

Superior String Alliance

Virtual Camp Handbook & Camp Code of Conduct



SSA teaches the U.P.'s next generation of string players, connects musicians from all over the U.P. and beyond, and grows young musicians' artistry with curiosity and kindness.



Founded in 1984, the Superior String Alliance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that supports the art of learning and performing music on the violin, viola, cello, and bass throughout Michigan's Upper Peninsula. SSA provides music education for string students in 4th -12th grade through the SSA Summer Music Camp. SSA also provides performance opportunities for the professional string musicians who are camp faculty members through the SSA Chamber Players.

Website: superiorstringalliance.org

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|---------|
| Letter to Our Parents & Campers | 3 |
| SSA's Mission and Values | 4 |
| Contact Info | 5 |
| Things your child will need for SSA Virtual Camp | 5 |
| Guidelines for Families in a Virtual Summer Camp Environment | 6 - 7 |
| How SSA Virtual Camp will work | 7 - 8 |
| Camper Safety | 8 - 9 |
| Camper Code of Conduct | 9 - 12 |
| Behavior Management and Discipline Policy | 12 - 13 |
| Cancellation Policy | 13 |
| Financial Assistance Policy | 14 |
| How to Donate | 14 - 15 |

A Letter to Our Parents & Campers

Camp looks a little different this year, and we hope you're looking forward to the 2020 virtual camp season as much as we are!

By participating in SSA Virtual Camp, your child will:

- Be surprised and delighted by many moments of camp joy
- Feel seen and heard
- Participate in artistically rewarding group projects
- Learn to adapt their musical skills in many different ways

Over the past 34 years, one key to SSA Camp's success is the significant investment we make in earning and maintaining the trust of parents and campers alike. Facilitating a virtual, fun, and musical experience in a physically and emotionally safe environment is just the beginning.

The SSA Camp staff is committed to partnering with you to maintain open lines of communication and engage your child as an individual with unique needs and goals.

This handbook includes information that will help us build that partnership and ensure camp sessions are full of fun and wonderful memories.

Please read it carefully and let us know if you have questions or need any additional information.

We can't wait to see all of those smiling faces and work with enthusiastic and musical campers! See you soon!

Sincerely,



Danielle Simandl
Executive Director, Superior String Alliance
(she/her/hers)

225.244.9059 admin@superiorstringalliance.org

[Facebook](#) / [Instagram](#) / [Youtube](#)

SSA Camp Mission and Values



Overview

SSA Camp is a place where everyone can play, learn, and grow toward being their best selves. Our team of driven and talented staff love learning together with campers.

Values

- We model and teach self-awareness and empathy
- We celebrate individuality; different is just different
- Everyone deserves to be witnessed, heard, and respected
- In music, we are all life-long learners
- Life should be filled with creativity, curiosity, and laughter

Contact Info

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SSA Main Office Location

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Website: superiorstringalliance.org

Things your child will need for SSA Virtual Camp:

- A good internet connection (either via ethernet, wifi, or cell service)
- A device that can operate the Zoom platform (computer, laptop, smartphone, tablet)
- Headphones
- A violin, viola, cello, or bass
- Writing utensils (and coloring utensils if you have them)
- Paper
- An open mind and positive attitude

Guidelines for Families in a Virtual Summer Camp Environment

SSA Virtual Music Camp uses the Zoom platform for creating virtual summer camp environments for staff and campers. The use of Zoom tools to engage in a virtual camp environment might be a new experience for many of the campers of SSA. When supporting your child as they engage in a virtual learning environment (e.g., Zoom), please consider the following:

1. Establish an at-home workspace/camp space and regular routine for connecting with the camp programs
2. Help your child to understand and follow norms and expectations for a Zoom session (e.g. how to mute the microphone and turn off the camera)
3. Encourage your child to ask questions as they adapt to the new online camp environment
4. Communicate with SSA if you have concerns or questions about Zoom
5. Consider being accessible to your child for the first Zoom meeting in case they have questions for you, are unsure of how to respond, or are uncomfortable in this new camp environment

Please note that unlike in-person camp, SSA will not be taking on supervision of your child while they participate in virtual camp. If your child requires supervision, please make individual arrangements so that your child has what they need to remain safe during virtual camp.

Please encourage your child to follow these expectations in a virtual summer camp environment:

1. Treat this camp environment as if they are in their classroom at school or at an important activity at our camp
2. Follow the camp norms and expectations established by the camp staff
3. Engage and add to the online camp community (e.g., ask questions)
4. Dress for a classroom learning environment
5. Show respect for the other campers in the group
6. Find a space where there will not be interruptions, if possible

Families, thank you for your support as we move into a new virtual summer camp environment! The past few months have provided many new learning experiences for all of us. Some things will work, and some things won't and that's okay. We are all learning...it will take time. We will get there together!

How SSA Virtual Camp will work:

- Campers will be on Zoom for 2 hours per camp day, 10 AM - 12 PM
- Camp Zoom meetings will consist of high energy, fast-paced, and excellently curated activities led by all SSA staff members.
- There will be a mix of camp game activities and music education activities. Sometimes we will be sitting and sometimes we will be moving around our designated computer areas.
- We will utilize Zoom breakout rooms for virtual cabins, chamber groups, and group lessons.
- Parents/guardians will receive one Zoom link in their email inbox connected to their CampDoc profile (CampDoc is SSA's contracted camp registration company). This Zoom link will be the one link you'll need for an entire camp session. *It will be your responsibility as the parent/guardian to make sure your child has the Zoom link and understands how to log into virtual camp with this link.*
- The night before each camp session starts SSA staff will be available from 7 - 7:30PM to work out any technology issues with campers and their families. A specific Zoom link for this time will be emailed to parents/guardians two days before their child's camp session starts. Even if you think your technology is fine, you're more than welcome to log in, say hi, and log out, just to make sure!

- SSA will assign campers 3 non-internet activities to do after campers sign off of Zoom each camp day:
 - 1) One activity will be nature based
 - 2) Another activity will be wellness/mental health based
 - 3) The last activity will be music based

- **Sheet music packets** for campers will be emailed to parents/guardians. The packets will consist of simple well-known songs like You Are My Sunshine. Every instrument will have the same melodies in their packets. These songs can be used for group lessons if your child is not currently working on any other solo music. We encourage our campers to perform these songs for their family, or outside on their porch for their neighbors, or outside nursing home windows. The idea is that people can sing along (with a mask of course!) and connect with each other through music.

- **Orchestra and chamber music:** We will have orchestra and chamber music adjacent activities in virtual camp. It will be very creative, we promise!

- **Final 'Concert':** We will invite parents and family to join the Zoom meeting for the final 15 minutes of the last day of each camp session. We will perform our cabin songs, demonstrate cool activities we did during camp, and then perform our orchestra improvisation.

- **Campwide project:** Campers will have the opportunity to collaborate with campers from other sessions this year. We want to surprise campers, so you'll have to register for camp to find out more!

Camper Safety

Physical and emotional safety is always SSA's first priority. We ensure quality programs through:

- Competitive hiring practices that result in a dedicated, responsible, and caring staff.
- Thorough background checks on all staff.

- Extensive staff training on child development, behavior management, emergency response, bullying prevention, and more.
- At least 2 staff for every 8 campers.

SSA has implemented all possible Zoom security measures by:

- Enabling the waiting room feature.
- Sharing the Zoom meeting link and password privately with camp families via the parent/guardian's email (please don't share link info with anyone else!).
- Making sure that campers will not be able to privately message each other in Zoom chatbox.
- Making sure that campers will not be able to record any camp session from within Zoom.

All SSA virtual programming will occur through SSA's professional accounts.

If you are in distress and need to talk, please contact one of the following two agencies:

*KidsHelp Phone: provides information, strategies and access to phone/text/live chat support
Call 1-800-668-6868 Text 686868 Website <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>*

ROCK 24 Hour Crisis Line at 905-878-9785.

If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal, please call 911

Camper Code of Conduct

Hello Campers!

Zoom meetings will be our virtual summer camp this year. It will be different but still fun! When you are in this virtual camp space, please make sure:

- To wear appropriate dress (not PJs or bathrobes).
- To use camp-appropriate language and comments.
- To station yourself in an appropriate location with an appropriate background.

- To talk about camp-related topics.
- That one person talks at a time.
- To keep your microphone on mute until you would like to add to the conversation. When you want to add to the conversation, turn on your mic and SSA will invite you to share (just like raising your hand). The camp staff can mute your microphone if necessary.
- To only use the chat on the sidebar when invited to as part of the camp activities.

You are welcome to listen with headphones on if it is best for you and your family (but not necessary at all).

Please set yourself up for virtual camp so that you are distraction-free while we meet in Zoom. This might mean keeping your phone several feet away from you, making sure all other computer tabs and browsers are closed, and making sure you are set up somewhere in your house with less noise or foot traffic.

PHOTO AND VIDEO POLICY

It is really important to remember that only SSA is allowed to photograph or record campers during virtual camp activities. This rule is for the safety of all campers and staff. So please understand that:

- Only designated SSA staff are allowed to record and photograph any virtual camp session.
- Only designated SSA staff are allowed to transmit any recording or photograph of any virtual camp session.
- Campers are prohibited from recording or photographing staff or fellow campers. This means no screenshots, and no recording or photographing the computer with your phone or other device.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

At Superior String Alliance we understand that the internet and social media platforms are constantly changing, but there are certain principles that remain constant. To ensure that Superior String Alliance remains an emotionally safe and supportive environment for all staff and participants the following policies are in place. Failure to comply with the policies listed below may result in disciplinary action.

- All SSA communication with campers will go through the official SSA email admin@superiorstringalliance.org and the campers' primary parent/guardian email.
- Campers under 18 years of age and/or who have not graduated will refrain from friending or following staff members' private social media accounts.
- Staff will refrain from friending or following the private social media accounts of campers under 18 years of age and/or who have not graduated.
- No communication between staff and campers will occur in private messages of social media.
- All pictures and recordings of camp activities with campers can only be posted through SSA social media pages. You are more than welcome to share SSA's social media posts on your own social media accounts.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Harassment is prohibited between members of the SSA community, including communication of any form between students, parents, faculty and/or staff, and any third parties directly or indirectly. We are committed to maintaining a working and learning environment in which campers and staff can develop intellectually, professionally, personally and socially. Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated and shall be just cause for disciplinary action.

Below are examples of poor behaviors that are prohibited, but are not limited to this list. These behaviors will result in disciplinary action.

- Abusive language towards a staff member or another participant.
- Verbal, physical or visual harassment of another participant or staff member.
- Actual or threatened violence toward any individual or group.
- Conduct endangering the life, safety, health or well-being of others.
- Bullying or taking unfair advantage of any participant.
- Failing to cooperate with a staff member.
- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, or threatening messages or images.
- Sending or posting messages that defame or slander other individuals.
- Disturbing the virtual learning environment.

- Refusing to follow the rules of the virtual learning environment.
- Unmuting yourself when your teacher has placed you on mute.
- Recording any class session and transmitting it.
- Recording your teacher and/or fellow campers.
- Participation in cyber-bullying and/or harassment.

Campers, we live in a world where it is extremely important to be mindful of your own safety and others' safety online. Always ask yourself if what you are doing, writing, or posting is kind or respectful.

By reading this Code of Conduct with your parent/guardian and by your parent/guardian signing the Code of Conduct authorization in your CampDoc Health Profile, you are agreeing to abide by the rules described above and understand that you may be removed as a participant if you violate any of these rules.

Behavior Management and Discipline Policy

Our primary goal is to maintain a physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe environment for all participants. Our role in any behavior management situation is to promote the camper's safety, comfort, and growth. We strive to prevent problematic behaviors and we avoid punishment as it removes a growth opportunity. Being proactive and preventative, using proximity and positive messages, and giving specific feedback are constant themes throughout staff training and are easily seen in our daily interactions with children. We also try to identify what may be driving the behaviors. Is the camper hungry? Angry? Lonely? Tired?

Disrespectful behavior is often a precursor to unsafe behavior. To keep children safe, we strive to identify and redirect disrespectful behavior as it occurs. When redirection is unsuccessful or when instances of unsafe conduct occur, we follow these general steps:

1. Reconnect with the camper - stop talking and listen, communicate calmly, validate their feelings, reflect what we hear. We will reiterate or clarify expectations, making sure they understand, and let them know the next steps.
2. Give the camper a clear verbal warning.
3. Remove the camper from the group to have a longer conversation. Two staff members will meet with the camper in a Zoom breakout room separate from the big group. From there, staff will engage the camper with leading questions that get them to think about what's going on (e.g. "Tell me what happened?" "What do you think should happen now?"). Throughout, we will maintain connection with the camper in whatever way is comfortable and appropriate for that particular camper.
4. If the unacceptable behavior continues, or if the camper threatens the emotional or physical safety of themselves or anyone else, our staff will contact you (the parent/guardian) to build an agreed-upon action plan.

Any instance of direct physical, emotional, or sexual harm will result in the immediate removal of the camper from the Zoom meeting and a call home. Such instances could result in expulsion from camp. No refund will be given in such cases.

Cancellation Policy

Registration Cancellations: SSA Camp offers these refund options upon written request and in accordance with the following timeline:

- More than 2 days prior to the first day of camp: You will be issued a full refund, minus the \$10 non-refundable deposit fee.
- Between 2 days and 1 day prior to camp: You will be issued a half refund, minus the \$10 non-refundable deposit fee.
- Less than 1 day prior to the first day of camp, through the end of the camp session you are registered for: No refunds are available. Instead, your tuition will be converted into a tax-deductible donation to the SSA Camper Scholarship Fund.

Financial Assistance Policy

Every child deserves the opportunity to attend camp, no matter what their circumstances may be. SSA Camp provides opportunities to break down all sorts of barriers and build bridges of understanding. Generous donors to SSA's Camper Scholarship Fund allow kids who might not otherwise have the opportunity to participate in our programs. With donor and grant support, we can help campers from all walks of life:

- Make new friends.
- Have fun and create.
- Learn about music and make connections with the world around them.
- Try and succeed at doing new things outside their comfort zone.
- Become more kind, curious, and confident.

Need-based scholarships are available as funding allows. To apply, please fill out the scholarship portion of the CampDoc online registration. All scholarship applicants will be notified soon after their CampDoc Health Profile is 100% complete.

How to make a Tax Deductible Donation to the SSA Camper Scholarship Fund

Let's work together to make SSA Camp an equal opportunity life-changer for any child who wants to participate! This year has been financially hard for many people, and nonprofits have taken a pretty big hit as well. If you are able to donate to SSA, please know that all amounts are deeply appreciated.

You can make a one-time or recurring monthly donation on our secure website:

<https://superiorstringalliance.org/donate/>

Or you can send a check to: PO Box 52, Marquette, MI 49855

Or you can opt to donate to SSA in CampDoc when you register your camper.

Superior String Alliance is an IRS designated 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. Our Federal Tax ID number is 38-2938444.