

STUDIO POLICIES

Updated 5/16/09

1. Lesson Fees:

- 30 Minutes \$25 (Recommended for students in packet #1 and younger students 8 and under)
- 45 Minutes \$35 (Recommended for students in packets # 2 & 3)
- 60 Minutes \$45 (Recommended for students in packet #4)
- Group Lessons \$15 (One hour for all levels)

When more than one sibling comes for their lesson, they are charged for their overall time. Group lessons for siblings cost \$10 each. Siblings are expected to practice together at home when they can.

Invoices will be handed out at the beginning of each month for the previous month. Sometimes my calculations are incorrect, so please look over these very carefully and let me know if there are any errors.

2. Required Learning Materials (All should be brought to each lesson):

- Violin
- Shoulder Rest
- Bow
- Rosin
- Cloth (to wipe rosin off of the violin)
- Binder (sheet protectors are optional but very helpful)
- Recording Device (Level 4 only)

3. Attendance:

- Have a game plan to get to your lesson on time.
- If you do miss a lesson, look at the “next lesson” section of your practice sheet to see what you need to work on next.
- If I am not contacted before a missed lesson, you will be charged for the lesson. (You can either email me or leave me a message on my phone. I don’t answer my phone when I’m in the middle of a lesson.)
- If you are late for a lesson, I will most likely end the lesson on time. (If you do not contact me to let me know you are late, you will be charged for the full lesson.)
- If you are more than 15 minutes late, I will assume you are not coming. (I may even leave if I have a break or if you are my last lesson.)
- Make up lessons will be given on a first come, first serve basis. I don’t really have any more open times, so unless someone else cancels a lesson (and lets me know), you may just have to wait till the next week.

4. Private Lesson Rules and Expectations:

- All students must wash their hands before their lesson. (Dirty, and oily skin will ruin your violin and strings.)
- Let yourself in quietly so as not to disturb ongoing lessons. (Do not ring the doorbell unless the door is locked.)

- Allow enough time for you to get your hands washed and your violin out while the lesson before your lesson is scheduled to start. It takes most students 10 minutes to get set up before we start playing.
- Parents are required to come inside for either the first or last 5 minutes of each lesson. This way I can be sure that any important information is heard by the parents.
- Parents of students under the age of 8 should stay for the entire lesson and should be monitoring practice time at home.
- Siblings of students must be supervised by an adult at all times.

5. Group Lesson Rules and Expectations:

- Monthly group lessons are mandatory. If you do not let me know that you are missing a group lesson, you will be charged for it.
- Do not bring music to your group lesson. I provide all the music that is needed, and space is limited in our downstairs living room.
- Students should be on their best behavior during group lessons. (When kids are around other kids, their behavior may be different than it is during their private lesson.)
- Students who are being disruptive during group lessons will be asked to sit out and you will still be charged for the group lesson.

6. Recitals and Other Performances:

- I do a recital at the end of each semester. Please make these recitals a priority in your schedule and let me know as soon as possible if you are unable to attend.
- Students are required to come to the rehearsal and/or their last group lesson before the recital.
- All songs and arrangements must be memorized for recitals. (Music stands block the sound and make it difficult for the audience to see you.)
- Level 4 students are required to play a short, memorized solo during the recital.
- NO NOODLING! This includes plucking, playing, and chatting. (Please be respectful of your audience and other performers.)
- Students must be on their best behavior during the recitals. (This includes the time that they are not on stage as well as when they are on stage.)
- SMILE!

7. Practicing:

The main expectation I have for practicing is remembering. Each day that you do not practice, you will forget a little bit of what you learned. To make up for that, you will have to practice a little harder and we may need to go back a little bit at your next lesson. With that said, it's easiest to practice a little bit each day. Depending on your level, this could take anywhere from 5 to 30 minutes. Here is a good practice routine for all levels:

- Warm up with a scale or other exercise (these are different for each level).
- Pick a different review tune each day and make sure it is still memorized and polished. (Focus on good technique and listen for ways to make these tunes sound cleaner and smoother.)
- Play your polishing tune once slowly with the music to clean up technique and any tricky spots, then try to play it without stopping (and without the music if you think you can.)

- Run through the tricky spots of your current tune first, then start slowly from the beginning to start putting the pieces together.
- Look ahead for what we will do at the next lesson so you will be prepared when you get there.

ALL PARENTS MUST READ AND SIGN PRACTICE SHEETS! I write out practice sheets so parents won't have to take notes during the lesson. These practice sheets have all the things to watch out for during practice time. Older and more responsible students can fill out their own, but I want to make sure the parents are still involved in what their child is learning.

Parents should look for the following during practice time:

- Your child should check for good posture **BEFORE** they start playing. During a lesson, I won't let a student put their bow on the strings until their violin is up all the way and their wrist is in place.
- Are they going slow and focusing on what they are playing? Or are they rushing through the tunes to get them over with?
- Nothing should be tense. Any squeezing, clenching, or pushing can cause injury in the future and most likely won't sound very good.
- **LISTEN!** I know this sounds obvious, but sometimes a student will be so focused on one thing that they will stop listening to themselves.
- If your child makes a mistake, they need to go back a measure (not to the beginning) and practice going into that spot. If they don't go back, they will sound like a skipping record.
- If your child is getting frustrated, have them take a five minute break and come back and try it again. Sometimes if you think too hard, it will just mess you up more.

8. INSTRUMENT CARE

Buying or renting a musical instrument can be a big investment for parents. Not only are these instruments fragile, but they are expensive. It's important to watch your children very carefully around their instruments. I can drill it into their heads to be careful, but accidents do still happen. If you have invested a lot of money into an instrument, it may be a good idea to get it insured. Sometimes we forget that kids will be kids.

Here are some things you can do to make sure your violin stays in good condition for a long time:

- Keep the violin clean. (Wipe rosin off of the wood frequently to avoid varnish wear and tear.)
- Avoid quick changes in temperature or humidity. Keep your violin away from the heater and never leave your violin in the car!
- Avoid touching the bow hair since dirt and oils keep it from working. (Bow hair should be replaced about once a year.)
- Don't keep the bow too tight and always loosen it when you're not playing.
- Replace the strings once a year. They will unravel over time. Newer strings will sound brighter clearer anyways.
- Take your time when tuning. (If you pull the string too quickly it may brake or cause the bridge to move.)
- Avoid bumping your instrument (even when it's in its case.) Even the slightest bump can cause damage or knock it out of tune.

Here is the routine each student should do before and after playing their violin. Please read this to your child, and make sure that they understand the repercussions if they do not take good care of their instrument.:

- **Before playing:**
 1. **Wash and completely dry your hands. (Oils in your skin will ruin the strings over time.)**
 2. **Tighten, and rosin the bow. (Do not over tighten the bow. There should be just enough room for a pencil to fit in the middle. Any tighter will warp the wood of the bow.)**
 3. **Carefully put shoulder rest on. (Support your violin by the neck and NEVER set your violin down on its bridge.)**
 4. **Never try to do too many things at once.**
- **After playing:**
 1. **Loosen the bow and lock it into your case. (Make sure it won't fall on top of the violin when you close your case.)**
 2. **Remove the shoulder rest.**
 3. **Wipe violin down with a dry cotton cloth. (Never use water or any other liquid to clean your violin.)**
 4. **Strap violin into its case and put a cloth over the bridge.**
 5. **Make sure case is latched and zipped up all the way.**