



Seattle Music Partners Family Handbook

Please keep at home for future use.

2016-2017

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For Students and Families

Welcome to Seattle Music Partners!

You're joining (or are already a part of) a community of musicians and families that's about learning, fun, and social responsibility. Seattle Music Partners started in 2000, with a handful of students from Leschi Elementary, and a few volunteers from Garfield High School. Now our program is at Leschi, Bailey Gatzert, Lowell, and Madrona schools, and we serve about 100 students each year, with the help of over 100 high school and community volunteers from all over Seattle and surrounding areas.

Our mission is to teach students in low-income elementary schools how to play an instrument and read music. Our program mission is supported by three pillars:

- 1) **Quality Music Instruction**- Our staff and volunteers are dedicated to providing students with a quality music experience. Students not only learn how to make a sound on their instrument and use their ears, they learn to read music and even compose music of their own. Over the years we have developed a curriculum for beginners as well as a curriculum for returning/advanced students, and we've measured changes in students' playing abilities as a result.
- 2) **Youth Development**- We believe that learning to play an instrument is not only enriching and fun; it's a great way to teach students responsibility, respect, and collaboration with others. Through our ensemble and private lessons, students learn that they are responsible for showing up, having all their materials, and working to create something with their peers.
- 3) **Social Justice**- We want every student to have access to the wonderful world of music, and we want our students and volunteers to be good musical citizens. We are dedicated to ending the inequity of music education in low income schools by providing music instruction to students who would not otherwise have the opportunity. We are dedicated to doing work to make the world a better place.

So what's the bottom line?

Students: You'll be learning to play an instrument with Seattle Music Partners, AND you'll also be interacting with new people, learning lots of new skills, and maybe even imagining new possibilities in your life and your community.

Families: We think of SMP as a program for the whole family. Your child is learning to play an instrument, but we hope that being part of the community will be important to you too.

Together: We will build the community of musicians that we want to see in the world!

Let's play together!

Description of Programming

What happens at SMP?

Every week, students will learn to play their instruments and read music, but there's lots more that students do in the SMP program! Students will have the chance to meet and play music with fellow musicians from other schools in the neighborhood, see music in action on field trips and at school assemblies, and have fun playing and learning together with their tutors and their SMP peers.

Regular Programming:

Tutor Days:

On tutor days, students receive one-on-one lessons from their tutors to learn skills on their instrument, work on pieces of music, and get practice assignments. Every student in SMP gets paired with a high school, college, or community musician who will be his/her tutor for the school year. Sometimes a tutor may have to be absent on a tutor day and miss a lesson. SMP will provide a substitute tutor for students on these days, so that they will always receive a lesson on a tutor day.

Group Days:

On group days, students from the same instrument families all learn how to play together! One teacher, whom we call a "Teaching Artist", leads the class and teaches students to read music, play alongside other instruments, and eventually be able to perform music as one unified group. Volunteers that we call "Student Assistants" are in the classroom to assist students with their music and help them succeed.

Activity Time:

As soon as students arrive to SMP, they receive a music-related activity that gets them ready to learn and play for the afternoon. This is also the time that SMP staff shares important announcements with students.

Supplemental Programming:

Student Performances

Individual Student Recitals: Recitals are an opportunity for each SMP student to choose and perform a piece of music for an audience of family and friends! Recitals take place on tutor days during regular program time. There are two recitals each year, in the winter and spring.

All-SMP Community Evenings: All SMP students gather at one of our schools and perform pieces of music together. SMP also provides dinner, hosts a guest artist performance, and plans fun activities to get the whole family involved with music! We have these twice a year and they always take place in the evening.

Special Performances: Every year we have the All SMP Concert & Celebration, where SMP students all perform at a venue in the neighborhood. Sometimes there are unique performance opportunities for students, and they are different each year. We'll let students and families know if/when these special performances come up.

Community Events

Guest Artists: There are tons of amazing musicians from around Seattle, sometimes even from around the world, who want to share their talents with young musicians. That's why we often have musical guests visit SMP to share their superskills with students and answer tons of questions! Sometimes these guests perform for the entire school.

Field Trips: Every now and then SMP students get to go on field trips during the school day to see musical performances, and in the spring all SMP 5th graders take a tour of the Washington Middle School band and orchestra classes. Once a year there is a special weekend field trip to the Seattle Symphony, where we invite all SMP students and their families to come along!

The SMP Family Newsletter

Every month SMP sends home a family newsletter with students. It contains the upcoming dates, times, and details about all of these events, as well as occasional days that there is no SMP. If you provided us with an email address, you will also be sent an electronic copy of the newsletter each month. Keep an eye out for the newsletter because something happens almost every month.

Student Participation Agreement

In Seattle Music Partners we will be:

- **Safe** with our instruments, each other, all students, staff, and special guests.
- **Respectful** of ourselves, each other, all students, staff, special guests, and school property.
- **Responsible** for our own behavior within individual and group sessions, and with our instruments, music and accessories.
- **Persistent** and **Focused** in our music lessons and home practice time in order to improve on our instruments.
- **Creative** and brave in all music lessons, rehearsals, and performances.

When students struggle to follow these guidelines, it disrupts the SMP learning environment. SMP staff aim to work with students who may be struggling and reintroduce them to the learning environment successfully. We have procedures in place to help students understand how their actions affect other students, and to help us get information on how to best support the student emotionally so they can learn best.

“Think Time” Moments:

We understand that everyone has bad days. Learning new skills is often difficult and frustrating, and learning to work with our peers is a lifelong process! Sometimes students need a moment to cool off or rethink how they want to be a part of the program environment. If a student disrupts the learning environment of SMP, we will ask the student to take a break from the activity and answer the following questions:

1. How are you feeling right now?
2. What decision did you make that led to this moment?
3. How did this choice impact the learning environment?
4. What choice could you have made to avoid this result?
5. What will you do to prevent this from happening again?

The student will be able to rejoin the activity once they have answered these questions and an SMP team member believes the student can do so with the Participation Agreement in mind. If a further disruption happens after the student has filled out their “Think Time” sheet, the student may be removed from the rest of the session and a staff member will call home to the parent or guardian to check in.

Escalating Behavior:

In future sessions, if concerning behavior continues:

1. A staff member will call home,
2. The student will receive a one-day suspension from the program,
3. A family conference will be scheduled. The student may not return to SMP until a conference with the student, family and SMP staff occurs to address the behavior and come up with solutions, which may include a behavior contract among all parties.

Continued Prolonged Disruption:

If there are continuing incidents or concerning behaviors that SMP staff witness after the family conference, SMP may:

1. review the possibilities and strategies of supporting the student in the future,
2. have a second family conference to finalize a decision about the student’s continued participation in the program.
3. implement a long-term suspension- students may not finish out the school year with the program, but may be able to rejoin in the following school year.

Attendance Policy

Attendance at SMP is mandatory. Being a musician is a commitment, and students must show up to get the most out of this experience. A lot of people show up to help SMP students succeed (tutors, teaching artists, students assistants, etc.), and they are counting on you to be there!

*If you do need to miss a day, please notify SMP in advance. If we are not notified in advance, an absence will be marked as unexcused. Since we often have a waitlist, and students only benefit by attending regularly, **two consecutive unexcused absences or three unexcused absences in one month will require a family meeting. One further absence after the family meeting will be cause for dismissal.***

SMP is two days a week, so we ask that any appointments or other afterschool commitments be scheduled around SMP when possible. If your child forgets to bring their instrument on an SMP day, they still need to come! We keep extra instruments for that exact reason.

Every SMP absence: If a student who was present during the school day does not show up to SMP and we have not been notified, families will receive a phone call home from SMP staff. This is to ensure that your child is safe and accounted for and to discuss why they did not come from SMP.

3rd unexcused absence: SMP staff will call home and discuss the student's commitment to SMP. Depending on the conversation, students may be put on probation or asked to give up their spot in SMP.

Family attendance at SMP events and performances is not mandatory, but we expect students to be there. For every event, SMP staff will contact you ahead of time to confirm whether you are able to come or not. We will contact you with whatever preferred method of communication that you indicated on the student sign-up sheet. Please inform us if your contact info or preference changes!

Practice Tips for Students

Practicing is an important part of learning how to play your instrument. Your tutor and your group lesson teacher will give you exercises and pieces to work on in between your days at SMP. Here are some tips that can help make your practicing more fun and successful.

1. **Practice time:** The goal is to practice 10 minutes a day! It may be helpful to practice at the same time every day. For example, your practice time could be before breakfast, after school, after dinner, etc.
2. **Practice space:** Find a practice area where you can concentrate. Have your music, music stand, pencil, and anything else you might need in your practice space.
3. **Do your Exercises:** Your tutor or group lesson teacher will help you write down what you should work at home. Post this assignment sheet on the wall of your practice space, on the fridge, or anywhere you can see it. This can help you focus and know what to practice.
4. **Posture check:** Check from your head to your toes. Is your body in the right position to create the best sound you can make?
5. **Open up those ears:** Listen actively to the sounds you're making.
6. **Ask Questions:** While practicing, if you come up with any questions, write them down and show them to your tutor or group lesson teacher at the next lesson.
7. **Don't let your instrument get lonely!** Even if you only have a few extra minutes, take your friend out for a chat!
8. **Don't cram!** Just a little practice each day is better than a whole bunch at the last minute.
9. **Rock out!** Don't be afraid to play more than what you've been assigned. Make up your own songs, explore, improvise, and invent new sounds. Have fun!
10. **Try it again!** If you just tried something that sounded really great, try to remember how you did it, and how it felt. Then try it again!

Family Involvement at SMP

We think of SMP as a program for the whole family. Your child is learning to play an instrument and read music, but we hope that being part of the community is a fun learning experience for you too.

There are many ways for family members to get involved at SMP. The most important thing any family member can do is to get involved with your child's learning. Sit in at a lesson, cheer at performances, and encourage your child's practice at home.

If you have the time, you can sign up for the **Family Team** at your child's school. Family Team members take a leadership role in SMP by helping keep other families informed and helping events run smoothly. They also help gather volunteers to chaperone field trips, bring food to events, etc.

If you're interested in learning how to become a Family Team member, contact Evan and she will get you involved!



Practice Tips for Family Members

Whether your child is new to SMP or has been with us before, we want to give you a few tips about how to help them with their musical adventures at home. All of us here know how hard it can be to find the motivation to practice, and also how frustrating it can be to convince someone else to practice. So, here are a few tips:

- **Tell your child that practicing their instrument at home is important to YOU.** If you don't tell your child that practicing at home is important, they won't value the experience and it will take much longer for them to feel comfortable playing their instrument. And don't forget to tell them how proud you are of how hard they are working!
- **Make practicing part of the daily routine.** We know you're busy- but if you encourage your child to pick up their instrument at the same time every day, it will become a habit. Find a time in the day that works best for your family. 10 minutes of practice a day make a difference!
- **Create a space in your home that is meant for music.** We've found that having a regular practice space where students won't be bothered by their brothers and sisters, or be distracted by toys or TV, helps a lot. They will be able to focus much better, and it will help them develop a practice routine.
- **Ask your child to perform for you.** Even if they haven't started learning songs yet, they can show you something that they learned in their lessons. Remember to say "thank you" when they are finished- for some children, it takes a lot of courage to play in front of people.
- **Ask your child to teach you something.** Children find it fascinating when they know something that their parents don't. It will be fun for them and fun for you if you ask them to teach you how to hold their instrument or make a sound on it.
- **Be helpful with your words.** If a child is insecure with something new that they are learning, encourage them to feel strong and keep up the good work.
- **Use incentives.** As the year goes on, students can feel less motivated to learn just for the sake of learning. Use whatever is important in your child's life at the moment as an incentive to get practice done, or to reward their hard work.

- **Listen to music.** Your child is learning an instrument, so help them fill their ears with music! Experiment with listening to classical or jazz music, and identify when the instrument your student plays can be heard in the song. Feel free to ask us for music suggestions!
- **Ask to see your student's practice chart.** They will get one from their tutor or group lesson teacher each lesson, and it will help to hold your student accountable if you consistently ask to see it.
- **Feel free to ask for advice.** SMP staff, as well as your student's tutor, are here to help! It may also be valuable to ask the parent of a returning SMP student for advice- they might have some ideas about what might work for the music life of your family. We are all here to support each other and help out when we can.
- **Come to a lesson if you can!** First, your child will understand that this is important to you. Second, observing what the teacher is working on in the lesson will let you help your child practice effectively.

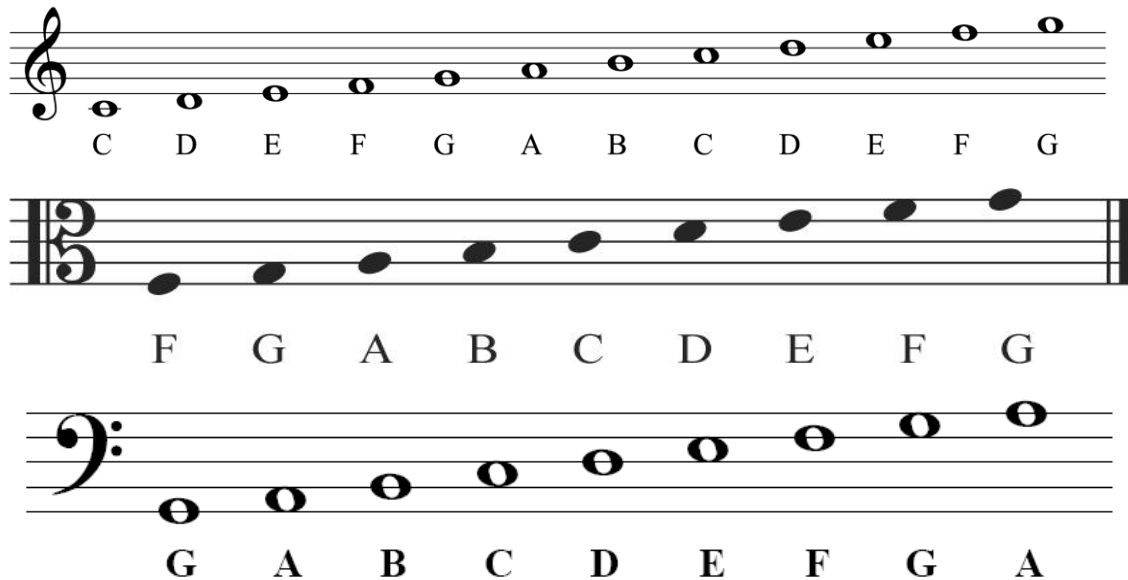
Reading Music: Some Helpful Hints

Want to help your child learn a piece of music? Here are a few helpful hints to get you started:

If your child plays the flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, xylophone, or violin, they will be looking at music in the **Treble Clef**. If your child plays viola they'll be using **Alto Clef**. If your child plays the trombone, cello, or bass, they'll be using **Bass Clef**.



The **Staff** is the five lines and four spaces where we put our notes. The clef is shown at the beginning of each staff. Each line and space is given a name from the musical alphabet: A-B-C-D-E-F-G-A, and it repeats over and over.



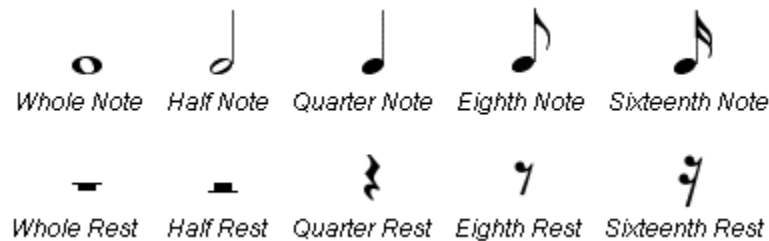
Note Values: Some notes last a long time, and some are very short. The different lengths of notes are called note values. When we arrange a series of note values together in any order, we call that **rhythm**.

The longest note you will have is a **whole note**. A whole note equals four quarter notes. A **half note** equals two quarter notes. A **quarter note** is one beat. An

eighth note is half a beat (or quarter note), and a **sixteenth note** is one fourth of a quarter note.



Rests are symbols that show you where the silences are in a piece of music. Every note value has a related rest of the same value.



Accidentals are symbols that indicate how a note can be altered in sound. There are three different accidentals. A **sharp** will raise the pitch of a note by one half step. A **flat** will lower the pitch by one half step. A **natural** takes away a flat or a sharp. It bring the note back to its original sound.

- Sharp

b - Flat

♮ - Natural

Instrument Care

Part of learning to play an instrument is learning how to take good care of it. All instruments are very fragile and valuable. Proper care of your instrument will keep it in good playing condition and make it easier to play. To keep it from getting damaged, follow these guidelines on how to take care of your instrument. If any problems come up with your instrument, please let us know.

All Instruments: Find a flat, sturdy space (the floor is usually best) to put your case down. Figure out which side of the case goes down and which side goes up – often there is brand label on the side of the case that goes up.

Store your instrument in its case when not in use. Never rush and never let anyone rush you when you are putting your instrument away. Never shut the lid of your case without double checking that everything is fastened. If you are interrupted it is very easy to forget that the case is unfastened, pick it up by the handle, and have the instrument spill on to the floor.

Do not place anything in the case that can press on the instrument- even your music book! Instruments should be kept indoors and away from any heaters.

In case of an accident, retrieve any broken pieces- no matter how small- save them in an envelope, and get the instrument to an SMP staff member as soon as you can.

WOODWIND INSTRUMENTS: Never eat before you play (or at least rinse your mouth out with water), and make sure hands are clean!

Flute:

1. When taking your flute out of the case, pick it up from the ends where there are no keys. Never pick it up from the keys.
2. Put the flute together with a slow back-and-forth twisting motion. Never push or pull the flute pieces when assembling or taking it apart. This can cause the instrument to become bent at the joints.

3. After you are finished playing, use a cleaning rod with an absorbent cloth to swab out the inside of all parts to remove moisture. Carefully wipe off the outside of the flute to remove oils or perspiration caused by your hands.

Clarinet and Saxophones:

1. When taking your instrument out of the case, pick it up from the ends where there are no keys. Never pick it up from the keys.

2. When putting your instrument together, first apply a small amount of cork grease to the tenon corks (the mouthpiece cork for the saxophone).

3. Put the clarinet together with a slow back-and-forth twisting motion. Carefully align the keys in the middle joints. Never push or pull the clarinet pieces when assembling or taking it apart. This can damage the tenon or tear the cork.

4. When tightening the screws on the ligature (the metal piece that holds the reed on the mouthpiece) take care not to over-tighten them. This can cause the screw to break.

BRASS INSTRUMENTS: Never eat before you play (or at least rinse your mouth out with water), and make sure your hands are clean!

Trumpet:

1. Valves on brass instruments need to be lubricated on a regular basis. **Don't try and lubricate your valves by yourself until you've done it at least 5 times supervised by your tutor or group lesson teacher.**

(a) Unscrew the valve cap and pull the valve out about half-way.

(b) Apply a few drops of valve oil to the wide part of the valve.

(c) Push the valve back into position making sure that it is lined up correctly. (Note): The valve has a guide that keeps it in place. To check for correct alignment gently try to turn the valve. If it doesn't turn, it is lined up. If it turns, keep turning the valve till you hear a slight "click" and the valve stops turning.

2. Occasionally a mouthpiece will become stuck in the horn. If this happens **do not try to remove it using force** - this can cause major damage to the instrument. Let us or the in-school music teacher know if this happens. You can also take it to

a repair shop or music store to have it removed. Most shops do not charge for this service.

Trombone:

1. Great care is needed when handling your trombone. The smallest bump or dent in the slide can cause problems with its proper movement. Be careful!

2. The slide needs to be lubricated on a regular basis. Carefully take off the outer slide and gently set it on a soft surface. Wipe down the inner slide with a cloth. Put the outer slide back on. Apply a small amount of slide oil or cream to the boot area of the inner-slide as needed. The boot is at the very end of the slide, so be careful not to allow the slide to slip off the trombone. If using cream, use a small amount and rub it into the entire slide.

3. Occasionally a mouthpiece will become stuck in the trombone. If this happens **do not try to remove it using force** - this can cause major damage to the instrument. Let us or the in-school music teacher know if this happens. Take it to a repair shop or music store to have it removed. Most shops do not charge for this service.

STRING INSTRUMENTS: Make sure your hands are clean when you play.

Bow Care:

1. Be careful not to bang the head or drop the bow as this can break the head. Also, remember not to touch the hair on the bow – oil from our skin ruins the hair.

2. Keep the bow away from extreme heat. This can warp the bow.

3. Always loosen the hair when you are not using the bow. Keeping the bow tight over time can warp the bow and stretch the hair.

Violin, Viola, Bass and Cello:

1. Be very careful when taking these instruments out of the case. Always protect the bridge.

2. Avoid rapid temperature changes. If you bring your instrument from a cold area into a warm area leave it in its case, to change temperature slowly, because cracking of the finish or wood can occur. A good rule-of-thumb is not to leave your violin any place that you would not like to be.
3. After you are finished playing, remove any rosin and hand oils from the instrument with a soft cloth. Don't let rosin buildup on your instrument.
4. Be sure to learn how to use the tuning pegs before turning them. Never force a peg into the peg box if it's slipping. If a peg is stuck, don't force it, either. You could break the peg or the peg box under these conditions. Let your music teacher know if you are having this problem.
5. It is always best to set your cello or bass on its side when you are not playing. If your instrument falls over it may break the bridge or the neck. Be Careful!
6. Keep an eye on the bridge. As you tune the instrument the strings tend to pull the top of the bridge toward the fingerboard. If the bridge tips too much it may fall over. This can break the bridge or even crack the top. If you notice your bridge tilting, bring your instrument in and tell your music teacher.