

# Guitar for Kids Studio

## Policies Relating to Suzuki Students

4/1/10

Our mission is to provide a fun and nurturing music education experience *for those families who are committed to the basic tenants of the Suzuki philosophy*. This document, as amended intermittently, describes the studio policies that apply to such families. Issues discussed include group class attendance and timeliness, initial training and ongoing discussion groups for home coaches, quarterly fees and payment due dates, make-up lessons, cancellations due to weather, teacher illness and other emergencies, recital attire, and expectations for behavior during lesson observations.

### Group Classes

#### Attendance:

Regular group class attendance is critically important for your child's musical development. Moreover, frequent absence, on the part of any one child, can have a significant negative impact on the quality of the group experience for their peers. As a consequence, group class attendance will be tracked, and *a child who accumulates more than 2 "misses"* (see also "Timeliness:", below) *in a given quarter may be excluded from the next studio recital. A child who accumulates more than 2 misses in two separate quarters within a 12 month period will be asked to leave the studio.*

#### Group Attendance After Three Years in the Program:

The only exception to the above policy is for families who have demonstrated the commitment necessary to have stayed with the program for 3 or more years. Such families may, at the discretion of the director, be given a limited amount of additional flexibility with respect to group class attendance. If you fall into this category, and think an upcoming quarter's group class commitment may be impossible to meet, please let the director know well in advance of the start of the quarter so we can discuss what impact your child's planned absences might have on their group class's roster and curriculum.

#### No Shows:

*If your child will be unable to attend a group class for any reason other than last minute illness, please let us know by the end of the prior day so that lesson plans can be adjusted accordingly.*

**Timeliness:**

In fairness to those who arrive on time, group classes will begin promptly, as scheduled. Also, when a teacher stops in the middle of a group class to set up a tardy student's stool and footstool and to tune their instrument, it dramatically disrupts the class. Consequently, please arrive at least 5 minutes before the scheduled start time of your child's group class. *Any arrival after 5 minutes prior to the start of a group class will be deemed "late." Two "lates" in a quarter will count as a "miss" for attendance tracking purposes.*

*Any child who arrives after a group class is already underway is welcome to observe, but not participate in, what remains of the class.* If you find yourself in this situation, please have your child sit with you in one of the home coach seating areas. *Please do not disrupt the class by attempting to set them up yourself while class is in session.*

**Fees**

The standard quarterly fee for a child involved in the Suzuki program is \$360. When 2 or more siblings are members of the program, the quarterly fee for the second and all additional siblings is \$300. *These fees are non-refundable.*

**Tuition for Advanced Students:**

As students progress into the middle and upper books, a half hour private lesson is no longer adequate for the child to feel like they're making satisfactory progress. At some point, usually around Book 3, the family is encouraged (though not required) to take a 45 minute private lesson slot. Then, somewhere around Book 5, the private lesson may extend to 60 minutes. In such cases, \$120/quarter will be added to the student's standard quarterly tuition for each 15 minutes beyond the typical 30 minute lesson slot.

**Due Dates – Child's First Full Quarter**

In order to mitigate the cash crunch associated with acquiring an instrument and all the associated accessories, parents of new students will be allowed to pay their first quarterly fee in 3 roughly equal installments. The payment schedule for these installments is: first payment due at the child's first regularly scheduled private lesson, second payment due at the child's fourth regularly scheduled private lesson, third payment due at the child's seventh regularly scheduled private lesson. For families that start mid-quarter, special arrangements will be made for payment of fees relating to the partial quarter.

### **Due Date – Child’s Second Full, and All Subsequent, Quarters**

*The due date for fees for the child’s second and all subsequent quarters will be the date of the child’s regularly scheduled private lesson in the last week of the previous quarter.* By meeting this due date, parents will reserve their child’s private lesson slot for the coming quarter. If payment for the coming quarter has not been received by the due date, the child’s lesson slot may be made available to new prospective students and to those veteran students who wish to make a scheduling change. Finally, we request that any parent who is contemplating leaving the studio be considerate of those who may be on a waiting list by letting us know, as far in advance as possible, when you will no longer be studying with us.

### **Home Coach Training & Discussion Groups**

#### **Training:**

During a student’s first quarter in the program, parents are expected to attend four, one and a half hour “home coach” training sessions. During these sessions, the home coach will learn about the Suzuki philosophy, how to make the most of the child’s individual and group lessons, how to make the home practice sessions fun, and how to play the first few tunes the child will learn on their instrument. It has been our experience that these sessions are critical to the parent’s understanding of how and why our program works, and therefore to the success of the student. As a consequence, attendance is mandatory. If you are unable to make all four of these sessions, please let the director know, in advance, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

#### **Discussion Groups:**

Once a family has been a part of our program for a full quarter, the home coach will be invited to attend “veteran” home coach continuing education sessions. While these sessions are optional, and are not counted for attendance tracking purposes, they do often cover topics important to the child’s music education experience. During these quarterly, one-hour, adult-only sessions, as well as dealing with administrative issues that pertain to the coming quarter, we will address home coach questions, brainstorm problems and discuss ideas that have come up in the course of the most recent quarter. We may also discuss readings that have been assigned during the preceding quarter or technical issues (such as tuning or stringing a guitar) which can be most efficiently taught in a group setting and yet may not be appropriate for younger students. *If a home coach is unable to attend the discussion group, the director reserves the right to use some, or all, of the student’s next private lesson time to review the more important points discussed.*

## **Make-Up Policy**

### **Group Classes**

*Make-ups will not be given for group classes missed by the student.*  
Either a make-up or a pro-rata refund (at the discretion of the director) will be offered for a group class canceled by the studio for weather, teacher illness or other similar event.

### **Individual Lessons**

*Make-ups will not be given for individual lessons missed by the student.*  
As a consequence, a password protected current student phone list will be made available on the web page. It is strongly recommended that, if you know you have to miss a lesson, you try to arrange to swap with another student, and if successful, notify the teacher of the scheduling change ahead of time.

*1 Family / Multiple Students & Lessons Longer than 30 Minutes:*  
There are benefits (beyond the discounted tuition rate) to having two or more children in the program, or an advanced child who takes a longer private lesson slot. With advanced notice, and when the studio schedule and calendar permit, missed private lessons may occasionally be rescheduled.

Either a make-up or a pro-rata refund (at the discretion of the studio) will be offered for a private lesson canceled by the studio for weather, teacher illness or other similar event.

## **Weather Cancellations**

The Guitar for Kids Studio will follow the Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) in terms of cancellations for weather. On any day which the BVSD schools are closed due to weather, the Guitar for Kids Studio will also be closed. Also, the studio will be closed on any day which the BVSD school children are sent home early due to weather.

If you call, but can't reach the studio to learn about a weather cancellation, there are three other ways to find out if the BVSD schools and the studio have been closed, or are sending children home:

- 1) check the "Studio Closures" button on the Guitar for Kids web site at [www.guitarforkids.com](http://www.guitarforkids.com), or
- 2) go directly to the Boulder Valley School District web page at [bvsd.org](http://bvsd.org). School closures are prominently displayed at or near the top of the home page.

### **Performances - Attire & Timeliness**

Unless otherwise specified, Guitar for Kids Studio students will be required to wear a dark gray or black skirt or slacks, and a white dress shirt or blouse to all public performances and recitals. Usually, the "Call" time for all recitals and public performances is ½ hour before the scheduled start time. A child who does not make the "Call" time will be excluded from participation in the recital.

### **Observation of, and Participation in, Another Student's Lesson**

One tenet of the Suzuki Method is that all children should be encouraged to observe and, when appropriate, be invited to participate in, the "private" lessons of other students. The Guitar for Kids Studio invites parents to bring their children to lessons early and to stay late, in order to provide opportunities for this kind of joint learning. It must be understood, however, that even under the best of circumstances, the arrival or departure of another family can temporarily disrupt the flow of a lesson already underway. As a consequence, standards for behavior must actually be higher for those children who are observing, than for those whose lesson it is. Please, when entering the studio with your child, be mindful of the potential impact your arrival may have on the student who is already in session. If your child appears prepared to sit and observe quietly, by all means, bring them in. If, however, their mood suggests that their behavior may be difficult to manage, please wait with them in the car until the other student's lesson is nearly finished. Thank you for your consideration.

## **Student Illness:**

In the interests of keeping a safe and healthy environment for everyone in the studio, please do not bring your student to their lesson or group class under any of the following circumstances:

1. if the student was or, on a Saturday or vacation day, would have been kept or brought home from school due to illness,
2. if the student has a fever, or
3. if the student was up sick the night before the lesson or group class.

We all get colds, and if we take the proper precautions, the risk of spreading them can be significantly reduced. So, students who have colds are welcome to come to lessons or group classes, as long as the cold is not accompanied by symptoms such as a fever, chills or nausea, which may suggest a more serious illness. Please notify your teacher, upon arrival, if either you or your student have a cold.

Thank you for your understanding on this. We all stand to benefit.

**Signatures:**

By signing this document, we acknowledge that we have read, understand, and agree to adhere to all of the above policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph M. Beninghof, Studio Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home Coach

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date