

EARLY BIRD STRING ACADEMY
Student and Parent Handbook
2011-2012

Welcome to the Early Bird String Academy. We look forward to an exciting year of music-making. You may find the following information helpful as you begin this new program.

What can you expect? The students will meet every Tuesday or Wednesday morning from 8:00-9:00 in Fellowship Hall. Extra optional practice days with a teacher are held on the opposite day of the lesson for 30 minutes from 8:30-9:00. The calendar for our program follows the school calendar with the **exception of the semester timing**. St. Peter's follows a trimester schedule. When school is not in session, (for example religious holidays or spring break) we will not meet. On most days, the hour will contain a group lesson and a large-group (ensemble) experience. The lessons will cover such things as proper positioning and technical aspects of playing, note reading, and beginning music theory.

We are planning 2 or 3 in-class concerts for this year - one in the fall and one in the spring. Parents, family and friends are welcome. In addition to playing in the St. Peter's Christmas program and spring program (see attached calendar), we will have our own spring program.

How much does it cost? Tuition for the Early Bird String Academy is \$175.00 per 17 + week semester. The first semester is September 13/14th, 2011 -January 17/18th, 2012. The second is January 24/25th -May 30th, 2012. Payment is due at the beginning of each semester and is non-refundable. (There is a 15% discount for a sibling if one child from a family is already enrolled in the program.) **Unless other arrangements have been made, there will be a \$5 per week late fee if payment has not been received by the start of the new semester.** Many people find it helpful to rent an instrument until they know that their child is committed. In general, we do not handle the rental of instruments, but we are happy to connect you with violin shops and stores who do. Individual teachers have some extra instruments that they may be able to lend or rent out based on need.

Instrument resources:

All Strings Attached (763)542-9542, in Golden Valley or (651)439-8899, in Stillwater. New instruments will be delivered to us before the first day of class. Instrument exchanges should be made at the Stillwater Store. (We highly recommend All Strings Attached as their instruments are very nice and their rental plan is competitive.)

Eckroth Music (651)704-9654 White Bear Lake

Please avoid buying instruments through the internet as these are often unreliable.

Care of the Instrument and Bow:

Will be covered in class and is given in the first pages and in the DVD that comes with the lesson book. We strongly recommend that you watch this with your child.

Remember: never leave the instrument in a car that is too hot because the varnish may melt and ruin the tone as well as the value of the instrument. And **please never** let the instrument get too cold because it will crack.

Early Bird String Academy Rules:

1. **Listen**—follow directions the first time.
2. **Be on time.**
3. **Bring instrument and materials to every class.**
4. **Respect** others.
Respect your instrument.
Respect the instruments of others.

We will have a lot to cover each time we meet, so promptness is important. We want to give your child the best musical education that we can (in an hour that is sure to fly by), so we need your child to be ready to go right at 8:00. This is best accomplished by planning to have your children arrive by 7:45. Parents are welcome to quietly observe class if it fits your schedule. This will help you assist your child with their practice at home.

Contact Information:

Please call us with any questions or concerns you have:

Ingrid Koller (primary inst. violin and viola)	651/777-9595
Kathryn Christie (primary inst. violin)	651/426-4377
Janis Nash (primary inst. cello)	651/779-8450

We can also be reached by email:

Ingrid	koller001@comcast.net
Kathryn	knchristie@comcast.net
Janis	jjnash@comcast.net

Or through our website: EarlyBirdStringAcademy.com

*"Help! ya know I need somebody,
Help! not just anybody,
Help! ya know I need someone to
Please, please help me, help me, help me....."*

The Beatles

Some helpful practice tips:

Parents can:

- Encourage** your child by giving concrete, positive feedback. Playing an instrument is hard work.
- Help** structure your child's practice time.
- Help** set practice goals.
- Provide** privileges or incentives for achieving practice goals.
- Provide** consequences when practice goals are not met.
- Support** your child's musical endeavors by telling them how much you like to hear them play.

Students should:

- Choose a practice time** and stick to it.
- Make practicing a priority**-this is your homework too.
- Practice in a place where you won't be disturbed.**
- Practice a little each day** (this is *way* better than practicing a lot on the day before the lesson).
- Practice for progress – not minutes!**
- Have fun.** Spend some time playing whatever you want to - just for fun.

We do not want practicing to become a big, huge issue between a parent and a child. This can make the whole experience of playing an instrument turn into a power struggle. Please call us if you need advice or extra help in this area.

We want this to be a positive experience for your child!!!!

We will try to be very clear about what your child is to practice that week. We will try to email this information to you as often as possible. If your child is not sure, please do not hesitate to call us, or have them call us.