



St. Paul Fine Arts Academy (SPFAA)

A Fine Arts ministry of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Austin, Texas ("SPLC")

Handbook of Policies and Procedures for Students, Instructors, and Administration 2026-2027

1. Contacts

a. Administrator

- i. Jonathan R. Mueller – Jonathan.Mueller@stpaulaustin.org – (630)346.7814
- ii. Becky Hamilton (assistant) – spfaa@stpaulaustin.org

b. Instructors (tentative)

- i. Kathy Achterberg (piano – high school and up, organ)
- ii. Robert Achterberg (clarinet, voice, brass)
- iii. Grace Einkauf (voice)
- iv. Sydney Glynn (beginning dance)
- v. Dawn Mueller (flute, first steps in music at St. Paul)
- vi. Jonathan Mueller (piano, organ)
- vii. Steve Schwolert (art and Sloyd)
- viii. Keri Wolfmueller (piano)
- ix. Rebekah Wolfmueller (beginning violin)

2. Purpose

- a. Catechesis/Teaching the Faith
- b. Provide professional studio lessons and group classes initially to members of SPLC, with a view to expanding services to members of other LCMS congregations, and the Austin community in general.
 - i. Service-based performance opportunities
 1. Worship services/events
 2. Off-campus Events
 - ii. Short-term Art show/gallery
- c. Raise up the next generation of Church Musicians and Artists
- d. In determining whether and when to expand services outside of SPLC members, it's anticipated that the structure of the programs, specifics of financial and organizational understandings with the voters and administration of SPLC, and similar matters, will be reviewed and revised in communications between SPFAA and the voters' body of SPLC.

3. Administration

a. SPFAA Advisory Board

- i. Richard Covey-chair, Robert Achterberg, Laura Mangioni, Leslie Paterson, Lisa McIlvride, Kathy Reistad, Megan Beach

b. SPFAA Administrator – Jonathan R. Mueller

c. SPFAA Assistant – Becky Hamilton

4. Music Instructors

a. All instructors:

- i. Shall be an active member in good standing of a congregation of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.
 1. Instructors will commit to the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and supportive of the Synod's Constitution, bylaws, and policies as well as those of SPLC.
 2. Instructors must have the aptitude to mentor students both personally and spiritually in accordance with the faith as they have come to know it in *Luther's Small Catechism*.
 3. Any exceptions to this policy will be approved by the SPFAA Advisory Committee, the Senior Pastor of SPLC, the chairman of the congregation, and the chairman of the Board of Elders of SPLC.
- ii. Will abide by all policies and procedures in this handbook and fulfill all requirements stated in their individual affiliation agreement with SPFAA.

b. Qualifications

- i. The instructor must have the qualifications necessary to teach their designated subject area.
- ii. Possess the ability to incorporate proper methodology, technique, theory/history, and appropriate musical/artistic skills within the lessons.

c. Curriculum

- i. The instructor is free to teach from any method books/curriculum that is appropriate for the students and for his/her unique goals and abilities.
- ii. The instructor will also include in their teaching classical and sacred music/art according to the Lutheran tradition and how that is relevant for us today.
- iii. *David's Harp* is a Recognized Service Organization of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and serves as a center for musical development to assist church in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world through music. *David's Harp* produces supplemental resources for music lessons that support the rich musical heritage of the Christian Church in its hymns and liturgies. These resources help teach the Christian faith through music while helping them grow musically. Music instructors at SPFAA should use the musical resources from *David's Harp* to assist in teaching hymnody as a supplement to each student's curriculum. Any exceptions are to be approved by the SPFAA administrator.

d. Lessons and Scheduling

- i. The instructor will determine their own schedule for teaching at SPFAA within the allotted time available, based on activities, events, and services at SPLC. No lessons or sessions can be scheduled during any worship service times at SPLC.
- ii. For private lessons, the instructor, with the Administrator's guidance or consultation, is to work with students (and their parents/caregivers) to set a schedule of lesson times. This information, and any changes that arise during each semester, will be provided to the Administrator.
- iii. For group classes, the instructor will determine the best time to have a class based on the class participants' and the instructor's own schedules and will inform the Administrator of that schedule and any changes that arise during each semester.
- iv. The instructor will consult with the Administrator when scheduling recitals, art shows, or other community events, and with the SPLC Director of Music when scheduling students to play for church services.

e. Yearly background check (paid for by SPFAA)

- i. A background check is required for each instructor every year. The cost of this will be paid by SPFAA.

- f. Dress
 - i. Each instructor is to dress respectfully, and professionally in relation to each instructor's respective vocation. For art instructors, that may vary based on the day's activities. Modest dress is also required. Dance instructors may wear dance attire.
 - ii. No visible tattoos or facial piercings are permitted.
- g. Issues and Complaints
 - i. Any instructor must report to the Administrator regarding any issues that arise. Any other complaints may be taken to the SPFAA Board.
- h. Independent Contractor Contract
 - i. Each instructor is hired on a contractual basis and categorized as an independent contractor whose income from activities through SPFAA will be reported on IRS form 1099.
 - ii. Each instructor must sign their affiliated agreement (general forms of which are attached to these policies.) The execution form of the agreement will be executed by the instructor and the Administrator, and preserved by the Administration, upon the Advisory Committee's authorization for the affiliation of the instructor with SPFAA.
- i. Cause for Termination of Affiliation
 - i. Instructors who fail to abide by the SPFAA policies as stated in their contract and the SPFAA handbook will be addressed by the Administrator first, and if necessary, by the SPFAA Advisory Board. If concerns cannot be resolved, the instructor's affiliation with the SPFAA will be terminated with immediate effect, and the instructor will be entitled only to payment of the funds received by SPFAA for payment of student's lessons that have already been completed but for which SPFAA has not yet delivered the funds.

5. General Policies and Information for Students/Parents

- a. Registration forms completed; information updated at least once a year.
 - i. Registration forms are to be completed at the time of initial enrollment as well as each consecutive semester while instruction continues. Students/Parents are requested to notify the Academy office as soon as possible regarding any changes in the contact information provided. Instructors are to provide students or parents with contact information at the first lesson/class so that families and teachers can communicate directly regarding lesson/class matters.
- b. Teaching location
 - i. All lessons and classes are to be held/given on the Academy campus, located at SPLC. If an instructor wishes to give a lesson or hold a class at another location (field trip, make-up lesson, etc.) this arrangement must be approved by the Administrator. Parents are strongly encouraged to sit in on their student's private lessons or must use a provided space in which to wait (e.g., for art classes). Parents must be actively present for any infant/toddler/pre-school music or dance class.
- c. Student Dress Code
 - i. There is no allowance for attire displaying anti-Christian language or subject matter.
 - ii. Please see more on dress code for our beginning ballet classes under the supplies section.
- d. Copyrights and photocopying
 - i. SPFAA abides by all applicable copyright laws. Scores should not be photocopied for private lesson repertoire. Students may only use photocopied scores in performance to assist in the efficiency of page turns.

- e. Photographs and Recordings
 - i. During individual and group classes, recitals, and other performances, the teacher reserves the right to record video or take photographs of students to use in the St. Paul Lutheran Church newsletter and/or bulletin, the church Facebook and/or Instagram page, SPFAA advertising materials, lesson demonstration, professional presentations, and the SPFAA website. Photos taken by the teacher OR that are shared with the teacher by other individuals present at gatherings or performances become the property of the SPFAA and can be used at the discretion of the teacher in regard to the SPFAA. The academy follows online safety rules in this matter.
 - ii. Parents will be asked to sign a release form to approve or decline permission to have their minor child(ren) in such photos and/or recordings. (Please see final page)

6. Program Descriptions

- a. Lesson Lengths
 - i. Lesson lengths at SPFAA are typically 30 minutes. As a student grows, there may be a need for a longer lesson (45, 60, 75, 90 minutes). This should be discussed between the instructor and student/parent as to the student's needs and abilities.
- b. Class lengths
 - i. Infant/Toddler/Early Childhood music classes are 25-30 minutes in length.
 - ii. Art class length and frequency will vary depending on the class subject and student age and ability.
 - iii. Dance classes are 45 minutes in length.
- c. Student Performance Opportunities
 - i. The leadership of SPFAA believes that performance opportunities are vital for developing student confidence and fostering an attitude of leadership and service. Student participation is determined by the student and instructor.
- d. Academy Events
 - i. Events will be communicated through handouts, posters, or emails. Students and parents are to contact the instructor or the Administrator regarding any concerns or questions.

7. Calendar Dates

- a. Fall Semester – (12 lessons per semester for private instruction)
 - i. Mid-September to December
- b. Spring Semester – (12 lessons per semester for private instruction)
 - i. Mid- January to May

8. Student Supplies

- a. Private lessons
 - i. Each music student should bring a small notebook for the instructor/student to take notes, noting music that is to be practiced for the following week, etc.
 - ii. Pencil
 - iii. Music
- b. Class lessons
 - i. When registering for an art class,
 - 1. an art supply kit will be created by the instructor and made available for purchase; or
 - 2. a supply list will be made available before the start of the first class.
 - ii. When registering for an infant/toddler/early childhood class, a music supply kit may be created by the instructor and made available for purchase.

c. Dance classes

- i. We encourage dancers to wear comfortable clothing that lets them move freely. There is no need for the standard leotard and tights dress code that is necessary for more advanced dancers. Ballet shoes are allowed – you can talk to the instructors if you need suggestions for the kinds and place you might look to purchase them OR students can come in bare feet (clean of course) – socks will be too slippery!

9. Practice Expectations for Private lessons

- a. Each student is expected to establish a daily practice schedule (minimum 5 days/week)
- b. Each instructor will make known practice expectations at the beginning of each semester.

10. Missed Lessons

a. Faculty Absences

- i. Planned – SPFAA instructors are encouraged to pursue performance and other professional opportunities, which add to their expertise as Academy instructors. If an instructor must miss a lesson for such an activity, he/she is responsible for notifying the student/parent in advance and for scheduling a make-up lesson.
- ii. Unplanned – If an instructor must miss a lesson due to illness, family emergency, transportation problem, he/she shall notify the student/parent at their first opportunity and a make-up lesson will be scheduled.

b. Student Absences

- i. Planned – For any planned absence, he/she must notify the instructor at least one week in advance of the absence. If this is not done, the instructor is not obligated to make up the lesson. If proper notification is given, the instructor will offer a make-up lesson per their schedule's availability.
- ii. Unplanned – If a student is unable to attend a lesson because of illness, family emergency, transportation problems, etc., the student or parent is expected to contact the instructor directly as soon as possible. Whether a missed lesson will be made up will be at the discretion of the instructor.
- iii. For group classes – There are no make-up classes for a student absence from a group class.
- iv. PLEASE NOTE: It is SPFAA policy that the instructor is not required to provide a make-up lesson for last-minute student cancellations or no-shows. The instructor may choose to work with you under unique emergency circumstances.

c. Emergency Closings

- i. SPFAA will follow the Austin ISD guidance for weather related closings.
- ii. The Academy may also utilize SPLC's automated phone tree messaging system and email message system.

11. Financial Policies

a. Lesson Fees

- i. These are given on the registration page.
- ii. For class lessons, the fees (and any supplies needed) will be listed with each class's course description.

b. Registration Fees

- i. There will be a one-time registration fee of \$25 per individual/family. Thereafter, no registration fees will be charged to a previously enrolled individual/family.

c. Payment

- i. To begin lessons or a class, your payment must first be received.
 1. Checks can be made payable to “St. Paul Fine Arts Academy” and given to the instructor or administrator.
 2. Online payments can be made by going to the privately shared link to the SPFAA’s page. Contact the administrator if you need the link again.

d. Withdrawal and/or Refunds

- i. No refunds are available for lessons already received.
- ii. Withdrawing from the Academy is only possible at the end of each month.
- iii. We ask that each student commit to taking private lessons for at least one semester. Thereafter, if a student wishes to withdraw from the class, they must give two weeks’ notice before the end of the month. Any tuition paid beyond lessons that will be completed will be refunded upon request.
- iv. Emergency/extraordinary circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis with the final decision made by the Academy Administrator.

*please see following page to sign and return to the student’s instructor at the first lesson.

St. Paul's Fine Arts Academy (SPFAA) Student Acknowledgement

SPFAA POLICY AGREEMENT for Parents and Students

I have read and reviewed the SPFAA Policy Handbook. I understand the contents and agree to abide by them.

Signature of Parent (for minor)

Signature of Adult Student

Date _____

MEDIA POLICY AGREEMENT

During individual and group classes, recitals, and other performances, the teacher reserves the right to record video or take photographs of students to use in the St. Paul Lutheran Church newsletter or bulletin, the church Facebook or Instagram page, SPFAA advertising materials, lesson demonstration, professional presentations, and the SPFAA website.

Photos taken by the teacher OR that are shared with the teacher by other individuals present at gatherings or performances become the property of the SPFAA and can be used at the discretion of the teacher in regard to the SPFAA. The academy follows online safety rules in this matter.

Signing this document indicates that I have read and understand the Media Policy of the studio and I agree to comply with all terms and conditions stated therein.

Name of Student

Printed Name of Parent (for minor)

Signature of Parent (for minor)

Signature of Adult Student

Date _____

Please sign and return to the SPFAA, Jonathan Mueller, Administrator

spfaa@stpaulaustin.org