



The Music Cottage

Providing individual, caring attention to all our young musicians in a happy, nurturing environment

Suzuki Cello, Piano, Flute, Viola and Violin Enrolment Information - Autumn 2018 Intake

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 Music Cottage 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:

Instrumental Tuition

- ★ **Weekly individual lessons.** All lessons are held at The Music Cottage. Please see the calendar for lesson dates. For new beginner students, preschoolers and preps begin with 20 minute lessons (\$2490 for the year). Students in Year 1 and older begin with 30 minute lessons (\$3290 for the year).
- ★ **Fortnightly group lessons.** Designed to complement the individual lessons, our students attend these popular classes 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 to suit the students' needs.
- ★ **Solo Concert rehearsals.** Prior to the Solo Concerts, each string and flute student has the opportunity to practise their solo piece with a professional accompanist.
- ★ **Orchestras.** As part of the regular Friday group lesson program, Violin, Viola and Cello students play in a string orchestra when they reach a certain standard. Prior to the Winter Concert and Summer Concert (ie twice a year), all Violin, Viola, Cello, and Flute students in Year 1 and older play in one of the orchestras, and there is a special percussion ensemble for piano students in Year 1 and older.

Musicianship Course

Musicianship classes are held on Friday afternoons alternating with group lessons. For older students, Musicianship activities are combined with ensembles and music reading activities. Our Musicianship course is a specially designed course of study based on the world renowned philosophy of Zoltan Kodaly. Classes incorporate a variety of activities with many different purposes, including:

- ★ To nurture music reading skills through an understanding of building blocks such as rhythmic patterns, metre, musical intervals, scales, chords and the rules of harmony
- ★ To develop 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
- ★ To foster an appreciation of a broad range of classical music styles
- ★ To ensure the students are confident in using their singing voices with good pitch

Concerts

- ★ **Free admission.** All Music Cottage 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 prepares a solo performance at a special venue. The piano students perform on a grand piano, and the cello, flute, viola, violin and voice students perform with a professional 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. **Orchestra, Junior Strings** and the **Percussion Ensembles for Pianists** are open to all students of all standards in Year 1 at school and older.

Orientation Month

- ★ **Three parent classes.** Both parents attend all three classes.

“Laying Strong, Awesome Foundations”	Tuesday February 13 at 7.15-8.15pm
“Aiming High With Kindness and Love”	Wednesday February 28 at 7.15-8.15pm
“Setting Your Child Up for Success”	Thursday March 15 at 7.15-8.15pm
- ★ **Three visits to observe an individual lesson.** You and your child will visit three times to observe another child having a lesson. These visits will be weekly between Friday February 23 – Thursday March 15. This is a great opportunity for your child to get to know the teacher and be comfortable in the lesson room, before their own lessons begin.
- ★ **Four visits to observe a group lesson/musicianship class.** Fridays February 16 and 23, March 2 and 9, at Firbank Grammar School in Brighton. We will confirm the exact time, which depends on the instrument and your child's age. It will probably be a 40 minute class at either 4.10pm or 4.50pm.
- ★ **Your child's own lessons** will begin in the week of Fri March 16 – Thurs March 22.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the best instrument to start on?

A: There's no 'best instrument'. All of them are excellent for providing a good solid musical foundation.

Q: What is the best age to start?

A: When the **parent** feels ready!! If you are unsure, a couple of terms in a 'Music for Preschoolers' class can be invaluable preparation.

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.

Individual lessons – it's really your decision. We have no rule against younger siblings attending lessons. 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!

Group lessons – younger siblings are often present...parents take them out of the room if necessary.

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 The Music Cottage 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.

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 what time you'll need to come. Students begin their own lessons in the week of Fri Mar 16 to Thurs Mar 22, after successful completion of the following activities:

Evening Parent Classes

There are three compulsory parent classes which must all be attended before starting lessons. We ask that both parents attend all three classes. For the Autumn Intake, these classes will be 7.15-8.15pm on Tuesday February 13, Wednesday February 28 and Thursday March 15.

Observation Visits – Individual Lessons

You and your child will visit to observe three individual lessons before your child's lessons begin. These will be scheduled between Friday February 23 and Thursday March 15 at a mutually convenient time.

Observation Visits – Group Lessons

You and your child will visit every Friday afternoon from February 16. Exact times will depend on your child's age and their instrument. (Times will be confirmed on your personal calendar.) Every second week there will be a group lesson with other children learning the same instrument. Every other week there will be a Musicianship class (which your child is very welcome to join in if they wish).

Which Instrument?

It really has to be the parents' decision. Don't expect your child to choose. A couple of important points:

- 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 young violinist, it ain't gonna work!!
- Piano students absolutely must have a **real** piano which is well maintained and kept in tune. If you don't have room for a real piano in your house, or cannot afford one, choose a different instrument.

Cello

Wait for your teacher's recommendation before buying a cello. Expect to pay about \$1500 for the first cello. Second hand instruments are a little cheaper.

Flute

Please wait for your teacher's recommendation before buying a flute. Most young students purchase a flute with a curved head joint, while smaller students can begin with a small flute. Expect to pay about \$800.

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.

Viola

Students start on a 'box viola' which is \$20, and progress to a real viola when the time is right. **Do not** buy a viola yet – please be patient and wait for your teacher's advice. Expect to pay about \$1500 for a 'Sabatier' viola which is our recommended brand. (Second hand instruments are a little cheaper, and we recommend these where possible.) Very small students who are not big enough for a 1/8 Sabatier play an 'Antonio Strings' violin strung as a viola (about \$1200).

Violin

Students start on a 'box violin' which is \$20, and progress to a real violin when the time is right. **Do not** buy a violin yet – please be patient and wait for your teacher's advice! We recommend 'Antonio Strings' violins - expect to pay about \$1200.

Choosing an Instrument for a Younger Sibling

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.

2018 at The Music Cottage

New Students – Autumn 2018 Intake

- ★ Students enrolled in the Autumn Intake attend observation visits and parent classes before March 16.
- ★ After March 16, individual lessons and the Friday group program will run on all dates shaded pink on the calendar, including public holidays.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
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
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	Feb 13 Parent Class	Feb 14	Feb 15	Feb 16 Visit Group	Feb 17	Feb 18
Feb 19	Feb 20	Feb 21	Feb 22	Feb 23 Visit Group	Feb 24	Feb 25
Feb 26	Feb 27	Feb 28 Parent Class	Mar 1	Mar 2 Visit Group	Mar 3	Mar 4
Mar 5	Mar 6	Mar 7	Mar 8	Mar 9 Visit Group	Mar 10	Mar 11
Mar 12	Mar 13	Mar 14	Mar 15 Parent Class	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 Easter	Mar 31 Easter	Apr 1 Easter
Apr 2 Easter	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	Apr 20	Apr 21	Apr 22
Apr 23	Apr 24	Apr 25	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
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
Suzuki Music National Conference, Melbourne, July 9-14 Visit www.suzukimusic.org.au						
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	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	Dec 30

2018 Conditions of Enrolment

By enrolling at The Music Cottage, 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 ten instalments, this may be done 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 to admin@themusiccottage.com.au **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 The Music Cottage.

Absences: To get the most out of any program, students must attend lessons regularly. Consistent attendance leads to happy and steady progress. We expect that you will give music lessons a high priority in your diary.

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. The Music Cottage 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 The Music Cottage. Please keep this document for your reference.