to support this venture? This short guide has been written from our list of FAQs and will hopefully answer any questions you might have. If you need any more information, you can get in touch any time via e-mail or phone and we will be happy to help.

What do I need to buy for lessons?

Books

Your child will be learning from one of the following books to begin with:

- John Thompson's Easiest Piano Course
- Me and My Piano
- Rock School Piano
- Trinity Piano
- ABRSM Piano

The syllabus used will depend on the age of the student so please discuss the recommended syllabus with your child's teacher before purchasing a book.

Piano

In order to get the most out of lessons and to progress through practice, a piano will be required for playing at home. This is the largest financial commitment and there are a lot of options available, so you need to consider the following when making your purchase:

Acoustic or Electric?

Acoustic

Purchasing an acoustic piano can be a daunting process as there are many different makes and models on the market. While you can pick up a second-hand piano from eBay or Facebook Marketplace starting from around £100, they can be difficult to transport due to their size. Additionally, a second-hand piano will likely need tuning which can only be carried out by a professional; you will therefore need to find a local piano tuner that can travel to your home to set up the piano. Furthermore, it is worth bearing in mind that sometimes older pianos can contain faults that require repairs – this will in turn increase the total cost of the instrument. For these reasons, we usually recommend purchasing an electric piano.

Electric

Not everyone has the space for a full acoustic piano in their home. In a lot of cases, an electric piano provides the perfect solution. These pianos take up less space in the room; can be easily moved/stowed (such as in a cupboard) when not in use; and provide the user with full control over the volume. It is worth noting that with most electric pianos you will have to purchase a stand, stool and sustain pedal in addition. A 'beginner' electric piano can be purchased new from between £130 and £400. Secondhand pianos can be found from as low as £50 to £350, depending on the make, model and how many accessories are provided.

The ideal electric piano will have 88 keys – this is to closely match a real piano and ensure that the student has access to the full dynamic range of the music they will be playing. Weighted keys are also recommended to match the 'feel of a real piano.

If you are uncertain about buying an electric piano online, Rhythm Room is a proud distributor for Alesis and can supply a brand new Alesis electric piano including all accessories starting from £300. Other recommended brands are Roland or Yamaha.

Acoustic

Pros

- No amplification needed, fewer accessories, easier to pick up and play,
- Unmistakeable acoustic sound, which cannot be fully replicated on an electric piano.

Cons

- More difficult to control the volume.
- Larger, takes up more space.
- Maintenance and tuning costs

Electric

Pros

- Smaller, and can be stored when not in use
- Volume is easily controlled and can be played using headphones, good for quiet practice at home..
- Additional voices and programmes provide options with the sound.

Cons

- Additional equipment costs - headphones, sustain pedal, bench and stool.
- A good quality electric piano can still be quite expensive, even second hand.

Encouragement

Taking up a new instrument is an exciting experience! Your child will likely want to perform what they have learned in lessons to you - after all, you are their first audience. Mistakes are inevitably common in the early stages but are an essential part of learning and progression. Be sure to encourage repetition and express interest when they play. A positive response will encourage practice and motivate learning. If you have any further questions or wish to place an order for any items detailed above, please feel free to contact us.

We look forward to being a part of your child's musical adventure!