

Student Name: _____ Parent Name: _____

STUDIO POLICIES & PARENT GUIDEBOOK

2021-2022



Sharon Neufeld

Director and Instructor of Violin & Viola

www.TheSuzukiAcademy.com

TheSuzukiAcademy@gmail.com

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**** PLEASE NOTE ****

*Enrollment in The Suzuki Academy indicates your acceptance of all Information,
Guidelines and Policies contained in this Parent Guidebook.*

Please sign here AFTER you have read and initialed in all required sections in this Guidebook.

Parent Signature: _____ *Date:* _____

March 1, 2021

Dear Academy Parents and Students,

Welcome to The Suzuki Academy! I am excited to continue my journey as a Suzuki educator “back home” in the Greater Houston area, and I look forward to a wonderful year of growing together!

My goal is to provide an excellent education and many opportunities for students to become lifelong learners, not just in music but in every walk of life. As Dr. Suzuki was known to say,

“Teaching music is not my main purpose. I want to make good citizens, noble human beings. If a child hears fine music from the day of his birth, and learns to play it himself, he develops sensitivity, discipline and endurance. He gets beautiful heart.”

Please take the time to read thoroughly through this Parent Guidebook, and keep it close by for quick and easy reference throughout the year. It will answer many questions that you may already have, as well as those which will come up along the way.

You are welcome to contact me if you have any further questions that are not answered here. Due to the fullness of my teaching schedule, email is generally the best way to contact me. You may reach me at TheSuzukiAcademy@gmail.com.

Let’s have a fantastic year together!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon Neufeld". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Academy Director and Instructor of Violin & Viola

MEET MS. SHARON



SHARON NEUFELD is a trained Violin & Viola Instructor registered with the Suzuki Association of the Americas (SAA). She operates her private studio in the Fulshear area, west of Houston, TX. Prior to moving back home to Houston, she operated private studios in Sioux Falls, SD; Luverne, MN; and Rochester, MN. She was also the Instrumental Ensembles Director at Schaeffer Academy in Rochester, MN. Between 2013-2017, Ms. Sharon was the Executive Artistic Director of the Indianapolis Suzuki Academy (ISA), where she also served as ISA's Director & Instructor of Violin and Viola Programs and directed special programs such as Chamber Music, Performance Groups, and the Master Class Series. Before moving to Indianapolis, Ms. Sharon was the Founder & Owner of The Suzuki Academy of Southwest Colorado (formerly Rose Haven Suzuki Academy) and Kindermusik at The Suzuki Academy of Southwest Colorado, both in Durango, CO. During her tenure in Durango, she also served as the Director of the Preparatory Strings Orchestra of the Four Corners Youth Symphony Association, and the Academic Director of the Durango Chamber Music Academy.

A lifelong musician who began Violin lessons at the age of 7, Ms. Sharon added the Viola to her musical life at the age of 12. She holds a Master of Music in Viola Performance from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music in Houston, TX; a Bachelor of Music in Viola Performance from Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Oberlin, OH; and graduated from The High School for Performing and Visual Arts in Houston, TX. Her early training as a student, and later as a teacher, was with Master Suzuki Violin Teacher Judy Offman in Houston. She has registered SAA Violin/Viola Teacher Training Courses with Judy Offman (ECC, Violin Unit 1), Martha Shackford (Violin/Viola Units 2-3), Nancy Jackson (Violin Units 4-7, Suzuki Principles in Action, and Bowing Skills through Book 6), William Preucil, Sr. (Viola Units 5-6), and Pat D'Ercole (Violin Long-Term Practicum). She is also in the process of attaining her SAA Certificate of Achievement (Level 1), and is working towards certification to become an SAA Teacher Trainer for Violin and Viola.

Ms. Sharon has had close to 30 years of experience teaching Violin and Viola in public schools, music centers, and privately in her home. Her teaching is centered on The Suzuki Philosophy, specializing in working with young children (age 4 and up). She incorporates scales, technique development, basic music theory & history, and ear/rhythm training into each child's musical education, and more advanced students are challenged with advanced scales, etudes and repertoire. All teaching is tailored to each student's individual strengths and learning style(s).

Ms. Sharon has enjoyed extensive ensemble performing experience in different contexts and locations around the country and the world, beginning with attendance at HSPVA, and participation in the Houston All-Region and Texas All-State Orchestras during her high school years. Her post-college ensemble work has included chamber music groups and orchestras in Texas, South Dakota, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Southern Russia. While living in Durango, she was the Principal Violist of the San Juan Symphony, and often collaborated with other area professional musicians to bring great chamber music to the Four Corners region as part of the Durango Bach Festival, the Durango Chamber Music Festival, and other musical events in the area. She was also given the honor of Principal Violist of the Colorado MahlerFest Orchestra in 2012.

Ms. Sharon loves to garden, cook, and tackle household DIY projects. She is studying to become an Integrative Health & Wellness Coach, and is also a certified dog trainer and experienced breeder of gorgeous European and American Golden Retrievers, who love a good game of fetch and then coming inside for snuggles!



GENERAL INFORMATION

The Suzuki Academy is a year-round program which offers Private Lessons and Group Classes in Violin and Viola to students from age 4 to adults.

We work very hard to make our Academy environment an inviting and comfortable place to learn. Please help your children to remember to pick up after themselves, turn off lights & faucets, flush toilets, etc.

Siblings are welcome in Private Lessons and Group Classes, provided that they have a constructive, quiet activity to keep them occupied. They should remain with the parent in the lesson studio. Children are not allowed to wander the building freely.

In order to help reduce postage costs and be environmentally-conscious, electronic communication is preferred via the Academy's website (www.TheSuzukiAcademy.com) and email (TheSuzukiAcademy@gmail.com). Please check the website for information first, but if you have questions regarding the calendar or any other aspect of the Academy, please don't hesitate to send an email.

ACADEMY POLICIES

PRIVATE LESSON ATTENDANCE / MISSED LESSONS

Students are expected to **arrive 10-15 minutes early** for their Private Lessons and Group Classes. The teacher will wait 15 minutes for a student to arrive before declaring them a no-show. If a student arrives within 15 minutes, the teacher will complete the lesson but is not required to make up time lost due to student tardiness. If a teacher is late for the lesson, any missed lesson time will be made up. _____

There are NO MAKEUPS for lessons missed by the student. _____

Enrollment in The Suzuki Academy is not a “payment per service” arrangement, but rather a tuition-based business. Enrolling in music lessons is a purchase of a teacher’s services and a reservation of the teacher’s time. Tuition entitles a student to Suzuki Academy membership and scheduled weekly lessons & classes. Your child’s lesson time is reserved for him/her, and since the time passes whether a student uses it or not, a lesson missed is time and money lost. The full fee is to be paid whether or not the student attends all lessons; lessons missed by the student for any reason will not be made-up nor tuition refunded. Notification of inability to attend a lesson is appreciated, but does not excuse payment for contracted lessons. If you need to cancel a lesson, please contact your teacher directly at least 24 hours in advance, except in cases of sudden illness or accident. Any lesson missed by the teacher will be made up at a mutually convenient time. Lesson cancellation does not exempt the student from payment of tuition. ***There are no refunds or credits given for individual missed lessons or group classes.*** _____

Please click on the following for an economist’s view on makeup lessons:
<http://ottawasuzukistrings.ca/makeuplessons>. _____

It is understandable that some families (particularly those with pre-school or homeschooled children) prefer to travel at times other than the scheduled breaks indicated on the Academy’s Academic Calendar. However, please note that except in extreme cases (i.e. death in the family), there will be no refunds or credits if a student must miss a lesson due to travel outside of Academy breaks. _____

GROUP CLASS ATTENDANCE

Group Classes **ARE A LESSON**, and are a vital part of the student’s development in the Suzuki Method. They are required for all Academy students **and their parents**. There are few good excuses for missing group. Do not schedule other activities at that time, and commit to the entire class time. _____

Low attendance (80% per academic year) may constitute grounds for dismissal from the Academy.

PreTwinkle and Book 1-2 students must always have a parent at Group Class. Parents of Book 3-4 children should be there to watch as often as possible, and we recommend that Book 5-8 parents watch when they can. Please see below regarding the use of cell phones and other devices during lessons and classes. _____

PARENT INVOLVEMENT & ATTENDANCE

The most progress is made when students and parents practice regularly. Parents of younger students are taught how to practice with their child and assist students in setting aside practice time. Listening to recordings, attending concerts, and participating in Academy sponsored programs and recitals are necessary to learn. All enrolled Academy students are required to perform in at least one Solo Recital per year. _____

Unless otherwise arranged with the Teacher, students 12 and under must have a parent present at all Private Lessons and Group Classes in order to take notes and effectively help the student with home practice. _____

Continual communication is a natural part of any educational endeavor. Open communication is strongly encouraged and appreciated between the Student, Parent, and Teacher. Any conflicts or problems that may arise in the course of the year should immediately be brought to the Teacher's attention. _____

Parent conferences without the student will be held in lieu of a lesson during one of the last few weeks of the school year. This time helps to give both the Parent and Teacher a chance to communicate each one's vision for the student and discuss how we are doing in terms of working towards this vision. Your child's development – both musical and otherwise – is very important to us. These conferences help to make sure that the work we do each week and the daily work you do at home in regards to violin/viola are helping to foster a healthy, happy and musical child. _____

LISTENING TO RECORDINGS

Listening to the CD is vital to your child's progress!

There is no Mother Tongue Approach without listening. Failure to listen to the CD on a regular basis could result in your family being asked to look elsewhere for your child's music education. It is very discouraging to the Teacher, as we cannot make up for the learning that you miss when you fail to have your child listen to their Suzuki recordings. _____

A student who doesn't listen to their Suzuki recordings tends to progress about 4 TIMES SLOWER than one who does! _____

If you think lessons are expensive, think about how much more they cost if your child is moving unnecessarily slowly because they do not listen! An extra CD costs \$15-20, and an extra lesson costs \$65/hour. Put your music on an iPod or other device and use it a lot! _____

CELL PHONES & OTHER DEVICES

The use of cell phones or other devices is strictly limited to lesson-related activity (i.e. taking a picture or video of something the teacher wants you to remember), and must not be used for any other reason. Parents who are constantly on their phones or devices during lessons will be seen as not committed, and the family may be asked to look elsewhere for their child's music education. Exceptions will be

made for parents who have an older child at home who needs to be able to reach the parent in case of emergency. _____

PLEASE NOTE: In order to help students prepare most effectively for their lessons, children aged 17 and younger are not allowed to use devices of any kind while in the building for Academy private lessons or group classes. _____

RECITALS

Please see the “Solo Recital Information Guide” included at the end of this Parent Guidebook. _____

FOOD GUIDELINES

In order to protect others who may have serious food allergies, please do not bring any kind of pre-packaged foods to Academy lessons, classes, or events. Fresh fruits & vegetables, water and juice boxes are acceptable. _____

ILLNESS POLICY

In order to protect faculty and other students from contagious diseases, we request that students, parents and siblings with a contagious illness to refrain from participating in Academy lessons, classes, and events until they are well. If a student is too ill for school, he/she is too ill for his/her music lesson. We work in close proximity and with our hands, so germs spread easily. Please consider the health and well-being of all in the Academy. _____

The Teacher reserves the right to not teach lessons to students who are ill, or appear to be suffering symptoms of the flu, colds, etc. The same applies to parents or siblings accompanying the student. In the case of illness, please make every attempt to notify your Teacher at least 24 hours in advance. In the event of illness, please attempt to switch lesson times with another student. There are no refunds or credits given in the event of illness. _____

NOTE: The Academy considers “illness” to include fever or diarrhea/vomiting within the previous 24 hours, and/or excessive/productive coughing/sneezing/sniffing at the time of the lesson. Additionally, if the student has had chicken pox or a similar breakout, sores must be completely crusted over for at least 24 hours. In the case of lice, the student must be completely free of both lice and nits for at least 24 hours. ***Please note that all of the above guidelines also apply to parents and siblings attending lessons.*** _____

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING COVID PRECAUTIONS: ***All students, parents, and siblings must remove shoes, wash hands, and wear a mask when attending Private Lessons and Group Classes in person. Additionally, if anyone in the student’s household has Covid, has been in contact with someone who has Covid, or is showing any symptoms that in any way resemble Covid, please request a Zoom lesson for that week, or take the week off in order to rest & recover fully.*** _____

INCLEMENT WEATHER

The Teacher will determine cancellation of Private Lessons or Group Classes due to inclement weather, and will notify families via email and the website. In general, these decisions will follow suit with the local public schools, and will be made with the safety of Academy families in mind. If Academy activities are cancelled due to inclement weather, a possible "Weather Day" may be scheduled by the Teacher. There are no refunds or credits given in the event of inclement weather. _____

INSTRUMENT RENTAL & MAINTENANCE

It is important to keep your instrument and equipment in good playing condition. At least once a year, string students should consider re-hairing their bow and changing strings. Those who practice every day will need to do these more often. Every student should have an extra set of fresh strings *in their instrument case* at all times! _____

For String Instrument Rental or Repair/Service, please ask your Teacher for recommendations.

WITHDRAWAL or DISMISSAL from ACADEMY

Out of consideration for the Academy, and specifically your Teacher, any family or individual student needing to terminate lessons/withdraw from the Academy, either temporarily or permanently, and for any reason, shall give 30 days' notice in writing to the Teacher. _____

The Academy takes seriously its commitment to an exceptional program, and reserves the right to dismiss any student due to frequent tardiness or missed lessons, behavioral problems, lack of consistency or discipline in practicing, delinquency in payment of fees, failure to abide by policy, or other serious misconduct. _____

TUITION, FEES & PAYMENT INFORMATION

ACADEMY TUITION:

30-minute lessons = \$194/month

45-minute lessons = \$266/month

60-minute lessons = \$320/month

75-minute lessons = \$395/month

INCLUDES:

- ♪ 40 Private Lessons between September 1, 2021 to August 31, 2022
 - ♪ 25 Group Classes between September 2021 through May 2022
 - ♪ Minimum of 2 Recitals/Concerts
 - ♪ Optional Participation in Community Performances
 - ♪ Administrative Fees
 - ♪ Teacher Professional Development
 - ♪ **For students enrolling after September 1st, the monthly amount will be the same as listed above, due to fewer months to divide the reduced number of lessons.**
-

REQUIRED FEES:

- ♪ Annual Studio Fee for First-Time Student (Studio Resources, Lesson Binder, Lesson Tote Bag, Memberships/Enrollments in Suzuki Association of the Americas, Southeast Texas Suzuki Association, Suzuki Cooperative of West Houston, Parents as Partners Online) - \$150, due upon enrollment
 - ♪ Annual Studio Fee for Returning Student - \$98, due upon enrollment
 - ♪ Annual Studio Fee for additional children in the same family/household - \$60, due upon enrollment
 - ♪ New Student Materials Packet, including all materials needed for the Academic Year - Amount based on individual student needs, and decided with teacher during 1st lesson, due by 3rd lesson
 - ♪ Fall Semester Co-op Fee (Recital Venues, Accompanist Fees) - \$50, due by September 1st
 - ♪ Spring Semester Co-op Fee (Recital Venues, Accompanist Fees) - \$50, due by January 1st
 - ♪ Fees are Non-Refundable
-

PAYMENT PROCESSING:

- ♪ Annual Tuition payment options: 12 Monthly Payments, 4 Quarterly Payments, or 1 Annual Payment due upon enrollment
 - ♪ Monthly Payments are due on the 1st of the month, and are considered late if not received by the 5th of the month. A late fee totaling 15% of the monthly payment due will be charged if payment is not received by the 5th of the month. Late fee will be increased to 30% of monthly payment if not received by the 10th of the month.
 - ♪ **Any payment more than 2 weeks late will result in suspension of private lessons and group classes/ensembles until the payment is resolved.**
 - ♪ Payments will only be accepted via credit card (4% processing fee added) or check. Please contact Ms. Sharon if you are not able to pay via these methods.
 - ♪ All payments are **non-refundable**.
 - ♪ Tuition rates will be increased by 2% annually in order to reflect inflation/cost of living increases.
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SOLO RECITAL INFORMATION GUIDE

Participation in a solo recital requires the recommendation of your private teacher; however, it is the obligation of the student to request a performance opportunity. Each student in the Academy is expected to perform at least once each year on a solo recital.

New students must observe a solo recital before performing the first time.

The piece selected to perform should be a polished piece. Your teacher will help you to choose a piece that represents your best playing. Your child's piece should be fully polished (played with virtually no mistakes) 30-60 days prior to the scheduled recital.

PIANO COACHING AND REHEARSALS

*****All recital performers who are in Books 4 and up MUST have a rehearsal with the accompanist at least one week prior to the recital day.*** Parents may set up rehearsals by contacting the accompanist directly. Rehearsals are offered in 15-minute increments, and are included in the Annual Tuition.

Students in Books 1-3 will rehearse with the accompanist on the day of the recital.

FIVE REASONS WHY ACADEMY STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN SOLO RECITALS:

1. A recital is an important tradition in the journey of a young musician.
2. A solo recital is a very special event that provides performing experience necessary for all musicians, and an opportunity for us to gather as a community and celebrate the achievements of the year.
3. Our recitals offer a wonderful opportunity for our students to build their self-confidence as a musician by performing a solo work in front of a supportive and non-judgmental audience.
4. The recital experience provides the student musician with an un-pressured, encouraging, and non-competitive atmosphere for performing.
5. The recital experience is an integral part of the Academy's curriculum.

RECITAL ATTIRE

Performers should dress appropriately for a formal recital. Consider this when getting dressed (or helping your child make a good decision). Do not wear anything that might restrict your movement. ***Practice in your performance attire before the concert to be sure you are comfortable!***

Examples of clothing suitable for public performance are:

- Dresses, nice skirts of appropriate length (***below the knees***), blouses, or dress pants and dress shirts for girls.
 - Girls should wear their hair pulled/pinned back and out of their face. Pony-tails and buns are excellent choices. Boys should have a haircut if needed prior to performance day. We must be able to see your eyes!
 - Dress pants with belts and dress shirts (tucked-in) and sweaters for boys (no suitjackets).
 - Dress shoes for both girls and boys (boys wear dark shoes with dark socks).
 - Dangling earrings and beaded necklaces should be avoided as they will rattle against the instrument.
 - Please show respect to your audience by not wearing: jeans, miniskirts, shorts, midriff shirts, flip-flops, high heels, Crocs, or sport shoes.
-

RECITAL ETIQUETTE

Because the recital is such a special event, you will want to be sure to invite family and friends! As an audience, our job is to provide a respectful setting in which our performers can offer the best of their skills and talents and display an exemplary standard of behavior. Unfortunately, children are seldom exposed to formal concert situations and are often not aware of these standards of behavior. The recital is an opportunity to teach our children how to behave appropriately in a concert situation. The performances we will see represent years of dedicated effort and reflect the students' musical development. We want all of the students to enjoy their performances and benefit from the recital experience.

Consider the following carefully:

- Please arrive no later than 15 minutes prior to the rehearsal time, for unpacking and tuning. We want to start on time and will need everyone's cooperation to do so.
- ***All Academy students performing in the recital are expected to attend the full duration of the recital.*** If you have a conflict which would require the performer to "play and leave," then s/he should not perform on that day.
- If a young child becomes unhappy and vocal, please feel free to leave the performance area immediately and as quietly as possible. Otherwise, please stay seated during all performances as movement can be very distracting to a performer. If necessary, you may get up and move during the applause.
- Flash photography is not allowed during the performance. Video photography will be permitted (and is encouraged) only if the video camera is held quietly by one person who remains seated. Please feel free to "stage" a performance *after* the recital if you wish to get an "action" photograph.
- Please silence all cell phones and other devices. Text messaging during the concert is also inappropriate.
