**Music in Religious Services**

**Updated 30 March 2021**

Schools often use music as part of their religious services. Examples include:

* + students and staff singing hymns during school assemblies
  + playing recorded music in a school chapel as part of a school service
  + students performing music at a school service held at a local church.

**National schools music licences**

Schools have entered into three national music licences:

* 1. the [APRA Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-apra-licence/), which allows schools to perform [musical works](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/musical-works/) for a school purpose, including at [school events](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/school-events/).
  2. the [AMCOS Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-amcos-licence/), which allows schools to [copy](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/copy/) and [communicate](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/communicate/) sheet music for a school purpose.
  3. the [School Event Licence,](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/school-event-licence/) which allows schools to make both visual and audio recordings of musical works and sound recordings to use at, or performed at, a school event.

All government schools, and most Catholic and independent schools, are covered by the national schools music licences.

Schools that are covered by the national schools music licences can rely on them when using religious music if:

* 1. the music is covered by the national schools music licences
  2. the service or event is for a school purpose
  3. they are using music in a way that is covered by the national schools music licences.

**How do I know if the music is covered by the national schools music licences?**

The majority of music is part of the [APRA AMCOS](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/apra-amcos-australasian-performing-right-association-and-australasian-mechanical-copyright-owners-society/) repertoire, and therefore covered by the national schools music licences, however a small number of composers/publishers are not. You can check whether a particular composer and/or music publisher is covered by the national schools music licences by searching [APRA AMCOS Works Search](https://www.apraamcos.com.au/search). We suggest contacting APRA AMCOS at [schools@apra.com.au](mailto:schools@apra.com.au) if the composer/music publisher does not show up in the search.

If the music is not part of the APRA AMCOS repertoire, you should contact [CCLI](https://au.ccli.com/copyright-licences/ccl-scl-licence-manual/) or [OneLicense](https://www.onelicense.net/how-it-works). They represent a number of publishers and composers of Christian liturgical music, and also offer music licences for congregational use. Note that the [CCLI](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/ccli-christian-copyright-licensing-international/) and OneLicense licences provide schools with access to the original sheet music, from which schools can make copies, and this may be appealing to some schools.

Sometimes composers or music publishers will be represented by both APRA AMCOS and CCLI or OneLicense. If this is the case, you can use their music under the national schools music licences.

**When is a service or event being held for a school purpose?**

School purposes are activities a school undertakes as part of its usual activities. These include providing educational services, as well as religious services for staff, students and members of the school community as part of normal school activities (eg an end-of-year school mass at a local church).

**How can I use music under the national schools music licences?**

Some of the ways in which schools can use music under the national schools music licences include:

* + performing musical works (eg a school choir or orchestra performing live music)
  + displaying sheet music (eg hymn music and/or lyrics on an interactive whiteboard)
  + printing sheet music for staff, students, parents and carers (copies cannot be lent to other members of the school community, and if the school is printing copies of sheet music for staff, students, parents or carers, the school will need to collect the copies at the end of the service)
  + playing sound recordings (eg background music as the school community arrives at a service). Catholic and independent schools can play sound recordings under an exception set out in section 106 of the Copyright Act. The musical works embodied in the sound recording are covered by the national music licences.

See the [Music Copyright Guide for Schools](https://smartcopying.edu.au/music-copyright-guide-for-schools/) for more information.

**FAQs**

**Can our school choir sing a musical work and or play recorded music during a school service at a church?**

Yes, as long as the music is part of APRA AMCOS’s repertoire, your school is covered by the national schools licences and the service is being held for a school purpose.

**Under the national schools music licence, how many copies of sheet music can I print out for students and staff attending a school religious service?**

As many copies as you need for the students and staff who are attending. You can also print out copies for parents and carers who are attending the service. You will need to collect the copies from staff, students, parents and carers at the end of the service.

**Can our school rely on the national schools music licences to display lyrics at a school religious service attended by students, staff, parents and carers?**

Yes.

**Can a church rely on the national schools music licences or the additional licences schools have with CCLI or OneLicense to use music in their church services or other congregational activities?**

No, only schools that are covered by the national schools licences or licences with CCLI or OneLicense can rely on those licences.