Caring For Your Viola

General
1. Always leave your viola in its labelled case while it is not being used.
2. Always keep your viola dry: away from windows, moisture and excess humidity.
3. Do not allow your viola to dry out or heat up excessively. Make sure you store it away from sunlit windows, heaters or fireplaces.
4. NEVER leave your viola in the car. Sun and internal heat can severely damage varnish and bows.
5. NEVER clean your viola with household cleaners or solvents. Varnish is very delicate. Proper stringed instrument cleaners are available for this purpose. Removing dry excessive rosin dust while fresh greatly reduces the need to clean your instrument.
6. Keep your fingernails trimmed to prevent damage to strings and the fingerboard.
7. Covering the viola with a cloth in its case further protects it against bow-scratches and helps to insulate it slightly.
8. The inexperienced player should have the teacher tune their viola. The fine-adjusters may also be used to control small changes in pitch. Only experienced players should use the pegs.
9. The Shoulder rest must always be removed from the viola while in its case and not in use.
10. Never allow others to play your viola.

Bow
1. Avoid touching the bow-hair (made from horse hair) with your hands and fingers. Even the smallest amount of grease or dirt from your fingers can affect your performance.
2. Keep anything greasy well away from the bow.
3. The bow must never get warm.
4. Always loosen the bow while it is stored and not being used, but not so loose that the bow-hair will fall out of the bow.
5. Do not over-tighten the bow. The correct amount to tighten your bow is until the hair is pulled away from the stick only about 8mm (a pencil's thickness) at the narrowest point. It is imperative that the bow remains curved. If the stick looks parallel to the hair, it is far too tight!

Maintenance
1. Keep a soft flannel cloth in your case to dust off rosin dust after every use.
2. More serious accumulation of dirt and rosin may be removed with a specialized violin cleaner periodically e.g. every 6 months or so.
3. Always check the appearance of your bridge to ensure it looks upright and straight, i.e. not tilting or warped. If you suspect that it has moved, tilted or warped, take your viola to a professional repairer.
4. Strings wear out both physically (corrosion and damage winding or breaking) and in tone (deteriorating quality, volume and clarity). Thus it is advisable to replace synthetic or gut strings approximately every 6 months. Steel strings may last longer, but should also be replaced after approximately 1 year.
5. Tuning pegs naturally vary their fit with climatic alterations but they should not slip unduly, nor should pegs be extremely difficult to turn with correct usage. Always make small pitch adjustments with the fine-tuners/adjusters, especially if you have synthetic or steel strings. Gut strings, generally only used by experienced players, do not require fine-adjusters.

- The replacement of all disposable items needed in the maintenance of the instrument is the responsibility of the hirer. These include strings, rosin, etc.
- Before any major repairs are done, Ms. Dietz will check the damage and authorize repairs to the instrument. All repairs should be carried out only by a professional repairer.
- Before returning to HGHS on completion of hiring for full refund of the deposit, it must be inspected by Ms. Dietz.