How it works: Instrumental Music Programs at Garran

The How it Works aims to inform parents of some of our practices and programs at Garran Primary. Our school provides student access to two music programs delivered by the ACT Department of Education’s Instrumental Music Program (IMP). This program is a self-funded entity which provides band, recorder and fife programs to students in public schools on a cost recovery basis. For over twenty years, Garran has offered students access to a Year 5 and Year 6 brass band program. This year, we have introduced a Year 3 recorder program based along similar lines to the band. Students accepting a place in either band or recorder do so as a two-year commitment.

How are students selected for the band program?
Because of the restricted number of spaces available in the Year 5 Band Class and the Year 3 Recorder Class a selection process has been instituted and refined over the more than 25 years of the IMP’s history. It is important that this process be seen to be a homogenous process across all of the schools associated with the IMP and that parents are satisfied that justice is done in all cases. The steps are as follows:

Step 1
During Term 4 a letter from the IMP is made available to all schools for distribution to Year 2 and Year 4 students that explains to parents the Instrumental Music Program and the process required for the selection of students involved. Also during Term 4 a form headed “Assessment for Year 5 Band Class” or “Assessment for Year 3 Recorder Class” is provided by the IMP to the classroom teachers of Year 2 and Year 4 who are requested to consider the following criteria as they relate to each child:

- Work habits
- Group etiquette
- Reading skills
- Completes homework tasks

Step 2
A music perception survey is administered early in Term 1 by the IMP staff to all students in Year 3 and Year 5 and is only one of the equally important criteria used for selection of students for both band and recorder. This survey will be scored by the IMP teacher and, in conjunction with the assessment form previously completed by Year 2 and Year 4 classroom teachers, will be used by the IMP teacher to compile a ranked list of student names for consideration by the school-based band teacher and classroom teachers.

Step 3
From the ranked list provided by the IMP teacher each school will create a list of 16 ~ 25 students to whom offers of Band or Recorder Class membership may be made. These offers will be made at the beginning of Term 1 (Year 3 and Year 5) after all students have completed the music perception survey and are included in the ranked list.

It is the policy of the IMP to make places available only to students who have not and are not otherwise receiving band instrument tuition privately. Such students would not benefit from having two teachers, nor is it the aim of the IMP to remove the livelihood of private tutors.

The school will send letters to the parents of students extending the offer of a position in band or recorder. Included in the school’s letter should be details of how the child’s regular schedule may be affected by withdrawal for band or recorder and the cost of the activity as determined by the school. The letter will include a return slip that indicates that the parents and student understand the commitment that is involved and that they either accept or decline the offer. Where a student declines, a further offer will be sent to the next student on the list until such times as the school has up to 22 acceptances (for band) and 25 acceptances (for recorder).

After all acceptances have been received, the IMP teacher assigned to the school will meet with the students and allocate instruments to them.