

Suzuki Music School of Arkansas Parent Handbook

The Suzuki Music School of Arkansas

The Suzuki Music School of Arkansas was founded at the University of Arkansas in 1977.

SMSA currently provides musical instruction in cello, flute, guitar, piano, and violin to approximately 200 students ranging in age from 3-adult.

SMSA is a non-profit organization funded entirely by student tuition, private donations and fund-raising efforts.

SMSA is affiliated with the University of Arkansas Community Music School and housed by the university.

All teachers have received training through courses provided by the Suzuki Association of the Americas.

SMSA holds membership with the Suzuki Association of the Americas.

The Suzuki Association of the Americas Mission Statement

The Suzuki Association of the Americas aspires to improve the quality of life in the Americas through Suzuki education. We seek to create a learning community, which embraces excellence and nurtures the human spirit.

The Suzuki Music School of Arkansas Mission Statement

The purpose of the Suzuki Music School of Arkansas is to foster the development of ability in all students regardless of age, race, and special needs. We share the values of the Suzuki Association of the Americas: teaching with integrity and respect for families and colleagues,

building community, pursuing excellence, and preserving the Suzuki legacy of developing noble character through the nurturing of musical ability in a loving environment.

Basic Elements of the Suzuki Method

1. **Listening.** Children learn by listening and imitating. Suzuki children repeatedly listen to pieces they will be learning. The student's success is directly related to the amount of time spent listening to the repertoire.
2. **Parents As Partners.** Suzuki parents are active participants in their children's musical education. They attend lessons and practice with their children daily. Dr.

Suzuki believed that parents create the desire to learn in their children. Parents work closely with their teachers to provide the optimum learning environment by trusting the teacher, taking notes during lessons, and following through with assignments.

3. **Nurturing Environment.** Suzuki parents and teachers nurture their children with love and respect.

“Where love is deep, much can be accomplished.”—Shinichi Suzuki

4. **Repetition.** Reviewing pieces that have been mastered is a key element to refining technique, improving tone, learning self-expression, and the joy of making music.
5. **Small Steps.** Each skill must be mastered before proceeding to the next. Suzuki teachers guide their students at a rate that encourages mastery of skill. Suzuki parents must wait for their teachers to guide them.
6. **Group Lessons and Private Lessons.** Regular attendance to weekly private lessons and group lessons is essential to a student’s success.
7. **Repertoire.** All students learn from a core curriculum. Students are taught the same pieces, allowing them to play together and learn from one another. Suzuki students from all around the world have a common bond when they come together to play concerts. Dr. Suzuki selected pieces from the standard repertoire of the great masters including Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven. These pieces were selected to facilitate specific skills needed to master the instrument. Teachers are encouraged to supplement the core Suzuki repertoire.
8. **Teacher Training.** The Suzuki Association of the Americas educates and trains teachers. The quality of this instruction is exceptional and all teachers are expected to take courses and continually expand their skill.

Registration

Please see the Register page on the website for registration information.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Please see the Resources page for an updated SMSA calendar.

Private Lessons

Weekly private lessons are scheduled with your private instructor.

Private lessons are 30, 45, or 60 minutes in length depending on the student’s age and readiness.

Parents are required to bring a notebook to record instructions and assignments. Recording each lesson is encouraged to provide the student with a model for correct pitch, rhythm and tone production.

Attendance Policy

If a student misses a lesson, make-up lessons will not be given. Therefore, if you know in advance that you will miss a lesson, please trade lesson times with another student and notify your teacher of the change. If the Fayetteville School District is closed due to snow, the Suzuki Music School of Arkansas will also close. Make-up lessons will be given for all snow days. Lessons missed by your teacher will also be made up.

Group Lessons

Group lessons are dependent on the number of students enrolled in the studio. Please ask the director about group lessons for your desired instrument. Group lessons afford a unique and essential opportunity for students to develop technical abilities, reading skills, knowledge of music theory and history. Group classes also give students opportunities to hone performance and develop social relationships with their musical peers. If you must miss a group class, please call your group class instructor at least 48 hours in advance.

Solo Recitals

SMSA students are given performance opportunities at monthly recitals. See the SMSA Calendar on the Resource Page for recital dates and times. All performances should represent your highest level of playing. Your private teacher will help you choose the piece to be performed and prepare you for the performance. Please dress appropriately: for example, dress shoes, nice slacks, dresses, or pant suits. SMSA teachers will assign an accompanist for each recital. Please give the accompanist your music in advance. The accompanist will be available to rehearse before the recital by appointment only.

Parking

Parents may park in the front circle drive or in the University of Arkansas Harmon Avenue Parking Facility. Please do not park on the street or in the apartment parking areas, as your car will be towed and/or ticketed.

Spring Festival Concerts

Every year the students at SMSA perform in a series of final concerts for the school year. Students are given the opportunity to perform on a professional stage in a formal concert setting.

Scholarships

Please see the How to Register page for more information about scholarships and to download the scholarship application.