

CODE OF ETHICS

The standing of a professional organization depends upon the quality and integrity of its members, the relationship with the outside world and the pursuit of the highest professional standards. The basic values of Suzuki Talent Education Association of Australia (NSW) (STEAA) teaching are integrity, trust, respect, impartiality and a relationship of intimacy between teacher, parent and child.

Definition:

Ethics:

“The science of morals, that branch of philosophy that is concerned with human character and conduct; the science of professional standards of conduct; a system of morals or rules of behaviour.”

Why have a Code of Ethics in the STEAA?

- To enshrine the Suzuki philosophy of respect, integrity and trust and apply it to our professional behaviour.
- To enable us to expand successfully in the next century without endangering the tenets of Suzuki’s philosophy.
- To address the particular problem of what to do in particular circumstances.

The Philosophy and Nature of Suzuki teaching:

The Suzuki method is an approach to the teaching of instrumental music based on the educational philosophy and teachings of Dr Suzuki. His basic belief is expressed in the opening words of his book, “Nurtured By Love”:

“Talent is no accident of birth.” *Dr S Suzuki*

Dr Suzuki believes that all children can be highly educated if they are given the proper training in a good and caring environment. After observing that all children are capable of learning their native language without formal lessons, Suzuki concluded that all children have great potential or talent for learning, if given the right experiences. He decided to find a way of teaching the violin using an environmental situation similar to that in which children learn their own language.

Dr Suzuki has revolutionized instrumental teaching making it available to all children. He has shown that through instrumental learning a child’s ability and character can be developed. His philosophy and understanding of the way children learn evolved over many years.

The purpose of Talent Education is not to train professional musicians but to train fine musicians, and then through music the student will show a high ability in whatever field of endeavour she might choose, developing into a fine human being.

The purpose of this Code:

- To establish and maintain standards for teachers who are members of the STEAA(NSW).
- To inform and protect members of the public seeking and using their services.
- To accept a common frame of reference within which to manage their responsibilities to parents, children, colleagues, members of the STEAA(NSW) and the wider community.

Whilst this code cannot resolve the ethical and practical issues, it aims to provide a framework for addressing ethical issues and to encourage optimum levels of practice.

You and the Parents

1. Any publicity and all written and oral information should reflect accurately the nature of the service on offer, and the training, qualifications and relevant experience of the teacher. Teachers should take all reasonable steps to honour undertakings offered in their initial information.
2. Teachers are responsible for communicating the terms on which teaching is being offered, including availability, expectation of the parent regarding fees, cancelled lessons, and any other significant matters. The communication of terms and any negotiations over these should be conducted before the parent incurs any financial liability. Subsequent revision of the terms should be agreed in advance of any change.
3. You, as the teacher, have a responsibility to carry out your part of the contract for services meticulously and professionally in terms of teaching methods and procedures, facilities and equipment.
4. Teachers would do well to recognize the difference between being their own boss, and being employed by parents to provide an educational service for their children.
5. Teachers must respect parents' priorities.
6. Teachers are responsible for setting and monitoring boundaries between the teaching relationship with the parent(s) and any other kind of relationship and making this explicit to the parent. For example, in situations where the teacher gets too close to the parent, the children can feel left out.
7. The Suzuki teacher has a responsibility to train the parent(s) to work effectively, respectfully and joyfully with their children, and give continued advice and ongoing training to support the parent in the home practice situation as it adapts according to the needs of the child.

You and the Child

1. The teacher must respect the child, its whole life and other activities.
2. The teacher must show physical respect for the child. In Suzuki, with the parent present, we are able to touch the child. We must do this with appropriate, professional and confident touching.
3. The teacher must balance the talk in the lesson between the needs of the child, the parent and the lesson plan.
4. The teacher must respect the parent's relationship with the child. For example, teachers can sometimes get too close to children and try to take the place of the parent, who then gets jealous.
5. Children should be treated courteously and their rights as individuals respected. Confidentiality of personal information conveyed to you must be maintained at all times.
6. Teachers are expected to provide performance opportunities for their pupils.

You and Your Colleagues

1. You should respect individual interests, activities and rights and should not publicly criticize fellow teachers.
2. You should not solicit as pupils those persons whom you know to be pupils of fellow teachers. However, parents have the right to choose their own teacher, and if they wish, to transfer from one teacher to another.
3. When a student of one teacher wishes to transfer to another, it is the responsibility of the new teacher to be satisfied that the pupil has satisfactorily terminated all obligations with the previous teacher. Therefore, contact them to ensure that all fees were paid, any property in the way of books, recordings, instruments has been returned, and that there is no professional reason why you should not take that pupil.
4. Care should be taken when teaching other teacher's pupils on workshops to behave with respect towards the home teacher and their efforts.

You and Schools

1. Teachers should behave professionally in schools in which they are teaching Suzuki. Those "brought in" directly by schools should ensure they have a contract with the school and individual agreements with parents if they come in to lessons.
2. Teachers should maintain a relationship with the schools their pupils attend.

You and the Wider Music Community

1. The conduct of one member of the STEAA(NSW) reflects upon the profession as a whole. Avoid any activity or enterprise that may bring the profession into disrepute.
2. Always be conscious of the need to act with appropriate dignity, good taste and loyalty to the profession.
3. Teachers should make it clear that their work is a professional activity for which they are accountable.

Teachers Responsibilities

1. Teachers are expected to provide a varied and balanced course of study appropriate to the age and ability of each pupil, with regard to both technique and repertoire.
2. Teachers are expected to have a suitably equipped studio with access to cloakroom facilities.
3. If extra lessons of any kind are needed, arrangements should be mutually agreed.
4. Teachers should make it clear whether or not they are able to accompany non-pianist pupils and at whose expense the services of any accompanist would be provided.
5. Teachers should not view their work in isolation. They should be aware if a pupil has overlapping interests eg whether the pupil learns other instruments, whether the pupil belongs to a band, orchestra, choir, music club etc.
6. Teachers are expected to guide and educate their parents in all areas of Suzuki education, including annual membership of the Association, attendance at workshops, concerts and Graduation.

Professional Involvement

It is expected that teachers will have a strong professional involvement.

Teachers must:

1. Maintain their membership of STEA(NSW) and through that their membership of the Pan Pacific Suzuki Association and the International Suzuki Association that provide the license to use the Suzuki name.
2. From time to time have an active participation in Association activities through serving some time on an Association committee, by attending and helping with the organisation of workshops and concerts.
3. Regular attendance at Teacher Training conferences. Minimum training requirement for maintenance of accreditation status is 18 hours (3 days) per calendar year.

Other means of being involved include:

4. Encouraging their families to take part in the many activities that are provided by the Association
5. Membership of other professional associations.
6. Commitment to their own further education. Teachers are expected to follow the example of Suzuki and research new ideas. They are expected to continue their professional development and to keep abreast of developments in music education by attending conferences, courses, seminars, discussion groups and by keeping their personal reading as well as their performance skills.
7. There are many matters on which teachers may be asked to advise. They should only advise where they are competent to do so or else suggest where an expert opinion can be obtained. Teachers are expected to be able to advise pupils and parents where to go for reliable information about the purchase of instruments, the appropriate schools for music education and courses in further education.

- 8. Respect yourself. Avoid “burn-out”. Faced with the need for constant adaptation to a continually changing environment, teachers are encouraged to commit to personal/psychological development.

You and the STEAA(NSW)

- 1. You should be loyal to the STEAA(NSW).
- 2. Unless speaking on behalf of the STEAA(NSW) make it clear that the opinions you are expressing are your own and not those of the STEAA(NSW).
- 3. Teachers will sign a document saying they agree to comply with the Code of Ethics, in the case of trainees when they join, existing members when they remit next year’s membership fees.
- 4. Violation of this Code – should a teacher become aware of any violation, they should communicate in the first instance with the Administrator. The matter will be referred to the Board, which reserves the right to remove the name of a member from the list of members should that person be found to have seriously and/or repeatedly violated the Code of Ethics. A procedure for appeals and re-instatement will be put in place.

Conclusion

Ethical and practical issues may arise which have not yet been given full consideration. The Professional development Committee of the STEAA(NSW) is interested in hearing of the ethical difficulties of teachers, as this helps to inform discussion regarding good practice.

I----- have read the Code of Ethics and agree to abide by it as a Suzuki Teacher.

Signed: _____ Date: _____