

Online Digital Music Lessons Guidance for Parents, Carers and Learners

Learning online is a good way to help learners continue to enjoy the many benefits of music education when it is not possible to attend school. Although it is not the same as face-to-face music activities or lessons, it is still very effective for learning and maintaining a virtual musical community.

This guide sets out what is needed to make online digital music lessons a fun and safe way to continue a musical education and will look at:

- How the teacher will invite parents, carers and learners to the lesson
- How to get set up - devices, apps, and internet connection
- How to get the most out of a lesson - setting a space aside for the lesson and having instruments ready
- How to stay safe online - and how to treat the lessons in the same way that you would in a school
- What we expect of parents and carers

Inviting parents to lessons

- Severn Arts will use Microsoft Teams for the online digital music lessons
- The Severn Arts teacher will send an email inviting the parent/carers to join the lesson via the parent/carers email address which was supplied on the application form
- The email will specify the date and time for the lesson – the parent/carers must accept or decline the invitation
- The contact email address provided on the application form will be used in case of IT difficulties during the lesson

The teacher will use a register to record attendance and log the date and time of each lesson (just as happens in face-to-face lessons in school).

How to get set up

Equipment

You will need a PC, Mac, tablet or a smartphone. Whichever it is, it will need to have a built-in camera, or a webcam attached. It will also need to have a built-in microphone and speaker, or for better quality you can use a headset with mic, or a pair of headphones that have a built-in mic (as often used for phones).

The lesson will be delivered through Microsoft Teams which supports the following browsers:

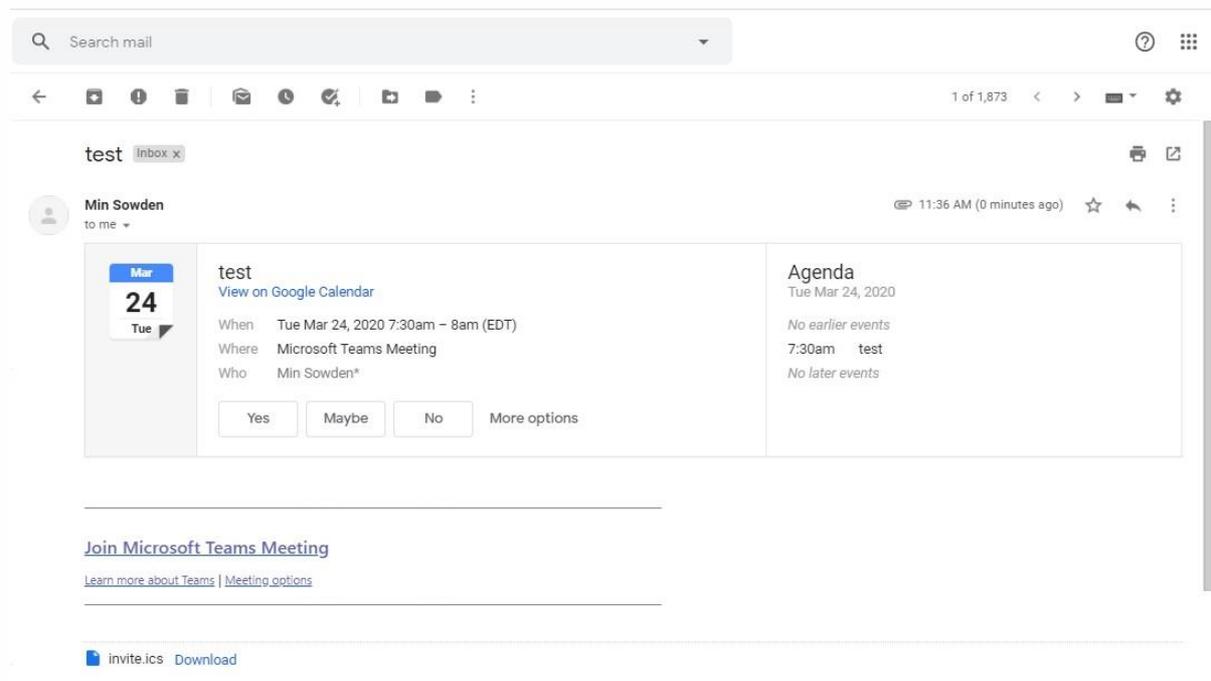
- Internet Explorer 11
- Microsoft Edge
- The latest version of Google Chrome
- The latest version of Firefox

You will need to download one of the above browsers to access Microsoft Teams.

Joining an online Teams meeting

Step 1

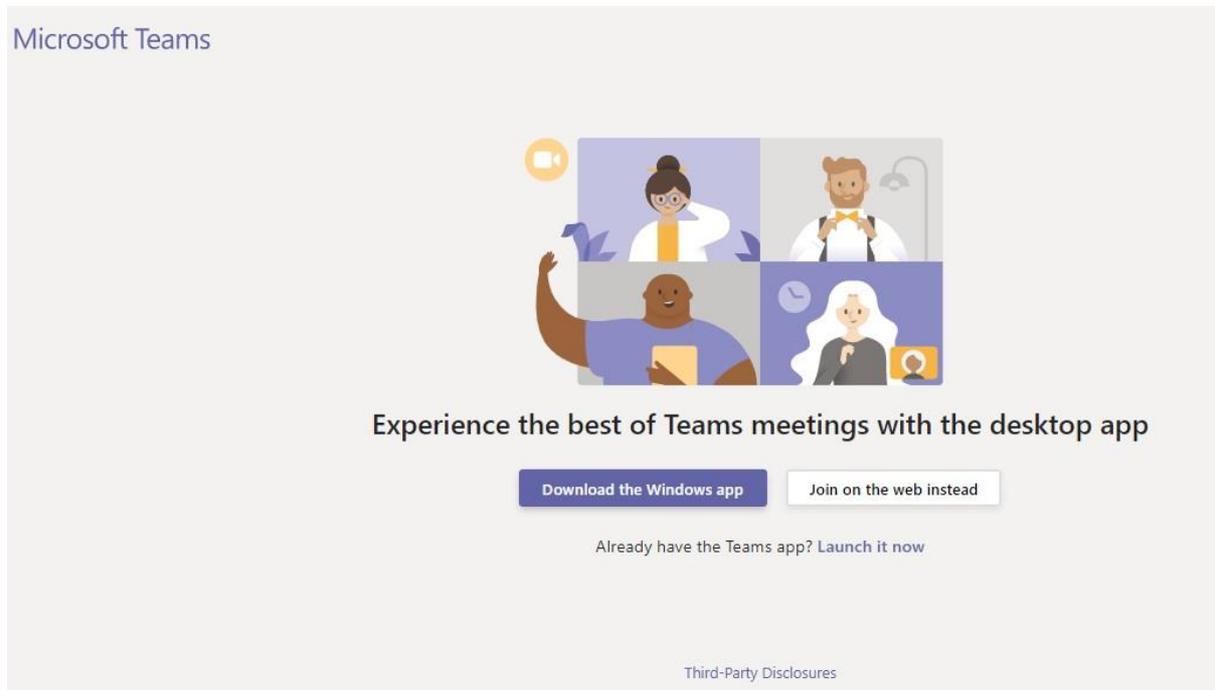
Open email and click Join Microsoft Teams Meeting



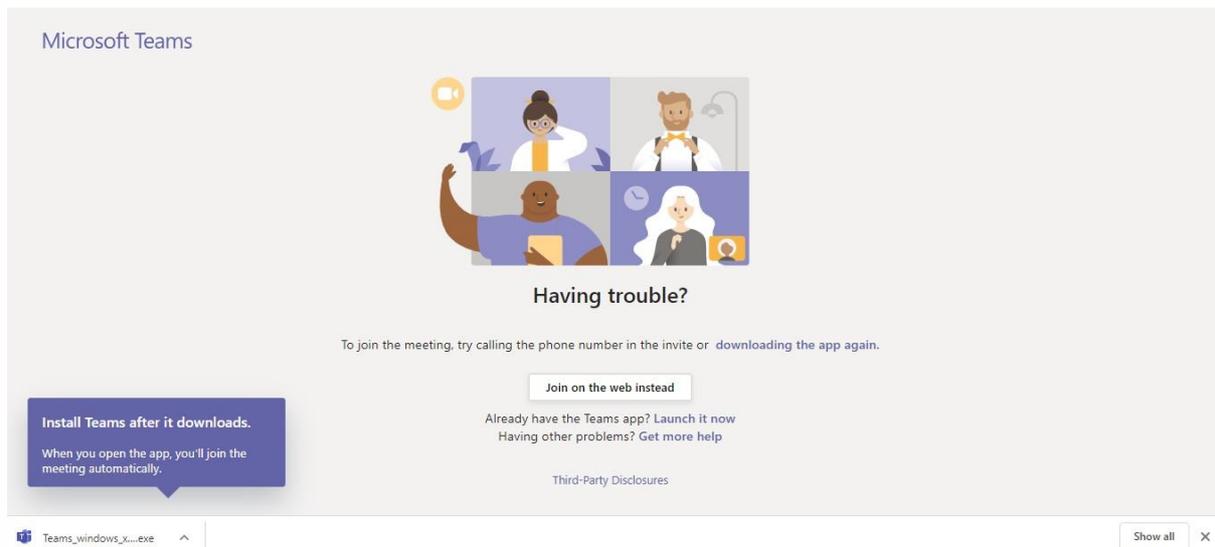
The screenshot shows an email client interface. At the top, there is a search bar labeled 'Search mail' and a notification for '1 of 1,873' messages. The email is from 'Min Sowden' to 'me', received at '11:36 AM (0 minutes ago)'. The subject is 'test'. The main content of the email is a Microsoft Teams meeting invitation. It includes a calendar card for 'Mar 24 Tue' with a 'test' event. The event details are: 'When: Tue Mar 24, 2020 7:30am - 8am (EDT)', 'Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting', and 'Who: Min Sowden*'. There are buttons for 'Yes', 'Maybe', 'No', and 'More options'. To the right of the event details is an 'Agenda' section for 'Tue Mar 24, 2020' showing '7:30am test'. Below the event details is a link to 'Join Microsoft Teams Meeting' and a link to 'invite.ics' with a 'Download' button.

Step 2

Click on Download the Windows App

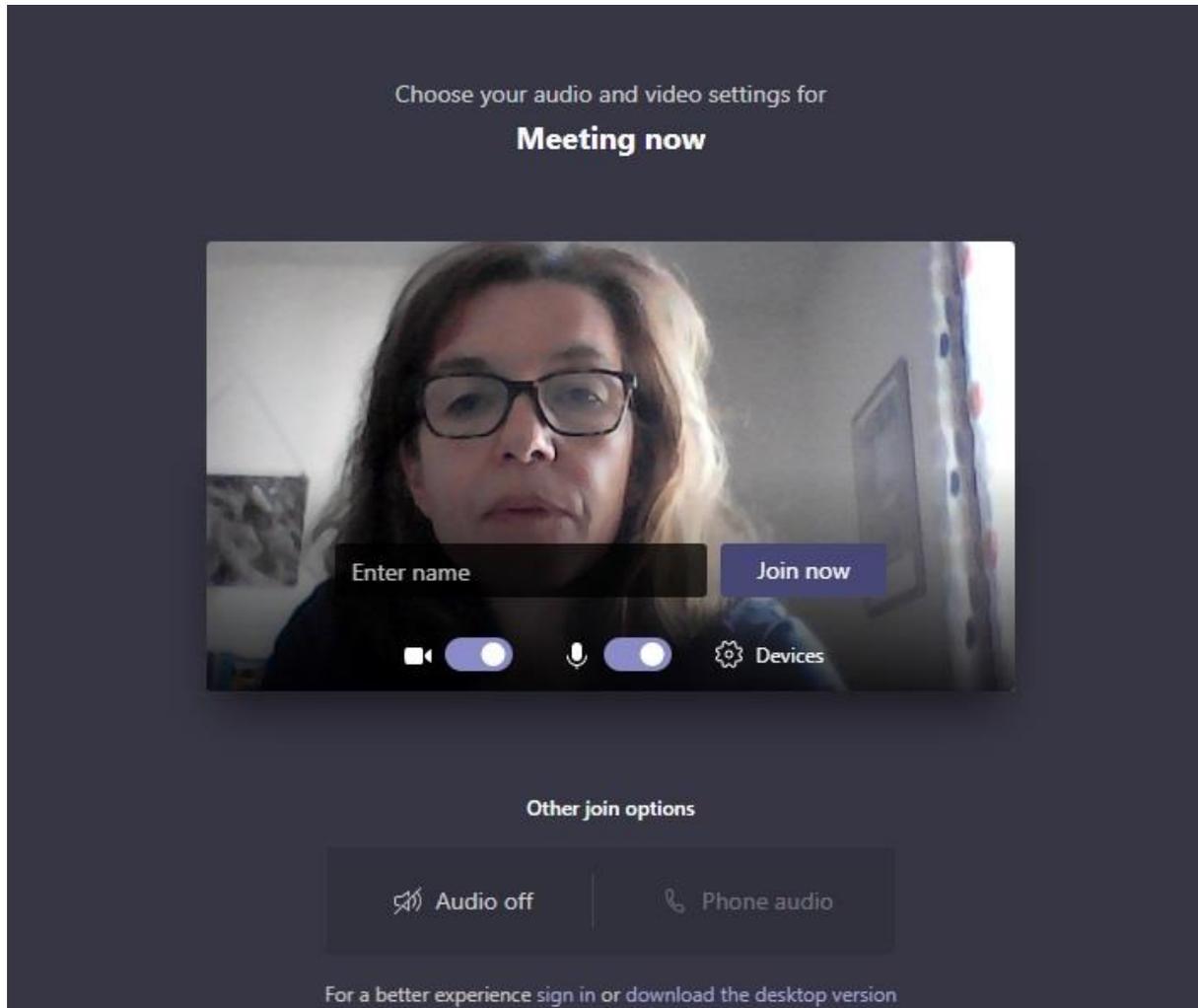


You will then be given the option to install Teams after it downloads. When you open the app you will join the meeting automatically.

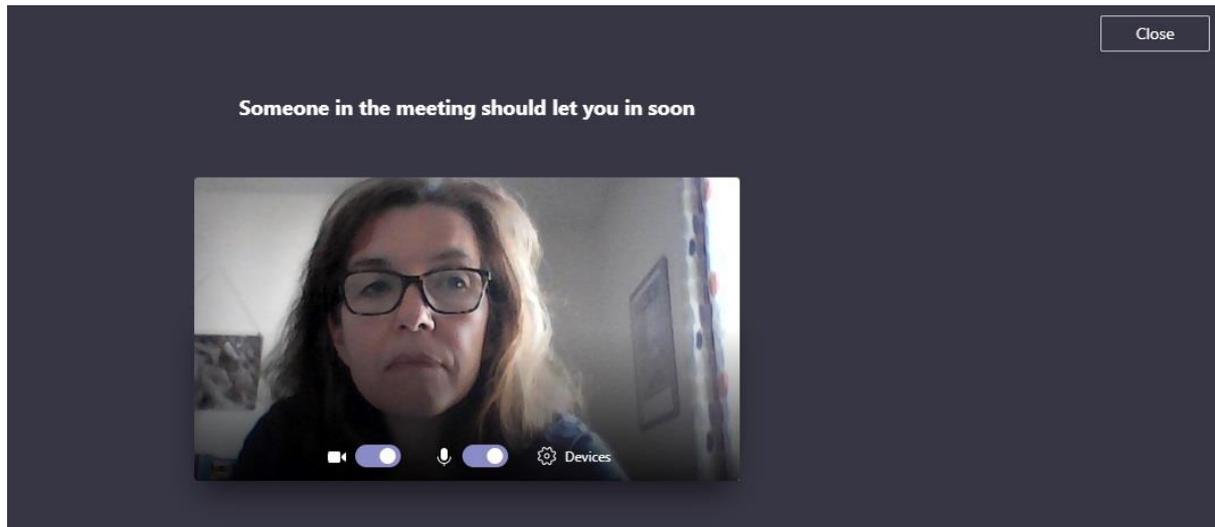


Step 3

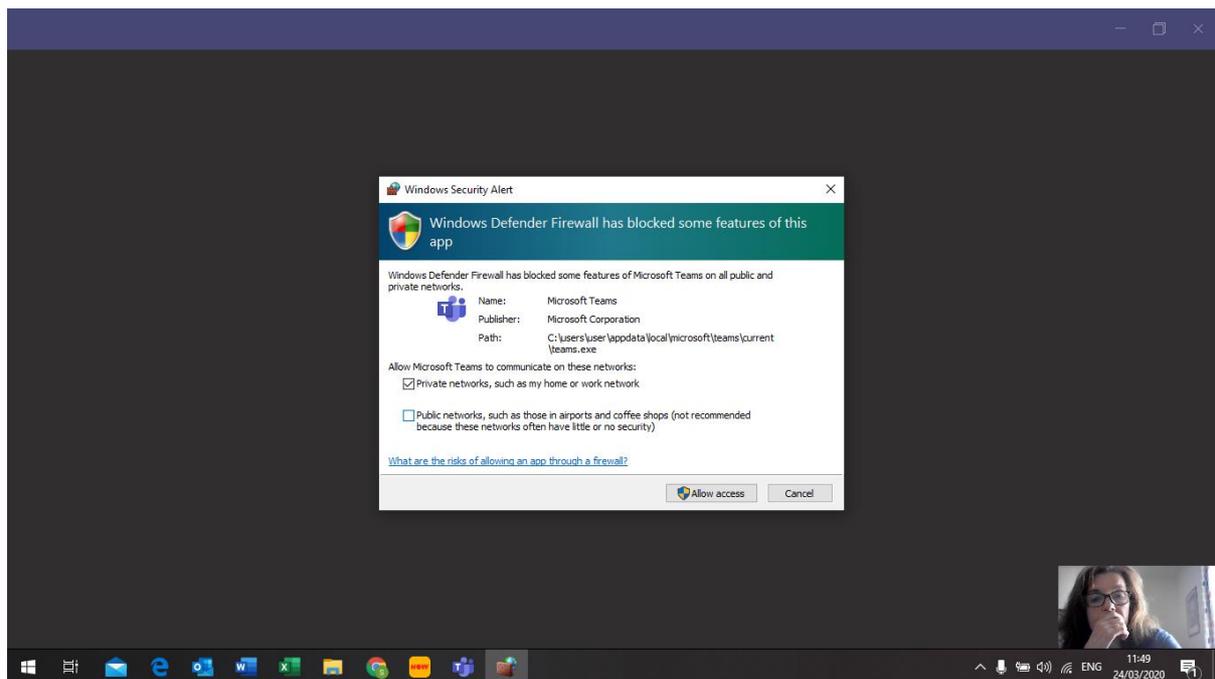
Enter your name (first name only is fine) and click the purple button – Join now.



You will then need to wait until the teacher responds to your request to join the meeting.



You might then see the screen below where you need to choose which box to tick and then press Allow access.

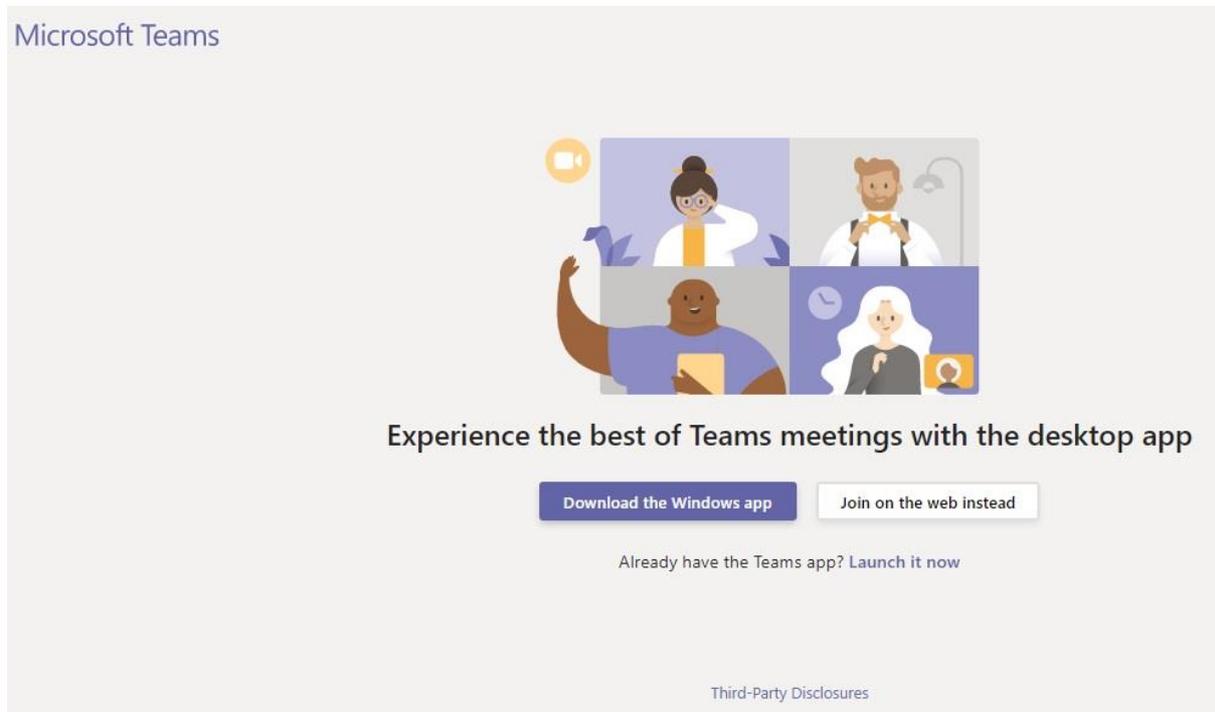


As soon as the teacher has accepted your request to join the meeting you should then see your teacher on the screen. To allow the teacher to see you and talk to you make sure your camera and microphone are switched on. The tool bar shown below will show on your screen. You can click on the icons to turn them on and off.

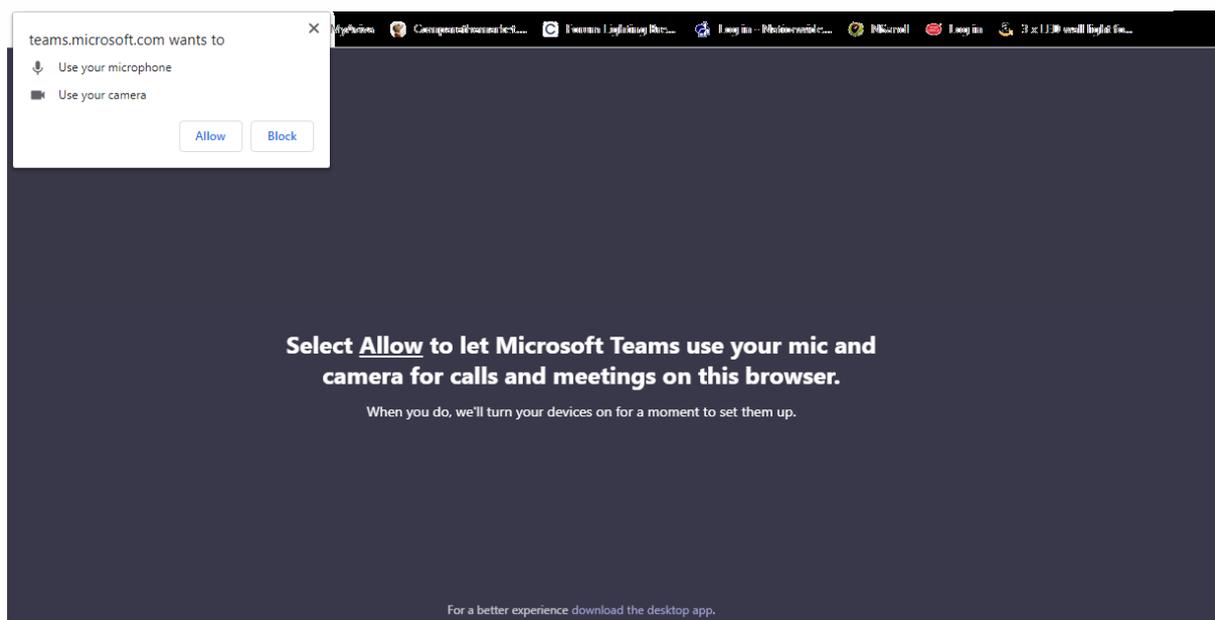


Join on the web instead

You can choose to Join on the web instead by clicking on the white button shown in the picture below.



You will then be asked to allow Microsoft Teams to use your mic and camera. When you have clicked allow you will be asked to Join now as in **Step 3** above.



Internet connection

For most people the internet connection should be fine for good quality video and audio. It is worth testing this with friends or family before starting the first lesson. If it seems slow there are several things you can try:

- Move your PC/device closer to the router (if you're far away the wi-fi signal isn't as strong). Or use a network cable to connect your computer to the router
- Checking that other people in the house aren't using the internet at the same time (e.g., streaming video or TV)
- Test the speed of the internet connection, for example, here: <https://www.speedtest.net>
- If there is a temporary problem with your line, you can contact your service provider to ask them to check for faults on the line

Not everyone has a fast broadband internet connection, or good mobile data signal. This can result in lower video quality, but generally the sound will be prioritised so you should be able to hear the teacher.

For those who don't have a fast-enough internet connection for live online digital lessons, Severn Arts teachers will be able to recommend resources, and support students' practice at home by other means such as email. But for many people, live online digital lessons will be the best way forward.

How to get the most out of a lesson

Setting up a space for learning

Although homes may not have much "spare space" and may have other people around, it is helpful to think about where the learner is going to be and get things set up before each lesson. This should make it easier and safer to enjoy the lesson. The teacher will likely have other students after the end of each lesson, so being set up and ready on time means you can make the most of the time.

The space should be somewhere:

- With room to play your instrument, and to set up your laptop/PC/phone
- Where you can focus, and that isn't noisy (e.g. not with a washing machine on, or a TV, or other people coming and going)
- Within earshot of a parent, carer, or responsible adult (to help sort out practical difficulties, or if the internet connection drops, or if the learner is uncomfortable about anything)

- That isn't an inappropriate place that you wouldn't invite teachers and other students into (like a bedroom)

Staying safe online

Treating the lessons in the same way you would in school

There are some other things to think about as lessons will be taking place in the informal space of people's homes rather than in the more "professional" setting of a school. It is important for the learning experience and for learners' safety that the same behaviour is expected in online lessons that would be expected at school.

Responsible behaviour and dress

To help make lessons safe and enjoyable, a parent or carer should be within earshot of the student taking part in the online lesson. Just as in a school or other face-to-face lesson, learners are asked to:

- Dress appropriately (e.g. not wearing pyjamas). Students are courteously asked to wear clothing that would normally be worn in public
- Follow the teacher's instructions
- Ask the teacher before leaving the session (e.g. to go to the toilet)
- Not take phone calls, message others, or use devices that aren't requested by the teacher for learning
- Not have other browsers or apps open during the online lesson to reduce the risk of inappropriate content being visible to others
- Not take screenshots or record video of sessions (as in schools, written permissions are needed to take photos or video of children and young people)

In an online lesson the background behind the learner will be visible to the teacher so, it is good to make sure:

- That you try and have a neutral background that doesn't show any personal information (e.g., screens with social media profiles), or personal items (e.g., laundry drying)
- Doesn't have anything that might offend others (e.g., posters with inappropriate language)
- That there isn't a TV on and screen showing content in the background

Responding to learner concerns

A parent/carer or responsible adult should be within earshot of the child during the online lesson. Students will be told that if they have any concerns before, during, or after a lesson they should ask the parent/carer for help. This could include for example:

- Technical issues with the computer or internet connection
- Practical issues, such as arranging the appropriate space to play their instrument
- Other issues, such as not being comfortable with what is happening in a lesson
- Tuning of, or problems with the instrument

The parent/carer should be aware that the reporting of any safeguarding concerns is the same as under Severn Arts Safeguarding Children Policy (just as it would be in face-to-face lessons in schools). Any concerns can be addressed to Severn Arts Designated Safeguarding Leads (Our Designated Safeguarding lead is Debbie Fawcett d.fawcett@severnarts.org.uk and the Deputy Safeguarding Lead is Ian Hattersley i.hattersley@severnarts.org.uk).

Teacher response to concerns

If the teacher feels the student hasn't followed the kind of behaviour expected in a school environment, in spite of prompting, or is concerned about something (inappropriate dress or language, for example), the teacher will stop the session for that learner, and then contact the parent or carer later to explain, and to help resolve any issues.

What we require and expect of parents or carers, and their involvement in lessons

Having the support of a parent/carer is one of the key factors in young people's musical development. And it is only natural that they may want to be involved and see what is happening in the lesson too.

Support from a parent or carer in setting up the online lesson is often needed. Being within earshot is important for safety as well as for practical help. Parents are expected to be present at the start and finish of lessons. This helps teachers make sure everything is alright and ready to go at the start, and so parents/carers know at the end of each session about plans for practice and the next lesson.

The level of involvement of the adult during the lesson will depend on the age of the student. Younger children may need a person in the room for the duration of the lesson to help keep them focused and safe, particularly if it's a new activity. But too much parental involvement can also be distracting or cause shyness with older students. In general, it is recommended that after the first few online lessons, the parent/carer is within earshot but not "in the lesson", particularly with older students wherever possible.



Questions or queries

Severn Arts very much looks forward to continuing with you on your musical journeys and exploring how to build a virtual musical community. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact your teacher, or the Severn Arts office on info@severnarts.org.uk

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