

HARP STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023 - 2024 ACADEMIC YEAR



KELA WALTON - HARP INSTRUCTION

www.kelaharp.com

Studio Philosophy

Developing compassionate hearts and disciplined minds through the study of music.

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

I EXPECT ALL HARP STUDENTS TO:

- Aspire to learn to play the harp well.
- Approach my suggestions with an open mind.
- Have at teacher-approved lever or pedal harp at home or accessible at school for daily practice, as well as the required materials listed in this handbook.
- 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.

Studio Policies

LESSONS

Weekly Lessons - Regular weekly lessons are available for 45 minutes or 1 hour. All school-aged (pre-college) students are required to take weekly lessons. Weekly 30 minute lessons are offered only to students under the age of 8, or beginners 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 take place at least twice a month, and are available for 1 hour lessons only.

LOCATIONS

In-Person - at my studio in Arlington, TX. Students may bring their own harp, or play one of my Lyon & Healy lever or pedal harps during the lesson.

Online - utilizing video conferencing via Zoom combined with video recordings submitted by students between lessons. Regular online lessons are available at my discretion to students who live further than 30 miles away from my studio. Occasional online lessons are also offered to all students when I'm traveling, if family members are ill, during inclement weather events, or in other emergency situations.

Hybrid - a combination of regularly alternating in-person and online video conferencing lessons.

PRACTICING

Students who practice regularly enjoy playing the harp the most. I suggest 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 other ensemble rehearsals.
- High School students & Advanced adult students: 1 hour per day, in *addition* to time spent in other 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.

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, or are having technical difficulties online you must contact me directly via **phone** or **text** as soon as possible.
- Failure to give notice about an absence prior to the lesson time - i.e. no call, no show - will result in paying a \$40 fee plus the usual cost of the lesson in question.

SCHEDULING

- All lessons will be scheduled and confirmed via our studio's online scheduling platform Fons <https://fons.app>
- Weekly Lessons: The student's regular lesson time is theirs to keep for one session.
- Floating Lessons: Floating lessons are scheduled at the beginning of each month via Fons.

RESCHEDULING & MAKE-UP LESSONS

- Students can reschedule ONE lesson per session (Fall, Spring, or Summer) for any reason, provided they give at least 36 hours notice prior to the original lesson.
- Rescheduling requests must be received and approved in writing (text or Fons).
- Lessons canceled with less than 36 hours notice, will not be made-up and will be charged the usual lesson fee.
- In cases of sudden illness or emergencies, a lesson may be 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.
- If a rescheduled or make-up lesson is missed or cancelled by the student, a second make-up lesson will not be offered.
- Make-up lesson opportunities are built into the calendar, usually for a week at the end of each session.

TEACHER CONFLICTS

Should a conflict arise in my schedule, I will give notice as soon as possible and do one of the following:

- Reschedule the lesson in advance at everyone's earliest convenience or during the allotted make-up lesson days at the end of each session.
- Should I need to cancel at the last minute due to illness or emergency, I will call and/or email the student (or parent). A make-up lesson will be available during one of the make-up lesson weeks, or the lesson will be refunded.

EXTREME WEATHER & EMERGENCIES

In extreme weather or local emergency situations, in-person lessons will be held or canceled based on the decisions of the student's local school district, or emergency declarations by the local authorities (such as a stay at home orders, driving bans, etc.). Students will be notified via text or email regarding emergency related in-person lesson cancellations.

In these situations, online video lessons will be offered when possible. Or the lesson will be rescheduled during the dedicated make-up lesson weeks in schedule for that session.

SHORTENING OF LESSONS

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

Anyone who is visibly ill or showing signs of contagion may be asked to leave in-person lessons.

TERMINATION OF LESSONS

Lessons will be terminated for any of the reasons listed below, or at the discretion of the teacher.

- 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.

ONLINE LESSONS

Regular online lessons are available at my discretion to students who live further than 30 miles away from my studio. A hybrid combination of regularly alternating in-person and online video conferencing lessons is also available. 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 utilize a combination of both regular online video conferences using Zoom <https://zoom.us> AND video recording submitted between online lessons.
- Information about how to configure your space as well as your computer or mobile device for online lessons is located on my website here: <https://www.kelaharp.com/online-lessons.html>
- Recordings of your Zoom lesson will be available to view (privately) for one month in Dropbox before being deleted.
- Online students will be asked to submit a video recording of one piece (currently in the polishing stage) between lessons. It is much easier to hear musical nuances like dynamics and phrasing in video recordings, than it is to hear these things via Zoom. 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 you do not have one of these online file storage systems.
 - ❖ I will provide positive comments and suggestions for improvement on the video performance much I would during a lesson. I may also send customized practice videos to students occasionally as needed.

HEALTH & SAFETY PROTOCOLS

- Always wash your hands before touching any harp, especially harps that are not your own.
- Anyone who is visibly ill or showing signs of contagion may be asked to leave.
- I will 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 at other times for your in-person lesson, please let me know.
- In-person lessons may be temporary suspended and replaced with online only lessons, or hybrid in-person and online lesson instructional model at my discretion for the safety of other studio members.

Tuition

- Tuition includes fees for lessons, my research and preparation outside your lesson time, recitals for in-person students, and occasional group classes or ensemble rehearsals.
- Accepted payment forms: personal check, cash, or online via Fons <https://fons.app> (a service for automatic ACH bank transfers or credit card payments).
- If payment is not received by the second lesson of the tuition payment period, the student will not receive that lesson or any further lessons until payment is made..
- If payment is not received within thirty (30) days of the first lesson of the tuition period, the regularly scheduled lesson time will be forfeited and possibly assigned to another student.
- There will be a \$75 fee for funds returned by the bank for any reason, in addition to reimbursement for the original amount of the funds declined and bank fees.
- If lessons are terminated mid-month or mid-term, prior payments will not be refunded.

SUBSCRIPTION PAYMENT PLANS

Students taking weekly lessons pay tuition using a subscription plan. Your subscription includes up to 14 lessons per four month term (Sept - Dec, Jan - April, May - August), and tuition is paid either by monthly subscription or in full at the beginning of each term.

Monthly Subscription Tuition Payment Plan

Due on or before the 1st lesson of each month.

LESSON LENGTH	MONTHLY PAYMENT
30 minute	\$155
45 minute	\$200
1 hour	\$255

Full Tuition Payment per Term (5% Discount)

Due on or before the first lesson of each term in September, January, and/or May, and payable with cash or check ONLY to receive the discount.

LESSON LENGTH	FULL TUITION PAYMENT
30 minute	\$588
45 minute	\$770
1 hour	\$980

SUMMER LESSONS

Students are highly encouraged to continue lessons during the Summer Term (May - August).

Students who would like to continue regular weekly (14 lessons) in the summer may continue to do so and pay the monthly subscription or full tuition plans outlined above.

Families with lots of travel and camps in the summer, may prefer scheduling only 6, 8, or 10 lessons rather than take weekly lessons during the May-August Summer Term. These packages of lessons are only available in 45 minute or 1 hour lessons, and must purchased and scheduled before June 1st.

LESSON LENGTH	SUMMER 6	SUMMER 8	SUMMER 10
45 minute	\$330	\$440	\$550
1 hour	\$420	\$560	\$700

ADULT FLOATING LESSON PAYMENT PLANS

Floating Lessons are available year round to adult students who do not take weekly lessons. Floating lessons take place approximately twice a month, and are available for 1 hour lessons only. Floating lessons are scheduled and paid for by purchasing packages of 2 or 4 lessons via Fons.

LESSON LENGTH	PACKAGE OF 2 LESSONS	PACKAGE OF 4 LESSONS
1 hour	\$150	\$280

SINGLE LESSONS

My single lesson rate (for audition prep, competition prep, etc.) is \$75 for an hour, or \$110 for a 90 minute lesson.

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

Students are encouraged to join their fellow studio members and perform on our various studio recitals. In the past these have included events such as:

Halloween 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.

Holiday Harp Ensemble - performances at area senior living centers in December. Holiday Harp Ensemble pieces 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.

Spring Harp-B-Que - Recital and Potluck

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

Senior Recital - high school seniors are encouraged to give a Senior recital, and these may be combined with other seniors and on other instruments.

Local Harp Society Chapter Performances - students are encouraged to participate in their local American Harp Society chapter which may offer the Music Education Auditions & Evaluations program, masterclasses, ensembles, and other performance opportunities.

IMPORTANT DATES & CALENDARS

For the always current schedule with all events, check the Online Studio Calendar at <https://www.kelaharp.com/studio-calendar.html>

To see your personal lesson schedule login to Fons <https://fons.app/calendar>

COMPETITIONS

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

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 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 shared studio [Dropbox](#) folder that contains practice note pages, string diagrams, DIY flash cards, practice videos, etc.. Each student will additionally be assigned their own individual Dropbox folder where I often share videos and documents via a private link.

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 full names online. I do not friend or follow 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): benefits include discounted harp insurance, *the American Harp Journal*, national 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.
- ☐ **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 rehearsals.
- ☐ **Metronome** – Must have a loud ticking sound! (Apps or stand alone devices are acceptable)
- ☐ **Practice Planner** – such as: spiral notebook or Suzuki practice sheets (in studio Dropbox), etc.
- ☐ **One Three Ring Binder** – to store handouts, lesson notes, music, 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.
- ☐ **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/metal stands are NOT acceptable** because they are flimsy, easily collapse, and often damage the wood and finish of harps.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- ☐ **Sproutbeat** - Music Theory iPad curriculum for all levels and ages. Student accounts are purchased through me (our studio has a group discount) \$40 per calendar year.
- ☐ **Grand Staff Flash Cards** - for students learning to read music, can be purchased ready-made, DIY print and cut, or use an app like Note Rush.
- ☐ **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.

Music and supplies can be purchased directly from me. I offer shipping discounts on group music orders at the beginning of each semester, or you can purchase directly from the following retailers:

Harp Music & Accessories Retailers:

Lyon & Healy West: www.Harp.com

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

Virginia Harp Center: www.vaharpcenter.com

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

Student's names will NOT be published on the internet with any photo or video, without 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 (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

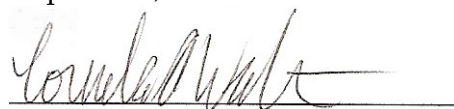
Teacher, Parent, Student Agreement

2023-2024

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. because they 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