

# AMANDA KERR SUZUKI VIOLIN & FIDDLE STUDIO

## 2016 STUDIO POLICIES

### SECTION I:

#### ... a quick note about the STUDENT, PARENT, TEACHER triangle

Before signing up for music lessons, it is important for the student, parent, and teacher to commit to sharing equal responsibilities throughout your music lesson experience. I teach using Dr. Shinichi Suzuki's "Mother Tongue" method which teaches the student music the same way they learn a language. I am a strong believer in Dr. Suzuki's theory that every child is born with the ability of becoming a capable musician with proper education and a positive practice environment at home. By knowing your responsibilities as a student or as a parent (and by understanding my responsibilities as a teacher,) Your child will flourish in musical growth.

#### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- THE DESIRE TO LEARN – Students should be inspired to play and to try new things every time they walk through the studio door. The best way to absorb knowledge is to be excited about it!
- RESPECT – Students must be respectful towards the teacher and the parent during lessons and during practice time. (Remember, the parent will become the teacher when practicing at home!)
- DAILY LISTENING – The reason children can learn to speak their native language at such a young age is because they hear it spoken around them all the time. If they hear the music they are learning just as often, playing music will feel just as natural as speaking their native tongue.
- DAILY PRACTICE – If you do not have time to practice every day, then this may not be the method for you. This goes for both the student and the parent. Every day you go without practicing you will lose valuable knowledge and muscle memory needed to progress.

#### PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- PROVIDING QUALITY LEARNING MATERIALS – There is nothing more frustrating than seeing a student do everything correctly, but yet struggle to create a beautiful sound because they don't have a comfortable shoulder-rest, they need new strings, or they have an instrument that was set up improperly. (For a full list of materials needed, see Section 5: Learning Materials.)
- PARENT ATTENDANCE – Parents must attend every private and group lesson and take notes! Even the most focused of students will not remember everything they did in their lesson. Parents will be given guidance from the teacher at every lesson on how to assist their child when practicing at home.
- DAILY LISTENING – While this is also the student's responsibility, you can greatly encourage how quickly your child learns by playing the Suzuki recordings as much as possible. I recommend playing the CD for the book they are in plus one book higher. Play them in the car, in the background during meals or during homework time until it is stuck in everyone's head. This may seem excessive, but if the music is stuck in your child's head, then they will know the music that much more.

With these responsibilities in mind, I promise to provide you and your child with a positive learning environment and all of the tools needed to create that environment at home.

PAGE 1

## SECTION 2:

### Attendance

It's important to know that music lessons are a big time commitment. Not only will you be expected to show up for private and group lessons, but you will need to find time to practice each day. Students who often miss lessons or practice time will progress much slower (or may not progress at all). Most teachers have similar attendance policies with this in mind.

- If you absolutely need to miss a lesson (due to sickness, family emergency, etc.) you must keep me informed before 2:30pm that day.
- Missed lessons will not be reimbursed, but can be made up when time is available. (Skype lessons can be arranged if you are out of town or can't leave home due to weather or sickness.)
- Scheduling a make-up lesson is the parent's responsibility.

Please note that while I am very committed to the time I have scheduled for lessons, I am not an "on-call" music teacher. Being a music teacher requires a lot of time to prepare for. This is why it's important to make your lesson time a priority and if you need to make a change, give me plenty of advanced notice.

## SECTION 3:

### Studio Etiquette and Behavior

In addition to creating something beautiful, music lessons provide children with many valuable life-skills. Respect, focus, and discipline will be a part of each lesson and must be consistently encouraged at home. With that said, it's also important to know that parents need to trust me as a teacher to handle each situation during the lesson time. Hearing multiple directions (or the same directions over and over again) from both the teacher and parent during a lesson can be stressful and inefficient for the student during lessons. To be clear, I am the teacher during lessons and the parent is the teacher during practice time.

This year, group classes will be held in the downstairs classroom at the Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. At A.U.U.F. we are guests, and there may be other groups meeting in the building. Please use inside voices and come directly to the downstairs classroom when entering. On occasion, we may be using the upstairs Sanctuary. Food and drink are not allowed. Pianos are property of A.U.U.F. and are off-limits to children. All children must be accompanied by an adult at A.U.U.F.

Finally, please keep in mind when coming to private lessons is that my studio is also my home. While I have lots of training and experience in being a teacher, I cannot be a baby-sitter and a teacher at the same time. Here are some important rules to ensure the safety of your children, my teaching space, and my home:

- Students must wash their hands before each lesson. In addition to keeping me safe, this will also make your instrument last a long time! (See Section 7: Instrument Care.)
- Children should NEVER be left unattended in my home. In addition to being present during lessons, parents need to have full supervision of their children before and after lessons. As students come and go in between lessons, I am often making preparations for other lessons and cannot be responsible for what happens in between.
- With the exception of siblings who both take lessons, siblings are best left at home. Your attention to the lesson is compromised if you are watching over another child. If you absolutely must bring siblings, they must stay in the studio under the parent's supervision at all times and for safety and liability reasons should never be left unattended anywhere in my home.

PAGE 2

## SECTION 4:

### Lesson Rates, Payment Options, and Billing

Discounts are given when families pay for the semester before semester orientation. This encourages families to make their lessons and classes a priority in their schedule. Weekly private lessons, group classes, and recitals are a mandatory part of my studio and are included into your registration fees. Due to past experiences, I can no longer wait until the end of each month to be paid. Missed lessons will not be reimbursed. In cases of emergency or sickness, missed lessons can be made-up when time is available. (See Section 2: Attendance.)

#### TUITION RATES:

- Pre-Twinkle (for first-year students under the age of 5)

|                                   |              |  |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Private Lessons (15 weeks x \$30) | \$450        | (pre-paid semester price - \$390)        |
| Group Classes (6 weeks x \$20)    | \$120        | (pre-paid semester price - \$80)         |
| Recital Fee                       | \$25         | (pre-paid semester price - \$25)         |
| <u>TOTAL DUE:</u>                 | <u>\$595</u> | (pre-paid semester price- <u>\$495</u> ) |

- Twinkle Stars (for first-year students over the age of 5)

|                                   |              |  |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Private Lessons (15 weeks x \$40) | \$600        | (pre-paid semester price - \$520)        |
| Group Classes (6 weeks x \$20)    | \$120        | (pre-paid semester price - \$80)         |
| Recital Fee                       | \$25         | (pre-paid semester price - \$20)         |
| <u>TOTAL DUE:</u>                 | <u>\$745</u> | (pre-paid semester price- <u>\$625</u> ) |

- Advanced (for all levels past Twinkle Graduation)

|                                   |              |  |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Private Lessons (15 weeks x \$40) | \$600        | (pre-paid semester price - \$520)        |
| Group Classes (6 weeks x \$25)    | \$150        | (pre-paid semester price - \$100)        |
| Recital Fee                       | \$25         | (pre-paid semester price - \$25)         |
| <u>TOTAL DUE:</u>                 | <u>\$775</u> | (pre-paid semester price- <u>\$645</u> ) |

\*FOR FAMILIES WITH ONE OR MORE SIBLINGS – One sibling per family will receive 50% off of their tuition.

#### BILLING:

Payments can be made by cash (in person only), check, or online through PayPal or Amazon Payments. Online payments can be made using my email address ([fancyfiddler@gmail.com](mailto:fancyfiddler@gmail.com)). Please notify me when making an online payment so I can make sure it's gone through.

Invoices are sent via snail-mail after your last lesson of each month along with a calendar and newsletter. Additional invoices can be sent online after the first day of the month if selected. It will include your balance and attendance for that month. It will also tell you if any make-up lessons are needed. Please look over these invoices carefully. Running a studio by myself means doing all of my accounting, and unfortunately that sometimes means I make errors. If there are any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me so we can resolve the issue.

## SECTION 5:

### Learning Materials

One of your responsibilities as a parent is to make sure your child has quality tools to make their learning experience fun, easy, and effective. It's important to note that violins are hand-made instruments and no two instruments will ever sound or feel the same. The best way to select the right violin, is to go to your local violin shop and try a few out that are in your price-range. For smaller musicians, I often suggest renting an instrument since children will often grow out of their instrument after a year or two. (Shar Music has great instrument rentals. All of their instruments wonderful quality and are set up very well for students. Over time your equity goes towards owning a quality instrument!)

#### REQUIRED LEARNING MATERIALS:

- Violin
- Bow
- Rosin
- Shaped Shoulder Rest (I prefer either Everest or Kun)
- Tuner (free smart-phone apps are available)
- Cleaning Cloth
- Notebook (for parents to take notes during lessons)
- Suzuki Violin Books (with the CD!)
- American Fiddle Method Books (with the CD!)
- Folder or Binder for extra sheet music

#### HELPFUL (BUT NOT REQUIRED) MATERIALS:

- Sheet Protectors
- Dividers
- Staff Paper (print for free at [www.blanksheetmusic.net](http://www.blanksheetmusic.net))
- Metronome (listen for free at [www.metronomeonline.com](http://www.metronomeonline.com))
- Recording Device (either a camera, mp3 recorder, or even just a phone that will record!)

## SECTION 6:

### Instrument Maintenance & Repair

While I am capable of doing small repairs such as changing a string, or fitting a bridge, I know that the luthier at your local violin shop would be able to do these things much faster and will probably do a much better job. It's very important to keep a good relationship with your luthier. If you ask nicely, they will often show you how to change your strings yourself and tell you any other things you may need to do to keep your instrument in tip-top shape. Owning or leasing an instrument is much like owning or leasing a car. Continuous maintenance is essential, and while some repairs can be done at home, most repairs are best done by the professionals. Here are some of my favorite Violin Shops:

Petr's Violin Shop – 1408 Hyder Street, Anchorage, AK 99501 (907-276-1800)

John Osnes Violins – 8900 Jupiter Drive, Anchorage, AK 99507 (907-346-3609)

The Horn Doctor – 1000 Ingra Street, Anchorage, AK 99501 (907-272-4676)

PAGE 4

## SECTION 7:

### Instrument Care

Owning or renting a musical instrument is a big investment. It's important to watch your children very carefully around their instrument. If you have spent a lot of money on an instrument, it's not a bad idea to get it insured.

Here is a routine all violinists should follow before they play.

- 1) Make sure hands are clean and dry before handling any musical instrument.
- 2) Tighten (but do not over-tighten) and rosin the bow. (PENCIL TEST: There should be just enough room for a pencil between the middle of the bow and the horse-hair.)
- 3) Carefully slide your shoulder rest on one side at a time. (Support the violin by the neck and never set your violin down on the bridge.)
- 4) Hold the violin in rest position with the bow pointed down when you're not playing to keep your instrument safe!

After you are done playing...

- 1) Loosen the bow hair and lock the bow into the case.
- 2) Carefully slide the shoulder rest off one side at a time and put it away.
- 3) Wipe rosin and dust off of your violin with a dry cloth. (Never use water or any other liquid to clean your violin!)
- 4) Strap your violin into the case and put a cloth over the bridge. (Double-check to make sure the case is latched before picking it up!)

\*\*\*TAKE YOUR TIME!!! Accidents happen when you try to do too many things at once\*\*\*

Here are some things you can do to make sure your instrument stays in good condition for a long time...

- 1) Avoid quick changes in temperature or humidity. Keep your violin away from the heater or air conditioner and NEVER leave your violin in the car!
- 2) Avoid touching the bow hair since dirt and oils keep it from working. (Bow hair should be replaced about twice a year.)
- 3) Don't tighten your bow too much, and always loosen it when you are done playing to avoid warping.
- 4) Replace the strings at least once a year. Dirty hands or playing with long fingernails will make the strings unravel. Even without unraveling, the strings will start to sound muted or muddy over time. Newer strings will resonate more and have a clear, bright sound.
- 5) Avoid bumping your instrument (even when it's in the case!) Even the slightest bump can cause damage to your violin or knock it out of tune.