

Lauren's Studio Policies for Violin Lessons

1. **Practice:** Learning the violin requires a consistent daily commitment of time and effort. The less a student practices the less effective my teaching will be. I ask my students to commit to practicing a minimum of 6 days a week. I am understanding of occasional lapses due to illness or bereavement but if a student is consistently not practicing after I have tried to help them to develop a better practice routine I may choose not to teach this student again in the future, or not to prioritize them when scheduling lessons in the future. To learn more about my expectations regarding practice please read my blog article on the topic on my website.
2. **Suzuki parenting:** Suzuki parents are expected to attend weekly lessons and assist their child with daily practicing. In the lessons they are expected to take notes on what happens in the lesson and what to practice at home. This will be the expectation until the student gradually transitions to practicing and attending lessons independently (usually in the pre-teen to teen years). This transition to independence will begin when the parent and teacher jointly decide the child is ready. The relationship between teacher, parent, and student (often called the Suzuki triangle) is built on open communication. Regardless of the age or level of independence of the student, communication between the parent and teacher is essential.
3. **Listening:** Suzuki students are expected to purchase and listen daily to the Suzuki CD/digital recording corresponding to their book level. Students are also encouraged to purchase and listen to Suzuki CDs of upcoming levels and to other violin music. All students are expected to listen regularly to recordings of the music they are learning and are encouraged to listen to other violin music. I can provide a list of listening recommendations if you like.
4. **Observation:** Observation is a key part of the Suzuki philosophy and beginner Suzuki students are **expected** to observe other students' private lessons and group classes regularly. All students are encouraged to observe other students' lessons, group classes, masterclasses etc. Students should understand that their lessons may be observed by other students, MUN music students, or other Suzuki teachers as part of their teacher training and continuing education. Any student who is uncomfortable being observed is welcome to speak to me about. I will try to give notice in advance when I know an observer is coming but it may not always be possible. Observation may sometimes be completed over Zoom.
5. **Parent Training:** Beginner Suzuki parents are expected to attend **all** of the Parent Training sessions offered by STEP. In the event that you are unable to attend a session please speak to me about how to make up the content. All Suzuki parents are encouraged to audit and review parent training at any time.
6. **Participation in STEP group classes or other group playing experiences:** I am a faculty member with the Suzuki Talent Education Program (STEP) and I expect my students to be members. Occasionally a student wishes be a part of my studio without

being a STEP member. In those situations the decision is made jointly as a result of consultation between teacher and parent/student. If a student chooses not to register for STEP without consulting me I may choose not to teach this student again in the future, or not to prioritize them when scheduling lessons. When a student is not a STEP member I will usually expect them to register for another group playing experience (ie. youth orchestra, chamber music etc.) and will advise on what options would be a good fit. Regardless of STEP membership students are encouraged to take part in any community music-making opportunities open to them.

7. **Communication:** Communication between teacher, parent, and student is vital to a successful learning process for the student. My primary method of communication with my students outside of the lesson is through email. I expect parents and students to read and reply to emails in a timely manner – usually within 48 hours. I will try to do the same. If you would like to speak on the phone you are welcome to try me any weekday before 2:00pm, though I can't guarantee I will be available. If you would like to set up a call at a mutually convenient time I'm happy to do so. I do not check my phone when teaching so if you call or email between 2:30 and 6:00 on weekdays I will not get your message. If you are running late/will be absent for a lesson please text when I see that you're not there I'll do a quick check. I generally do not check email or answer phone calls on the weekends.
8. **Parent-teacher conferences:** Once a year I do a week of parent-teacher conferences where the parent attends the lesson without the child to chat about how things are going. These have been very valuable in the past and I expect all parents to make them a priority. If you ever have something you would like to discuss with me (without your child's presence) you are welcome to request a parent-teacher conference.
9. **Technology:** Technology can be very valuable to learning process (listening to recordings, recording one's playing, using metronome apps etc) but it can also be very distracting. I ask that parents and students limit device use during the lesson and practice time, only using them for purposes relevant to the lesson, and avoiding email, texting, social media etc. I understand that some parents like to take notes on their phones, but I strongly prefer that parents take notes in a notebook. If you feel strongly that taking notes on your phone is the best way for you please speak to me about it, otherwise I will expect all parents to take notes in a notebook.
10. **Media:** I often take photos, video, or audio in a lesson in order to bring a student's attention to something about their playing. These will never be shared with anyone outside of the lesson without permission. I also may occasionally take photos or video in lessons or at recitals for my own use on my website or Facebook page. I will post photos, video, or audio on the internet or share them with anyone without permission. Likewise, I often encourage students to take a picture or video in the lesson to aid their home practice. Parents also often take video at recitals. Please never post to the internet or share with anyone any photos, video, or audio of me without my permission.

11. **Missed Lessons:** Student are expected to make violin lessons a priority and schedule their other commitments around them. When a student misses a lesson for any reason (illness, weather, travel, birthday parties, other activities, appointments, forgetfulness, or any other reason) **I will not provide a make-up lesson** and the lesson fee will not be refunded, regardless of how much advance notice is given. This is in accordance with the STEP Studio Teachers' Policy. In the case of lessons missed due to weather I **may** be able to provide a lesson via Skype or FaceTime at the student's regular lesson time in lieu of an in-person lesson. I share my master studio schedule with my students so they can trade lessons times in the event that a conflict arises. PLEASE inform me in advance any time you arrange a lesson trade. If I cancel a lesson for any reason I will always provide a make-up lesson or offer a refund.

12. **Payment:** I accept payment for the entire school year in September. Students who have not paid for the whole school year by the end of September will be required to pay a 10% late fee. I do have a "pay-as-you-go" option during the school year. I also do not usually send individual invoices. Instead I send one document to all of my students with all of the payment information for all lesson-lengths. From that document you can find your lesson-length and easily determine how much to pay.

I offer sliding scale fees upon request in that case I will send an individual invoice with the mutually agreed-upon amount.

I accept payment in the following ways:

- a. You can pay for the entire school year in one e-transfer or cheque dated and delivered for the day of your first lesson.
 - b. You can divide your payment into two equal cheques dated for the day of your first lesson and January 1st 2020. Both cheques are to be delivered at the first lesson in September.
 - c. You can pay in 10 equal monthly cheques dated for the first day of each month (September through June) and delivered on the day of your first lesson. This year I will also accept 10 equal monthly e-transfers set to auto-deposit on the first day of each month. I will only accept e-transfers if they are set to auto-deposit. If your e-transfer is late more than once I will ask for cheques instead.
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13. **Withdrawing from Lessons:** If you wish to discontinue your lessons I expect one-month's notice. If that notice is not given then one month's payment will be expected. (In the case of students who have paid in full at the beginning of the school year the lesson fees will be refunded minus one month's payment. A month's payment is calculated as to total fee divided by the number of months in this case 10.) This applies to withdrawing from lessons scheduled to start in September during the summer. If you choose to withdraw from lessons after registering for Lauren's studio one-month's payment will be required.