

# String Orientation

## Private Teachers

Private lessons are strongly recommended for all students. Please see attached list of local string teachers.

## Lesson Schedule

Lessons are on a designated day of the week but the lesson time will rotate throughout that day.

## Concerts

ES Spring Concert: ES Gymnasium

## Recommended Reading

Nurtured by Love, Shinichi Suzuki

## Listening

Most children will learn music faster if they are practicing *and* listening to it. Most orchestra music and NYSSMA solos are posted on the classroom website: [www.salzmanorchestra.weebly.com](http://www.salzmanorchestra.weebly.com)

## Tuning

Follow these steps for tuning your child's instrument at home:

1. Listen to the note you are tuning on a piano or pitch pipe, or tuning app.
2. Hold the instrument so it is facing you and turn the "peg" towards you first.
3. After you have loosened the string, you can begin to tune up (away from you) very slowly while plucking the string at the same time. Keep checking the original pitch so you don't accidentally go too high—this will cause the string to break!
4. Push the peg in while tuning so the string will not slip.
5. Use "pegs" (black knobs) for strings that are very out of tune and "fine tuners" (silver knobs) for strings that are just a little out of tune. Turn the fine tuners to the left to make the string looser or lower in pitch and to the right to make the string tighter or higher in pitch.

## **Note Reading**

### **Clefs**

Violin music is written in the treble clef (right hand of the piano).

Viola music is written in the alto clef.

Cello and Bass music is written in the bass clef (left hand of the piano).

Notes can be “natural”, “flat” (a little lower), and “sharp” (a little higher).

Notes on the markers can be either natural or sharp. Please refer to the scale and fingering sheet to properly understand this concept.

- Please note that the second marker on the violin and viola is referred to as a “high” 2.
- The second marker on the cello is played with the “3<sup>rd</sup>” finger.
- The second marker on the bass is played with the “4<sup>th</sup>” finger.

### **Fingering**

With string instruments, the index finger = 1<sup>st</sup> finger, middle finger = 2<sup>nd</sup> finger, ring finger = 3<sup>rd</sup> finger, and pinky = 4<sup>th</sup> finger.

# Posture/Positioning—Violin/Viola

## **Bow Exercises:**

Snoopy Hand

Rocketship

Elevator

Witches' Brew

Pinky push-ups

Windshield Wipers

Arm against wall

## **Violin/Viola Exercises** (always use a sponge or shoulder rest for support):

Flat like a tabletop

Hold/Walk with no hands

Tugging/Tapping

## **Things to watch for:**

### **Right Hand:**

Thumb and pinky should be curved.

Don't squash the mouse inside your hand!

Middle and ring fingers should be hanging down over frog.

Index finger should rest on the stick just above frog.

Arm should only move from elbow down.

Straight bow/flat bow hair—parallel to bridge and fingerboard.

Keep bow halfway between bridge and fingerboard.

Wrist should curve up for "up" bows and down for "down" bows.

### **Left Hand:**

Straight thumb in line with 1<sup>st</sup> finger marker.

No pancake hand!

Straight wrist/arm.

Can you see your elbow? (All the way forward!)

Left elbow will move out even more when playing on the lower strings.

### **Body:**

Stand up straight.

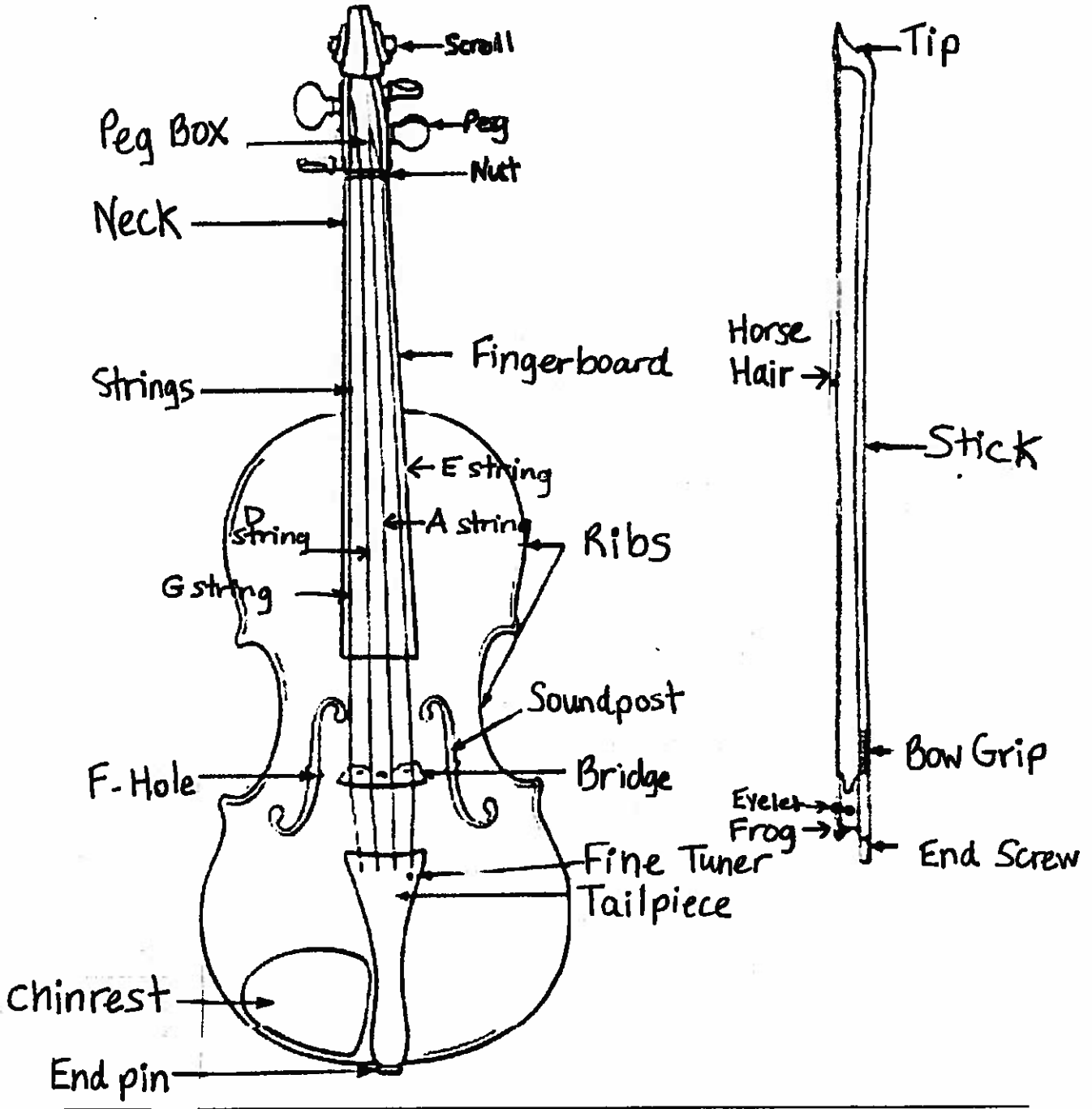
Left foot should be slightly forward, point to the left and be in line with the violin, nose, strings, elbow and scroll.

Don't lock knees.

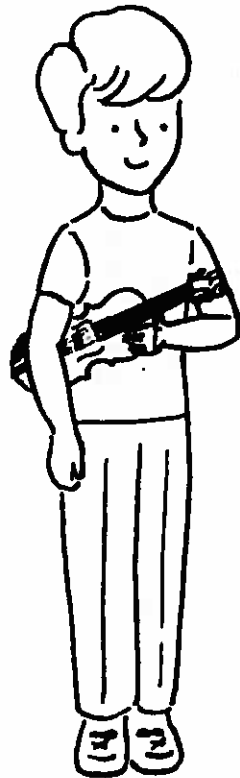
Violin/viola should be touching the neck and sitting on the left shoulder underneath the chin. Head should be turned to the left. (Always use a shoulder rest.)

Violin/viola is supported entirely by the chin/shoulder and should not be held in place with the left hand.

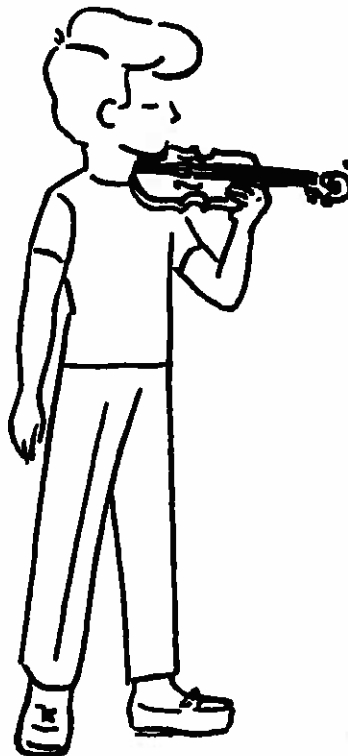
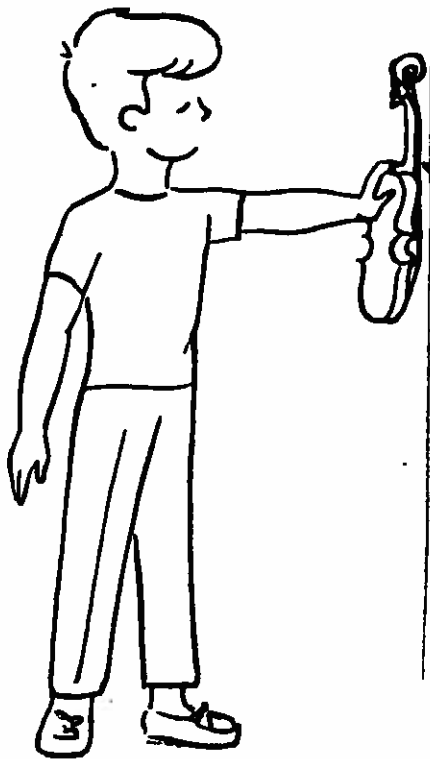
Parts of Instrument:



Rest Position (practice bow):



Playing Position (no hands, no bow, violin up, feet apart):



① Feet apart.

② Swing vln. out to side.

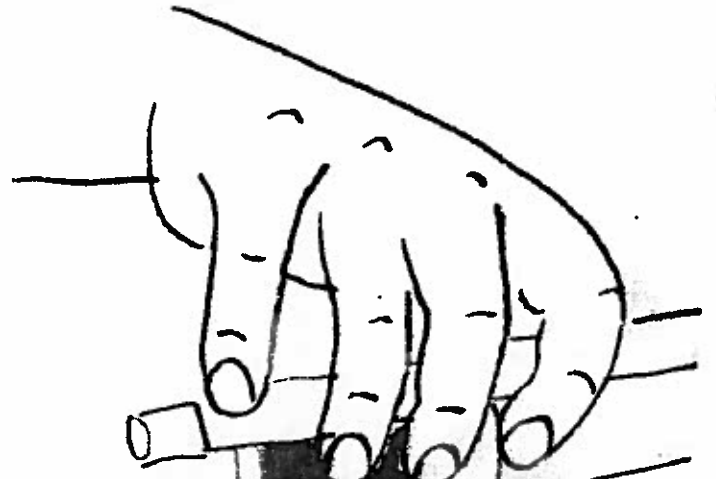
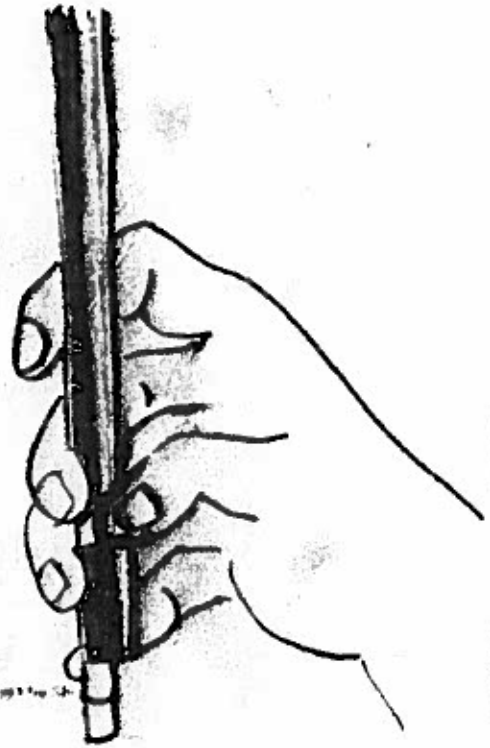
③ Hold vln. between left shoulder/chin

# Bow Position:



Right arm  
opens/closes  
from elbow.  
Bow stays straight.  
Practice on Left Shoulder.

# Bow Hold:



## **INSTRUMENT POSITION**

1. Stand or sit with correct posture.  
See figures 5 and 6.
2. Attach the shoulder rest in the proper position on the viola.
3. Place the viola on your left shoulder.
4. Be sure that:
  - a. your left shoulder is well under the viola.
  - b. the left corner of your chin is in the chinrest so that you are looking straight down the strings.
  - c. the viola is tilted slightly to the right.
  - d. the viola is parallel to the floor.
  - e. the following are in line:
    - nose
    - strings
    - left elbow
    - left foot

See figures 5 and 6.

5. Relax your left shoulder.

## **LEFT HAND POSITION**

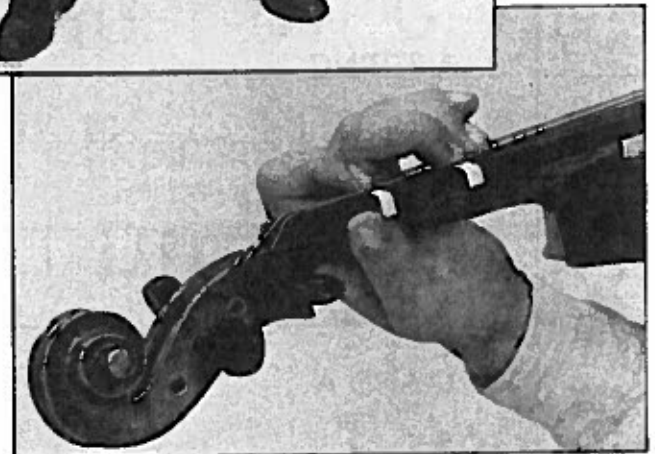
1. Place the first joint of your thumb on the neck.  
See figure 7.
2. Curve your fingers over the fingerboard.  
See figure 7.
3. Adjust your wrist and forearm to form a straight line.  
See figures 5 and 6.
4. Be sure that:
  - a. your thumb is relaxed, straight and pointed upwards.
  - b. your thumb and first finger are opposite each other.
  - c. your wrist is straight.
  - d. your fingernails are cut short.
5. Relax your left shoulder.



Figure 6



Figure 7





# RHYTHMS

**Rhythmic Value Chart**

	<b>NOTE</b>	<b>BEATS</b>	<b>REST</b>
<i>whole note</i>		4 beats	
<i>dotted half note*</i>		3 beats	
<i>half note</i>		2 beats	
<i>quarter note</i>		1 beat	
<i>eighth note</i>		1/2 beat	
<i>sixteenth note</i>		1/4 beat	

\*a dot increases the value of a note by 1/2. Example:

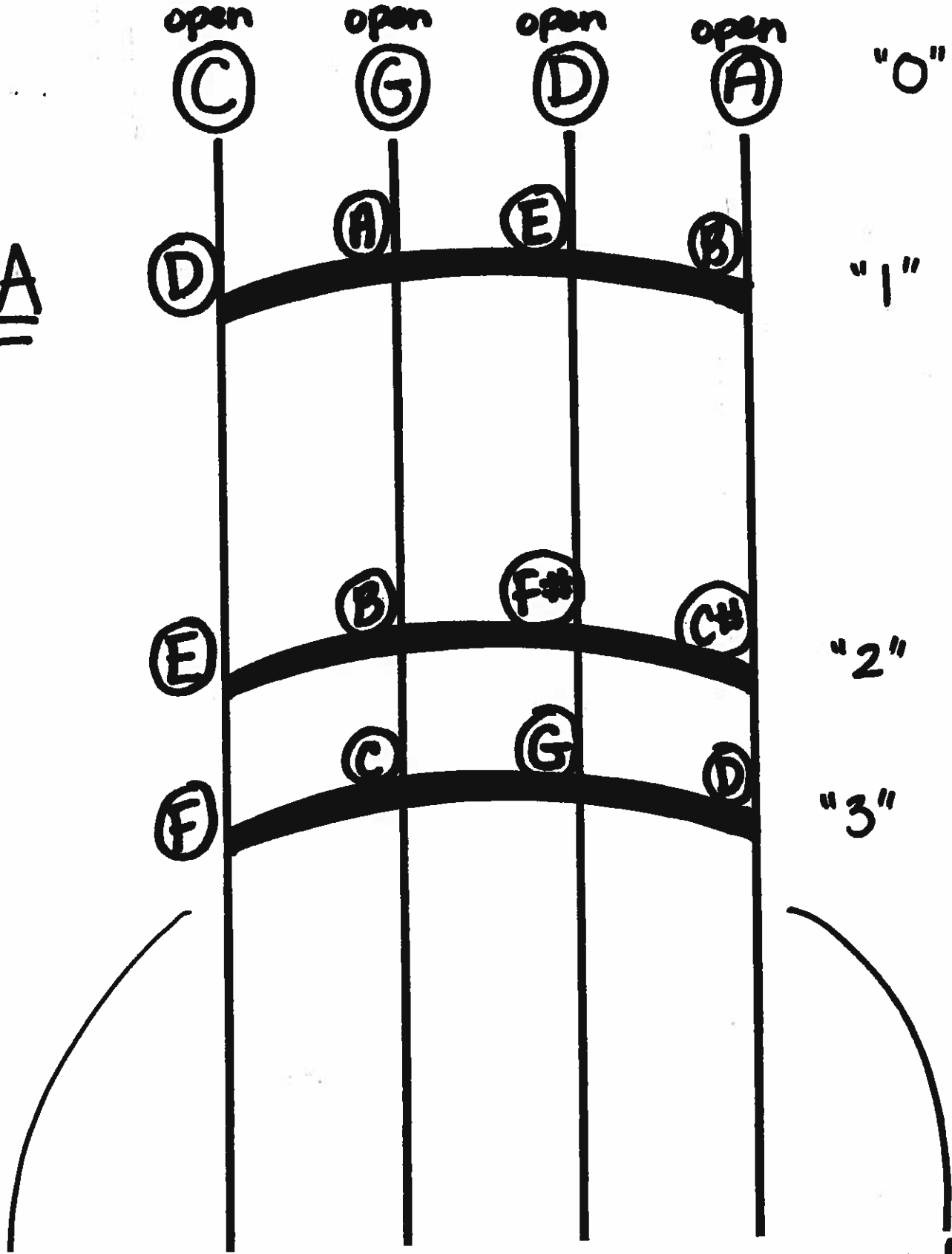
$$\text{Dotted half note} = \text{Half note (2 beats)} + \text{Quarter note (1/2 of 2 is 1 beat)} = \text{3 beats}$$

**Equivalent Note Chart**

<i>whole note</i>	
<i>half notes</i>	
<i>quarter notes</i>	
<i>eighth notes</i>	
<i>eighth note triplets*</i>	
<i>sixteenth notes</i>	

\* A triplet is a group of 3 notes played in the time of 2 notes of the same value.

VIOLA



VIOLA

A musical staff with a B-clef. Above the staff, a series of notes is written, each with a small circle above it. Below the staff, a sequence of fret numbers is written, corresponding to the notes above. The notes and fret numbers are:
 

- C (0)
- D (1)
- E (2)
- F (3)
- G (0)
- A (1)
- B (2)
- C (3)
- D (0)
- E (1)
- F# (2)
- G (3)
- A (0)
- B (1)
- C# (2)
- D (3)
- (E) (4)

# CARE AND MAINTENANCE

## INSTRUMENT

1. Handle instrument with care!
2. Store instrument in the case when not playing—make sure the latches are closed!
3. Never push down on the case lid to make it close all the way.
4. Always wash hands before playing instrument.
5. Keep instrument clean from rosin, smudges, fingerprints, etc. with a soft, clean, DRY cloth. Do not wash instrument with soap and/or water!
6. Do not let instrument get too hot or cold. Always keep it in a comfortable temperature and never leave it in the car.
7. Make sure the bridge is lined up correctly and standing straight at all times. Ask your teacher to straighten it out if it gets out of place.
8. Always have an experienced person handle and fix your instrument.

### Extra Guidelines for Cello and Bass:

1. Put the endpin back inside the instrument when you set it down so you don't trip over it.
2. Never drag the side of your instrument on the floor as you put it down or pick it up.
3. Be careful not to bump the bridge of the instrument while carrying it.
4. If you cannot place the instrument back inside the case, gently place it on its' side.

## BOW

1. Handle bow with care!
2. Keep bow stick clean from rosin and smudges with a soft, clean, DRY cloth. Do not wash bow with soap and/or water!
3. Always wash hands before touching bow.
4. Never touch the bow hair, only the stick and frog. Dirt and skin oils will ruin the hair.
5. Rosin your bow regularly but be careful not to put too much on.
6. Loosen bow hair before putting it back in the case.

### Extra Guidelines for Cello and Bass:

1. If using a soft case, remove the bow *before* taking the instrument out. Put the bow back in the case *after* putting the instrument back. This will prevent the bow from breaking.