

Great Northwest Music Academy

Student/Parent Handbook 2007-2008

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Student Responsibilities

- Arrive on time for your lesson each week.
- Follow your *Weekly Practice Plan*.
- Record your practice times on your *Daily Practice Chart*.
- Complete any written work assigned.
- Bring the following items to each lesson:
 - Your 3-ring notebook
 - Two sharpened pencils.
 - All books and music your teacher has asked you to bring
 - Completed homework from the previous lesson
 - Your signed practice chart for the week
 - A good attitude
 - Any questions you may have
- Enjoy making music!

Parent Responsibilities

- For instrumental students, provide a good quality instrument, a music stand, and a bench or chair at the correct height. If it is a piano, it should be tuned twice each year.
- Be sure the student has a place to practice with adequate lighting in a location allowing uninterrupted and undistracted practice.
- Provide an established daily practice time and be consistent about cheerfully reminding and requiring your child to practice.
- Supervise your child's practice (see "Practice Tips" in your student notebook).
- Be sure that your child attends all scheduled lessons and performance opportunities and arrives on time. These opportunities are very important for continued progress. Please arrange your schedules accordingly.
- Call or email the teacher if you have any questions regarding practice problems and assignments.

Practice Guidelines

- **Assignments and practice are expected to have the same priority as homework.** An instrument can only be learned by actually playing it—without practice, lessons will be ineffective.
- **Practice is the key to your child's enjoyment of learning music.** Repetition over time is what makes playing easier. Each new concept or skill will be demonstrated in a lesson. This new concept or skill must then be repeated *correctly* over and over in practice sessions at home. The next lesson will devote a small amount of time confirming that the new concept was practiced correctly and then the teacher will move on to

something new. Without practice, the assignments will not progress satisfactorily, and the student will become frustrated. WITH practice, the student will get better and better and feel proud of what they accomplish.

- **It is not age appropriate to expect children to discipline themselves to practice.** Parents will need to diligently but cheerfully **require** the student to practice. Scheduling practice at the same time every day and establishing a routine **from the very beginning** will make this easier. Scheduling the practice sessions earlier in the day also helps.
- **Planning your practice time is an important first step!** Your teacher will work with you to assign a reasonable number of minutes that you or your child should practice each week. Talk with your family and decide on a regular time for practice each day and record this on your *Weekly Practice Plan*. Show the completed *Practice Plan* to your teacher.

Scheduling guidelines:

*The earlier in the day the practice time is scheduled, the easier it is to stick to the schedule.

*For the most efficient muscle development (fingers, hands, arms, embouchure, vocal chords), it is best to practice every day. However, if your schedule requires it, it is also possible to practice fewer days as long as the total number of minutes is achieved.

- **Practice Awards.** At the end of each school year, students who have met their practice minutes goal every week will receive an award and a gift certificate from Great Northwest Music. There will also be a special award and gift certificate for the student who has practiced for the most total minutes. **For students under 18, a parent must sign the practice log each week for the minutes to be counted.**
- **Parent involvement with practicing is highly recommended and is a big factor in student success.** We have found from experience that the vast majority of students who succeed in music lessons do so because their parents actively participate in their practice sessions. For students eight years old and under it is suggested that parents sit with their children while they practice, guiding their activities and helping them follow the teacher's practice directions. If you play a musical instrument, you may wish to play along with your child occasionally. For children older than 8, it works well to be in the same room reading a book or doing some other quiet task and making occasional encouraging comments. For ALL students, parents need to require that the children practice, just as they require that homework be completed.

- **Hold a weekly mini recital** the evening before your child's lesson. Have your child play for the entire family the pieces he or she has been practicing. If parents or other siblings play an instrument or sing, include them as well. Make it a special weekly event that becomes a family tradition.
- **Practice Tips:** Making the most of your practice time will improve your playing or singing greatly!

Warm up correctly as part of your practice. Do your technique book or scales and exercises before songs.

Play no faster than you can play the piece well— even if this is VERY slow.

Play your piece all the way through first. Then pick a few measures that were difficult and work on those alone. Play them slowly, then fast, then at the correct tempo.

Do NOT repeat the same mistake over and over. Stop and fix it before it becomes a habit.

Set attainable goals. Work on a small section (a measure or a line) at a time or focus on one problem at a time (accuracy, rhythm, dynamics, fingering, etc.)

Complete at least one page of your written assignments each day until they are completed. Be sure they are all done BEFORE you get in the car to come to your lesson! J

Piano Students: Master hands separately, then put both hands together.

Enjoy making music every time you play or sing!

Calendar

- Classes meet for the Academic Year, September through June and/or for the Summer Session, June through August. See the class schedule for specific beginning and ending dates.
- Private lessons and ensembles meet year-round.
- All students have the following weeks off, unless they are making up a missed lesson or the teacher is making up a canceled class since these weeks also serve as make-up weeks: Spring Break Week, Memorial Day Week, July 4th Week, Labor Day Week, Thanksgiving Week, 2 Weeks for the Winter Holidays. A Calendar of Important Dates is available online at www.greatnorthwestmusic.com. Click on "Student Info."
- **SUMMER SCHEDULE** Lessons and Ensembles are scheduled year round. During the summer, private lesson students may choose a special focus including music ensembles, sight reading, jazz, popular music, worship music, etc.
If you wish to take the summer off, you must

complete a withdrawal form by the 14th of your last month of lessons. You may reregister for the fall, but please be aware that you will be charged another registration fee, and we cannot guarantee that your teacher or your preferred time will be available when you reregister.

Performance Opportunities

We provide several performance opportunities each year:

- **Family Holiday Music Night:** Early in December, families will gather for cookies, hot chocolate and holiday music. Students and their families are invited to bring a plate of cookies and holiday music to share. Space is limited, and there will be a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in November. Donations are accepted to cover the cost of the event. Any extra money collected will be donated to a local charity.
- **Mini Recitals:** Every First Friday, we offer mini recitals on our stage in the store. All students are invited to play whenever they are ready to perform a piece or two. A sign-up sheet for each month is posted on the bulletin board. Even if you or your child are not playing, you may want to stop in during First Friday to enjoy the music that other students, as well as our faculty and staff, are performing.
- **Spring Concert:** Each May we hold our annual Spring Concert. All students who are in their second year or more of lessons are invited to perform. It is at this time that we present our awards, so you won't want to miss it! There is a \$5 recital fee per student to help cover cost of hall rental.
- **Piano Parties:** First year piano students have the opportunity to participate in a Piano Parties in our large classroom where they will play for each other and for their families. This provides a friendly, low pressure setting for their first performance experiences.

Policies and Procedures

Child Drop-Off & Pick-up Policy: Students under 8 years of age must be walked to and from the classroom by an adult and must be directly supervised before or after class. Older students should come directly to their classroom when they arrive, and wait inside the building for their parents after their lesson or class is finished. Parents of all students are encouraged to come to the studio or classroom to pick up their child each week so that the teacher can provide details regarding the week's assignment or upcoming events.

Registration and Payment: A \$20 registration fee is due at enrollment for all classes, ensembles, and lessons. Tuition is paid in equal monthly installments by automatic deduction from a debit or credit card. Students also have the option of paying in full by the semester (September-January, February-June and July-August) or submitting post-dated checks with the registration form, dated the first of each month of the semester.

Payment for Books and Materials: An invoice will be provided with any music that is not included in tuition payments (see below). The invoice should be paid on or before the date of the next class or lesson.

CLASSES: A book fee is included in class tuition and covers initial books and materials for the class. Students are responsible to pay for any additional books that may be required.

ENSEMBLES: All music used in ensembles is on loan to the students. Any student wishing to purchase the music may do so at the time that the teacher receives the music back from the group.

PRIVATE LESSONS: Books and materials are not included in private lesson tuition. Students are responsible to pay for all music books and materials provided.

Students/parents may set up their autopay account to include books and materials. Students who do not have an autopay account for tuition may set up an account just for books and materials. Check with our front desk staff to make arrangements for autopay.

Cancellation and Refund Policy: Great Northwest Music Academy reserves the right to cancel any course with fewer than six students enrolled. Timely registration will help keep your chosen course open, so enroll early! Should the Academy cancel a course due to low enrollment, you will receive 48 hours notice and a full refund of the fees paid, including the registration fee.

Withdrawals: Withdrawals are allowed as described below. **A completed WITHDRAWAL FORM must be submitted to the front counter by the date listed below.** Withdrawal forms are available at the front counter and online.

CLASSES: Students taking classes may withdraw only within the first 2 weeks and at the end of the first semester of an academic year class. Auto payments will continue even if the student no longer attends. *To withdraw at the end of the first semester of an academic year class and stop your autopayments for the 2nd semester, you must submit a withdrawal form to the front counter by January 14.*

ENSEMBLES: Ensembles meet year round.

Members who wish to withdraw must submit a withdrawal form by the 14th of the month in order to stop autopayment beginning the following month. Members may withdraw at any time, but no refunds will be given, so it is best to finish out a month or the entire time period for which you have paid. *Please be sensitive to the group's upcoming performances and remain in the group until after performances are completed.* You may withdraw for a period of time (for example, in the summer) and then reregister, but be aware that you will be charged another registration fee. Also, if you withdraw, your place is open for another student to take and we cannot guarantee that there will be room for you in the ensemble when you reregister.

PRIVATE LESSONS: Private Lessons meet year round. Students who wish to withdraw must submit a withdrawal form by the 14th of the month in order to stop autopayment beginning the following month. Students may withdraw at any time, but no refunds will be given, so it is best to finish out a month or the entire time period for which you have paid. You may withdraw for a period of time (for example, in the summer) and then reregister, but be aware that you will be charged another registration fee. Also, if you withdraw, your place is open for another student to take and we cannot guarantee that your teacher will be available when you reregister.

Withdrawal and Autopayments: To stop autopayments for withdrawals as allowed above, we must receive a withdrawal form within the first 2 weeks or by the 14th of January for classes or in the case of lessons or ensembles, by the 14th of the month to stop autopayments for the following month.

If we do not receive a withdrawal form, your autopayments will continue even if the student is no longer attending. Should this happen, no refunds will be given. It is the student's/parent's responsibility to be sure that we have received a completed withdrawal form in time. We cannot accept withdrawals over the phone. Withdrawal forms are available at the front counter and online.

Withdrawal Refund Policy: We encourage students to pay monthly using auto payment with a debit or credit card or by post-dated checks. Payments made for a semester or year will not be refunded except for relocation out of the area.

Missed Lessons and Make-up Lessons: Tuition is paid for the teacher's scheduled time. If a student does not attend a lesson, we still pay the teacher. Therefore, make-up lessons will be limited to 1 per quarter (January-March, April-June, July-August,

September-December) and will be held during scheduled make-up weeks as follows: Spring Break, Memorial Day Week, 4th of July Week, Labor Day Week, Thanksgiving Week, and 2 weeks for the winter holidays.

To qualify for a make-up lesson, we must be notified of the absence before 9:00 a.m. the day of the lesson.

A completed MAKE-UP REQUEST FORM must be submitted within one week of the absence in order for a make-up to be scheduled. Forms are available at the front counter or online.

Missed Classes and Ensembles: No refunds are given for missed classes or ensembles. Kindermusik students may attend at a different class time or in classes for ages birth-5, another child can take attend in the student's place if we are notified ahead of time. Children in a Kindermusik class with only one session scheduled per week may make up an absence in the Family Time class. Students in instrument classes are encouraged to call and get the assignment for the following week.

Cancellations due to instructor absences and inclement weather: If a teacher must miss a class, ensemble or lesson and a substitute is not available, a call will be placed to the student's home and the time will be made up during a scheduled make-up week. If schools are closing due to inclement weather, we will also cancel our classes and lessons, and will place a cancellation notice on our website by 10:00 in the morning. You may also call to see if classes have been canceled.

Emergencies: It is the responsibility of parents and legal guardians of minors to supervise their children before and after each class or lesson. In case of a medical emergency, if neither the parent of a minor nor the emergency contact can be reached, the teacher is authorized to direct the student's care until the arrival of the parent or the emergency contact listed on the registration form. Parents, legal guardians of minors, students and adult students, represented by the signature on the registration form, waive the right to pursue any legal action towards the store or the instructor for any injury sustained while at Great Northwest Music.

Kindermusik Information and Policies

Music in the home is an integral part of Kindermusik.

To get the most from your Kindermusik experience, take time to bring the joy of music into your lives each day! Be sure to play the CD at home so that your child can learn the songs. Sing lullabies at nap and bed times, play some of the musical games and circle dances at birthday parties, sing songs at bath times and when traveling—look for any opportunity to incorporate music in your daily activities. You may even find that your child participates more actively at home than in class.

Children's response to the activities in class.

One of the most important things we do in Kindermusik is to surround your child with love and acceptance. Kindermusik is not performance oriented—there is no “correct” way to respond to any of the activities. (The only exception to this is inappropriate activity that disrupts the class or disturbs the experience of other children.) The purpose of Kindermusik *Our Time* is to *explore* sounds and music. It is important to let your child respond to the music naturally **without any pressure**. At this age, any response is acceptable including simply watching or finding a different, creative way to respond. In fact, the teacher will look for creative responses and will try to incorporate them into the activity. It is important that your child feel that his or her creative contribution to the class is valuable.

Parents' musical abilities. Sing even if you feel you can't sing, move even if you feel you don't know how to move—total acceptance for everyone's participation extends to the adults as well as the children. Even if you feel you can't "carry a tune in a bucket" it is important that you participate. Your child will follow what you do and how you feel—your joyous, enthusiastic participation is far more important than your musical skills. Your child will learn to sing on pitch from the experience with the class as a whole and through the recorded music you play at home (such as the home CD). But your child will only learn to participate from you. Kindermusik *Our Time* classes are designed around this one important understanding: **You are your child's first and most important teacher.**

Practical matters and policies

Arrival time: Try to arrive 10 minutes early. Especially in the winter, this gives time to take off all those winter clothes! Please take your child to the bathroom before class and **stay with your child until the teacher is ready to begin the class.** We will begin class on time.

Food and toys: Please do not bring food or toys to class.

Clothing: You and your child should wear comfortable clothes and shoes that do not limit active movement

A final note for all Kindermusik Parents

Recent research is proving out what music teachers have observed for years—that participation in music has many benefits to the brain, academic learning, emotional development, and socialization. However, the children don't know this. They only know they are having fun! As stated in the beginning, one of the most important goals of Kindermusik is to make music a joyful part of everyday life for your child and your entire family. Kindermusik is preparing your child for a lifetime love of music!



Information for Parents in Kindermusik Village..

The Village class was designed for the range of ages of babies that include lap babies, crawlers, and walkers. This means that the *Village* class is not run in a typical group fashion. It is not expected that everyone will do the same thing together. This is sometimes difficult since we are all so used to classes that are focused on doing what the teacher is doing. However, in Village the focus is on the interaction between each child and parent. This is important to remember, especially for parents with children who are crawling and walking.

Wandering during the class is expected and planned for in the *Village* curriculum. Babies just beginning to crawl or walk are *driven* to practice their newfound skill! Follow your walker or crawler around room, with your eyes or physically. If she/he does not seem to want to participate, once or twice during every song try to re-engage your child gently. (Be assured that your child is watching others or listening to the music.) To keep your child engaged, try the following:

Use words to refocus your child's attention:

"Look...the other Moms and babies are dancing, etc. . .)"

"Will you help me (rock, sway, stretch, etc. . .)"

"Can you do this: (show rocking, clapping, or any motion)."

"Let's sing together."

Use encouraging words often:

"I like the way you're doing that"

"You're getting stronger."

"What nice (dancing, singing) you are doing."

Try to repeat activities at home when your baby seems more receptive. Parents often find that in the home setting their children are more focused and able to enjoy activities that they "walked through" in class.

Information for Parents in the Our Time Classes.

Your participation is especially important in the *Our Time* class. Your child will look to you for what to do and is more likely to participate if you are actively joining in.

However, even when the parent participates, many children in the *Our Time* class simply want to watch. This is wonderful—they are being surrounded by music and they are watching the most important person in their life having fun with music. At the same time you are learning the songs and activities to do with your child at home. Sometimes your child may be just to shy or feel too unfamiliar with everyone to join in, but parents often report that their children do the activities enthusiastically at home.

Children will participate in the group when they are ready. While they are watching they are absorbing and learning all of the same concepts as those who are more active in the class. When they are ready to participate, they will know exactly what to do.

Children in class who are 18-24 months often will still be wanting to wander rather than focusing on the activities at hand. If your child exhibits this behavior, try to re-engage your child gently. (Be assured that your child is watching others or listening to the music.) To keep your child engaged, stay close to your child (you may have to follow them) and try the following:

Use words to refocus your child's attention:

"Look...the other Moms and children are dancing, etc"

"Will you help me (rock, sway, stretch, etc. . .)"

"Can you do this: (show rocking, clapping, or any motion)."

"Let's sing together."

Use encouraging words often:

"I like the way you're doing that"

"You're getting stronger."

"What nice (dancing, singing) you are doing."

Try to repeat activities at home when your child seems more receptive. Parents often find that in the home setting their children are more focused and able to enjoy activities that they "walked through" in class.

Young children are beginning to pretend, categorize, sort and classify. They need many experiences that provide visual, tactile, and kinesthetic images of fast/slow, high/low, big/little, same/different, etc. to develop their perception skills. Your child must see, hear and touch everything. She must manipulate it, push it, pull it, throw it (!), hide it, find it, give it away, take it back. Important questions like “what can this thing do?” and “what can I do with this thing?” must be answered and as they are, basic cognition is developing: solving problems, developing memory, creating sequence, establishing cause and effect. Often before one-on-one time with your child, the teacher will provide an example of what to do during the activity. But feel free to be creative in the way you explore vocal play, objects and instruments. There is no “correct” way to do these activities as long as you participate actively. **Just have fun with your child!**

Kindermusik encourages a technique of teaching young children called “scaffolding” because it builds on the interaction between you and your child. During this process you gently guide and support your child’s learning—you respond to your child’s idea by adding to it or changing it slightly. Together, one layer at a time, the two of you discover new ideas, experience new emotions, learn new language and strengthen your bond of trust. This is the best way for children of this age to learn. Specific opportunities for parent-child scaffolding in class include:

Exploration time: Find your own special place in the room (break out of the circle!) and try to be in your own little world with your child and explore the instrument. Begin with an exploration of texture, size, shape, weight and movement. Only after this is your child ready to begin an exploration of sound with you: the particular type of sound, how long and how loud the sound is. Ask your child questions about the object to help explore – “What does this feel like?” “What color is it?”, etc.

Vocal Play: It is through the experience of vocal play that your child learns to form vowels and consonants, say words and phrases, and imitate rhythm and vocal inflection. In *Kindermusik Our Time* vocal play is presented within the context of songs, chants and activities done in class. From the song may emerge a simple pattern suggested by the teacher or one of your own, with or without the melody, which you say and your child copies. Then you (or your child) alters the pattern in some way—through the change of a word, a consonant, a rhythm, an inflection or timing. At first it will be you who does most of the changing. Eventually your child may initiate some change. From this vocal play “give and

take” your child will develop a sense of beat, meter, tempo, sequence, pattern, tonality, and form. Your child can then use these new concepts to create his own new rhythms, inflections, phrases, stories and songs. This is the beginning of improvisation and composition, learned through active, meaningful, contextual play within a nurturing relationship – the way young children learn best. This type of vocal play with you also teaches your child to learn to feel valued as a communicator whose words are listened to and responded to with joy.

Inappropriate Behavior: Children between the ages of 18 months and 3 years are learning all about what it means to act appropriately. Because they are in this learning process, they sometimes “act out” and require firm guidance from their caregivers. The most important thing to remember is that everyone in the class has a child this age and everyone understands the nature of the toddler personality! Parents should never feel embarrassed when inappropriate behavior occurs. We are here to be a supportive and caring community for one another. With that said, there are times when inappropriate behavior needs to be addressed.

We do not expect that children of this age will all follow the teacher’s directions exactly, and creative responses to music are highly encouraged. However, there are a few situations that must be addressed in order for the rest of the class to be able to enjoy their time together. Please take appropriate action to take control of your child in the following situations: running in circles around you or around the classroom, throwing, biting, hitting, screaming, or other similar inappropriate behaviors. Also, if your child is doing something that would normally be acceptable, but a “copy cat” situation occurs when one or more other children all begin doing the same thing, distracting the class from the activity at hand. If any of these situations arise, you are welcome to take your child out of the classroom for a few minutes until they are able to participate in an appropriate way.

Home Activities: The home activity book is full of activity and craft suggestions to use at home. Take advantage of these opportunities to create special one-on-one times with your child. If you have older children, involve them in the activity as well. They may enjoy helping their little brother or sister and you will create family memories that last a lifetime.

Information for Parents of Students in Imagine That! Classes

Children become more self-sufficient in a group setting of their peers. They are quite sure they can do many things...and they are right! They sing and

dance and interact with each other. The activities are carefully selected and integrated to promote and enhance individual development and learning.

The goal of *Imagine That!* is a positive experience for each child, allowing for the expression of each one's gifts, experiences, knowledge and ideas. Every child contributes to the development of activities in *Imagine That!* The teacher often uses suggestions from students for ways to move or use our voices or even which musical instruments to play.

Three to five-year-old children love pretend play, which is experienced in class through the use of song, dance and props. Their imaginations are active as they discover new ways to use familiar instruments or props.

Children at this age are more interested in the process than in the outcome. Sharing and taking turns is a big part of the three to five-year-old's development. Thoughtfulness and kindness are encouraged and developed through the teacher's guidance in class activities.

As a parent, you are so very important in this process of development and discovery. The home activities suggested each week in class (and also in the home activity book) give you an opportunity to extend the benefits of your child's Kindermusik experience. Be sure to enjoy these activities and projects with your child during the week between classes. You will both look back on these times together as very special memories. It is always wonderful to hear the children talk with pride about how their mom or dad helped them complete their weekly assignment!

Information for Parents of Students in Young Child Classes

Five year old children are beginning to learn to focus for longer periods of time and are therefore ready to learn to play a simple melody instrument. Kindermusik has chosen the Glockenspiel because it uses large motor muscles that are easier for children this age to control than the smaller muscles of the fingers that are needed for the piano. The glockenspiel is considered a pre-keyboard instrument because the bars are arranged from left to right, low to high, just as they are on the piano. In fact, some students in our Young Child classes are able to transfer the songs from the glockenspiel to their piano at home.

To get the most benefit from this class as a preparation for future musical instrument lessons, it is very important to schedule five minutes each day, five days out of the week for completion of the weekly playing and activity assignments. This will accomplish several things:

1. Your child will have success in playing the glockenspiel and feel good about being able to play the assigned music in class.
2. Your child will learn that it takes practice in order to learn to play an instrument, and that when you practice it is easier to play the instrument and it's more fun.
3. Your child will learn the routine and habit of practice during only 5 minutes each day, which is much easier to require than the 20-30 minutes that will be needed for individual instrument study.

It is extremely important that an adult initiates and requires this daily practice and actively works with your child in the practice and activities. **It is not age appropriate to expect your child to remember to practice or to practice and do the activities alone.** Look upon this time as an opportunity to spend quality time with your child. You may also take the opportunity to learn to play the glockenspiel and read music yourself (it's never too late to start!)