

OTTAWA
SUZUKI

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PARENT HANDBOOK

2016-2017

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Ottawa Suzuki Strings Directory 2014-2015

Artistic Director

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Administrator

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admin@ottawasuzukistrings.ca

School & Volunteer Coordinator

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Ottawa Suzuki Strings Faculty (in alphabetical order)

Christopher Barham, Violin

Michael Blais, Cello

Adam Cicchillitti, Guitar

Nicholas Deek, Theory

Lance Elbeck, Violin

Megan Graham, Violin. Viola

Ania Hejnar, Voice, Violin, Theory

Rosemarie Klimasko, Violin

Nan Laurenzio, Theory

Sara Mastrangelo, Violin

Lisa Moody, Viola, violin

Sarah Williams, Violin

*Affiliate Faculty Members**

Elaine Klimasko, Violin

*Affiliate faculty members are teachers in the wider Ottawa musical community who support the Suzuki approach to music education and teach advanced Ottawa Suzuki Strings students.

Board President

John Royle

613-233-6345

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General Information & Policies 2016-2017

Office

You may contact the OSS office by phone at 613-369-4376 at any time or email us at admin@ottawasuzukistrings.ca

Terms

The year is divided into three 9-week terms and one 10-week term.

School Policies

Payment of Fees

Upon registration, please provide post-dated cheques for all fees. Lesson fees vary according to lesson length and hourly rate of private lesson teacher; your teacher will advise you as to the exact amount. (If you have more than one child, fees may be combined on a single cheque.) Annual fees are intended to be 'all inclusive.' They include 35 private lessons, 30 group classes, studio recitals, concerts, and some other special events, such as the playdown/potluck.

Fees do not include accompanist time for rehearsals, individual entry fees for the Kiwanis Music Festival or RCM exams. There may be additional (modest) charges for special optional workshops, or retreats. Please speak to your private teacher if you have any questions about the fee structure.

Note: Non-refundable Ottawa Suzuki Strings registration (membership) fees are additional: 1st child - \$75, 2nd - \$35, 3rd - \$20, 4th - no charge. Registrations for returning students that are submitted after the posted deadline for returning registrants are subject to late fees as indicated on the registration form.

A fee of \$25 is levied for each NSF cheque.

Volunteer Commitment

Ottawa Suzuki Strings is a non-profit, volunteer organization. We rely on volunteer support and donations to operate and keep fees as low as possible. OSS member families are asked to submit one cheque for \$150 per family, post-dated for June 1st, 2017 with your registration form. Families who contribute 4 hours or more in volunteer time in various positions/tasks during the school year will have their cheque returned to them or shredded, depending on their preference, upon submission of a Volunteer Hours Log form. This form is available on our website at www.ottawasuzukistrings.ca. The log should be submitted to the School & Volunteer Coordinator on Group class Mondays or by e-mail at deanne@ottawasuzukistrings.ca. The commitment fee gives families who are unable to volunteer an alternative means to support our school programming. If a family chooses to

give a cheque of \$150 in lieu of volunteering, the funds will be considered a tax-deductible donation to OSS and you will be issued a tax receipt.

Bursaries

We have a limited capacity to provide bursary assistance. If you are faced with temporary, short-term financial difficulties, please speak to your teacher and we will do our best to help.

Withdrawal

Registration (membership) fees are not refunded under any circumstance. Should a parent decide to interrupt their child's musical studies mid-term, fees for the remaining weeks of lessons are not refunded. Parents must provide a minimum of a two week notice of withdrawal prior to the start of a new term in order to have their term fee returned.

Missed Lessons

Private lessons missed by the student are considered to have been taken by the student; no make-up lessons are owed by the teacher. If a teacher misses any lessons, the lesson(s) will need to be made up at a mutually convenient time. If lessons are owed by the teacher at the end of Term 4, then they will be offered in the usual private-lesson slot until all lessons have been provided. Should a student miss one of these lessons, or a make-up lesson scheduled at any other time, it is considered to have been taken by the student.

Holiday Policy

Private lessons which fall on statutory holidays (e.g. Thanksgiving, Good Friday) will be given as usual; group classes and ensemble activities are generally not scheduled on statutory holidays. There is normally a 2-week break at Christmas but this year, there is a 3-week break for private lessons and 2-week break for group classes. There is a 1-week March break. Please look at the school calendar for specific dates. The school google calendar is found on the OSS website.

Responsibility of Supervision

Please note that although Ottawa Suzuki Strings will do all they can to ensure the safety of OSS students during group classes, parents are ultimately responsible for the safety of their children and must be supervised. There will be other groups using space at Woodroffe H.S. at the same time as OSS group class, so please do not let your children wander the halls alone.

Parents are at all times responsible for ensuring that their children do not harm other children or damage the facility or property (the school, instruments, other children, by dialing 911 or pulling fire alarms).

In particular:

- No eating or drinking in any classrooms, with the exception that drinking water is allowed.
- No touching of equipment belonging to Woodroffe High School
- No children in classrooms without adults
- No unsupervised children wandering in the halls or washrooms

Teachers are responsible for the supervision of students during classes and rehearsals, but not before and after class or during breaks. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their children get to and from the assigned rehearsal space. Although Ottawa Suzuki Strings monitors attendance, in the event that a student is absent, OSS will not contact parents to verify that the absence is explained.

It is the policy of Ottawa Suzuki Strings that the parents of children under 11 years of age must generally attend the group classes, including the rhythmic reading or theory class. Although the teacher is responsible for supervising the students while in class, they may ask the parent to take charge of the child at any time during the class. In the case where the parent is unable to assist at the class, for example, because they must attend a sibling's class, it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that another parent in the class will take responsibility for their child. In cases where two siblings have classes simultaneously, parents are expected to usually attend the class involving the younger child.

In the case of children between eleven and twelve years of age, and if the parents must leave the premises, then the parent may leave the group class facility as long as they leave contact information with both their child and another parent and/or the duty officer. The parent *must* pick their child up as soon as their classes are finished, as Ottawa Suzuki Strings must vacate the group class facility within 10 minutes of the end of the last class. If the child is 13 or older, they may attend classes independently. However, the parent remains responsible should they damage the facilities, etc.

The Duty Officer will not leave the premises until the last child is collected or will arrange for the child to be returned home safely. Should a parent fail to collect their child promptly at the end of the lesson, they will be fined \$50 for a first incident, and in the case of any recurrence will be required to remain on the premises for the remainder of their child's group classes.

If for any reason the instructor or School Coordinator determines that it is desirable for the parent to be present at all times, then the parent must attend the classes regardless of the child's age.

Group Class Attendance

A successful group class program requires teamwork between the teacher, the students, and their parents. Your child's absence will adversely affect the capacity of their classmates to achieve their musical goals. We understand that family lives are complicated, and that a 100% attendance may be difficult. However, a child who misses more than 3 group classes may be refused the right to perform with their class/ensemble. Children who miss more than 50% of group classes may be refused re-registration in the Ottawa Suzuki Strings program.

Instruments

Your teacher will guide you in acquiring a violin for your child. Please do not purchase an instrument for your child without consulting your teacher. Bows should be loosened after being used and strings and bow-hair should be renewed *at least* annually. (Inexpensive beginner bows may be cheaper to replace than to rehair.) Ottawa Suzuki Strings is not responsible for damaged instruments, including any damage that might be incurred at group class or at any other event organised by our school. All instruments must be kept clean and in good repair at all times; they should not be exposed to extremes of heat or cold. We *strongly* recommend that instruments be insured against fire, theft and damage; you can add a 'rider' to your home (or renter's) insurance policy at a very small expense, and you will thereby have peace of mind.

Ottawa Suzuki Strings families can advertise instruments for sale on the OSS website <http://ottawasuzukistrings.ca/classifieds> by sending the make, size, price and a photo of their instrument to the Administrator at admin@ottawasuzukistrings.ca.

The Ottawa Suzuki Strings Program

Private Lessons

Each student receives one private lesson per week. Lessons vary in length from fifteen minutes to one hour. Your teacher will advise you on the length suitable for your child. Private lessons are normally scheduled after school hours (although a few of our teachers are prepared to teach at other times). The Ontario School Administration Act states: "A child is excused from attendance at school if he/she is absent from school for the purpose of receiving instruction in music and the period of absence does not exceed one-half day in any week."

In most cases, our students miss one-quarter day or less. One lesson annually may be set aside for a parent-teacher conference. Note that you may also request, at any time during the year, that regularly scheduled lesson time be used for a parent-teacher conference rather than for a lesson.

Teacher time spent at rehearsals with an accompanist to prepare for performances at a recital, an exam, the Kiwanis Music Festival or any other event is considered as lesson time. In particular, make-up lessons owed by the teacher can be used to cover teacher time at these rehearsals.

Group Classes

Group classes take place on Monday evenings at Woodroffe High School. There will be thirty-one (*including two play-down/potlucks and one special group class night that includes a concert for the entire school by Stellae Boreales and Fine Tuners in the auditorium; theory classes will not be given on the play-down or special group class nights*) group class dates during the school year. On Monday nights, students are offered the following programming:

- Pre-Twinkle – one 40 minute class each group class session

- Book 1 to Book 4 – two 40 minute classes each group class session
- Fine Tuners – one 90 minute class each group class session
- Stellae Boreales – one 120 minute class each group class session

All group classes, except for Pre-Twinkler groups, perform at the Kiwanis Music Festival. It is important that all students attend all group classes (except in cases of illness), and take their group class assignments seriously.

The faculty work together to ensure that all students are placed in the correct group class. If you have any concerns about the appropriateness of your child's group class placement, please speak with your private teacher. Under no condition is a parent allowed to unilaterally change their child's group class. Studio and group class teacher agreement is required for a change.

Theory Classes

We offer theory courses in rhythmic reading and music rudiments. These courses are prerequisite to joining our performance groups. The current course structure begins with a combination of Suzuki and Kodály and progresses to following the RCM theory curriculum.

Performance Groups: Fine Tuners (Junior Performance Group) and Stellae Boreales

The Junior Performance Group, Fine Tuners, is designed to introduce students to playing in parts, section leadership, following a conductor, and sight-reading music. The Fine Tuners perform at the play-downs, around the community, at retirement residences and at schools. It also serves as an introduction to the more demanding music and schedule of our senior performance group, Stellae Boreales. Stellae Boreales is appropriate for advanced students (Books 7/8+). Admission is by audition on a teacher's recommendation; auditions are held each spring. For more information, please consult the "Programs" tab on the OSS website.

Parent Education

Parents receive instruction on Suzuki philosophy and instrument-related topics. All new parents must attend any orientation sessions which are offered. Parent Education is a continuing process in learning to work successfully with your child in the home environment. Don't assume this can all be digested in the first year; the rules and conditions of efficient practice and working positively with your child can change quite dramatically from year to year! As your child matures, you will need to adapt your approach in working with your child. Our teachers have experience and training in helping parents cope with challenges that may occur during home practice.

Studio Recitals

All students will receive two solo performance opportunities, a studio recital in December or January and a further performance opportunity in May or June. There is no specific dress code for recitals, but students are expected to dress as they would for a special occasion. Being carefully dressed is part of creating a good impression on the audience. All students who perform in a recital MUST rehearse before the recital with the accompanist. This is to ensure that your child has a positive experience. No exceptions.

Playdowns/Potlucks

There are two playdown/potluck events this year, December 19 and June 5. All families will be asked to contribute food to the potluck, and we will be sharing our music and having fun.

Visiting Clinicians

Ottawa Suzuki Strings invites visiting clinicians, from time to time, to teach group classes. Every teacher has a slightly different style of teaching and your child will benefit from having input from several sources.

Special Recitals/Concerts in the Community

From time to time, students have the opportunity to perform in the community. This could include, for example, concerts at the NAC, retirement homes, ceremonies, cultural festivals etc. The dress code, unless otherwise specified, is black bottoms, white tops, and black socks and shoes. The dress code for Stellae Boreales is *all black*.

In the case of recitals and concerts, holding areas will be designated where musicians will assemble. Chaperones and/or teachers will be in holding areas to supervise students before, during and after performances. Parents are responsible for their children at concerts, and should see that children under the age of 11 are accompanied to the holding area where a teacher or chaperone will take over supervision until the child is collected at the close of the activity. Children over the age of 11 are expected to make their way to the appropriate holding area and not leave that area without the teacher or chaperones' permission. We also encourage all of our students to perform informally in the community, for example at their school, church, or other community events. Please send a digital photo of your child's performance (if possible!) via the PARENT HUB on the OSS website as well as a short description of the event; we will try to post this info on our website.

The "Need to Know" guide to Gathering Information and Solving Problems

Most of us complain that we are drowning in information...and so we find ourselves functioning on the 'need to know' principle. The challenge is to know who to approach when you 'need to know' something. Here are some guidelines.

First – always start by checking the Ottawa Suzuki Strings website, ottawasuzukistrings.ca. We try to make sure that all times and locations for upcoming events are posted on the website. Other relevant information will be distributed through the weekly bulletin. The bulletin is sent out by email every Wednesday evening during the school terms. Each bulletin is numbered; if you miss a bulletin please email the School Coordinator at Deanne@ottawasuzukistrings.ca and ask for it to be resent.

Getting Information About...

Ottawa Suzuki Strings Administrative Issues

Start by checking our web site: ottawasuzukistrings.ca If you don't find what you need, then phone our Administrator 613-369-437 or e-mail us at admin@ottawasuzukistrings.ca

An Upcoming Studio Recital

For all questions about your upcoming studio recital, please speak to your private lesson teacher.

Group Classes

Group class dates are posted on the calendar at our website. Please contact your group class teacher by email or phone for any additional information concerning group classes.

Special Events

If the event involves children from your private teacher's studio *only*, then contact your private teacher or their designated representative. If the event involves children from your child's group class *only*, then contact your group class teacher or their designated representative. If the event involves children from different studios or different group classes, then contact the coordinator for the event. Contact information for the coordinator of that event will be announced in the weekly bulletin.

You are faced with a problem in the context of...

Your Private Lesson

Generally, if you have a problem or concern with respect to your child's private lesson, the best person to talk with is your private teacher. This is particularly true if you are worried by your child's behaviour toward the teacher, or if you have any other concerns about lesson dynamics. If something your teacher is doing does not 'work' for your child, then your teacher will want to know about this as soon as possible. It is important to maintain open dialogue with your teacher.

If you feel that you are unable to raise or resolve a specific concern with your teacher, please contact the Administrator.

Your Child's Group Class

Generally, if you have a problem or concern with respect to your child's group class, the best person to talk to is the group class teacher. This is particularly true if you are worried by your child's behaviour in the class, or if you have any other concerns about group dynamics, or repertoire. If something your teacher is doing does not 'work' for your child, then the group class teacher and your private teacher will want to know about this as soon as possible. If you feel that you are unable to raise or resolve a specific concern with your teachers, please contact the Administrator.

A Special Event

If you have any problems or concerns with special events, you should contact the coordinator of that event. If you are unsure of who that is, please contact the Administrator.

Getting Home Practice Sessions to be Pleasant and Productive

This is probably the most frequent problem that parents encounter! We *all* fall into practice pits from time to time, and some of us spend more time than we want to admit struggling with practice. But you are not alone! If you are feeling discouraged, there are several strategies you can try: (1) check out the resources for parents at ottawasuzukistrings.ca/parentresources (2) talk to your private teacher – they will provide encouragement; (3) talk to a parent who has 'been there, done that'; your private teacher will be able to suggest a parent who may be able to provide you with support.

Other problems

- Administrative problems or concerns: Please contact the Administrator.
- Any other problems or concerns: Please feel free to contact any member of the Board of Directors; we are always happy to be of help, and want to ensure that Ottawa Suzuki Strings does its very best to meet the needs of its member families. You can contact the Board through the [contact page](#) on the website or by calling the Administrator.

Role and Purpose of Group Class

Fundamental Objectives of Group Class

Group class plays a key role in Suzuki programs, and is a distinctive feature of Suzuki pedagogy as compared to traditional music teaching. Attending and learning from these classes is as important as the private lesson. The four fundamental objectives of the group class program are:

- To strengthen mastery of Suzuki repertoire
 - through review
 - by perfecting old and new technical skills
- To develop ensemble and observation skills
- To reinforce performance skills
- To provide students with musical peers, and the sense that they are part of a learning community

Strengthening Mastery

Children take pleasure in activities that they do well. Consequently, group class provides students with the opportunity to take pleasure in the masterful performance of pieces with their peers.

Group class time spent working on repertoire also plays a crucial role in perfecting old and new skills. Dr. Suzuki talked about developing ability through 10,000 accurate repetitions – but few children will undertake this much activity at home! Parents can often use group class approaches to support home practice.

Ensemble and Observation Skills

Musicians almost always play as part of an ensemble. This requires different skills from those required for solo performance. In an ensemble, musicians need to develop an awareness of the self within the context of the group. Specific skills are fostered, including: breathing together, following the leader (conductor) and communicating through eye contact, energetics and body language. It should be emphasized that musicians must develop their non-verbal communication skills to a high level; this may mean that teachers sometimes choose to use non-verbal means of communication, when it would in fact be more efficient in the short run to simply tell the children what is wanted using words. Please be understanding of what the teacher is trying to foster! Through regular participation in group classes Suzuki students naturally develop these ensemble skills.

Reinforcing Performance Skills

Outstanding performances require careful preparation: soloists and conductors often work for months (even years!) on their interpretation of a piece of music. In group class it is easy and natural to explore different ways of communicating musical ideas to an audience to ensure that the audience takes pleasure in the group's performance. At different times during the year (in particular, during the Kiwanis Music Festival) Ottawa Suzuki Strings tries to provide students with the opportunity to perform in the community.

Providing Students with a Learning Community

Practicing a discipline like music is hard work; it is more rewarding if you can share the challenges (and the successes) with musical peers. In group class, students are part of a learning community of children of different ages who are at a comparable stage of musical development. Group class teachers work hard to provide students with opportunities to develop confidence and leadership skills by working with the other students in group class. Importantly, group class provides models of success to inspire your child. Children are inspired by the pleasure that their peers take in learning to play an instrument, the repertoire that another student is playing, by a very musical performance or by an enthusiastic performance. Your child knows that there are many other children who have successfully conquered the challenges that they are dealing with in their own studies; this knowledge can help both parent and child deal with bumps along their musical journey.

How are children placed in a group class?

Group class placements depend on the student's playing level. Age is not a factor.

What is expected of the parent attending the group class?

- You are expected to arrive 5 minutes before the beginning of class. Classes start 'on time' and end after 40 minutes (including tuning). If you arrive late, your child may be asked to observe until it is convenient for the teacher to stop and tune the instrument.
- Pay close attention to what the teacher is doing with the children: don't create a distraction by chatting to your neighbour, reading the paper, typing on your computer, etc....
- If you can't observe your child's group class (e.g., because you have more than one child in the program, etc.), please arrange to make sure you know what assignments were given by the group class teacher – and make sure these are incorporated into home practicing.
- Don't coach your child from the sidelines! Let the teacher run the class.
- Sometimes kids are cranky and have a bad day. This is life. If you are asked to remove your child, don't get cross but simply pack up and depart matter-of-factly. (See "The Million Dollar Lesson" in the "Parents" section on the website.)
- Don't let your child skip group class– demonstrate the same commitment to the other students (and parents) as you would to members of a sports team.

Resource List

Books

Ed Sprunger, **Helping Parents Practise: Ideas for Making It Easier.**
Dorothy Briggs, **Your Child's Self-Esteem.** Doubleday & Co. Inc.
David Elkind, **The Hurried Child,** Addison Wesley
Masaru Ibuka, **Kindergarten is Too Late.**
Edward Kreitman, **Teaching from the Balance Point,** Western Springs School of Talent Education
Ray Landers, **The Talent Education School of Shinichi Suzuki** - An Analysis. Daniel Press
Kay Slone, **They're rarely Too Young... and Never Too Old "To Twinkle,"** Life Force Press
William and Contance Starr, **To Learn with Love,** Summy-Birchard
Shinichi Suzuki, **Ability from Age Zero.** Senzay
Shinichi Suzuki, **Nurtured by Love.** Senzay
Shinichi Suzuki, **Where Love is Deep.** World-Wide Press
Craig Timmerman, **Journey Down the Kreisler Highway.** Ivory Palaces Publications
Linda Wickes, **The Genius of Simplicity.** Summy-Birchard Music
Phillis Young, **Playing the String Game,** University of Texas, Austin, Press

Magazines

American Suzuki Journal. Suzuki Association of the Americas, Inc., P.O. Box 17130, Boulder, Co., USA 80308, tel. 303-444-0948

Videos

Nurtured by Love - The Life and Work of Shinichi Suzuki. NBL Videos, 67 Alpha Drive, Cleveland, OH 44143

Online

Naxos Online Music Library: naxos.com

Access to listen to tracks from many CDs, including all Naxos, Marco Polo and Dacapo CDs. There are about 50 new releases per month.

YouTube: youtube.com

Various artists and pieces are available. Just search for the title of the piece your child is playing. The quality is variable, so beware.

Musicians and Injuries Web Site: rsi.unl.edu/music.html

Suzuki Chat email list: groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/suzukichat/info

An e-mail based discussion board where you can seek support from a worldwide Suzuki community.

Music and Instrument Retailers

Guy Harrison, Luthier, Violin Maker

792 Gladstone Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 6X9

Tel: 613-569-4803

Web: guyharrison.com

Olivia Pelling, Luthier

2116 Fillmore Crescent, Ottawa, Ontario, K1J 6A4

Tel: 613-325-0752

Web: finestrings.ca

Karoly Loso Violins

1224 Walkley Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1V 6P8

Tel: 613-233-5406

Web: losoviolins.ca

Long & McQuade

2631 Alta Vista Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, K1V 7T5

Tel: 613-521-5909

Web: long-mcquade.com

Peter Mach

309 Eardley Road, Gatineau, Quebec, J9J 2Z6

Tel: 819-684-3886

Web: petermach.com

Cello and violin maker and restorer, Mach One shoulder rests

The Sound Post

319 Catherine Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 5T4

Tel: 613-422-4415

Stringed instruments and accessories and repairs

Suzuki music supplies, Sheet Music, Reading Material for parents

Strings and Things

Tel: 613-231-3466

Web: stringsandthings.ca

Musical accessories and books.

The Leading Note

370 Elgin Street, 569-7888

Suzuki music supplies and sheet music

Always ask your teacher to approve instruments before you make your purchase.

You can generally borrow two or three instruments to try out. Bring them with you to the lesson and have your teacher help you make the final selection. We recommend you consult your teacher before visiting any of the dealers on this list.

For further resources visit the Resources page at
<http://ottawasuzukistrings.ca>