**Music in Religious Services**

**Updated 21 March 2022**

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 a [Schools Music Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-music-licence/) which allows schools to copy and share [musical works](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/musical-works/) and [sound recordings](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/sound-recordings/) in certain circumstances.

All government schools, and most Catholic and independent schools, are covered by the [Schools Music Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-music-licence/).

Schools that are covered by the [Schools Music Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-music-licence/) can rely on them when using religious music if:

* 1. the music is covered by the [Schools Music Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-music-licence/)
  2. the service or event is for a [school purpose](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/school-purpose/)
  3. they are using music in a way that is covered by the [Schools Music Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-music-licence/)

**How do I know if the music is covered by the** [**Schools Music Licence**](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-music-licence/)**?**

The majority of [musical works](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/musical-works/) (including [musical works](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/musical-works/) used in religious services) are 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 [Schools Music Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-music-licence/), however a small number of composers/publishers are not. You can check whether a particular composer and/or music publisher is covered by the Schools Music Licence 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 [musical work](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/musical-works/) 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 [Schools Music Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-music-licence/).

**When is a service or event being held for a** [**school purpose**](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/school-purpose/)**?**

[School purposes](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/school-purpose/) 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** [**Schools Music Licence**](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-music-licence/)**?**

Some of the ways in which schools can use music under the [Schools Music Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-music-licence/) include:

* performing [musical works](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/musical-works/)(eg a school choir or orchestra performing live music)
* communicating [musical works](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/musical-works/) (eg emailing the score and/or lyrics of a song)
* displaying [musical works](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/musical-works/) (eg hymn music and/or lyrics on an interactive whiteboard)
* copying [musical works](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/musical-works/) (eg printing sheet music for staff, students, parents and carers)
* playing [sound recordings](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/sound-recordings/)(eg background music as the school community arrives at a service). Catholic and independent schools can play [sound recordings](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/sound-recordings/)under an exception set out in section 106 of the Copyright Act and government schools under an interim agreement with PPCA. The [musical works](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/musical-works/)embodied in the [sound recording](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/sound-recordings/) are covered by the [Schools Music Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-music-licence/).

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**](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/musical-works/) **and or play recorded music during a school service at a church?**

Yes, in relation to the [musical work](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/musical-works/), as long as the [musical work](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/musical-works/) is part of APRA AMCOS’s repertoire and the service is part of your school's usual activities, your school is covered by the [Schools Music Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-music-licence/).

Yes, in relation to the [sound recording](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/sound-recordings/) under an exception set out in section 106 of the Copyright Act for catholic and independent schools, or under an interim agreement with PPCA for government schools.

**Under the national** [**Schools Music Licence**](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/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 the school reasonably considers are required for the service.

When you make the copies they must be made from an original copy of the sheet music. This means that the school (or a teacher at the school) first needs to purchase a copy of the sheet music from an authorised publisher before they make any copies. You should also label the copies with the words "AMCOS LICENSED COPY" and the following information:

* + name of the school
  + date copied
  + the name of the owner of the original sheet music that was copied (e.g. if the school bought the original, the school, or if it was a teacher, the teacher).

**Can our school rely on the** [**Schools Music Licence**](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-music-licence/) **to display lyrics (eg from an electronic whiteboard) at a school religious service attended by students, staff, parents and carers?**

Yes.

**Can a church rely on the** [**Schools Music Licence**](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-music-licence/) **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 [Schools Music Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/guidelines/education-licences/schools-music-licence/) or licences with CCLI or OneLicense can rely on those licences, not the church.