



From the Suzuki Piano Studio of *Erica Booker*

<https://ericabookerpiano.com/>

PARENT INFORMATION AND STUDIO POLICY 2018

PLEASE READ AND KEEP FOR REFERENCE

PARENT INFORMATION

STEAA Membership - I am an accredited Suzuki Piano Teacher and Teacher Trainer and it is the policy in this studio for each family that is learning by the Suzuki Method to join Suzuki Talent Education Association of Australia (NSW). Your membership provides many advantages including access to workshops, recitals, graduation and performances at the Opera House, and a quarterly Newsletter, 'Tempo'. Membership is due on Feb 1st each year and the cost is \$85 if paid on time. Please be sure to pay/ renew your Family Membership online at www.suzukimusic.com.au during week 1 of Term 1 if not before.

Suzuki Pedagogy – My studio is a specialist studio where the teaching is based on the educational philosophy of the late Dr Shinichi Suzuki. For students to achieve success easily and enjoyably it is most important that parents fulfill their responsibility to create an atmosphere conducive to learning at home. The non-negotiable guidelines that need to be followed are: -

- Daily listening**
- Daily practice**
- Daily parent involvement**

Listening – It is the parent's responsibility to make sure that the listening programme, essential to achieving success in learning by the Suzuki Method, is carried out daily. The more listening provided in the home environment the easier and more enjoyable the musical journey through the repertoire and beyond will be for the parent and the child. As a minimum, the recordings of the current repertoire need to be played twice daily for one hour in different forms ie general (bathing and dressing, in car, during homework, in bed etc) and specific (during practice time for analysis and as a model).

Through having the environmental absorption of the music daily, the inner ability of each student is developed to a very high degree, which in turn facilitates learning, expands memory capacity, accelerates progress and creates a happy, confident, motivated student. As well as general listening, repeated listening to the specific pieces that are being studied currently is a very important factor in making learning easier and faster. Having a music player available at the piano is also very important so that the student can listen to the recording of the piece before playing it. This is an extremely effective way of the child 'absorbing' musicality and sensitivity to the music.

The seven training books of Suzuki Method are intended as a 'Primary' education and the level of difficulty within the repertoire progresses rapidly. Without adequate listening, progress becomes slow; students struggle and feel frustrated, doubt their own ability and become easily bored. Listening is the fuel that keeps the 'engine running'.

If you are concerned about the progress of your child, please increase the listening time – especially of the current pieces being studied and just watch the results! As listening can be combined with any number of other activities, it is not difficult to clock up many hours during the course of each day and night.

Practice- Consistency in practice is the key to building technical fitness at the keyboard. Playing the piano is a physical skill as well as a mental skill. As with all physical skills, daily repetition is needed to get the best results. Training the neuro-muscular pathways - from mind to fingers - for playing a musical instrument is exactly the same.

The daily practice time for school age children should be, as an absolute minimum, the same length as the weekly lesson. For best results, double the lesson time is recommended. A student's progress and motivation can be severely hindered by inadequate or irregular practice. A routine needs to be set up in the home and respected by all so that daily practice is a habit.

Parent Involvement - The parent's role is critical in the Suzuki method. As well as attending every lesson, taking notes (and recording the lesson or specific points on video, ipod etc) the parent needs to be present at each practice session as a practice partner, coaching and giving encouragement. As the technical difficulty and complexity of the training repertoire (Books 1 to 7) increase very quickly, the parent's guidance and general interaction during practice has an enormous effect on the progress and success of the child. The parent's role can evolve from one of coaching and management to general support as the child matures and becomes able to independently use good practice tools.

STUDIO POLICY

Performance – is an essential element of being a good musician. Confidence in performing develops through playing suitable, well prepared music in front of others as often as possible. Preparing for performance sets goals, improves the quality of practice and speeds up progress.

The whole experience of sharing music and receiving positive feedback takes learning and personal growth to a higher level.

Many performance opportunities are built into the studio structure. It is important that each student takes part in the ones that are offered to him or her. Awards are given to encourage performing for studio and outside studio performances.

Newsletters – There are regular Studio Newsletters, sent to you as a PDF file, informing you of dates, studio activities and other information. Please **READ these Newsletters** and make a note of the important dates immediately. If you are not scrupulous about these deadlines you may find that your child has missed a workshop or performance that would have been valuable to them.

Observation of other students' lessons is also an important part of motivation and keeping the learning process rolling. Please arrange to observe **at least one other lesson every week**. This can be the adjacent one before or after yours, or at a different time in the week.

Written work – once your child has been started on this programme, it is important that all work done at home with the parent is marked and shown at the start of each lesson. This covers Music Sticker or Theory Books, Past Papers etc and is critical support for the playing of a musical instrument. If your child is in late Book 1 or early Book 2 they should have begun Theory work.

Sight Reading – during Book 1, IF the ear is well developed, I introduce Note Reading, as competence in this is an essential pre-requisite for fluent Sight Reading. Piano students need to work diligently on this to ensure high musical literacy. Pianists have to decode two different staves simultaneously- a much more difficult task than reading for single line instruments. Ten minutes each day should be set aside for reading practice. When the first two reading books, The Music Road, are completed, students progress to my Sight Reading Library. Although I charge no fee for this Library, I ask parents to please respect my music and ensure it is brought to every lesson.

Material needed for lessons – Video camera or other recording device for recording the lesson and specific practice points. They can be a very valuable point of reference (especially when back at home not everybody agrees on what the teacher has said!)

A parent notebook and pen for recording important points and management tips from the lesson. Theory, Sight Reading and Repertoire Books plus other books in use such as Hanon and scale books and additional repertoire.

Hygiene – Please ensure that your child's hands and nails are clean. Hands should be washed or sanitised before the lesson. Nails should be kept neatly cut. There are tissues and sanitizer in the studio. Please ask your child to avoid habits such as touching the nose or mouth during the lesson. In the interest of the child, teacher and other families, sick children should not be brought to the lesson.

Siblings – are welcome at lessons as this is a valuable learning opportunity for them. However parents are asked to please take responsibility for bringing for the littlies quiet forms of entertainment which do not take away parental attention from the student at the piano. If a sibling disrupts the lesson parents will be asked to find an alternative to bringing the child to lessons.

Food and drink – these are not allowed in the studio. Please ensure that your child has had a drink and a healthy snack before coming to the lesson. Students are less able to focus at the piano if they are hungry or thirsty.

Accounts – Accounts for the Term's Fees are payable in advance to secure your child's lesson time, and are due immediately. Cash or Electronic Transfer please.

Fees - are based on the number of weeks in the term. However, apart from securing your lesson time, your fee also covers other services offered by the studio such as access to my library of scores, CDs and books, the Sight Reading Library, and administration for entries to workshops, recitals, and exams. Fees may rise slightly each year.

Missed Lessons -Unfortunately, except in exceptional circumstances, **fees cannot be adjusted for missed lessons**. Music teachers receive no sick pay, holiday pay or superannuation. In my experience schools and preschools do not give refunds for absent children. If however there is another cancelled lesson time during that week, you will be offered that time slot.

You can arrange to swap lessons with another student by asking me to give you the telephone number of any student with a similar lesson length to you. If you are going to be away for any length of time during the term, an adjustment may be made on the fees if notification is given before the start of term.

Lesson Cancellation - If I cancel a lesson for any reason, you will be repaid in cash at the next lesson.

Stopping Lessons – It is customary for a half term's notice to be given of cessation of lessons, or a half term's fees paid in lieu of notice.

Reimbursements – Please pay me reimbursements for music or theory books, workshops, graduation or exams in CASH in a clearly marked envelope. Please do not use cheques or add it to your account.

Erica Booker

With love, much can be accomplished!

Don't hurry, don't rest, without stopping, without haste,

carefully taking one step forward at a

time will surely get you there.

Shinichi Suzuki