

# AMANDA KERR'S SUZUKI VIOLIN & FIDDLE STUDIO

## 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. Shin'ichi 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 strive to be inspired to play and to try new things every time they walk through the door. The best way to absorb knowledge is to be excited about it!
- RESPECT – Students will be expected to practice being 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 at least a little bit 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 & Fiddle 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.

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## 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.) please try to let me know before 2pm that day. (I usually keep my phone in a separate room once I start teaching in the afternoon.)
- 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

Positive encouragement is a big part of Suzuki Method, and is primarily how I handle disciplinary events in my studio. While your role as an active parent is very important during lessons, please note that as an experienced teacher, you should trust me to handle most disciplinary situations. Part of my job as a Suzuki teacher is to model and encourage politeness, respect, and good behavior. Most younger children won't have these skills mastered, and I do not expect them to until they are quite a bit older, so I know the best thing I can do as a teacher is to be patient and acknowledge good behavior when I see it. With that said, no one will know a child and what he or she needs better than their parent, so if you notice that something does not seem to be working, please talk to me about it (preferably not in front of the child).

This year, group classes will be held in the downstairs classroom at the Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. At AUUF, 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 AUUF and are off-limits to children. All children must be accompanied by an adult at AUUF and are not allowed to be left unattended anywhere in the building.

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 are *never* allowed to be left unattended anywhere in my home.

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## 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. 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 Group Classes (for students under the age of 5 who are preparing for private lessons)

Group Classes (15 weeks x \$25)	\$375	(pre-paid semester price - \$325)
Recital Fee	\$25	(pre-paid semester price - \$25)
<b>TOTAL DUE:</b>	<b>\$400</b>	<b>(pre-paid semester price- <u>\$350</u>)</b>
  
- Twinkle Stars (for pre-twinkle students ages 5 and up who have graduated to their "real violin")

25-35 min Private Lessons (15 weeks x \$35)	\$525	(pre-paid semester price - \$455)
Group Classes (8 weeks x \$25)	\$200	(pre-paid semester price - \$150)
Recital Fee	\$30	(pre-paid semester price - \$25)
<b>TOTAL DUE:</b>	<b>\$755</b>	<b>(pre-paid semester price- <u>\$630</u>)</b>
  
- Twinkle Graduates (for students who have graduated from Twinkle Theme & Suzuki Variations)

40-50 min Private Lessons (15 weeks x \$45)	\$675	(pre-paid semester price - \$585)
Group Classes (8 weeks x \$25)	\$200	(pre-paid semester price - \$150)
Recital Fee	\$30	(pre-paid semester price - \$25)
<b>TOTAL DUE:</b>	<b>\$905</b>	<b>(pre-paid semester price- <u>\$760</u>)</b>

\*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.

As soon as all of the registration forms are in (hopefully by January 7th), an invoice will be sent via snail-mail along with a schedule and all of the information you need to prepare for your first class. Additional invoices can be sent online (if selected on your registration) in addition to the physical copy. Payment is due on January 14th.



## SECTION 5:

### Learning Materials

One of your responsibilities as a parent is to make sure your child has the proper tools to make their learning experience fun, easy, and effective. I often like to compare buying or renting a violin to buying or renting a car: Getting a brand-new high-end car from a qualified dealership is usually pretty expensive (and I realize does not fit into everyone's budget), but comes with a lower risk of any mechanical issues. Getting a used car may be more affordable, but comes with an increased risk of having some hidden (and often expensive) problems... If you were to get a used car from an unqualified source, it would probably be in your best interest to have it looked over by a qualified mechanic before taking out on its first road-trip. With that said, please get to know your preferred luthier. They can look over your instrument and let you know what you need to be doing to keep it in tip-top shape for a long time (See Section 6: Instrument Maintenance & Repair.)

My suggestion is to go to a couple of violin shops and try a few instruments out that are in your price-range. It's important for the instrument to make a smooth, resonant sound and for it to be comfortable to play. For smaller musicians, I often suggest renting an instrument since children will often grow out of their instrument after a year or two. (Petr's Violin Shop and Alaska Music & Sound have wonderful instrument rentals. All of their violins are excellent quality and are set up very well for students.)

#### REQUIRED LEARNING MATERIALS:

- a *properly* set up Violin & Bow ("Twinkle Tots" will NOT need an instrument for the first few weeks of classes.)
- Rosin
- Cleaning Cloth
- Shaped Shoulder Rest (I prefer either Everest or Kun)
- Notebook & Pencil (for parents to take notes during lessons)
- "Bunny Ballads" by Kathleen Spring (for "Twinkle Tots" and "Twinkle Stars" students only)
- "Suzuki Violin School" Book \*revised edition!\* (I recommend owning the book you are in plus the next book.)
- "Suzuki Violin School" Recording \*revised edition!\* (You can download it online, buy the CD, or purchase the book & the CD together.)
- "American Fiddle Method" Books (with the C.D.!)
- Folder or Binder for extra sheet music

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

- Humidifier (either in your case or in your home. Some violin shops require you use one if you are renting)
- Tuner (look for a free tuning app if you have a smart phone!)
- 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! Please just remember that all pictures and videos are not to be shared without permission!)
- "Nurtured by Love" by Shin'ichi Suzuki
- Music Mind Games "Puppy Pack" (these are the same materials I use in group class, only smaller!)
- Membership with the Suzuki Association of the Americas – This gets you a regular magazine in the mail as well as access to the "Parents as Partners" online blog



## 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 your self 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)

[Alaska Music & Sound](#) – 1000 Ingra Street, Anchorage, AK 99501 (907-272-4676)

## 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.)

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.