Studio Policy

Welcome

I am delighted that you are investing in music education for your child! Through this experience your child will not only learn how to play an instrument, but they will also develop skills that will serve them lifelong such as self-discipline, perseverance, teamwork, and responsibility. The primary focus will be on the development of character and kind, loving hearts through the medium of learning how to play the violin.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that the collaborative Suzuki Triangle experience is truly one of the most rewarding for the student, the parent, and the teacher. Family bonds are strengthened and students experience the highest levels of success when this loving environment is functioning at it's optimum.

My goal as the teacher is to help each of my students to develop their talents to their full potential, and to truly enjoy the music they are making. To this end, I would ask that you please read this policy thoroughly so that you will know what the expectations are and be prepared to assist me in working towards these goals.

The Suzuki Method & Talent Education

Please see separate handout.

Parent's Responsibilities (For parents with children ages 3-12):

Parents play a vital role in the development of their children, and this is especially true when they are young. Whichever parent decides to embark on this Suzuki experience with their child should plan on attending every weekly lesson and group class for children ages 12 and under, and will need to commit to practicing daily with their child.

Role of Home Teacher: For parents of children in this age bracket, your role will be that of the "home teacher" and as such, you will be responsible for practicing with your child on a daily basis (a minimum of five days a week is required). Please set aside a specific time for practice that can become an established part of your daily routine. Consistency is key and distractions should be minimal. For really young ones, splitting practice up in to smaller "mini-sessions" throughout the day can be helpful for maintaining focus and motivation.

Role in Private Lessons/Note-taking: Your main role in the lesson is to take detailed notes so that you can structure practice at home according to the teacher's recommendations. Some parents even bring recording devices to lessons, so as long as they are not a distraction, feel free to be creative! The more details you capture in the lesson, the better equipped you will be to construct positive practice sessions at home that will maximize the learning process. During the actual lesson, please do not interrupt either verbally or non-verbally (except to smile affirmingly!) It can be very tempting to want to say something to your child when you feel they are not representing the work you have done at home or are making poor behavior choices, but this disrupts the flow of the lesson and can be upsetting for the child. The teacher will deal with any of these issues directly with the child, both kindly and efficiently, and this will be discussed with you ahead of time. Your respect for the teacher's one on one time with the student is appreciated and this will help to maintain the focus of the child. If you have questions about anything that is happening in the lesson, please jot them down and we can discuss them at the end of the lesson. If your questions are of a more personal nature that should not be discussed in front of the child, please feel free to give me a call (preferred) or email me.

Listening: Listening to the Suzuki CD recordings is crucial for children to be able to develop their "musical ears," and so please make sure that this is occurring every day. Listening can happen while driving, during playtime, meals, at bedtime, etc., so please have CDs copied and prepared for various situations. The listening should be structured as follows:

- "Working" piece -- *10 times in a row*
- "Next" piece (after "working" piece) -- *10 times in a row*
- Whole CD for book level -- *At least twice a day*

***Parents of beginners are also recommended to purchase the Book 4 CD at the same time that the Book 1 CD is purchased so that students can listen to the concertos in Book 4 (i.e. the Bach Double) that Books 1-3 are preparing them to play. This is optional, but very motivational!

In General: Please be patient with your child's progress, especially during the first year of study. During this time we are laying the foundation for posture, technique, sound, intonation, etc. and this is a process that cannot be rushed. It might seem that your beginner is making very slow progress, but this first year is actually the time when they are learning and absorbing the most. Once these foundational items have been mastered, the learning pace and difficulty level for pieces will accelerate.

Parent's Responsibilities (for children of all ages):

Encouragement: Please be positive and encouraging and make every effort to assist the teacher in creating the best learning environment possible for your child. Positive reinforcement is key and so be sure to celebrate every small achievement.

Progress: Please be realistic in your expectations of "progress." Every child is different and consistent effort, cooperation, and a positive attitude are what is most important. As you are helping your child practice, **please remember that what is important is not what piece they are playing, but rather <u>how well</u> they are playing it.** Throughout the process of learning pieces, <u>character and skill development will be the focus</u>. ***That said, if someone asks you or your child what you are "working on right now" your answer should be: **"beautiful posture, beautiful tone and a beautiful heart."**

Communication: If you experience frustration over your child's behavior or progress, you are welcome to speak with me and we can discuss possible solutions. **However, please do not bring these issues up in front of the child as this can be embarassing and/or upsetting to them.** You may email or call me to set up a time to speak in person or over the phone, (the latter is preferred). I will be happy to speak with you so that we can discuss how to resolve any issues that may be occurring as quickly as possible.

Lessons: Please arrive at least five to ten minutes early to every lesson and group class so that your child will have time to go to the bathroom, eat a snack, get a drink of water, unpack, get tuned, etc. so that the lesson can start right on time. **To be clear -- students do not bring their violins in to my studio to unpack them and get ready for their private lesson. This should be done right outside my door in enough time such that when it is the lesson time, the students can walk right in with their violin in rest position, ready to go.** (The one exception to this rule is beginning students who are just learning about the violin, how to carry and hold it, etc. In these instances, the case comes with the student in to the lesson and I will let you know when we can transition to the student getting their violins out all by themselves). *Thank you for complying with this expectation so that we can maximize the lesson time.*

Repetition: Please be enthusiastic about doing repetitions! This is a vital element to the success of talent education and children tend to mirror the behavior of their adult role models. Even though you might tire of having to do something 100x, please remember that children often enjoy assignments such as these and it is very important (especially for young ones), to repeat small assignments over and over again for complete mastery.

Home Concerts: No matter what stage of development your child is in, organizing a home concert for them to showcase their hard work to family and friends can be extremely affirming and motivational for your child. Feel free to be creative and discuss your ideas with me in the lesson.

Performances: Plan to attend and participate in all student recitals and program performances. It is also recommended that you attend any performances given by the teacher in addition to as many other professional performances as you possibly can. The more exposure your child has to quality performances, the better.

Tuition: Please pay tuition in full and on time as agreed upon with the Preucil School of Music.

Private Lessons

Private lessons form the heart of each student's musical education and will occur on a weekly basis. The instruments I teach are violin and viola and the curriculum is based on the Suzuki Method of "Talent Education." Students ages 3-4 (Pre-Twinklers) will share their weekly lesson with another student at the same age and level. Students ages 5 and up will have one individual private lesson a week. Students at the Pre-Twinkle through Happy Farmer level will have a 30-minute lesson, those playing the Bach Minuets through the end of Book 3 will have a 45-minute lesson, and all students Book 4 and up will have an hour lesson. For students ages 12 and under it is absolutely required that a parent be in attendance for all lessons. For those students ages 12 and up parental attendance is optional. Please note that other family members such as siblings are allowed to be in the lesson so long as they are not a distraction. If you plan to bring younger children please provide them with quiet activities to occupy them.

All cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned OFF during lessons unless approved by the teacher.

Group Classes

Group classes play an important role in Talent Education and are a required part of the program. These classes are a companion to the private lessons and will help to reinforce technical skill development, repertoire review, listening, reading, and musicality. Students will also have the opportunity to develop their teamwork and ensemble skills in a fun environment, playing with their peers. Parental attendance is required and you should plan to sit quietly and take notes as this is a lesson.

Please note that other family members such as siblings are allowed to sit in on the group class so long as they are not a distraction. If you plan to bring younger children please provide them with quiet activities to occupy them.

All cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned OFF during group classes unless approved by the teacher.

New Students

All new students (both beginners and transfers) and their parents are required to observe at least two private lessons and one group class before enrolling.

*****IMPORTANT*****

The parents of beginning Pre-Twinkle students will be required to take the first 4-6 weeks of lessons by themselves (without the child present). This time is known as "parent education" and during these weeks we will cover all the components of the philosophy and "Mother Tongue" Method thoroughly, the parent will learn the basics of how to play the violin, you will be given resources and effective strategies for how to practice with your child at home, and we will go over any additional questions or concerns that you might have so that you will feel confident and secure about moving in to your role as the Suzuki Parent/Home Teacher.

Parents of transfer students who are already playing will are required to do 1-3 weeks of parent education. During this time, the student will be present to hear any relevant discussion and to play for the teacher so that the teacher can form a strategy for the continued development of the student.

For siblings who decide to take lessons -- if their sibling is already in my studio then parent education will be left to my discretion. However, if their sibling is in another studio, then the parent will need to do the 4-6 weeks of parent education for a pre-twinkler or 1-3 weeks if the sibling is transferring from another studio.

Recitals & Special Events

There are two recital dates for my studio this year and they are:

Sunday, March 9, 2014 @ 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, April 13, 2014 @ 2:00 p.m.

Recital date assignments are a cooperative effort between the Preucil School of Music administration and faculty. That said, I will be in touch with you individually about which recital you or your child will be placed on. These recitals are an opportunity to celebrate the student's progress and achievements during the semester, and participation is required. Recitals may require an extra fee to pay your accompanist. Other opportunities may arise to perform in special venues (or for special events), and the studio will be made aware of these opportunities as soon as the teacher is able to confirm. Informal performances opportunities in outreach venues will also be offered.

The annual Hancher String Concert is part of the curriculum for all students. An additional fee will be collected by the Preucil School of Music for those students who have NOT registered for group and/or orchestra to participate in the Hancher concert.

Summer Institutes

Attending a summer Suzuki institute is one of the best ways to motivate your child and kickstart their continued development for the upcoming year. Plan now to attend an institute in the summer of 2013 and be sure to ask me about applying for scholarships or financial aid. For more information about upcoming institutes, check the SAA website here: http://suzukiassociation.org/events/institutes/

*Special Note: I ask that every family in my studio participate in some type of workshop or institute experience every year. That said, **this year the Preucil School of Music will be offering the course "Every Child Can" that will be taught by Christie Felsing on Saturday, October 12, 2013.** The fee for this course is $75 and this is significantly cheaper than what you would pay to attend an institute. Unfortunately, this is not a class for children, but if you are wanting to "get your feet wet" in terms of attending an institute or workshop, this class would be

an excellent option. Please contact me and/or the Preucil School of Music office for more details.

Lesson Schedule

The program year is divided up in to two semesters with the first semester running from August 26 till December 20, 2013, and the second semester running from the January 6, 2014 till June 7, 2014.

Important dates to note:

- Preucil Fall Fundraiser, "A Night in Iowa," *(4:00 - 7:00 p.m. @ Celebration Barns)*
- Preucil makeup lesson days for fall semester: November 25 - 26, 2013
- Preucil winter break: December 23, 2013 - January 5, 2014
- Preucil Annual String Concert: February 2, 2014 *(2:00 p.m. @ IMU)*
- Preucil makeup lesson days for spring semester: June 9 - 14, 2014
- Preucil summer session for lessons: June 16 - August 2, 2014

  ** This is subject to the teacher's summer schedule*

Attendance & Makeup Policy

Consistent, punctual attendance to both private lessons and group classes is absolutely mandatory. If for some reason you have to miss your lesson, please do your best to let me know at least 24 hours in advance. **I will only be able to offer ONE make-up lesson each semester for student absences due to <u>ILLNESS</u>, (this is Preucil policy).** **The only exception to this rule will be for those whose spring break dates differ from the University of Iowa's spring break (March 17-24, 2013). If your child's spring break falls during a different week then I am willing to re-schedule their lesson. However, you must let me know at the beginning of the semester if this is the case.* If I need to miss your lesson for any reason, I will do my best to let you know at least 24 hours in advance, and I will schedule a make-up lesson for you. *Please note that if a student misses three or more lessons in one semester that are not due to an extreme situation (i.e. medical emergency or death in the family), their spot in the studio will be forfeit and given to someone on the waiting list.*

Instruments & Other Required Materials

It is very important that your child have an instrument that fits comfortably and is up to the task of being played beautifully. I want to help you get the best instrument for your needs and this will require me to measure and fit your child in person, so please **<u>DO</u> <u>NOT</u>** rent or purchase instruments or bows without consulting me first. Quality in stringed instruments can vary a great deal and while it might seem like you are getting a great deal, without proper knowledge, it can be very easy to purchase/rent something that is of poor quality.

Here are some options for instrument rental companies in the area:

West Music
(319) 351-2000
1212 5th St.
Coralville, IA 52241
http://www.westmusic.com/

Schultz Strings
(319) 895-8484
1756 1st Ave. NE
Cedar Rapids, IA
http://www.schultzstrings.com/
*John is also on the faculty of the Preucil School of Music and so can bring items directly to the school.

For the poly-pad shoulder rests you will need to contact:

Michael Kimber
mkimber@centurylink.net
http://m_kimber.tripod.com/mkpolypad.html

Fees & Payment

Tuition payments are divided into equal monthly payments, with the first and last monthly payment due at registration. For each succeeding month, tuition is due by the 10th, with a $15 late fee added after that date. All finances are handled directly with the Preucil School of Music Main Campus Office (337-4156).

*****Everyone in my studio is required to become a member of the Suzuki Association of the Americas. Please bring a check for $30 to your first lesson and I will process your membership for you.** This will give you a yearly subscription to the SAA journal and access to many other wonderful resources.

*****All the parents in my studio are also required to participate in the "Parents as Partners Online" program that the SAA sponsors every year.** This carries a minimal cost and will give you access to video resources on a wide variety of topics related to your journey as a Suzuki parent.

There may also be additional fees for paying an accompanist for recitals. You will also be responsible for paying rental or purchase fees for instruments and for buying all necessary materials (books, recordings, metronome, music stand, strings, rosin, etc.) which you need, as well as any instrument maintenance not covered by your rental agreement. You may also have the opportunity to attend master classes, workshops, or institutes, which would have associated costs.

Your signature indicates that you have read this entire studio policy and are in compliance with it.

Parent_____Date_____

Teacher_____Date_____