

PROSPECTIVE PARENT GUIDE

2023-2024

**Suzuki Program
Family Policies**

Brooklyn
Conservatory
of Music

I. All members of our community must work together in a constructive manner to create a supportive environment for the students, parents, teachers and staff.

II. Attendance at lessons, group, theory class and concerts is required.

Your child's success in our program depends on good attendance in all classes. Students who attend all of their classes have an infinitely more positive and successful experience. All students receive 30 private lessons, 28 group/theory classes and four performing events.

- If you will be absent for a lesson or class, you must call, text or email your teacher. When classes are held in person, you must also call the registration desk. Teachers will give you their preferred contact info.
- If a student arrives late, instructors are only obligated to teach until the lesson's scheduled endpoint. If 15 minutes of the lesson has passed, the teacher is not obligated to stay for the remainder of the time.
- Participation in festival concerts and recitals is required.
- We may revoke your enrollment in the program for excessive absence or lateness:
 - Three consecutive absences from private lessons without notice.
 - Less than 80% attendance to any one class.
 - More than six late arrivals of 15 or more minutes to any one class.
- Arrive 5 minutes before all classes. (Five minutes early is on time!) Late arrivals disrupt the flow of class.
- Students who do not attend group class regularly may not be allowed to participate in major events. This is to ensure that all students have a positive performing experience.
- If you must send a non-Suzuki parent or other caregiver to a lesson, notify your teacher in advance, and keep to a maximum of four times per year. Provide video-taking and note-taking capability, and advise the caregiver about the "One Teacher at a Time" policy and classroom etiquette.
- Summer: we strongly recommend that students register for 4 - 7 summer private lessons, and attend summer music workshops. Consult with your teacher for their recommendations. Without lessons and practicing during the summer months, students often see a decline of their momentum, which can be frustrating.
- If the parent designated as the Suzuki Parent is no longer able to fulfill that role, the new Suzuki Parent is asked to attend Parents Class at the earliest opportunity.

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III. Equipment

Families should work with their teacher to determine the best equipment for their lessons, including type of instrument and instrument accessories.

IV. Make Ups

Due to the intensive nature of the Suzuki Program's schedule, no make ups for private lessons or group classes are given for student absence. Any classes missed by a teacher will be made up or a sub will be provided.

V. Recitals

To ensure all students have a positive experience:

- Every child is required to perform at each recital. Any exceptions must be approved by the department head and director.
- Beginners typically take a bow for their first recital. Teachers assist young children on stage.
- Our program values artistry and mastery, demonstrated by recital selections. Students do not perform their most recently learned pieces. Teachers make the final decision regarding recital pieces.
- To provide a supportive experience for all students, we expect families to attend the entire duration of performing events.
- We respect the need for families to balance events for multiple activities and for multiple children. To help us accommodate such needs, we expect requests for students to perform at certain times in performing events to be submitted by the deadlines.

VI. Group & Theory Class Placement

Group & Theory are a critical component of our program. Students remain in their assigned group & theory class for the entire year. It is expected and desirable for students to experience being "challenged" and to be a "leader" of their classes over the course of several years in the Suzuki program. Students learn valuable skills from both positions. Class titles are approximate and might not precisely describe where your child is for the entire year.

VII. Suzuki Program Director's Office Hours: 15 hours per week; Mo – Th, 9 AM – 2 PM

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VIII. Suzuki is an ANNUAL PROGRAM

It is expected that students will continue in the program for the full school-year. Schedules remain the same from September – June. Tuition is non-refundable after August 1. Prior to August 1, 10% of tuition plus fees are withheld. Any withdrawals must be processed through the registration process listed on the BKCM website. See [Registration Form](#) for further financial policies. See also COVID-19 related policy changes.

IX. Lessons & Classes – the “Suzuki Secretary” and the “One Teacher at a Time” principle

- Parents are the “Suzuki Secretary”. At times, teachers will invite you to participate in the lesson. Otherwise, please actively listen, take good notes, and audio/video record the lesson.
- We follow the “One Teacher at a Time” principle. Any commentary (positive or negative) or physical gestures from parents will divide the child's attention, so please refrain from doing so during lessons or classes. Questions are encouraged, but please wait for a pause in the lesson. Inform your teacher you have a question, and he/she will either answer it then, or make time before the end of the lesson.

X. Classroom Etiquette

- Eating food during lessons is not allowed. Please have children eat snacks before or after classes. Food is not allowed in classrooms.
- Be mindful of strong perfumes in small studio spaces – many people have allergies.
- Arrive 5 minutes early to your class, and do the following prior to your lesson time:
 - Take off coats, sweatshirts, gloves, hats, and scarves.
 - Trim fingernails (if applicable), use the bathroom, and wash hands.
 - Have a drink of water and finish any snacks prior to the lesson. Wash hands again!
 - Prepare your instrument for the lesson outside of your class if there is space (tune, rock-stop, shoulder rest, guitar support, etc.)
 - Review notes from last lesson, and review any important questions for your teacher.
 - Help your child find a calm center.
- Ask your teacher their preference whether to wait in hall at your lesson time, to knock, or to enter the room.
- Screen use during classes is not permitted unless you're taking an audio/video recording or have a modification in your lesson.

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XI. Honor the relationship between Teacher and Parent

- Please observe the stated working hours of teachers and department heads. Do not expect responses during holidays or regular days off, or in between classes.
- Texting must be reserved for quick reminders, not long conversations.
- Please obtain permission from your private teacher for any additional musical endeavors. This includes orchestra, chamber music, additional private lessons, second instruments, etc.

XII. Progress, curriculum and concerns regarding your teacher, the program or your schedule

- Twice per year conferences are held during lesson time in order to facilitate such conversations.
- If more time is needed, mention at the beginning of the lesson that you'd like to reserve some time at the end of the lesson to have a conversation, or email your teacher to request a conversation at a separate time.
- Some conversations are best held without a child present, especially regarding progress, philosophical differences or comparisons.
- Do not wait until spring to bring up a problem. Any discussions should take place as soon as possible so that we have time to implement multiple strategies for improvement.
- If you don't feel comfortable talking with your teacher, please request a meeting with your Department Head or with the Suzuki Director to discuss; a meeting will then be scheduled to include the teacher.
- Any changes to your schedule must be approved by the Program Director. Changes to schedules will be made only at the semester break, and are made only in exceptional circumstances. Please be aware that any changes involve significant administrative time, and affect many other people.
- We all wish the absolute best for each child, and must work together to communicate and grow. Requests to change teachers will not be approved if the above steps are not taken.

XIII. Expectations of the Suzuki Parent (as discussed in First Year Parents Class)

- Attend Parents Class during the first semester, and continue in role of Suzuki Parent for the duration of child's Suzuki experience.
- Suzuki Parent (the one who attended the Parents Class) must attend all classes and take notes.
- Ensure that student listens to the Suzuki recording every day at home.
- Practice every day with the child, using positive language strategies learned in Parents Class.
- Obtain required materials and bring them to class every week.
- Read and follow the Suzuki Program Family Policies.
- Keep a sense of humor, and model this for your children.
- Keep an open dialogue with your teacher in order to problem solve together.

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The Suzuki Parent is the parent who attends parent classes, accompanies the child to lessons, communicates with the teacher, and works with the child at home. You are the container of information! If a spouse wants or needs to take over the duties of the Suzuki Parent, they must attend a full semester of Parents Class.

We teachers know that you work very hard in your role as a Suzuki Parent, and all of us have immense respect for your dedication. We have an incredible Suzuki community here at the Brooklyn Conservatory for which we are all very grateful. Let's work together to continue to build a life-long musical journey for you and your children. As Suzuki said, "Music Polishes The Heart."