

## **Poise, Presence and Ease in playing or singing - letting go of unhelpful habits**

At Abingdon School, students have the opportunity to take Alexander Technique lessons to support their instrumental or vocal studies and improve their well-being. These lessons teach the students to develop a high level of awareness and to let go of unconscious mental, physical and emotional habits that can lead to pain, postural issues, stress and performance anxiety. The tools that they learn can also be applied outside of lessons to help them manage the demands of everyday life by thinking and reacting in a calmer and more constructive way.

Some of the benefits of having lessons include:

- Playing/singing with freedom and ease
- Preventing pain and tension
- Being balanced and poised
- Transforming tone
- Improving breathing
- Embodied awareness – enhancing freedom and stage presence in performance
- Feeling calm and being able to cope with nerves and anxiety
- Having the tools to practise with efficiency and ease
- Improving technique and quality of action in playing
- Improving emotional resilience

### **What happens in a lesson?**

The teacher uses a very gentle hands-on contact and verbal directions to encourage the student to think differently about how they are using their body in different movements and activities, such as sitting at a desk, standing and walking, enabling an improved co-ordination, balance and poise. Students are also taught to become more self-aware and how to apply the Alexander Technique to their playing or singing to get the best from themselves and their music-making. Students will often be asked to lie down on a special table in the Constructive Rest position which offers optimum support for the back. The teacher will then work with them to release unnecessary muscular tension and quieten the mind and nervous system. Students often feel taller, lighter and calmer at the end of a lesson.

Trial lessons are available and can be schedule through the music department.

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