



**Giving Music to
Everyone**

**PARENT HANDBOOK
2024-2025**

Welcome to El Sistema Aeolian!

Dear Parents & Guardians,

“The Gift of Music, the Gift of Community”

You and your child are going to have an exceptional experience by joining the El Sistema Aeolian program. Through the program, your child will have access to a wide range of opportunities to learn and explore music.

The El Sistema Aeolian program is an after-school music education program run by The Aeolian Hall. It is free and intensive, with a strong focus in social development.

In this program, the orchestra and the choir are at the centre of the activities. They are collective and caring communities where each child’s individuality is valued while promoting cooperation and interaction with others.

We have created this handbook as a resource to offer you information on the many aspects of the program, including your child’s and your responsibilities.

If you have any questions or concerns that are not addressed in this handbook, please, contact us at Aeolian Hall by email at elsistema@aeolianhall.ca.

We will be happy to provide you with further information and to hear your ideas and suggestions.

Cordially,

Clark Bryan

Aeolian Hall Executive Director

“Music has to be recognized as an agent of social development. It transmits the highest values – solidarity, harmony, mutual compassion. It unites entire communities, and expresses sublime feelings.”

Jose Antonio Abreu (Founder of El Sistema)

El Sistema Aeolian Program Overview

- Minimum of 1, and up to 5 days (9+ hours) of music instruction and rehearsals per week,
32 weeks during the school year, plus a Summer Camp.
- Instruments provided at no cost to families
- A welcoming and nurturing environment
- Field trips and opportunities to experience music outside the classroom
- Leadership development opportunities
- Strong community and volunteer support
- Access to a free piano through the 88 Keys program (partnership with D&S pianos)
- Food program: Providing snacks and meals including opportunities to learn about food and experience food from different cultures

Concerts and Performance Opportunities

Please note that concerts and public performances will be scheduled outside of the regular program throughout the year. Students will have the opportunity to perform for families, peers and members of the local community. We encourage you to come to these performances and share the wonderful sense of pride, community and accomplishment that they foster in each child. There are many special projects that occur during the year including performances with famous Aeolian Guest Artists. Please ensure that every effort is made to participate fully in these events. We will alert you well in advance to their dates and times.

Core Program Information

Time	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
4:30pm	• Beginner Strings (Sr.)		• Beginner Cello & Beginner Strings
5:30 pm	• Beginner Strings (Jr.)		• Beginner Strings (Jr.)
5:45 pm		• Beginner Strings (5:45–6:45pm)	
6:30pm	• Dismissal	• Dismissal	

Time	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
4:15 pm	• Applied Musicianship	• Instrumental classes (Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian Strings, Brass & Woodwinds, Int. Cello, Double Bass)	• Instrumental classes (Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian Strings, Brass & Woodwinds, Ionian Cello)
5:15 pm	• Dinner	• Dinner	• Dinner
5:45 pm	• Instrumental classes (Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian Strings, Brass & Woodwinds, Ionian Cello)	• Jr. Choir Sr. Choir	• Symphonic Orchestra
6:45 pm	• Dismissal	• Choir ends	• Dismissal
7:00 pm		• Leadership Class – Optional (Senior Students Only)	
		OR	
8:00 pm		• Glee Choir – Optional (Open to All Students)	
		• Dismissal	

2024-2025 School Year Schedule

Sept 16	Program Begins
Oct 14	Thanksgiving, no classes
Oct 24	Concert 1
Oct 28-Nov 1	Off Week
Nov 4	Program Resumes
Dec 11	Concert 2
Dec 16-Jan 10	Winter Break
Jan 13	Program Resumes
Feb 17	Family Day, no classes
Mar 6	Concert 3
Mar 10-14	March Break, no classes
Mar 17	Program Resumes
April 18	Good Friday, no classes
April 28-May 2	Off Week, no classes
May 5	Program Resumes
May 19	Victoria Day, no classes
June 12	Concert 4, final program day
July-August	Summer Program to be announced!

Program Policies

ATTENDANCE:

It is essential that program participants participate regularly in all program activities, including rehearsals, concerts, and outside opportunities that enrich the program experience. Participation is important for the musical and personal growth of your child, as well as the impact on their group.

We want to ensure that families are taking our free program seriously and understand that there are consequences for not complying with our Attendance requirements. We understand that parents have changes to their work schedule or are taking courses. ESA still needs to hear from you and provide a reason for your child's absence.

Our Policy:

1. We require 80% attendance in our program.
2. For every absence, parents must communicate with the El Sistema Aeolian office either by email (elsistema@aeolianhall.ca) or by phone (519) 679-2220 X 200 (ESA office) and provide a reason for your child's absence.
3. Senior students (Grade 10 and higher): attend 2 of 3 days per week, 1 day can be optional (not 50% attendance).
Parents must notify the ESA office about expected absences if they occur regularly on certain days for senior students. Leadership class: students or parents must notify ESA when their children do not attend Leadership class.
4. A **\$10 fee** will be charged for every Non-Legitimate absence to our program.

This includes:

- i. Parents not notifying the ESA office of a child's absence.
- ii. After 3 non-legitimate absences, your child will be suspended from our program. They must return their instrument and you can re-apply the following year.
- iii. Late Pick-up of over 20 minutes

Legitimate Absences include Medical appointment, Illness, Family reason, School exams, Work-related, or Transportation issue.

Non-Legitimate Absences

1. If you plan to travel this year (vacation or otherwise) and your child will miss 1 month of classes during our programming time, please re-apply to El Sistema the following year.
2. If your child will regularly miss 1/3 of our classes and they are not a Senior Student (Grade 10 and up), then should not continue in our program.

Attendance will be periodically evaluated after each concert or program session. Families that have not been able to fulfill the attendance requirement, or who have missed important events will be invited to a meeting with the program coordinator/teacher to discuss participation and attendance strategies. Participants will be given an opportunity to improve attendance, and program staff will work with families as much as possible.

If, after another concert or program session, attendance commitment is not able to met, we will discuss the student's place in the program, and assess their spot in the program.

CODE OF CONDUCT:

All participants and their parents/guardians agree to abide by the ESA Code of Conduct.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP POLICY

El Sistema Aeolian sessions take place at the El Sistema Education Campus (350 Queens Avenue, London ON). Participants and their parents/guardians are responsible for their own transportation to and from the venue. Parents who pick up their child 20 minutes or later will be charged a \$10 fee, which will go directly to program operations.

Parents/Guardians shall ensure that the child is picked up from the designated entrance of the venue at the scheduled times. If the named person cannot pick up the child, the program team needs to be informed, in advance, with the name of the person picking up the child. If parents are consistently unable to pick up their children in a timely manner, their place in the program may be reevaluated.

EMAIL POLICY:

El Sistema participants who are in Grade 9 or in a higher grade are allowed to email their ESA teachers directly only with written parental consent and parent must be copied in all communications.

HEALTH ISSUES AND EMERGENCIES:

If a child has a medical condition or a major health issue that requires the use of a puffer or EpiPen, the parent/guardian is required to supply with us such a device to be stored on site for any such emergency as well as to provide training to the Program Coordinator on the use of the device to allow them to assist the child if necessary.

In case of an event or a report of an event that we consider posing a serious risk to a participant's health, El Sistema Aeolian staff will take steps to ensure the child receives appropriate professional care (by calling 911 or taking the child to the hospital).

LEAVING THE PREMISES WITHOUT PARENTAL NOTIFICATION:

If a child leaves the hall during a scheduled rehearsal/lesson, the Aeolian team will inform the police who in turn may issue a missing child alert, as this is considered an escape.

DIVERSITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:

El Sistema Aeolian welcomes participants of any race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin musical ability, and social background to the music education program and related activities.

As a program run by Aeolian Hall, we at El Sistema Aeolian expect and believe that everyone should be treated with dignity and equity, including the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Discrimination is at odds with our values.

If your personal or religious views contradict these values, then please consider another program for your children.

TEAMWORK AND SUPPORT:

El Sistema Aeolian program is designed to develop leadership skills, cooperation, and teamwork. A positive and supportive attitude is expected from your child towards the program, peer participants, volunteers and teachers.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS:

El Sistema Aeolian's musical instruments are available free of charge to El Sistema Aeolian participants who need them to take part in the program's activities. El Sistema Aeolian participants and their parents/guardians agree to use all necessary cautions to take care of the instrument and to comply with the Instrument Loan Contract.

Parent are encouraged, whenever possible, to assist with the maintenance of instruments. Accessories such as rosin and strings can be purchased cheaply, and help the program with costs.

FOOD POLICY:

All food brought to the program has to comply with Health and Safety regulations. If you want to send food with your child to be shared, please contact the Program Coordinator in advance so that we can beware of any food allergies.

VOLUNTEERING:

We greatly appreciate your support to the program. There are many volunteer opportunities! These include: monitors for the classroom and hallways, help in the office, help with the venue with cleaning and organizing, helping during concerts and special events and even help with music education if you have the background. Please contact the Program Coordinator.

QUESTIONS & CONCERNS:

The healthy and holistic development of your child is very important to us. If you have any concerns regarding the pedagogy, challenges that your child might be facing with other participants, or any other matter, please contact the El Sistema Aeolian Executive Director or the program Coordinator.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to provide Aeolian Hall with their updated contact information. Please all phone numbers and email address to elsistema@aeolianhall.ca

COVID-19 & Other Illnesses

The Aeolian takes the safety of its patrons, volunteers, and staff very seriously. We will be enforce all government regulations regarding COVID-19, as well as other polices we consider to be best practice. If students experience acute symptoms of COVID-19 or other illnesses, we ask that they stay at home. If they are recovering with mild symptoms, we ask that they wear a mask at El Sistema. We expect cooperation with families and participants for all of our health and general safety protocols. Should you be unable to comply or

El Sistema Aeolian Teaching Team, 2024-25

Darren Sigesmund, program coordinator
elsistema@theaeolian.ca
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Lesley Andrew, jr. Choir & Glee
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Susan Millar Boldissar, cello
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Maria Gonzalez-Iraheta, strings
mgonzalez@theaeolian.ca

Bruce Hoadley, woodwinds/brass
bhoadley@theaeolian.ca

Vladyslav Horbanovskyi, cello, double bass & guitar
vhorbanovskyi@theaeolian.ca

Jeffrey Komar, strings & senior choir
jkomar@theaeolian.ca

Contact Information:

Please contact us if you need further information, have comments, or would like to support the El Sistema Aeolian program:

Clark Bryan
Executive Director

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Want to learn more?
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