

CARING FOR A STRING INSTRUMENT:

- Find a safe place in your house to store your instrument. It should be away from pets, siblings, and direct sunlight.
- Cellos and Basses should be stored on their sides only, not on their backs.
- Cello and Bass players always take out your bow first and then your instrument. When it is time to put the instrument away always put the instrument in the case first and then the bow.
- Never leave your instrument in extreme temperatures. In Florida, this pertains more to the heat, as the glue that holds your instrument could melt.
- The ONLY one who should be playing the instrument is the student.
- Develop a plan for safely transporting the instrument to and from school.
- NEVER EVER attempt to tune the instrument yourself. They will tune it for you at Summer Camp.
- NEVER touch the white part of the bow.
- Tighten the bow when you are going to play the instrument. There should be a slight bend in the wood. You don't want the wood to be parallel to the bow hair. If you see that then you have tightened it too much. When you are done practicing make sure you loosen the bow so the horsehair is slightly relaxed. If the horsehair is flopping all over the place then you have loosened it too much.

HOW TO PRACTICE: “Aim for 5 days a week for at least 5 minutes”

- Set aside time each week for practice. This works much better than hit and miss practicing. More frequent shorter practices are better than longer less frequent ones.
- There should be no distractions while practicing, such as phones, MP3's, TV's, radios, video games, etc.
- Do not play straight through a piece. Play until you reach a trouble spot. Stop Playing. Work ONLY on that trouble spot. Back up to some place before that trouble spot and play through it. If you have corrected the problem, keep going until you find another trouble spot.
- If you still have problems, work only on the trouble spot some more

WHY PRACTICE:

- Our job is to introduce students to the skills and help guide them to learning a skill properly.
- Without practice, the students will forget what we have taught and it will need to be retaught.

- Students need to develop muscle memory. With at home practice, this will happen much more quickly.
- Students need to hear what they sound like individually, which is hard to do in a group setting.

WHAT TO PRACTICE:

- Students should work on the material we are covering in class.
- They may also look back to previous assignments that they are still struggling with, but should continue to work on more skills each week
- You should hear them adding more notes and rhythms each week

PARENTS ROLE IN PRACTICE:

- Help develop and maintain a regular practice schedule.
- Make sure instruments are being well cared for.
- Occasionally sit in on a practice. Help remind them about correct posture, check for steady beat, even if it means slowing down the entire exercise.
- Ensure that he/she is practicing the correct exercises. Ask what has been covered in class.
- Help your child understand that learning a new instrument is not an instant process. It takes time, practice, and lots of patience.
- Never criticize the strange sounds your child may sometimes make. It is normal in learning a new orchestral instrument to hear some strange sounds, and encourage your child to make small changes in their playing until they find better positioning and/or techniques to improve their sounds.
- Celebrate each achievement with your child as they advance on their instrument. Whether it be playing better in tune, playing with a steadier rhythm, mastering a new fingering, or any other skill we will be working on this year, all of these accomplishments take time and should be celebrated as a major achievement in orchestral playing.

POSITIONING TIPS FOR PARENTS TO LOOK FOR:

- Is your child sitting up on the edge of their chair (or standing with good posture). Is your child's bow hand in the correct position?
- Is your child bowing straight across their instrument between the bridge and the end of the fingerboard? Is your child's left wrist straight and not collapsed with their instrument resting against their wrist?