

HARP STUDENT HANDBOOK

2019-2020



KELA WALTON - HARP INSTRUCTION

www.kelaharp.com

Studio Philosophy

“There is nothing difficult - only new things, unaccustomed things” - Carlos Salzedo

EXPECTATIONS

- I expect my students to have a strong desire to learn how to play the harp well, and approach my suggestions with an open mind.
- Students are required to have at teacher-approved lever or pedal harp at home or school for daily practice as well as the required materials listed in this handbook.
- Students must devote ample daily practice time between lessons *in addition to* time spent in ensemble rehearsals in order to attempt new ways of playing.
- Students are expected to attend lessons regularly and abide by the attendance policies.
- Students must listen to harp recordings of pieces they study and perform as part of their daily practice.
- Attending live, harp-related concerts where the students themselves do not perform, is strongly encouraged.
- To develop solo as well as ensemble performance skills, students are expected to take part in harp studio recitals, informal performances, American Harp Society events, competitions, and/or summer harp events.

EXPERIENCE

I love teaching the harp! I began teaching harp lessons in 1998. I previously served on the harp faculty at Buffalo Suzuki Strings in Buffalo, NY; the Round Rock Independent School District in Round Rock, TX; Temple College in Temple, TX; the Moores School of Music Preparatory and Continuing Studies program in Houston, TX; Longhorn Music Camp in Austin, TX; and at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in Twin Lake, MI. Though some of my students have won competitions or become professional musicians, my goal in teaching the harp is to help students become noble people, with compassionate hearts and disciplined minds, who love music.

My credentials include a Bachelor of Music in Harp Performance from the *University of Texas at Austin* and a Master of Music in Harp Performance and Pedagogy from the *University of Houston Moores School of Music*. My principal harp teachers include Gayle Barrington and Paula Page. My Suzuki training includes coursework in early childhood education with Sharon Jones, harp teacher development with Delaine Leonard, and Suzuki principles with Dr. Laurie Scott. Additionally, I am an alumnus of the *Salzedo School* in Camden, Maine where I studied upon invitation with one of Salzedo's most famous pupils Alice Chalifoux, former principal harpist of the Cleveland Orchestra.

Studio Policies

LESSONS

Weekly Lessons - Regular weekly lessons are available for 45 minutes or 1 hour. All school-aged students are required to take weekly lessons. Weekly 30 minute lessons are offered only to students under the age of 8, or beginners of any age in their first semester of lessons.

Floating Lessons - Adult students who do not wish to take regular weekly lessons may take floating lessons. Floating lessons are available for 45 minute or 1 hour lessons. *Floating lessons are scheduled and purchased in advance at the beginning of each month.*

Group Class - When enrollment allows, I offer group classes in addition to individual lessons (typically 2 group classes per month). In group class we play as an ensemble, learn how to take care of our instruments, and play music theory games.

LOCATIONS

In Person - Most lessons take place at my studio in Spartanburg. Students are welcome to bring their harp for lessons or may play one of my Lyon & Healy pedal or lever harps during the lesson.

Online Video Lessons - Lessons via online video conferencing such as FaceTime, Skype, or Zoom are available to students who live further than 1 hour away from my studio, and at my discretion. I also offer video lessons when I'm traveling, and during inclement weather events.

In rare cases I may travel to students' homes to teach an occasional lesson for a slightly higher hourly rate. Travel to a student's home is only available for a one-hour lesson, at my discretion in special circumstances based on schedule, location, and need.

Tuition

- Payment must be in the form of personal check, cash, Venmo or PayPal.
- There will be a \$25 fee for any funds returned by the bank for any reason, in addition to reimbursement for the original amount of the funds declined.
- If lessons are terminated by the student, parent or teacher before the end of the tuition payment period, payment will not be reimbursed.
- Families with more than one student enrolled in harp lessons will receive a discount of 5% off the regular tuition fee for each student enrolled.
- All tuition payment plans are based on the following fee schedule:

30 minutes = \$35, 45 minutes = \$45, 1 hour = \$60.

Monthly Tuition Payment Plan - Weekly Lessons

Monthly tuition is calculated based on 28 lessons divided by 9 months (September - May) and rounded to the nearest even number creating equal monthly payments.

LESSON LENGTH	2019-2020 MONTHLY TUITION (SEPT-MAY)
30 minute	\$110
45 minute	\$140
1 hour	\$190

1. The monthly payment is due on or before the 1st lesson of each month. If payment is not received on or before the first lesson of the month, a \$20 late fee will be added for each week payment is not received.
2. If payment is not received by the second lesson of the month, the student will not receive that lesson or any further lessons until payment is made.
3. If payment is not received within thirty (30) days of the first lesson of the month, the regularly scheduled lesson time will be forfeited and possibly assigned to another student.

Long Session Tuition Payment Plan - Weekly Lessons

Discounted tuition is based on 14 lessons each session (September - January & February - May).

1. Students choosing to pay for the entire session must do so on or before the first lesson of September or February and will receive a 5% discount as indicated below.

LESSON LENGTH	FALL SESSION PAYMENT - DUE SEPTEMBER 1ST	SPRING SESSION PAYMENT - DUE FEBRUARY 1ST
30 minute	\$465	\$465
45 minute	\$600	\$600
1 hour	\$795	\$795

Summer Session Tuition Payment Plan - The Summer Pick Six

Students are highly encouraged to continue taking lessons during the summer (June - August). The Summer Pick Six = 6 lessons purchased before June 1st at a discounted rate, and scheduled in advance during June, July, and August.

LESSON LENGTH	SUMMER SIX PACK (JUNE - AUGUST)
45 minute	\$250
1 hour	\$325

Students wishing to take fewer than 6 lessons in the summer must schedule and pay for lessons at the beginning of each month at the regular tuition fee rate of 45 minutes = \$45, 1 hour = \$60. (Note 30 minute lessons are offered only to brand new beginners during the summer.)

Floating Lesson Tuition Payment Plan

Floating Lessons are available year round to adult students who do not take weekly lessons. Floating lessons must be purchased and scheduled in advance at the beginning of each month at the following rates: 45 minutes = \$45 or 1 hour = \$60

Practicing & Tuning

In my experience students who practice regularly outside of their lesson are the ones who enjoy playing the harp the most. Students will make every effort to observe the following guidelines:

- A **minimum** of 5 days of practicing per week is expected for all students.
- Students ages 5 and under: 5 minutes with enthusiasm 3 times per day!
- Elementary School Students: 30 minutes of harp practice per day - this can be divided into multiple sessions per day.
- Middle School students: 45 minutes of harp practice per day, in ADDITION to time spent playing in other ensemble rehearsals.
- High School students and above: 1 hour per day, in ADDITION to other ensemble rehearsals.
- Students preparing for college auditions and/or competitions at the state or national level: 1.5 hours (minimum) per day.
- Harps must be tuned a **minimum** of 3 times per week - tuning everyday BEFORE practicing is best for the harp. Students ages 12 and older are responsible for tuning their harp; parents must tune or supervise tuning for elementary students.

Scheduling & Attendance

SCHEDULING

The student's regular lesson time is theirs to keep for one academic year (September thru May). Please refer to the online studio calendar at <http://www.kelaharp.com/calendar.html> for the most current information about the lesson schedule.

ATTENDANCE

Consistent attendance at lessons is required. In my experience, students that commit to regular lesson attendance progress more quickly and get the most enjoyment from harp lessons.

I have set aside your lesson time to teach you so please be respectful of my time and make every good faith effort to be at your lesson.

To continue to be a member of my studio, all students must attend lessons regularly.

If you will miss your lesson for any reason, you must contact me directly via phone or text.

Excused Absences

1. To obtain an excused absence the student (or parents) must contact the teacher more than 24 hours in advance about missing a lesson.
2. Each student can reschedule or make-up TWO excused absences per academic year (September - May).
3. In cases of sudden illness or family emergency a student may obtain an excused absence, at the teacher's discretion, with less than 24 hours notice by contacting the teacher as soon as possible and **prior** to the original lesson time.

Unexcused Absences

1. Unexcused absences will not be rescheduled, made-up, or refunded.
2. Payment must be made regardless of attendance for all scheduled lessons.
3. Canceling a lesson with less than 24 hours notice will result in an unexcused absence, except in cases of emergency determined at the discretion of the teacher.
4. Scheduling doctors appointments for well visits (check-ups, dentist, orthodontist, etc.) during your regular harp lesson time will result in an unexcused absence.
5. A failure to give notice about an absence prior to the lesson time - i.e. no call, no show - will result in the student paying a \$25 fee plus the usual cost of the lesson in question.

EMERGENCIES & EXTREME WEATHER

In extreme weather or local emergency situations, lessons will be held or canceled based on the decisions of the student's local school district, or any driving bans between the student's home and my studio. Students will receive an email and/or text about extreme weather or local emergency related cancellations.

In extreme weather situations, lessons via Skype or FaceTime are encouraged if possible, or a lesson will be available during the make-up lesson days scheduled in the calendar.

RE-SCHEDULING & MAKE-UP LESSONS

As the Teacher, if a conflict should arise in my schedule with the student's lesson day and time, I will give the student notice about the conflict as soon as possible in advance. I will do one of the following:

1. Reschedule the lesson in advance at everyone's earliest convenience or during the allotted make-up lesson days scheduled in the calendar.
2. Offer an online lesson at a mutually agreed upon time.

Should I need to cancel a lesson due to illness or emergency, I will call and/or email the student (or parent) to cancel with as much notice as possible before the lesson. A make-up lesson will be available during one of the make-up lesson weeks, or the lesson will be refunded.

Students, are allowed to reschedule or make-up TWO Excused Absence lessons per academic year, provided the student (or parent) adheres to the attendance policy. After two excused absences, missed lessons may not be rescheduled and payment must be made regardless of attendance for all scheduled lessons.

If a scheduled make-up lesson is missed or cancelled by the student, a second make-up lesson will not be offered.

SHORTENING OR TERMINATION OF LESSONS

Shortening of Lessons

Should a student arrive for their lesson late or unprepared (i.e., without their music or lacking sufficient practice), I reserve the right to shorten or cancel the lesson at the student's expense. I have set aside my time to teach, therefore a lack of preparation is a lack of respect for my time.

Grounds for Termination of Lessons by the Teacher

Lessons will be terminated for any of the reasons listed below, or at the discretion of the teacher. Students and families will be given one written warning, and one chance to change their behavior or resolve the problem.

- Failure to abide by studio policies
- Repeated lack of preparation (i.e. not practicing) or a routinely poor attitude
- Habitual absences or cancellations
- Repeated failure to follow the attendance policy
- Perpetual tardiness
- If the student has an unpaid balance due for more than 30 days then lessons will be terminated immediately, and the balance will still be required in addition to any late fees and court costs.

When the decision is made to terminate lessons, the student's regularly scheduled lesson time will be forfeited and possibly assigned to other current students or the next student on the waiting list. If lessons are terminated by the student or teacher before the end of a tuition payment period, payment will not be reimbursed.

Performances & Events

RECITALS & COMPETITIONS

To develop solo as well as ensemble performance skills, students are expected to take part in at least one of the following every academic year: harp studio recitals, informal performances, American Harp Society events, competitions, and or summer harp events.

All students are expected to participate in studio recitals. Suzuki Students are encouraged to give recitals upon completion of each book. Additionally I encourage high school seniors to give a Senior solo recital, or a combined recital with another music student. Community engagement performances at retirement homes, schools, and non-profits are also encouraged.

I am happy to help students prepare for local, state, or national competitions, such as the American Harp Society National Competition held in odd numbered years at the AHS, Inc. Summer Institute.

SPARKLE CITY HARP ENSEMBLE

The Sparkle Harp Ensemble co-directed by Anna Grace Bennett and Kela Walton is a new opportunity open to upstate harp students of all ages and levels. Registration is by semester and the fee includes music. More info at www.kelaharp.com/harp-ensemble.html

HOLIDAY HARP ENSEMBLE

Students are encouraged to join their fellow studio members and perform two or three ensemble pieces for our studio's Holiday Harp Ensemble tour. Students may choose from several performance dates at area senior living and community centers. Holiday Harp Ensemble music will be chosen based on the skill levels as well as the cultures and traditions of students performing. Students are also encouraged to play a solo at these events.

Rehearsal Schedule: The Holiday Harp Ensemble will have one dress rehearsal on the same day and at the same location as the concert. Students will also rehearse the music in their lessons and group class.

SUMMER CAMPS, INSTITUTES & FESTIVALS

All harp students are strongly encouraged to participate in summer harp activities. Lists of harp camps, Suzuki Institutes, summer festivals, and the American Harp Society, Inc., national events can be found online at:

<https://suzukiassociation.org>

<http://www.harpcolumn.com>

<http://www.harpsociety.org>

Communications & Social Media

- Students must provide their current mobile phone number, so I can contact you in case of emergencies on your lesson day.
- Email is the primary way students and parents will receive updates, so please provide the address you check frequently.
- Email is typically the fastest way to reach me in non-emergency situations harpist@kelaharp.com Please use only this address and be sure you have this email address saved in your address book to receive important studio emails.
- Harp-related text messages on my cell phone are acceptable: 512-350-4018. I may also text students/parents in situations when I need to pass on last minute information quickly. No personal or holiday greeting texts please.

WEBSITE

I've created a corner of the web just for my students where you will find the studio calendar, videos, photos, and more. <http://www.kelaharp.com/teaching.html>

DROPBOX

We have a studio Dropbox folder that contains practice note pages, string diagrams, DIY flash cards, practice videos, etc. <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/b75hdw389xrrhv1/AACkzuXB9WgKpTwq8Oj61CgGa?dl=0>

SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow me on the social media of your choice for updates about harp happenings, photos, and tips.

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/kelaharp/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KelaHarp>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/KelaHarp>

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/KelaHarp/>

Privacy Concerns - I do not tag students in photos or use student's last names online. I do not friend students on my personal Facebook page, you are welcome to like my harpist page linked above.

AMERICAN HARP SOCIETY, INC.

<http://www.harpsociety.org>

I encourage you to become members of the American Harp Society (AHS): benefits include discounted harp insurance, *the American Harp Journal*, competitions, scholarships, and more.

Harp Student Supply List

REQUIRED SUPPLIES

- Tuning Key** – All students must have their own personal tuning key.
- Electronic Chromatic Tuner** – Students (or parents of students under 12) must tune their harp a minimum of three days per week, tuning everyday is best for the harp. A separate electronic tuner, or an approved app on a mobile device is required.
- Tuning Pick-up Microphone** – This device plugs into your tuner or mobile device and clips onto the harp; it helps tune in noisy situations such as ensemble rehearsal.
- Metronome** – Must have a loud ticking sound that can be heard while playing. Can be an app on a mobile device.
- Practice Planner** – Either a: spiral notebook or Suzuki practice sheets (provided by teacher).
- One Three Ring Binder** – Students must have someplace to store handouts, ensemble music, and the occasional copies I may give them for their solo and theory work.
- Music** – Students are responsible for promptly purchasing and owning **original** sheet music and recordings of all solo music they perform, as well as other music as assigned.
- Adjustable Bench** – It is best to buy one sturdy adjustable bench, this way as the student grows or switches to a different sized harp they can always sit at the proper height.
- Music Stand** – Must have a sturdy desk (where the music sits) that swivels and the height should adjust. **Folding wire stands are NOT acceptable** because they are flimsy, easily collapse, and often damage the wood and finish of harps.
- Sproubeat** - Music Theory iPad curriculum for all levels and ages. Purchased through me (from my studio group account) \$50 per year.
- On Playing the Harp - Yolanda Kondonassis**: This 150 page method book is full of helpful information about harps and technique with pictures! It will last any harpist for a lifetime – required for pedal harp students of any age. Published by Carl Fischer. List Price \$26.95.

FOR BEGINNING HARPISTS

- Grand Staff Flash Cards** - for students learning to read music, can be purchased ready-made or DIY print and cut.

Supplies can be purchased directly from me, and I offer shipping discounts on group music orders at the beginning of each semester. Or you may order directly from the retailers listed below.

Harp Music & Accessories Retailers:

Lyon & Healy West: www.Harp.com

Melody's Traditional Music & Harp Shoppe: www.FolkHarp.com

Vanderbilt Music: www.VanderbiltMusic.com

Virginia Harp Center: www.vaharpcenter.com

Important Dates 2019 - 2020

Dates are subject to change. For the most current schedule information check the Online Studio Calendar at <http://www.kelaharp.com/calendar.html>

DATE	EVENT
September 9, 2019	First Day of Fall Session
October TBA	Possible Halloween Harp Recital
November 25 & 26, 2019	Make-up Lesson Days
November 27 - December 1, 2019	Thanksgiving Break - No Lessons
December TBA	Holiday Harp Ensemble Performance(s)
December 15 - 19, 2019	Make-up Lesson Days
December 20, 2019 - January 12, 2020	Winter Break - No Lessons
January 13, 2020	First Day of Spring Session
March 30 - April 7, 2020	Spring Break - Optional Make-up lessons
May 18 - 22, 2020	Make-up Lesson Days
May 25, 2020	Memorial Day - No Lessons
May 26 - 29, 2020	Possible Make-up Lesson Days
June 19 - 25, 2020	No Lessons - American Harp Society, Inc. Board Meetings, AHS National Conference: Orlando, FL.

Photo & Recording Release Form

Harp student's accomplishments with photos may be featured in both printed and online studio publications - such as on Kela Walton's Harp Studio website, social media, or other publicity materials. Audio and/or video recordings of student performances may also be published via YouTube and on other social media.

Only the student's first name will be published on the internet with any photo or video. Students will not be tagged on social media posts, but may tag themselves if they so choose.

To grant permission for Kela Walton to publish images and/or recordings of you or your child, please indicate so below (check all that apply):

___ I approve the use of *photographs* of myself or my child as an individual for studio publications in print and online.

___ I approve the use of *recordings* of myself or my child as an individual for studio publications in print and online.

___ I approve the use of *photographs* of myself or my child as part of a group for studio publications in print and online.

___ I approve the use of *recordings* of myself or my child as part of a group for studio publications in print and online.

If you DO NOT wish Kela Walton to publish images and/or recordings of you or your child under any circumstances, please indicate so below:

___ I DO NOT approve the use of *photographs* of myself or my child for studio publications in print and online.

___ I DO NOT approve the use of *recordings* of myself or my child for studio publications in print and online.

_____ Student's Printed Name

_____ Student's Signature

_____ Parent/Guardian's Name (if student is under 18)

_____ Parent/Guardian's Signature (if student is under 18)

_____ Date

Teacher, Parent, Student Agreement

2019-2020

As the Teacher...

1. I will provide each student with an environment, individual attention, and the respect necessary to nurture their growth. To create a successful experiences we will set goals together at each student's individual rate of learning.
2. I will come to each lesson prepared to teach all of the student's current assignments, and be prepared with new materials as needed.
3. I will seek out additional performance and learning opportunities for the student such as recitals, competitions, master classes, camps, workshops, harp events, etc.

Teacher's signature



As the Parent(s) and/or Guardian(s)...

1. I understand and will observe all of the policies outlined in the Student Handbook.
2. I grant permission for images and recordings of my student to be used by Kela Walton for publications in print and online, OR I have returned the Photo & Recording Release Form.
3. I will help my student schedule daily practice time, and assist with practice as assigned.
4. I will provide a home practice environment that is free from interruptions and distractions (such as: family, friends, video screens, mobile devices, etc.)
5. I will encourage my student to participate in performances and other harp events.

Parent's signature _____

date _____

As the Student...

1. I understand and will observe all of the policies outlined in the Student Handbook.
2. I will come to my lessons prepared. This means that...
 - I will wash my hands and make sure my nails are trimmed *before* playing any harp.
 - I will not wear jewelry while playing any harp (bangles, watches, dangly earrings, etc. damage the harp).
 - I will practice in accordance with the guidelines in the Student Handbook.
 - I will bring all music and materials that I am currently working on to my lesson.
 - I will treat each lesson as a mini performance - my chance to show my teacher how much I have progressed between lessons.
 - I will ask my teacher questions to be sure I understand all assignments.
 - I will use and refer to my assignment notes or planner *before* each practice session.
 - I will complete all assignments using a metronome or other practice techniques as assigned in my notes or practice planner.

Student's signature _____

date _____