

Villa Musica (The Music Cottage) Enrolment Information

Autumn 2019 Intake

Suzuki Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass, Flute, Piano and Voice

The Suzuki Approach

Dr Shinichi Suzuki's educational philosophy is based on one simple idea: to develop musical ability in the same way as we teach a child to speak. When you think about it, language acquisition is the most successful form of education there is. Dr Suzuki believed that music education should be equally accessible and achievable. He called his method the "Mother Tongue" approach. It is our goal, as Suzuki teachers, to develop the musician within each child as if it were a 'first language'. Just with other languages, an early start is ideal. There are several features of Suzuki learning:

The Role of the Child's Environment

Just as children learn to speak by 'absorbing' the language in their environment, musical ability can be nurtured in this way. Through exposure to musical experiences, (eg group classes to supplement individual lessons) ability can be fostered and nurtured in a natural way, as the children absorb the musicality around them.

The Age At Which We Start

Children who have started young seem more at ease with their instrument later on – like a first language. Although 'progress' is understandably slow (even invisible at times!) in the first few years, it's very interesting to see things fall into place when the child's coordination, concentration, and maturity all come together.

Ability is Accessible to Everyone

Dr Suzuki believed that any child could become musical, with the right environment, education and effort. Moreover, he saw it as a birth-right of every child to grow up with music in their hearts. If a child finds their music a little tricky, we don't dismiss them as untalented – we give them extra support and encouragement to see them through the rough patches.

The Role of the Parents

Parents play a vital role in teaching their children to speak, a most intensely rewarding and exciting experience. The Suzuki approach embraces the parent's role and empowers the parent as 'home teacher'. Suzuki parents view their child's music education as an essential part of their upbringing, crucial for the development of mind, body and soul.

Celebration, Joy, Love and Patience

When a child learns a new word, everyone is so excited! The child knows this, and is motivated by their family's excitement. Suzuki music seeks to recreate this joy in music education.

Ear Before Eye

We don't teach children to read and speak at the same time, because they are developmentally ready for these two skills at very different times. While traditional music education teaches reading at the same time as the instrument, Suzuki education begins with the instrument itself, the child developing a keen musical ear in the early years, and becoming fluent on their instrument. Music reading is added to the mix at age 7-8 when the child is developmentally ready (ie when they can easily perceive diagonals) and the written notation will be meaningful to them.

The Villa Musica Suzuki Program

We are extremely proud of the comprehensive program we offer our Suzuki families. You will find our fees are great value, as the one fee includes all of the following:

Music Tuition

Weekly individual lessons. All lessons are held at Villa Musica, 1 Patterson Rd, Bentleigh. Please see the calendar for lesson dates. For new beginner students, preschoolers and preps begin with 20 minute lessons. Students in Year 1 and older begin with 30 minute lessons.

Friday group lessons. Designed to complement the individual lessons, our students attend group lessons with other children who play their instrument. Group lessons are held at the Firbank Grammar School in Brighton. All group lessons are on Friday afternoons between 4pm and 7pm. Exact start/finish times vary throughout the year, but young students' classes are usually at 4.10 or 4.50pm.

Musicianship classes. Also part of the Friday group program, these Kodaly-inspired classes incorporate a variety of activities with many different purposes, including nurturing music reading skills through an understanding of building blocks such as rhythmic patterns, metre, musical intervals, scales, chords and the rules of harmony, developing the skill known as audiation (or 'inner hearing') essential for fluent reading and the ability to 'think' more than one musical part at a time, essential for good ensemble playing, fostering an appreciation of a broad range of classical music styles and ensuring the students are confident in using their singing voices with good pitch.

Orchestras. In the terms leading up to a 'big' concert, all students in Year 1 and older play in an orchestra or ensemble, even brand new beginners. Our advanced students play in a string orchestra or flute ensemble throughout the year as part of our regular Friday afternoon group lesson program.

Concerts

Free admission. All Villa Musica concert costs are covered in the fees. Admission is therefore free of charge for unlimited family and friends.

Solo Concerts. Twice a year, every student has the opportunity to prepare a solo performance. All students perform with a professional accompanist.

Solo Concert rehearsals. The weekend prior to the solo concerts, each student has the opportunity to practise their solo piece with their accompanist.

Winter Concerts and Summer Concerts. Twice a year, every student performs with their instrument group, and piano students prepare duets to be performed on two grand pianos. The Orchestras and the Ensembles for Pianists are open to all students of all standards in Year 1 at school and older.

Parent Classes for New 'Suzuki Parents'

Both parents attend all three classes. Classes are 7.30-8.30pm. The first session, "Laying Strong, Awesome Foundations" looks at the philosophy behind our teaching, why we do what we do and what's really important. We also provide information about buying instruments, other equipment needed, etc. The second session, "Aiming High With Kindness and Love" looks at expectations, and how to balance your expectations of yourself and your child to ensure happy, quality progress. The third session, "Setting Your Child Up for Success", provides ideas for structuring home practice, ideas for motivation, and other things which benefit you and your child on your Suzuki Parenting journey.

Fees for the Autumn 2019 Intake

For the Autumn 2019 intake, students in preschool or prep (20 minute lessons) pay \$2490. Students in Year 1 or older (30 minute lessons) pay \$3290. A commitment is made for the whole calendar year. On enrolment, parents can choose to pay in 1, 3, 6 or 11 instalments.

Orientation Month

It's very important to us that all our families get off to a great start. Our orientation activities are designed to be the best possible springboard to a fabulous experience. All enrolled students will receive a personalised calendar listing all the orientation activities and confirming what time you'll need to come.

Three Evening Parent Classes

"Laying Strong, Awesome Foundations"	Tuesday February 12, 8pm
"Aiming High With Kindness and Love"	Wednesday February 27, 8pm
"Setting Your Child Up for Success"	Thursday March 14, 8pm

Four visits to Friday Group Lessons

At Firbank Grammar School in Brighton. The exact time depends on the instrument and your child's age (and will be confirmed on your personal calendar). It will probably be a 40 minute class at 4.10pm or 4.50pm.	Friday February 15 Friday February 22 Friday March 1 Friday March 8
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Three visits to observe an Individual Lesson

You and your child will visit weekly to observe a lesson. Much learning will happen while your child is getting to know the teacher and seeing how it all works.	Visit 1: February 22-28 Visit 2: March 1-7 Visit 3: March 8-14
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Which Instrument?

It really has to be the parents' decision. Don't expect your child to choose. Remember that you, the parent, MUST like the sound of the instrument. For example, it doesn't matter how much your child wants to learn the violin – if you can't bear the sound of a tiny violin, it ain't gonna work!! If you're unsure which instrument is best for your child, please do call us for a chat. Also please remember that piano students absolutely must have a real piano which is well maintained and kept in tune. A warning - old family pianos are often not suitable.

Purchasing a Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass or Flute

Please be patient and wait for your teacher's advice before buying an instrument. We'd hate for you to waste your money buying something unsuitable. Buying a musical instrument is confusing and all is not what it seems! So please wait for our advice. We will put you in touch with someone selling a second hand instrument if we possibly can – this is always the best option. For a violin, expect to pay up to \$1200. We recommend 'Antonio Strings' violins. For a viola (we recommend 'Sabatier' violas), expect up to \$1500. For a cello, expect up to \$1500 and for a Double Bass, expect \$1700-2500. For flute, again we recommend waiting for your teacher's recommendation. You won't need a flute straight away. There are a few specific things you will need to request when purchasing. Expect to pay about \$800.

Purchasing a Piano

Piano students absolutely must have a decent quality real piano and adjustable piano stool in their home. Electronic pianos and keyboards are not acceptable. From the very beginning, we are training the children's young ears to be discerning, and laying the foundations for good technique. A real piano has real strings and real vibrations, which create an aesthetic experience which cannot be replicated with electronic sounds coming out of speakers. Even the best electronic piano cannot satisfactorily re-create the weight and feel of the keys and hammers. Children who practise on electronic pianos often play in a very two-dimensional way. Their finger strength (and therefore their technique) is not as well developed, and their understanding of tone development is non-existent. We believe this puts the student at a great disadvantage (in the all-important formative years), hence our very strict policy.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the best instrument to start on?

A: There's no 'best instrument'. Any instrument is excellent for providing a good musical foundation.

Q: What is the best age to start?

A: When the parent feels ready!! Flute is suitable for students aged 3+, while the smallest size of double bass is suitable for ages 7+ (or tall 6 year olds).

Q: Must I organize babysitting for my other child/ren?

A: Older children are usually no trouble – particularly if they can quietly read a book, etc. Regarding younger children, it really depends on the type of class. For individual lessons, it's really your decision. However, most parents find it easier to focus on the lesson if there are no distractions. It's also lovely for the child to have their parent's undivided attention for a few minutes. For group lessons, younger siblings are often present...parents take them out of the room if necessary. It's possible to watch the group class through the windows from the corridor.

Q: We're not sure if our child will enjoy the chosen instrument. What should we do?

A: This is a concern of many parents. There's a great fear in society that we will damage our children if we 'force' them into musical activities which they don't enjoy. In response, we have the following advice:

You will find the lessons (and home practice sessions) are most likely COMPLETELY different to your childhood music lessons and practice. We make every effort to make them fun and happy events, and at the parent sessions we will discuss strategies for making home practice fun, rewarding and productive.

Most of our students at Villa Musica are bright kids – many find schoolwork a bit of a breeze. Learning an instrument is hard work, and for some, it's the only very difficult thing they have to really work at. It's a great opportunity to teach these kids some valuable skills – problem solving strategies and so on.

What is enjoyment? Watching tv or playing a computer game is fun for most kids, but it's 'junk food fun'. What about the more meaningful enjoyment which comes through persevering at something tricky and finally achieving it? The most intensely enjoyable moments are often preceded by many tears of frustration rolling down the instrument and much foot-stamping! That feeling of elation in the end is connected to self esteem, confidence, and real strength of character. What a gift.

It's absolutely fine to make educational decisions on behalf of our children even if they are unpopular at times (eg we make our kids go to school every day even if they're not keen!) Damage is only done when the adults involved have unfair expectations. We will discuss this issue in the parent evenings.

Q: Do you recommend the same instrument or different instruments for siblings?

A: We very strongly recommend siblings learn different instruments. In 99% of families, this means you will need to actively promote a different instrument to your younger child, because they will usually want to play the same instrument as their older sibling. (...because that's what they know!) You may well be tempted, too, because you've just got the hang of that first instrument, and your younger child has already 'picked up' a lot, and it will seem daunting to start all over again with a different instrument.

But your second child is a completely different person, and their journey will, believe it or not, be far easier if you are 'learning along' with them, just as you did with the first one. Your child will benefit from the novelty, excitement and newness of the process, rather than the feeling that everything they do has been done before. You, too, will appreciate the novelty. Both children will benefit from the opportunity to create their own musical identities. You will also have far fewer issues if your younger child learns a lot more quickly and overtakes the older one. This can be masked quite effectively on different instruments, but is painfully obvious if the instrument is the same one. Even more of an issue is when the younger one learns a little slower – the parents can't help but compare them to the older one, and that's not good for anyone! **We have observed that the dropout rate for younger siblings learning the same instrument is very significantly higher than for different instruments.**

Having said all that, it does sometimes work! If you're unsure, please do give us a call and we can talk through the different possibilities with you.

Villa Musica 2019 Calendar

for Students in the Autumn Intake

Observation visits will be scheduled on the dates shaded blue.

Parents will have 3 classes on the dates highlighted in yellow.

Students will have 32 lessons on the dates shaded green.

Dec 31	Jan 1	Jan 2	Jan 3	Jan 4	Jan 5	Jan 6
Jan 7	Jan 8	Jan 9	Jan 10	Jan 11	Jan 12	Jan 13
Jan 14	Jan 15	Jan 16	Jan 17	Jan 18	Jan 19	Jan 20
Jan 21	Jan 22	Jan 23	Jan 24	Jan 25	Jan 26	Jan 27
Jan 28 Aus Day Hol	Jan 29	Jan 30	Jan 31	Feb 1	Feb 2	Feb 3
Feb 4	Feb 5	Feb 6	Feb 7	Feb 8	Feb 9	Feb 10
Feb 11	Feb 12 Parent Class	Feb 13	Feb 14	Feb 15 Visit Group	Feb 16	Feb 17
Feb 18	Feb 19	Feb 20	Feb 21	Feb 22 Visit Group	Feb 23	Feb 24
Feb 25	Feb 26	Feb 27 Parent Class	Feb 28	Mar 1 Visit Group	Mar 2	Mar 3
Mar 4	Mar 5	Mar 6	Mar 7	Mar 8 Visit Group	Mar 9	Mar 10
Mar 11 Labour Day	Mar 12	Mar 13	Mar 14 Parent Class	Mar 15	Mar 16	Mar 17
Mar 18	Mar 19	Mar 20	Mar 21	Mar 22	Mar 23	Mar 24
Mar 25	Mar 26	Mar 27	Mar 28	Mar 29	Mar 30	Mar 31
Apr 1	Apr 2	Apr 3	Apr 4	Apr 5	Apr 6	Apr 7
Apr 8	Apr 9	Apr 10	Apr 11	Apr 12	Apr 13	Apr 14
Apr 15	Apr 16	Apr 17	Apr 18	Apr 19 Good Friday	Apr 20	Apr 21
Apr 22 Easter Mon	Apr 23	Apr 24	Apr 25 Anzac Day	Apr 26	Apr 27	Apr 28
Apr 29	Apr 30	May 1	May 2	May 3	May 4	May 5
May 6	May 7	May 8	May 9	May 10	May 11	May 12
May 13	May 14	May 15	May 16	May 17	May 18	May 19
May 20	May 21	May 22	May 23	May 24	May 25	May 26
May 27	May 28	May 29	May 30	May 31	Jun 1	Jun 2
Jun 3	Jun 4	Jun 5	Jun 6	Jun 7	Jun 8	Jun 9
Jun 10 Queen Bday	Jun 11	Jun 12	Jun 13	Jun 14	Jun 15	Jun 16
Jun 17	Jun 18	Jun 19	Jun 20	Jun 21	Jun 22	Jun 23
Jun 24	Jun 25	Jun 26	Jun 27	Jun 28	Jun 29	Jun 30
Jul 1	Jul 2	Jul 3	Jul 4	Jul 5	Jul 6	Jul 7
Jul 8	Jul 9	Jul 10	Jul 11	Jul 12	Jul 13	Jul 14
Jul 15	Jul 16	Jul 17	Jul 18	Jul 19	Jul 20	Jul 21
Jul 22	Jul 23	Jul 24	Jul 25	Jul 26	Jul 27	Jul 28
Jul 29	Jul 30	Jul 31	Aug 1	Aug 2	Aug 3	Aug 4
Aug 5	Aug 6	Aug 7	Aug 8	Aug 9	Aug 10	Aug 11
Aug 12	Aug 13	Aug 14	Aug 15	Aug 16	Aug 17	Aug 18
Aug 19	Aug 20	Aug 21	Aug 22	Aug 23	Aug 24	Aug 25
Aug 26	Aug 27	Aug 28	Aug 29	Aug 30	Aug 31	Sep 1
Sep 2	Sep 3	Sep 4	Sep 5	Sep 6	Sep 7	Sep 8
Sep 9	Sep 10	Sep 11	Sep 12	Sep 13	Sep 14	Sep 15
Sep 16	Sep 17	Sep 18	Sep 19	Sep 20	Sep 21	Sep 22
Sep 23	Sep 24	Sep 25	Sep 26	Sep 27	Sep 28	Sep 29
Sep 30	Oct 1	Oct 2	Oct 3	Oct 4	Oct 5	Oct 6
Oct 7	Oct 8	Oct 9	Oct 10	Oct 11	Oct 12	Oct 13
Oct 14	Oct 15	Oct 16	Oct 17	Oct 18	Oct 19	Oct 20
Oct 21	Oct 22	Oct 23	Oct 24	Oct 25	Oct 26	Oct 27
Oct 28	Oct 29	Oct 30	Oct 31	Nov 1	Nov 2	Nov 3
Nov 4	Nov 5 Cup Day	Nov 6	Nov 7	Nov 8	Nov 9	Nov 10
Nov 11	Nov 12	Nov 13	Nov 14	Nov 15	Nov 16	Nov 17
Nov 18	Nov 19	Nov 20	Nov 21	Nov 22	Nov 23	Nov 24
Nov 25	Nov 26	Nov 27	Nov 28	Nov 29	Nov 30	Dec 1
Dec 2	Dec 3	Dec 4	Dec 5	Dec 6	Dec 7	Dec 8
Dec 9	Dec 10	Dec 11	Dec 12	Dec 13	Dec 14	Dec 15
Dec 16	Dec 17	Dec 18	Dec 19	Dec 20	Dec 21	Dec 22
Dec 23	Dec 24	Dec 25	Dec 26	Dec 27	Dec 28	Dec 29

2019 Conditions of Enrolment

By enrolling at Villa Musica, you are agreeing to images and videos of classes and concerts being used on our website, in promotional material and for teacher training purposes.

Your Enrolment

Enrolments are for the whole calendar year. Fees are due and payable in advance. If you wish to divide your fee into three, six or eleven instalments, this may be done if you pay by credit card. The first instalment is processed at the time of enrolment and we will charge your card for the remaining instalments on the appropriate dates.

Our Refund Policy: Our music teachers have the right to expect a steady income for each teaching week of the year. We do not require our teachers to accept a pay cut if a student misses one or more lessons, regardless of the reason. Therefore, no reduction in fees is possible.

Discontinuing Lessons: Considering the necessary forward-planning, and in line with other educational institutions, one full term's notice must be given (or a term's fees paid in lieu of notice). Notice must be sent in writing via email before the start of the preceding term. The remaining payments will then be adjusted or a refund paid, whichever applies.

Your Individual Lessons

Please ensure your child's hands are clean, instrumentalists' fingernails are trimmed and so on. We prefer that food is not brought into teaching rooms.

Supervision: Remember that your child must be supervised at all times while at Villa Musica.

Illness: If your child is unwell, even if they are not contagious, a lesson will probably not be particularly productive, and might be a negative experience for them. We encourage parents to keep this in mind.

Absences: Please communicate directly with your teacher regarding absences. On the day, a quick SMS is the best way to send apologies. If someone else has cancelled, your teacher may be able to offer you their timeslot. But of course, this is not always possible, and should never be expected. It is, of course, completely unreasonable to expect your teacher to work extra time outside their normal schedule to make up lessons you have missed.

Injuries: If your child has an injury (eg sprained wrist) and can't play their instrument but is otherwise in good spirits, please do bring them to their lesson. Your teacher will find something to work on!

Our Make-up Lesson Policy: We do not require our teachers to work extra hours to make up lessons which students have missed for any reason. If, however, the teacher has cancelled, he/she will communicate directly with you to organise a mutually convenient time for a replacement lesson.

Your Group Lessons

Students in Year 4 and older may be signed in and out. Students in Year 3 and younger must have a responsible adult on site at all times whilst at group lesson and concert venues. Please arrange for other parents to help where needed, eg taking the child to the toilet, and ensure your child knows who to ask for help. Siblings must be adequately supervised and remain in the sight of their responsible adult at all times. Villa Musica takes no responsibility for supervising children outside their class.

Group lessons are an important part of the program. Please do everything you can to enable your child to attend the Friday group lessons.

All children participating in any class must be enrolled as students of that program.

Thank you for your enrolment at Villa Musica. Please keep this document for your reference.