

# Music For All

Encouraging Musical Development

## Maintenance Notes – Violins/Cellos

If you have any issues or problems with the instrument or if any accidents or breakages occur, please can you contact me for advice rather than attempting to deal with the problem yourself, or taking it to be repaired. It may be a simple problem for which there is an easy solution which we can do ourselves at no cost, but as the instrument remains the property of MFA we need to oversee and arrange any repairs and ensure they are correctly done. For your information I have outlined some of the more common simple problems and how to deal with them as well as some general care and understanding of the instrument which I hope will be helpful to you. Again if there is anything you are unsure of, please give me a ring or an e-mail and I will advise!

Sorrel Harty 01254 831112      mob. 07960 654226      [mfa@musicforallnorthwest.org.uk](mailto:mfa@musicforallnorthwest.org.uk)

Other useful addresses found on last page.

### Tuning your instrument

Your string instrument needs to be in tune in order to be played successfully, and this should be checked every time the instrument is taken out, as the string pitch easily shifts with any bump or temperature change or other variable. Young children will need help with tuning their instrument. The strings must be tightened the exact amount to allow the string to vibrate giving the correct pitch.

Violin (highest to lowest)      E      A      D      G

Cello (highest to lowest)      A      D      G      C

Another instrument (piano, keyboard, recorder etc) needs to be used as a reference point to tune the stringed instrument to, or you can purchase a tuning fork or an electronic tuner. If the string you are tuning is close to the correct pitch, just a bit sharp (higher) or flat (lower) than the desired note, use the fine adjuster (small round screw in knobs at base of each string), twisting clockwise to sharpen and anti-clockwise to flatten note. If the string is a long way out, possibly even totally loose, then use the wooden peg to get it somewhere close, and then move onto the fine adjuster.



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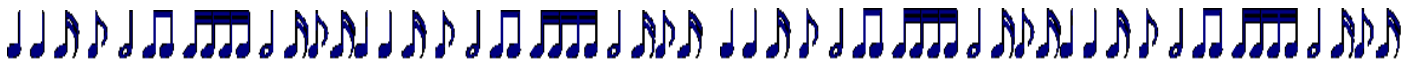
### Bow

Every time the instrument is played, the bow will need to be tightened to the correct tension for playing. Make sure it is not over-tightened. The gap between the hair and the stick must be slightly bigger at either end of the bow than in the middle, so the wood is still bent slightly concave towards the hair. If the stick is straight or convex, then the bow is over tightened and will become stretched and damaged after time.

The hair of the bow needs to be coated with rosin every time the instrument is played in order for the instrument to sound clearly when the bow is put across the strings. Always hold the bow by the base (frog), as the hair of the bow should never be touched with your hands. If any sweat, oil, food or anything gets onto the bow hairs, this will adversely affect the sound when the bow is pulled across instrument and will need a lot of re-rosining or even cleaning before the instrument will sound again! If rosin is lost or dropped and smashed (easy as it is very brittle) it is easily available from music shops for about £2.

The bow must be loosened before putting the instrument away in the case so the hair doesn't become over stretched. If the bow is consistently over tightened or left tightened in the case when not in use, the bow will lose its ability to become tight enough to play. This is not repairable other than by a re-hair at the violin shop, and often it is cheaper to buy a new bow (children's violin bows are about £20 to replace. Cello bows are more).

Sometimes particularly exuberant playing can lead to the odd hair on the bow coming loose at one end, and then it hangs down. This is not a problem and the hair should just be pulled off at the other end and discarded.



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### Broken String

Strings do occasionally just break, and it is not a big problem. You need to identify which string it is, and buy a replacement either from me as I have some spares, or from the Blackpool violin shop (contact details below) or another music shop or online. (I advise to go for middle range quality, the cheapest ones sound really terrible and scratchy, and the most expensive ones are probably unnecessary until ability is advanced. Mid range student violin strings are about £3 and student cello strings are around £10. Dogal is a possible brand to buy) Make sure you get the correct size as well as the correct string (they are different lengths and thickness) so specify the size of your instrument ie. eighth, quarter, half etc as well as which string ie. A, D etc. when ordering.

If you are replacing the string yourself, just copy how the other strings are fitted. Hook the metal end onto fine adjuster first, then post other end through the hole in wooden tuning peg so half centimetre or so is poking through, and wind the peg until string tightens, (trapping end of the string under the windings securely). Look at the other pegs to ensure you are winding peg in correct direction. It is sometimes easier to ask the teacher to replace the string, as it is easy when you know how, but can be fiddly if you haven't done it before.

You then need to tune string to the correct note. You will find that a newly replaced string will take a while to settle into the correct pitch, so constant retuning may be necessary. If you are not happy or successful in your attempts to replace string, do not hesitate to contact me or the instrument teacher for help!

### Chin rest falls off

Sometimes with a bump in the wrong place, the chin rest can fall off the violin. This is not a major problem but you need to know what you are doing to replace it, as a special tool is needed to screw/unscrew the fixings and over-tightening the metal brackets can cause cracks in the body of the violin. Please contact me if this problem occurs and we can fit it back on for you.



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### Bridge collapses or moves

The bridge is not glued onto the violin or cello, and so if knocked it can move across the body of the instrument, pulling strings along with it. You will notice that strings are out of tune, and are not aligned centrally on black fingerboard and neck of the instrument if this has happened. To re-align, carefully grip bridge with both hands and pull back into place. The bridge should be at right angles to the strings and in-line with the centre of the f-holes on either side of the instrument, with the strings evenly and centrally spaced across black fingerboard.

If the instrument is knocked more severely, the bridge can collapse completely, and then all the strings become loose. If this happens be extra careful with instrument as the required tension has been lost, and an internal sound post, which is wedged between top and bottom of instrument, can now easily fall out of place. You can see the sound post through the f-hole, a small piece of dowel located under the bridge of the instrument. If it has collapsed it will be rattling around inside instrument and will need to be taken in to violin shop to be repaired. Assuming the sound post is still in place, you can easily put the bridge back by first loosening all the strings a little with wooden tuning pegs, then placing the bridge back in the correct position, then replacing the strings and retuning them all.

Any other problems contact me or your teacher before panicking too much and we can advise on how best to deal with it! Good luck and enjoy.

Musicforall@hotmail.co.uk



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## Useful Addresses and Contact Info

### Chairperson of Music For All

Sorrel Harty  
28 School Lane  
Brinscall  
PR6 8QR  
Tel. 01254 831112  
Mob. 07960 654226

### Violin Teachers

Joy Hunter  
3 Erskine Road  
Chorley  
Tel. 07836 507316

Helen Tonge  
27 Birch Polygon  
Manchester  
M14 5HX  
Tel.07880 853906

### Blackpool Violin Shop

Kevin George  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Royal Bank of Scotland Chambers  
Talbot Square  
Blackpool  
Tel. 01253 622451  
[www.violinshop.co.uk](http://www.violinshop.co.uk)

### Cello Teacher

Rachel Jones  
Flat 6, 13 Vincent Avenue  
Chorlton  
Manchester  
Tel. 07903 780367

### Music Teacher/Advisor

Sue Ridyard  
Tel. 01257 274349  
mob. 07760 427049

### Music shop in Chorley

Apoco Music  
73 Bolton Street  
Chorley  
Tel. 01257 264482

### Music Shop in Preston

The Music Cellar  
11-12 Fox Street  
Preston  
PR1 2AB  
Tel. 01772 251407  
[www.themusiccellar.co.uk](http://www.themusiccellar.co.uk)

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