TCU MUSIC PREPARATORY

HARP STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026 - 2027 ACADEMIC YEAR

KELA WALTON - HARP INSTRUCTION

www.kelaharp.com & TCU Music Preparatory

Copyright © 2004-2026 by Kela Walton. All Rights Reserved

Studio Philosophy

To encourage students to develop compassionate hearts and disciplined minds through the study of music.

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

“First character, then ability.” - Shinichi Suzuki

I EXPECT ALL HARP STUDENTS TO:

- Aspire to learn to play the harp well.
- Approach my suggestions with an open mind.
- Have a teacher-approved lever or pedal harp at home or accessible at school for daily practice, as well as Student Supplies listed at https://www.kelaharp.com/student-supplies.html.
- Devote ample daily practice time between lessons *in addition to* time spent in ensemble rehearsals in order to attempt new ways of playing.
- Make every good faith effort to attend lessons regularly.
- Listen to recordings of pieces they are learning as part of their daily practice.
- Attend harp-related concerts, where the students themselves do not perform.
- Participate in performance opportunities that are mutually agreed upon by both student and teacher, to develop solo and ensemble performance skills. These performances may include: harp studio recitals, informal performances, American Harp Society events, summer harp camps or festivals, and competitions when appropriate.

© 2004-2026 by Kela Walton

Studio Policies

LESSONS

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

LOCATIONS

In-Person - at the TCU Harp studio in JAR 300A (Jarvis Hall) at TCU. Students may bring their own harp, or play one of the TCU lever or pedal harps during the lesson.

Online - Occasional and optional online lessons may be offered to students when I'm traveling, if a student's family members are ill, during inclement weather events, or in other emergency situations. Online lessons are offered only at the discretion of the teacher, and not as part of the normal lesson routine.

PRACTICING

Students who practice regularly enjoy playing the harp the most. I suggest the following guidelines:

- A **minimum** of 15 minutes a day and 5 days per week is expected for all students.
- Students ages 5 and under: 5 minutes with enthusiasm, 3 times per day!
- Elementary School students & Beginning adult students: 30 minutes of harp practice per day. Practice time can be divided into multiple sessions per day.
- Middle School students & Intermediate adult students: 45 minutes of harp practice per day, in *addition* to time spent playing in school or harp ensemble rehearsals.
- High School students & Advanced adult students: 1 hour per day, in *addition* to time spent in school or harp ensemble rehearsals.
- Students preparing for college auditions and/or competitions at the state or national level: 1.5 hours or more per day.

TUNING

- 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.

© 2004-2026 by Kela Walton

ATTENDANCE

- 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.
- If you will miss your lesson for any reason, you must contact me directly via **phone** or **text** as soon as possible.

SCHEDULING

- All lessons will be scheduled and confirmed via our studio's online scheduling platform MakeMusic Studio (formerly called Fons) https://www.studio.makemusic.com/
- The student's regular lesson time is theirs to keep for one term (Fall, Spring, or Summer).

RESCHEDULING & MAKE-UP LESSONS

- Due to scheduling restrictions involving space and teacher availability, rescheduled or make-up lessons for student cancellations are considered upon the teacher's discretion and should never be **expected** by students or parents.
- In cases of sudden illness or emergencies, a lesson may be rescheduled or made-up at the teacher's discretion (pending schedules) as long as notice is given via phone or text as soon as possible and **prior** to the original lesson time.
- Rescheduling requests for reasons other than illness or emergency must be received at least one week in advance in writing (text is acceptable) to be considered.
- Make-up lessons will not be offered for students who miss the lesson without giving prior notice to the teacher.
- If a rescheduled or make-up lesson is missed or cancelled by the student, a second make-up lesson will not be offered.

TEACHER CONFLICTS

- Should a conflict arise in my schedule, I will give notice as soon as possible. We will reschedule the lesson in advance at everyone's earliest convenience.
- Should I need to cancel at the last minute due to illness or emergency, I will call, text, and/or email the student (or parent). Every effort will be made to make-up the lesson at a mutually agreed upon time.

© 2004-2026 by Kela Walton

EXTREME WEATHER & EMERGENCIES

In extreme weather or local emergency situations, lessons will be held or cancelled based on the decisions of the university and will be posted at www.tcu.edu

In accordance with university policies, if TCU closes, then the Music Preparatory Division must comply with that mandate. All lessons, classes, and rehearsals will be canceled, make-ups cannot be offered for university closures.

ONLINE LESSONS

Occasional online lessons may be offered to all students when I'm traveling, if family members are ill, during inclement weather events, or in other emergency situations. Online lessons are offered only at the discretion of the teacher, and not as part of the normal lesson routine.

- Online lessons utilize a combination of both an online video conferences (via a platform such as Zoom https://zoom.us) AND video recording submitted by the student.
- Information about how to configure your space as well as your computer or mobile device for online lessons is available on my website at: https://www.kelaharp.com/online-lessons.html
- Students may be asked to submit a video recording of one piece (currently in the polishing stage) as part of an online lesson. It is much easier to hear musical nuances like dynamics and phrasing in video recordings. Therefore, these recordings are an essential part of the online lesson process.
    - Students can upload videos to Dropbox or Google Drive, or text videos to me if they do not have access to an online file storage system.
    - I will provide positive comments and suggestions for improvement on the video performance much I would during a lesson.

HEALTH & SAFETY PROTOCOLS

- Always wash your hands before touching any harp, especially harps that are not your own.
- Everyone attending in person lessons must be fever and/or vomit free for a minimum of 48 hours prior to the lesson.
- Anyone who is visibly ill or showing signs of contagion may be asked to leave.
- I may wear a mask if I've recently been exposed to or if I am recovering from an illness (and do not have a fever). If you would like me to wear a mask during lesson, please let me know.

SHORTENING OF LESSONS

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

Anyone who is visibly ill or showing signs of contagion may be asked to leave the lesson.

TERMINATION OF LESSONS

Lessons will be terminated by the teacher for the reasons listed below.

- Failure to abide by studio policies
- Repeated lack of preparation (i.e. not practicing) or a routinely poor attitude
- Habitual absences or cancellations
- Perpetual tardiness

Students and families will be given one written warning, and one chance to change their behavior or resolve the problem. When the decision is made to terminate lessons, the student's regularly scheduled lesson time will be forfeited and possibly assigned to another student. If lessons are terminated by the student or teacher before the end of a tuition payment period, payment will not be reimbursed.

TCU PARKING

Music Preparatory students may park in the TCU reserved parking lot on the corner of West Cantey and Rogers Streets, directly behind University Christian Church. You may park in the designated Music Preparatory spaces along the back fence. You are not permitted to park in any other space in this lot (7:00am to 5:00pm). You must display your Music Preparatory parking permit when parking on campus. If you are a TCU student or employee, you may park in the Music Preparatory spaces only during your or your lesson time.

Tuition & Fees

Current TCU Music Preparatory Tuition and other fees information can be found at:

https://finearts.tcu.edu/music/events/music-preparatory/private-lessons.php

Performances & Events

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, harp ensemble, American Harp Society events, competitions, and/or summer harp events.

RECITALS

Regular recital participation is recommended, with students normally playing in at least one recital per semester. ***Students are always expected to remain present until the end of the recital or performance.*** In the past these have included performance events such as:

Music Preparatory Recitals - weeknight recitals are usually held on Thursday evenings at 7pm. Recital music may include no more than two memorized solo pieces and/or non-memorized duets with a five-minute limit per student.

Harp-o-ween Recital - held in October featuring fall or Halloween themed solos. Sometimes students get creative and "creepify" one of their favorite review pieces, or compose their own solo.

Harp Ensemble - Holiday Harp Ensemble performances at Harp-o-ween, at area senior living centers in December, as well as performances at the AHS in Dallas Harp Ensemble Festival.

Suzuki Book Recitals - students are strongly encouraged to give a graduation recital upon completion of each Suzuki book.

Senior Recital - high school seniors are encouraged to give a Senior Recital. These may be combined with other seniors who play harp or other instruments.

Dallas Harp Society Chapter Events - AHS Dallas Chapter student events may include: the Music Education Auditions & Evaluations program, ensemble festivals, annual student recital, and more.

IMPORTANT DATES & CALENDARS

To see your personal lesson schedule and other harp events login to MakeMusic Studio: https://studio.makemusic.app/calendar/

COMPETITIONS

Students may choose to prepare for local, state, or national competitions in their lessons. These may include, but are not limited to, the TMEA auditions, UIL competitions, and the American Harp Society local and national competitions.

SUMMER CAMPS, INSTITUTES & FESTIVALS

All students are strongly encouraged to participate in summer harp activities which greatly enhance their skills and provide an opportunity to interact with other harp students. arp camps, Suzuki Institutes, summer festivals, and the American Harp Society national events can be found online at:

https://suzukiassociation.org ~ http://www.harpcolumn.com ~ http://www.harpsociety.org

Communications & Important Links

- 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 kela.walton@tcu.edu is typically the best way to reach me in non-emergency situations. 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.

STUDIO WEBSITE

I've created a corner of the web just for my students where you will find links to supplies, videos, and more. http://www.kelaharp.com/teaching.html

DROPBOX

We have a shared studio Dropbox folder that contains practice aids, helpful info about changing strings, DIY flash cards, practice videos, etc. Each student may be additionally be assigned their own individual Dropbox folder where I often share videos and documents via a private link.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow me for updates about harp happenings, studio member accomplishments, and more.

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

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

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

Privacy Concerns - I do not tag students in photos or use student's full names online. See Photo and Recording Release Form at the end of this Handbook for more info. I do not friend or follow minor students on social media. You are welcome to connect with me via any of the above links.

AMERICAN HARP SOCIETY, INC.

http://www.harpsociety.org I encourage all harpists to become members of the American Harp Society (AHS) both nationally and at the local chapter level. Ask about becoming part of our studio membership for an AHS member discount! Member benefits include discounted harp insurance, *the American Harp Journal*, national events, chapter events, scholarships, and more.

Harp Student Supply List

REQUIRED SUPPLIES

- ☐ **Harp -** Students must own or rent a teacher-approved harp for individual daily practice. The use of a school-owned harp is also acceptable, provided the student has daily access for practice and the ability to borrow the harp from the school for holidays, group classes, performances, etc.
- ☐ **Music** – Students are responsible for promptly purchasing and owning **original** (physical or digital) music and recordings of all pieces they perform, as well as other music as assigned.
- ☐ The remaining **required** supplies such as tuners, metronomes, benches, music stands, etc. with affiliate links to purchase them can be found on my website at https://www.kelaharp.com/student-supplies.html

OPTIONAL RECOMMENDED SUPPLIES

- ☐ **Sproutbeat -** Online Music Theory curriculum for all levels and ages. Student Sproutbeat accounts are purchased through me (our studio has a group discount), for $75 per calendar year.
- ☐ Additional and optional **recommended** supplies, with affiliate links to purchase, can be found on my website at https://www.kelaharp.com/resources.html

Physical music and supplies can also be purchased directly from me. I offer shipping discounts on group music orders at the beginning of each semester.

Reputable Harp Music & Accessories Retailers:

Harp Column Music: https://harpcolumn.com/music/ (mainly digital downloads)

Lyon & Healy West (Salt Lake City, UT): www.Harp.com

Melody's Traditional Music & Harp Shoppe (Houston, TX) : www.FolkHarp.com

Vanderbilt Music Company (Bloomington, IN): https://vanderbiltmusic.com/

Virginia Harp Center (Midlothian, VA): www.vaharpcenter.com

© 2004-2026 by Kela Walton

Photo & Recording Release Form

A 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, etc.. Audio and/or video recordings of student performances may also be published via YouTube and on other social media.

A student's first name only may be published on the internet with any photo or video, ONLY with their permission. Students will not be tagged on social media posts, but may share them if they choose.

To grant permission for Kela Walton to publish images and/or recordings of you or your child, please indicate so below. (Please 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

© 2004-2026 by Kela Walton

Teacher, Parent, Student Agreement

2026-2027

As the Teacher…

1. I will provide each student with a positive environment, individual attention, and the respect necessary to nurture their growth. To create successful experiences, we will set goals together for 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 share new materials and resources as needed.
3. I will seek out additional performance and learning opportunities for the student such as: recitals, competitions, master classes, camps, workshops, and other harp events.

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 take notes during lessons in a practice planner or other format that students can easily access during home practice to complete assignments, and have previous lesson's notes available for the teacher to reference at each lesson.
4. I will help my student schedule daily practice time, and assist with practice and listening to recordings as assigned.
5. I will provide a home practice environment that is free from interruptions and distractions (such as: family, friends, video screens, mobile devices, etc.).
6. 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:
    - 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 such as: watches, dangly earrings, etc. because they often 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 an informal performance and my chance to show how much I have progressed between lessons.
    - I will ask my teacher questions to be sure I understand all assignments.
    - I will refer to my assignment notes or practice planner *before* each practice session.
    - I will complete all assignments using the practice techniques as assigned in my notes or practice planner.

Student's signature _____ *date* _____

© 2004-2026 by Kela Walton