

## **Parental Help and Support**

### **The following suggestions will assist in your child's musical growth**

**Encourage regular practice sessions.** Fine motor skill and muscle development, eye/hand coordination and endurance need daily practice to achieve agility and growth. Daily practice is part of our course requirement (Homework) 20-30 minutes daily is recommended. Help to establish good habits by setting aside a quiet place and regular time for individual practice.

1. For all musicians, practice time should be a period of intense concentration, devoted to the idea of working out rather than playing through musical material.
2. It is important to practice slowly and to avoid continued unsuccessful repetitions of a problem passage. Any mistake made will tend to be perpetuated until it is discovered and corrected. The muscles learn the wrong physical coordination and must be retrained. To correct the problem passage, practice slowly at first. Then slowly speed up, never faster than you can do correctly.
3. Always think about relaxation and be on the lookout for tension in your playing. Sit correctly with a straight spine and relaxed shoulders. Think proper posture and instrument position. Use the least amount of pressure necessary.
4. Take full deep breaths and play in a very aerobic way. Use your diaphragm muscles. Do not get into an isometric struggle with your instrument and again, think relaxation.
5. The practice area should be private and quiet, without distractions of television, stereo or other people. It should have good lighting, a music stand for proper instrument position, and a firm straight back chair for correct posture and breathing.
6. The practice session is most beneficial when you reserve a certain time of the day to work. Usually a practice session at the end of the day, when you are mentally and physically fatigued, is fruitless.
7. For some, shorter practice sessions (10 or 15 minutes) during the day are preferable to a single, longer practice session. Example: One session after school or before dinner and another session later in the evening as a break from other studies.
8. Practice good basics. Constantly think fundamentals. Never sacrifice your sound. Good characteristic tone comes first and always.
9. Practice with a steady pulse or beat. Use the metronome frequently to promote even playing and proper subdivision.
10. Think about the mathematical component of music. It will promote correct subdivision. If you cannot imagine or see what the music should sound like, it may be too soon to try to play it. Have a vision in your mind of a correct performance.
11. When beginning a practice session, have a well-organized idea of how to use the time that is available. Select from the following: Warm-up materials, Scales, Long tones, Flexibility studies, Articulation studies, Private lesson material, Band/orchestra/jazz repertoire, & Sight-reading material.

### **Attendance, punctuality, tardiness.**

Most everyone agrees that absences and tardiness disrupt the educational environment and, to varying degrees, cause problems for all students and teachers. Students need the regular day-to-

day attendance and punctuality so necessary to maintain a sense of continuity in their programs. Obviously, absences due to illness or emergencies are unavoidable, but we need your help and cooperation in dealing with unnecessary absences.

Performing organizations are interdependent. Each musician, part and nuance effects the sound, interpretation and intonation of a musical work. Everyone is an active participant in the music making process.

First, when large numbers of students are absent immediately before or after a vacation or long weekend, the students who are at school tend to take a less serious attitude toward class work and the educational process suffers. Furthermore, having to repeat or review material creates a problem for the rest of the class who are ready to progress.

Second, it would be helpful to attempt to schedule special appointments (dentist, etc.) so that they do not conflict with all or part of the school day. Even one critical absence can affect the educational outcome for that class on that day. Music rehearsals are particularly difficult to make-up since the process is so experiential. You cannot recreate what the students experienced the preceding day.

Please help keep attendance at the highest possible level throughout the year. Our combined efforts will enhance the teaching/learning environment to the benefit of all!

**Private lessons by a qualified artist/musician** are invaluable in developing individual skill and talent. Music has been taught throughout the ages from mentor to student. This develops:

- Individual talents
- Addresses individual problems
- Builds technique and musicianship at the student's own pace
- Exposes the student to the wealth of solo literature.
- Provides a student with an appropriate model

### **Instrument Quality**

A step up instrument and accessories (intermediate to professional level) provides the tools for unimpeded growth. A quality instrument and mouthpiece assists the musician in producing a beautiful sound and increases technical ability.

### **Listening Library**

A listening library of CD's featuring artist/musicians on your instrument is an excellent way to develop the proper "sound concept". Establishing a list of "Musical Heroes" whom you wish to emulate. Community libraries and the Internet are excellent alternative sources

### **Live Music Making**

Attend live performances. Be inspired and stretch your musical horizons. Live music making is what it is all about. Attend professional concerts and productions, local community concerts and collegiate concerts. It is important for our students to have musical role models and professional "heroes" on their instruments.

\*\*\*Students are required to attend and review a live musical performance each quarter. For our younger students this may involve a family activity. Check out the offerings at the Leshar Arts Center; Walnut Creek or the myriad of quality performance opportunities in San Francisco and Berkeley.

### **Extra Curricular Activities**

Encourage participation in out of school music activities; such as County and State honor bands, Youth Orchestras and bands, area workshops and summer camps.

### **Be There**

Support your students' efforts by attending their performances, listening to them practice and encouraging them in their musical endeavors.