

Helping Our Community

Suzuki Music Schools is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation and relies on donations and sponsors to survive. We are extremely grateful for all the support given to us. Please consider supporting the school. We love parents to be part of all our events and any the extra time you can give to our community. We have an active network of parents who help bring us together, please contact the assistant director for more information: sarah.s@suzukischools.org. You may be interested to know that your financial donations can be deducted from your taxes.

PARENT HANDBOOK

DISCOVERING JOY THROUGH MUSIC



A NOT-FOR-PROFIT 501C3
COMMUNITY MUSIC SCHOOL

The Suzuki Music Schools are a community in which music is valued as life enhancing.

We teach all ages, from 3 months to adult and specialize in a style of education in which parents and family play a key role.

Our curriculum, The Suzuki Method, is a highly structured 'value based' learning process, where children learn the language of music by example.

Community and family are at the heart of this immersive learning. We aim to create opportunities beyond the classroom to portray music as a life tool that serves the community.

This handbook is designed to outline the method and help parents take advantage of our process.

Annual Registration Fee

SMS charges an annual registration fee per family. This goes toward school-wide events and various community performances. Our online calendar lists all the events available to students.

Tuition Fees

Tuition fees include a private lesson and a group class every week. Private lessons include time for parents to talk to the teacher. The length of private lessons is recommended by the instructor based upon the age and experience of the student. Group classes are integral to the Suzuki method and children are assigned to an appropriate group based upon the level of their experience.

Billing

We bill tuition in advance of each term. Payment is accepted by check or credit card. We reserve the right to suspend or discontinue instruction if a family's account remains delinquent.

Student Supervision

Every child at the school must be accompanied by an adult and monitored at all times.

Parking Lot Regulations

The parking lot is often very busy and a dangerous place for young children. Please accompany your child at all times when in the parking lot. Please observe normal precautionary driving techniques. Please drive slowly. Please park in designated parking lots only.

Suzuki Music School Contacts

Director	andrew.s@suzukischools.org
Assistant Director	sarah.s@suzukischools.org
Registration & Scheduling	office@suzukischools.org
Bills & Payments	billing@suzukischools.org
Event information & Recitals	events@suzukischools.org
Donations & Giving	amy.g@suzukischools.org

Enrollment Preference

All students are expected to study for the entire year, including the fall, spring and summer terms. Returning students may retain their private lesson times during the fall and spring terms providing they return their registration forms and payment by the due dates. After the due dates, preference for scheduling is given to families with multiple students. Late students and new students are assigned private lesson times in the order in which they are received.

We offer a bespoke summer term with options to schedule according to your availability. During the summer, private lessons are allocated on a first-come first-served basis. Families who do not enroll for a minimum of six lessons in the summer semester cannot be ensured that their place will be held in the fall.

Absentee Students

If you miss your private lesson for more than five consecutive weeks without contacting your teacher or the School's Director you will be considered to have stopped lessons. Your lesson time will be given to a new student and no refund of your tuition payment will be made. If there is exceptional circumstance for absenteeism you may appeal this decision. Written explanation must be presented to the Director and will be considered by our Board of Directors. The Board reserves the right to deny or accept this appeal.

Requesting A New Teacher

SMS does not encourage students to switch studios but understands that in rare circumstances it may be desirable. We want to make this process as comfortable for your child as possible and make sure all teachers involved see the professional need for a change.

1. Email or call the Director: andrew.s@suzukischools.org
2. The Director will make recommendations on the situation and inform all parties
3. When we are sure you have found the right teacher our office will make arrangements to move you.

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ABOUT THE SCHOOL

We were founded in 1997 and have grown to become one of the regions major arts institutions - named by Westport's First Selectman as the 'Jewel of Westport's Arts'.

We are governed as a 501c3 non-profit arts organization with a board of directors. Visit our website for a profile of our board members.

We serve families from Connecticut's counties - Fairfield, New Haven , Litchfield, and Hartford - as well as the metro New York areas of Westchester and Manhattan.

We are one of just a handful of community music schools in the US dedicated to the Suzuki Method.

Our faculty are both renowned musicians and teachers but are also trained in early childhood teaching techniques.



SCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Missed Lesson Policy

SMS has make-up days at the end of each semester during which teachers will make-up any lessons they may have missed. We cannot schedule make-up lessons when a student misses a lesson, whether due to illness or pre-arranged commitments. If a lesson is cancelled by the instructor, or by SMS, for a snow emergency for example, the instructor will make every effort to reschedule the lesson for a make-up at a mutually convenient time. The instructor will offer up to three other times to the parent to schedule a make-up. If the parent is not able to accept the three make-up times offered, the school will not be held responsible for making up the lesson. If you know you will be missing a lesson please email your teacher.

Tuition Refunds

Upon written request, full tuition refunds are available to families withdrawing from SMS until 30 days before the start of the term. After this time SMS maintains a strict policy that no refunds will be granted since our teachers are already contractually committed (this includes unexpected and unavoidable circumstances such as illness or work-related relocations).

Financial Aid

The school offers needs based financial aid to families. All financial aid decisions are based upon a process of independent financial assessment by an internal committee. If you would like to be considered for financial aid please go to:

<https://suzukischools.org/apply-for-music-school-financial-aid/>

Instrument Resources

For everyday needs the following list might be useful. The school recognizes there are many shops where you can purchase instruments, music and supplies. Please ask your teacher for advise about instrument purchases and rentals.

String Luthiers & String Rentals

Atelier - Westport, CT	(203) 227-9577	www.atelierconstantinpopescu.com
Audubon Strings - New Haven, CT	(203) 772-4722	www.audubonstrings.com
David Segal Violins New York	(212) 769-4559	www.davidsegalviolins.com
Johnson Strings Newton, MA	(800) 359-9351	www.johnsonstring.com
Phillip Perret Katonah, NY	(914) 232-0896	
Lawrence Wilke Clinton, CT	(860) 669-2007	www.wilkecellos.com
Mark Hough Clinton, CT	(860) 669-2007	www.markhoughviolins.com
Misha Parshenov Ridgefield, CT	(203) 431-0901	
Robertson & Sons Abq, NM	(800) 284-6546	www.robertsonviolins.com
Robert Islay, Rye NY	(914) 921 1075	www.robertisleyviolins.com
Stamell Strings MA	(800) 766-0936	www.stamellstring.com
Ute Brinkman Wallingford, CT & Suzuki Music School, Westport	(203) 265-7456	www.luthier-ct.com

Piano Stores

Allegro Pianos Stamford	(203) 968-8888	www.allegropianos.com
Al Oliver & Son* Norwalk	(203) 622-8350	www.oliverpiano.com
Faust Harrison Fairfield	(203) 333-8400	www.faustharrisonpianos.com
Fry's Piano* Trumbull	(203) 331-9000	www.fryspiano.com

Flute Stores

Flute Center of New York* NY	(212) 307-9737	www.flutes4sale.com
The Woodwind & Brasswind	(866) 514-7200	www.wwbw.com
National Education Music Co*	(800) 526-4593	www.nemc.com
Flute World	(810) 855-0410	www.fluteworld.com

Guitars

Ruben Flores Seal Beach, CA	(562) 598-9800	www.rubenflores.com
La Mancha Guitars		www.lamanchaguitars.com
Los Angeles Classical Guitars	(626) 529-0147	www.lacg.net

Music & Supplies

Creative Music Center	(203) 261 7301	www.thecreativemusiccenter.com
Johnson Strings	(800) 359-9351	www.johnsonstring.com
New Canaan Music	(203) 920-1800	www.newcanaanmusic.com
Shar Music	(800) 248-SHAR	www.sharmusic.com
Sheet Music Plus	(800) 743-3868	www.sheetmusicplus.com
Strings By Mail	(231) 421-3773	www.stringsbymail.com

WHAT WE OFFER

Early Childhood - introductory music classes for children and parents from 3 months to 6 years.

Suzuki Lessons - instrumental lessons for children ages 4 -18 in a combined curriculum of private and group instruction.

Continuing Education Classes - individually tailored private instrumental lessons and group classes in general music for ages 18+.

General Music Classes - specialist classes in music theory, composition, recording techniques, film music, chamber music and ensemble.

Annual Community Events - children's performances, the Family Pillow Concert series, the Da Capo Visiting Artist series offering concerts and educational workshops, community and charity performances by faculty and students & art shows.

Community Engagement - We provide music education to underserved schools including a special educational partnership with the Adam J Lewis Academy and the KEYS Orchestra. We offer needs based financial aid and our faculty and students perform community concerts for non-profits, charities and regional festivals.

THE SUZUKI METHOD

The Mother Tongue Method Shinichi Suzuki (1898 - 1998)

The Suzuki approach is that ability is determined by environment. All children have ability and it is the conditions which we provide as adults that determines the success and enjoyment of this experience.

The most important education a child can receive is from their parent - the acquisition of language is one of the best examples of this.

A child's most receptive learning years for language are their first years - a parent provides and supports this entire environment.

A child learns speech and music from their parents and from their community. This is accomplished through the simple progression:

1) LISTEN 2) REPEAT 3) REFINE

Learning music happens best in a positive environment at a child's individual and natural pace, where small accomplishments are encouraged with praise.

PARENT RESOURCES

Helpful Reading

Please find below a selection of books which you may find helpful in further understanding the Suzuki Method.

C. Goodner	Beyond the Music Lesson: Habits of Successful Suzuki Families
S. Kempter	Between Parent and Teacher
E. Kreitman	Teaching from the Balance Point
E. Sprunger	Helping Parents Practice
W. Starr	To Learn with Love
S. Suzuki	Ability Development from Age Zero
S. Suzuki	Nurtured by Love

Web Resources

The Suzuki Music Schools	www.suzukischools.org
The Suzuki Association of the Americas	www.suzukiassociation.org
International Suzuki Association	www.internationalsuzuki.org

Summer Suzuki Institutes

Suzuki summer institutes are for children with their parents. These week-long camps create excitement and inspiration lasting the whole year.

American Suzuki Institute, WI; Ithaca Suzuki Institute, NY
Chicago Suzuki Institute, IL; Intermountain Suzuki String Institute, UT
Hartt Suzuki Institute, CT; White Mountain Suzuki Institute, NH

Visit <https://suzukiassociation.org/events/institutes/> to find out more.

EVENTS FOR YOUR FAMILY

The Da Capo Visiting Artist Series

Internationally respected performers and teachers give special master classes and concerts for our students. These annual workshops are open to all students nominated by their teacher from any age group and at all levels. If you would like to be considered please mention it to your teacher.

Pillow Concerts

This Sunday afternoon family concert series brings guest artists to perform in our recital hall for an informal concert atmosphere. The Concerts are free and relaxed - bring a pillow and sit on the floor by the artists.

The Connecticut Guitar Festival

This community festival is run by the Suzuki Music Schools in residence at the Westport Library. Three days of events celebrate the many facets of the guitar - classical, rock, jazz, pop and folk. With concerts, expositions, masterclasses and workshops for Suzuki students. www.connecticutguitarfestival.com

LISTEN

Make Music a Part of Your Daily Life

Listening to the Suzuki recordings daily is essential for a student to develop. Have your music playing in the background or listen and sing together. Listening to all types of music helps create aesthetic knowledge and develops the ear. Suzuki believed in "nurture over nature". For him, the home environment was the primary place to establish good practices.

REPEAT

Repetition Promotes Development

Children's motivation to learn comes from a desire to please. When a child learns speech their experiments at sounds draw delight. It is this experimentation that turn sounds into words. A parent's role creating the environment for experimentation is essential. We nurture using encouragement and love. The process is fun. Finding success at something difficult brings self-esteem. A parent provides the structure and security to support the efforts of the child - we call this "Ability Development".

REFINE

Review and Repetition: The Private Lesson, Group Class & Daily Practice

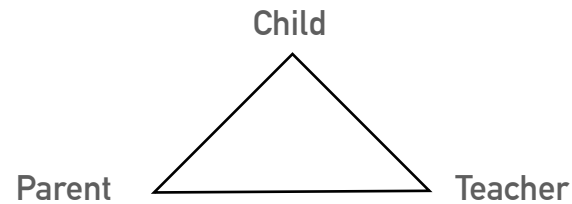
The brain's control over the body requires both identification and repetition. Through review and repetition the brain's cells grow to acquire physical knowledge or motor skills.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S MUSIC EDUCATION

IN THE SUZUKI METHOD WE USE THREE TYPES OF LEARNING

PRIVATE LESSONS

Suzuki lessons give you the opportunity to play an active role in your child's musical education. The private lesson is the source for primary information about learning the instrument. The teacher and child and parent each have a role in the private lesson - Suzuki Teachers call this the Suzuki Triangle.



Encourage your child by actively engaging in the lesson, cheering their successes, taking notes and being clear on the teacher's practice expectations for the week. Some teachers will also ask you to video new skills or practice spots.

Clear communication with your teacher is important. Ask them for their practice expectations, goals and any priorities they may have.

Arriving early for your lesson helps create a positive start to your lesson. Arrange discussions about progress or behavior with your teacher in private, not in front of your child.

GROUP CLASS

Group class instills teamwork. It reinforces the private lesson and is a fun time to interact with others. Group classes are assigned by playing level and may involve children of multiple ages.

Concert Etiquette for Children

- Please stay for the entire recital. If you have a commitment that requires you to leave, your child should not perform that day and you may take part in a different recital.
- Please arrive early so that your child is settled before playing.
- Please do bring your extended family and friends - grandparents, aunts and uncles. This is a family celebration and we want you to enjoy your child's success.
- Celebrate your child with videos and photos . Please do not take flash photographs during the performance. We always leave time at the end for photos.
- Dress up and make a real occasion of the afternoon! Enthusiastic applause is always welcome!

The Spooky Concert

The school presents a special family friendly concert around Halloween, where children, teachers and parents are encouraged to attend in costume. After the concert we hold a fair with games and prizes. Families are encouraged to bring extended family and friends.

The Concerto Concerts

The school hosts a professional orchestra to present one of our major concerts of the year. Suzuki students of all ages and all book levels are chosen from audition to perform as soloists in a public concert. It's a wonderful event and the highlight of our year!

The Honors Concert

After the spring recitals, student's performances are nominated that best represent the Suzuki Schools. All levels are included from Twinkle to major advanced repertoire. This concert is free and open to the public and is a great way to see the remarkable process of the Suzuki method.

The Final Concert

Our end of year group concert is a chance to gather on stage with our entire community and see the achievements of the whole school.

Children are encouraged to play up to their polished piece. Observing the pieces they have not yet learned is extremely beneficial and an important part of the Suzuki Method.

Encourage your child by being actively interested. If your child has a sibling who will disturb the class, try not to bring them. If arranging care is difficult, sit in the foyer with them.

PRACTICE

Suzuki Method Parents are the teacher at home. Practice Every Day: create a practice routine in your daily schedule. We recommend scheduling the same time every day to create an expectation of repetition.

Practice time is a special moment to connect with your child, try introducing fun elements by devising new games. Ask your teacher for ideas! Small sessions are more effective than long ones. Try to end the practice after a success to motivate your child.

Give your entire attention to your child by eliminating distractions such as screens etc. Incorporate review in every practice - each contains the technical foundations for progress.

Before leaving the lesson be clear on your teacher's practice priorities for the week. Encourage your child to take ownership of their instrument - teach them to care for it and carry it to and from lessons. Create a space for their instrument in your house

Each piece is designed to introduce a new technique. Moving forward on a new piece without your teacher's guidance could slow progress.

Take your child to classical music concerts and events. Give home concerts to allow your child to show you their skills. Children inherit your values - how you prioritize music at home influences their approach.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR CLASSES

Music Theory

Open to all students from beginners to advanced. The school is the regional testing center for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music international exam system and teaches AP music and composition.

Performance Class

Open to all students at any level, whether you are pre-twinkle or playing advanced music. Talk to your teacher to sign up for a trial run of your favorite piece in an informal setting.

Chamber Music

Open to students Book 3 and above, chamber music requires fluent reading skills. Chamber music can be one of the most musically beneficial and fun ways to enjoy music with others.

SMS Reading Orchestra

Open to all students Book 2 and above. This is the ideal way to practice early reading skills in a fun and relaxed setting.

Summer Camps

The school runs summer camps for all levels: General Music Camp, Piano Camp, Chamber Music Camp, Audition Camp. Please find more information on our website.

AN ARTISTIC COMMUNITY

The Suzuki Method teaches a child that work, ability and joy are intertwined. As a Suzuki Method community music school we offer opportunities for families to be part of an artistic community, where workshops, recitals, performance classes, public concerts and charitable performances are part of the annual calendar.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Solo Recitals

We present student recitals in the fall and spring. Please ask your teacher for dates and times.

Discuss with your teacher and if you are ready, they will choose your piece with you. Please support your teacher and members of your studio by attending, even if you are not performing.

New students should attend a recital before participating in one.

Rehearsals with an accompanist can be scheduled online through the school parent page; a coaching fee will apply. We strongly recommend using them to support your child's performance.

Some students will require more than one rehearsal, please ask your teacher for advice on this.

Chamber Music Concerts

We present chamber music concerts each year, featuring the many performance ensembles at the school. The concerts are free. To find out more about our Chamber Music program please contact Dr. Andrew: andrew.s@suzukischools.org.