

Studio Welcome Packet

Lesson Information and Policies

Thank you for your interest in lessons and your commitment to furthering the musical education of yourself or your student. It is my goal as a teacher to discover the individualized learning style of each student to best work with them and their families to help them grow as students and musicians.

I believe in developing strong technical basics while nurturing the student's love of music. In classical lessons, I teach a Suzuki-based curriculum with supplemental fiddle and folk music to give the student a more diversified education. Fiddle lessons are based on learning by ear with additional materials to support music theory understanding.

But overall, learning an instrument is about much more. Through lessons, your student will learn discipline, structure, self motivation, and artistry. They will learn how to appreciate art, how to work each day to improve something they care about, and so much more. These life skills will help them in every setting throughout their lives, be it sports, academics, or their future careers.

I look forward to working with you and your student.

Before we get started with lessons, please read through all the following information carefully. Next please review, sign, and return the last page to me before our first lesson. (If we are meeting in person, I will have an electronic copy for you to sign at our first lesson so be sure a parent or guardian is present and has read this document in full ahead of time.) Please save a copy of this document for future reference.

COMMUNICATION

I am always a message away. Please contact me if you or your student ever has trouble between lessons. I never want them to be confused or lacking resources and feel they have to wait until their next lesson to mention it. I commit to communicating with the parents and student about anything that I feel will help the student. Please do the same for me. Keep me updated with your student's progress at home and come to me with any questions or concerns.

Lessons are for your student, but your student's success is a team effort the whole family participates in. Learning an instrument is not only about music but about habits, patterns, responsibility, organization, commitment, and a love of what we are doing.

CONSISTENCY

Learning an instrument above all takes consistency and being consistent with lessons is just as important as being consistent with practice. Show your student that lessons and practice are something important to be valued. Missing or skipping lessons not only shows your student that lessons are not a priority, but also creates a gap of at least two weeks between lessons which will slow or stall their progress. Please help your student's success by showing them the value that you place on learning music through prioritizing consistent lessons and practice.

HOLIDAYS

I teach regardless of school holidays and breaks. If you need to reschedule due to a holiday or for any other reason, please give me as much notice as possible. If I plan on altering my schedule in any way, I will alert you ahead of time.

SCHEDULING

Lesson schedules will be created individually for each student to fit both our schedules in the most consistent way possible. I will always do my best to alert you of any schedule changes that may affect our lessons as far in advance as possible, please do the same for me. If I need to cancel lessons, I will either make up the ones that I have had to cancel or not charge you for that day.

CANCELLATION POLICY

I have a 24-hour cancellation policy. I ask that you give me 24 hours notice if you need to cancel or reschedule a lesson or you will still be responsible for payment of that lesson.

PAYMENT

I accept lesson payments by cash, check, Venmo, Zelle, or PayPal (listed as a personal expense). **Payments are due monthly on the 1st of the month.**

PRACTICE

- **Frequency:** I ask for daily practice from my students. Practice is the most important part of lessons. It is not always easy so habits, discipline, and a good sense of fun are important to keeping up good progress. If the student is practicing less than five times a week, I will meet with the student and parent(s) to find a better way to support the student's practice or redefine our goals.
- **Planning, Follow-through, and Accountability:** It is important for the student to set goals and follow-through with them so we will work together to create the best practice plan and goals for the student. My least favorite thing to hear is "I don't know why I didn't practice." Sometimes we have bad weeks, things get in the way, or we are just lazy but the important part is to own it. If a bad week happens, we will work together to acknowledge why and make a plan for how to improve in the future. I want to help my students set goals and assume responsibility if they aren't met.

- **Scheduling:** Daily practice is only possible with planning and intention. Have a plan for daily practice at a time that is always consistent and set the intention with your student and household that practice happens at that time every day. Success doesn't accidentally happen, you have to plan for it.
- **Post Lesson:** I take notes at every lesson that go home with your student in their lesson notebook. Please look these over with your student right after each lesson to be sure they understand everything and always get a practice session in after each lesson to review that week's material. This will help dramatically with retention and motivation.
- **Practice Routine:** Every practice session they need to go down their list of tasks in their lesson notebook. Their notebook should be right next to their music stand when practicing so they can check that they are doing everything correctly and in order. After each practice, mark their practice for the day in their practice chart at the bottom of their notes. Keep an eye on them when practicing and help them maintain proper posture (guide below).
- **Listening:** Listening to their songs is a vital part of practice and should be done each day. Have them practice both active listening (listening to their song during their practice session while giving it their full attention) and passive listening (having music on in the background of other activities). (Links to recordings are on my website under "Practice Recordings.")
- **Parental Support:** Students need your support. Please help them schedule their practice, reach the goals we have set, remember good posture, etc. (For more ideas and support, please explore the "For Parents" page on my website under Resources.)
- **"I couldn't practice because..."** Things happen and sometimes students think they can't practice because they don't have their instrument, it needs repairs, they're injured, etc. but practice can always be done! They can:
 - Listen to their songs
 - Sing the fingers and clap the rhythm of their song
 - Use something like a pencil to practice their bow hold and fingerings
 - Practice good playing posture
 - Watch videos and listen to music from the YouTube on Zoe's website
 - And ask Zoe for more ideas if needed!

WEBSITE

- **Overview:** Resources for lessons are under the tab "Teacher" on my website. Take some time with your student to familiarize yourselves with the pages in this category.
- **Practice Recordings:** The most frequently used page will be "Practice Recordings." SAVE this link somewhere to be able to easily access this page for your student's daily listening practice.

- **Explore:** Here they will find inspiring videos and recordings featuring professional violin, fiddle, viola, and cello performers from across multiple genres to help them explore music from home. Check these out with your student and revisit often, I will keep adding new content!
- **Resources:** This page is your hub for supportive resources such as a posture guide and links to local live performances, performance and education opportunities, accessories like music stands, shoulder rests, music books, and more.

LESSON MATERIALS

- **Notebook:** Your student will need a designated violin notebook for me to write notes in during lessons and for them to reference during practice. Please find one that is big enough to write in that also fits in their case's outer pocket or music bag.
- **Recordings:** For their daily practice recordings, please visit the “Practice Recordings” page on my website for links or to purchase the Suzuki CD for their book.
- **Folder:** I will give them loose sheets of paper periodically. Please have a designated folder for lessons to keep papers organized and accessible.
- **Pencil:** Always have a pencil in your case and/or music bag. You will need this during practice to mark your music and fill out your practice chart.
- **Accessories:** Your student will need a music stand, shoulder rest, and music book. Links to all of these can be found on my website under “[Resources -> For Parents.](#)”

INSTRUMENT CARE

- **Environment:** Your instrument is made of wood which means it moves and changes with the environment. If your instrument gets too hot, cold, dry, or moist it may cause cracks or other damage so never leave it in direct sunlight, outside, in your car, or in wet areas.
- **Cleaning:** Clean your strings at the end of each practice using a soft, fuzz-free cloth to gently wipe off rosin dust residue where your bow comes in contact with the strings (between the bridge and fingerboard) and on the wood of the instrument right below. Gently wipe down toward the bridge, not up toward the fingerboard. Do NOT use the velvet violin cover as a cleaning cloth.
- **Handling:** Treat your instrument with care! It is a fragile collection of pieces that can easily break if handled roughly. Pretend it is made of glass. Pick it up and set it down gently, don't bang it around, even in the case (cases are protective only to a point, a good jostle can still cause serious damage) and don't drop it (of course). Don't poke things with your bow or use it as a sword. When picking up the instrument, hold it by the neck or body, never by the fingerboard or strings. NEVER place instrument face down or put pressure on the bridge, even in the case!

- **Touching:** The oils from our hands can be very damaging so never touch the hair of your bow or the strings of the violin where your bow plays them. The oil from your fingers will never come out of the hair and will render that part of the bow useless as rosin will no longer stick.
- **Rosin:** I recommend giving your bow a good rosining 1-3 times a week. Don't over-rosin your bow. Daily is too often for most students. If you're getting lots of white residue on your strings after playing, your hair has too much rosin. Ask me if you have concerns.
- **Storage:** Store instrument safely in case after each practice. If you prefer to have it out so it is easier to start practicing, be sure that it is in a safe, protected, shady place. Always LOOSEN your bow when putting it away (just until the hair lightly touches the stick or gets slightly slack).
- **Safety:** Have a conversation with the other members of your household about rules surrounding care and handling of the instrument. Be extra careful of small children and pets.

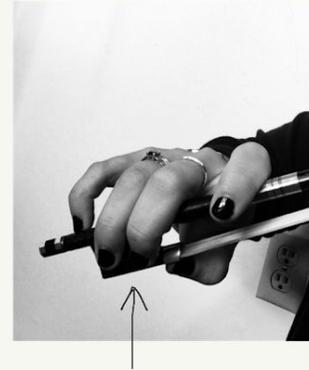
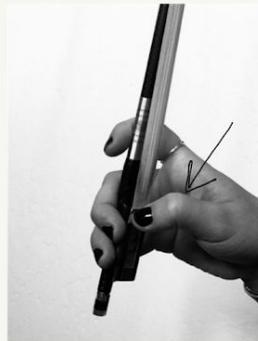
A GUIDE TO THE INSTRUMENT AND BOW HOLD

Please save this for you and your student as a reference for proper positioning. The way that we hold the instrument and bow is imperative to how we sound and feel. These basics should be worked on and checked every moment we play.

The Bow Hold:

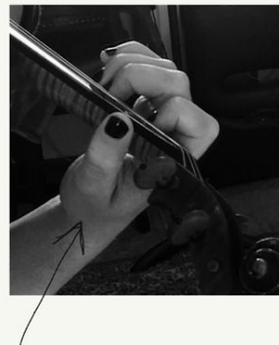


All fingers curved. Watch especially for curved pinky and thumb.



Middle fingers should be down around and in contact with the frog.

The Violin Hold:



The violin is held on the left shoulder with the shoulder relaxed down and the chin turned and rested on the chin rest. The wrist should be straight and the fingers curved up over the fingerboard. The thumb should be straight and rested right across from the first finger along the neck. Be careful that the pad of the thumb is resting on the instrument not the base of the thumb. Thumb should not be sticking up past the neck.

ZOE SCHLUSSEL

VIOLINIST. PERFORMER. TEACHER.

www.zoeschlüssel.com

By signing below you agree to the following:

Please initial:

_____ I have received a copy of this document.

_____ I have read this document in full.

_____ I agree with all stated information and policies.

_____ I have shared this information with my student and household.

_____ I understand and will adhere to the Cancellation Policy whereby I am responsible for payment of lessons cancelled or rescheduled with less than 24-hours notice.

_____ I have shared this document with other parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student and they too understand and agree to the information and Cancellation Policy.

_____ Lesson payments are due monthly on the 1st of the month.

Student Name (print): _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent or Guardian's Name (print, if applicable): _____

Parent or Guardian Signature (if applicable): _____