

Music (Edexcel)

“I think music in itself is healing. It’s an explosive expression of humanity. It’s something we are all touched by. No matter what culture we’re from, everyone loves music.” – Billy Joel

Music is extremely strong at Northampton High School. It helps students build relationships and confidence and provides many formal and informal performance opportunities throughout the year. The school benefits from connections with many professional working musicians and is staffed by a dedicated and talented team of permanent and peripatetic staff. The facilities have recently been refurbished and include 8 practice areas and 2 recording studios. Sibelius and Logic software are available for composers and are used to great effect each year.



Academic

A Level music follows the Edexcel specification and is weighted similarly to the GCSE music course. Students perform, compose and analyse music.

The performance standard necessary is equal to a minimum of Grade 7 ABRSM. Two compositions are submitted, with one assessing compositional techniques and the second being a free-choice submission. The final exam requires students to write two essays analysing musical elements of complex pieces of music and also to listen to extracts of studied pieces and identify elemental modulations. A high percentage of our students progress to study music at universities and conservatoires each year, for example 75% in 2019.

Co-Curricular

Music at the High School really begins outside the classroom, where numerous groups are run by the permanent and peripatetic staff. Part of the ethos of the music department is to prepare students to become working musicians. This involves preparing for particular events throughout the year in the same manner as one would as part of an ensemble.

Highlights of the year include a carol service, held at the stunning All Saints’ Church in Northampton, and the school musical production which takes place during the Summer Arts Season. Amidst these major events lie the Spring Composition Recital, the Summer Masterclass series and the biennial GDST Young Musician of the Year award.