

ASO STRING ACADEMY
Student Handbook 2023-2024

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CURRICULUM FOR PRIVATE LESSONS AND GROUP CLASSES

The private lessons use repertoire from the Suzuki method as well as other supplemental materials. Etudes and scales will be introduced as the student progresses. The group classes focus largely upon review of the Suzuki repertoire, along with some additional supplemental pieces. The students will have opportunities for solo performances and receive basic music theory weekly.

We use the International Edition of the Suzuki Violin and Cello School Method Books. Parents are expected to purchase the volumes when needed as well as the corresponding CD and piano accompaniment. Parents should also have a notebook and folder that is reserved for Violin or Cello only. Students must bring their instrument, music, notebook, and a pencil to each lesson and group class.

EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

Parental participation plays a vital role in the students' musical experience. The parents are expected to attend all of their children's group and private lessons and practice with them every day, unless

otherwise discussed. The parents are also responsible for setting up a listening routine at home; the student should be listening to their Suzuki CD every day. During the lessons and group classes, it is important that the parents observe the lesson quietly and take notes. We ask that you refrain from bringing along distracting or noisy siblings whenever possible. While assisting their child's practice, the parent assumes a teacher-like role and should use the same terms as the teachers do during group classes and lessons. The parents are not allowed to begin new pieces with their children or change the size of the instrument without permission from the instructor. This ensures that nothing is learned incorrectly the first time. However, **listening ahead** is always encouraged.

The parents are encouraged to always provide positive support for their children's study. Parents are responsible for providing the teacher with any change of contact information.

PAYMENT POLICY

The teacher is not allowed to continue lessons if full payment has not been received by the tuition deadline. Please approach the Director if you are interested in a scholarship or financial aid for your child.

CANCELLATION POLICY

If the program has begun and the teacher has reserved the time slot for the private lesson, no more than 50% of the tuition will be reimbursed after week three. After week six, no tuition will be refunded. If a student must leave the program due to health reasons, the refund will be up to the discretion of the Director.

COVID-19 POLICIES

All students, parents, instructors, pianists and helpers will be required to wear a proper face covering at all times at all Sturgis Academy activities, be they indoors or out-of-doors. The face mask shall cover the mouth, nose, and chin. All teachers and those employed by Sturgis shall be fully vaccinated. All students and parents will be required to sign in with a symptom screen and temperature check before each Sturgis-related activity. All students will be socially distanced inside every classroom. There will be no reason to touch anything besides their own instrument, bow, and music.

Should you have reason to believe that you or your child has been exposed to Covid-19 ahead or after a group class or private lesson, alert the Director and your teacher immediately. If given enough notice, your private lesson may be online that week. Group class instructors will be able to conduct class online and in-person should you need to quarantine for an amount of time. Please air on the side of caution and assume more information is best in regards to everyone's health. Our faculty and staff rely upon our parents now more than ever to keep our Academy going during this time.

ATTENDANCE, LATE ARRIVALS AND ABSENCES

24-hour notice via email, text or phone call is requested for cancellations of lessons. If the Director or teacher cannot be reached, please contact Ms. Beth Robison. Students are expected to arrive five minutes prior to the private lessons. The teacher is allowed to assume a cancellation of the private lesson if the student is **more than ten minutes late** without a make-up lesson or lost time offered. This is the

policy for in-person AND virtual lessons. If the teacher is late, any missed lesson time will be made up.

The student is allowed to reschedule a lesson only if the teacher is given **one week's notice**. The teacher is not required to make up student absences. If a student has a health condition which might jeopardize the health of other members of the Academy community (including other students, parents, faculty and pianists), the student and his/her family are asked to take all reasonable precautions to prevent the spread of disease. Such precautions might include, but are not limited to, notification of the teacher and, in some cases, canceling the lesson and keeping the child at home. In the case of an extended illness a portion of the tuition may be refundable. This does not exempt the student from payment as contracted.

If a cancellation is necessary due to health concerns and out of the one week time frame, please notify your teacher ASAP and your instructor may be able to go online or reschedule at the discretion of the teacher. **Teachers are not required to make up a lesson due to illness of the student.** If a teacher falls ill, the lesson will be made up at a mutually convenient time. Please refer to the section above on Covid-19.

As an active professional musician, the teacher may periodically need to reschedule private lessons due to performances and rehearsals. If a teacher is absent, a make-up lesson will be arranged at a mutually convenient time. If the student misses a make-up lesson, a second lesson **will not** be arranged. There will be no refund of tuition for any missed lessons or group classes.

In the event of inclement weather, the cancellation of the lesson will be announced via phone or email. Private lessons missed due to the weather will be made up, **but group classes** will not.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial Aid may be awarded to families who have a total annual family income under \$35,000 or have a student that currently qualifies for his or her school's free or reduced price lunch program. For information about whether or not you qualify for the Arkansas Free Lunch Program, please visit the website at <https://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/1952>.

To apply for financial aid, email the Director for an application form. Complete the form and mail it to the office or send it electronically via email together with the following 2 items:

- 1) Photocopies of parent/guardian's most recent signed Federal Tax Form 1040
- 2) Copies of W2s

Once the tuition status has been determined, families will be contacted by email and given further instruction. Students may begin lessons while financial aid is being determined. If no financial aid is awarded, the entire amount will be owed.

Deadline for the application is a day prior to the start date of the semester.

TEACHING STUDIOS/GROUP CLASS LOCATIONS

All **violin** group classes will take place on the first floor of Byrne Hall in the rehearsal room. All **cello** group classes will take place in the hall across the courtyard in Fitzgerald Hall. Due to Covid-19, only

students with Saturday private lessons will be allowed upstairs at Byrne Hall. The health, safety and comfort of our staff at the ASO is a top priority and this new procedure is to honor these concerns. Your private instructor or Director will be able to provide the exact room/location for your private lesson.

BEHAVIOR/ETIQUETTE

Students should speak quietly in the aforementioned areas while waiting for lessons so as not to disturb ASO staff in nearby offices. Parents are responsible for curtailing running, loud children and any dangerous behavior on the part of their youngsters. Students are **under no circumstances allowed** to touch any of the instruments stored in the hall. Young children must be supervised by their parents or an adult at all times.

When attending concerts, students must arrive on time and stay for the **ENTIRE** concert as a courtesy to the other performers. Students must dress appropriately for the concert. It is requested that cameras without flash be used. If the flash must be used, please wait until the end of the performance. Please encourage your child(ren) to listen quietly while other students are performing. Rattling papers, candy wrappers and talking are distracting to our performers. Please do not enter or exit the room/venue during a performance.

GROUP CLASS AND CONCERT POLICIES

Group classes offer students the opportunity to perform for their peers and to perform together as a group. A number of group concerts and a final solo recital will be conducted every semester. Attendance is required at all group classes and concerts. If a student misses more than three group classes, it is up to the discretion of the Director whether or not the student can participate in the concert.

JURIES

Our biannual solo recitals will serve as informal juries for the Academy. This means that the recitals are a chance to move to a different group class, receive encouragement to apply for a youth orchestra, or receive a recommendation to move to a different teaching studio. Only in rare cases will a student switch group classes after the Winter Solo Recital. Placement in a teacher's studio one year does not guarantee placement in that same studio for the following Academic year.

CONCURRENT STUDY AND DISMISSALS

Students enrolling for the program cannot be studying with another private teacher outside of the program. The Sturgis Music Academy reserves the right to dismiss any student due to lack of interest or progress, frequent absence (more than four lessons per semester), frequent tardiness, behavioral problems, or failure to abide by policy. The following procedure will be followed in such a case:

- 1) Parents will be contacted by phone
- 2) Letter will be sent
- 3) Dismissal

MUSIC STORES (Instruments, Music, and Accessories)

Little Rock Violin Shop
501-712-3217
316 E 11th St, Little Rock, AR, 72202
<https://www.littlerockviolinshop.com/home.html>

Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Instrument Rental
501-666-1761 Ext. 109
kwilliamson@arkansassymphony.org

Shar Music Products (Music, strings, accessories)
1-800-248-shar
<https://www.sharmusic.com/>

USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

Mimi Zweig String Pedagogy
<http://www.stringpedagogy.com/>

Suzuki Association of the Americas
<https://suzukiassociation.org/>

PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK AND PLAN FOR FUTURE EDITIONS

The policies and procedures of the ASO String Academy have been established in order to assist students in achieving continuity of study. All students are required to abide by them. The ASO String Academy reserves the right to change any program, policy or regulation published in this handbook.