



# Why regular orchestra rehearsals matter - for school, for life

Dear TVYO Families,

As academic demands increase during the secondary-school years, it's natural for music and other extra-curricular activities to start feeling like something that could be sacrificed. We also understand how difficult it can be for you to decide on how to prioritise competing pressures on your time, particularly in the run-up to important exams and assessments. But we wanted to share our thoughts with you on the benefits of keeping musical activities going throughout this time – and our view that, if anything, this is when sustaining those activities matters most.

Warm regards,

**Caroline Hobbs-Smith and the TVYO team**

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## 1. Academic and cognitive benefits

Long-term musical training strengthens the brain systems students rely on for academic success\* - **concentration, working memory, pattern recognition, and the ability to stay focused under pressure.**

Studies consistently show that advanced young musicians outperform non-musicians in tasks involving learning, prediction, and attention\* - the same mental skills used in **maths, science, languages, and exams.**

\*Please see references to these studies below

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## 2. Teamwork, leadership and life skills

Orchestra is one of the most powerful environments for **teamwork and leadership development.**

In every rehearsal, students learn:

- How to listen actively
- How to support others
- How to take responsibility for their part in a larger whole
- How to lead when needed and follow when appropriate

These are not just musical skills - they are **life skills** that carry into school, university, work, and relationships.

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### 3. Mental health and emotional well-being

Secondary students face significant academic and social pressures. Music provides:

- A healthy, creative outlet
- A sense of belonging
- Opportunities for self-expression

Being part of an orchestra strengthens **emotional well-being and resilience** - helping students manage stress, anxiety, and the challenges of teenage life.

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### 4. Feeding the musical soul

Beyond all the cognitive and social benefits, **great music feeds the soul**. Playing repertoire with others allows students to **feel, express, and connect** in ways that words and exams never can. This emotional depth keeps them motivated, inspired, and human.

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### 5. Lifelong skills

Learning to play an instrument will bring pleasure for the rest of your life, as will the habits developed through regular rehearsal - **commitment, time management, persistence, and pursuit of long-term goals** - are foundations of **lifelong learning**. These skills stay with students long after their time in the orchestra.

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### 6. Attendance matters for the orchestra

Every student's presence is important. Ensemble playing depends on all players being present:

- Balance and blend are stronger
- Confidence grows
- Rehearsals become more productive
- The orchestra develops as a **cohesive, high-performing team**

Supporting regular attendance is **not choosing music over education**. It is choosing a **fuller, healthier, and more successful education**.

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## References

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