



The Drew Robertson Music Studio, L.L.C.

Parent Handbook and Studio Policies

2017-2018 Academic Year

I. Contact Information

- a. Email: drewrobertsonmusic@gmail.com
- b. Website: www.drewrobertsonmusic.com
- c. Phone: (616)443-2573
- d. Address: 9173 Manassas Drive, Manassas Park, VA 20111

II. Essentials Materials for Every Lesson

- a. **Instrument** in good repair from a reputable purveyor.
- b. **Wooden or carbon fiber bow.** Fiberglass bows are discouraged.
- c. **Shoulder rest** fitted specifically for the student. This will change as the student grows.
- d. **Rosin** appropriate for the season.
- e. **Metronome/Tuner.** Analog or digital are acceptable; please do not use an app.
- f. **Microfiber cleaning cloth.** You will have to replace these periodically.
- g. **Music.** Pay attention to the publisher; editions make a huge difference!
- h. **Lesson notebook and pencil.**

III. Lesson Expectations

- a. **Student**



- i. **Desire to Excel** - When you sign up for lessons, it is expected you are studying because you want to become a better musician and to enjoy playing your instrument. Playing a string instrument is intense and challenging, but the rewards of study are wondrous and lifelong.

If you have difficulty meeting lesson assignments, become discouraged, or have substantial other obligations that week, talk with your teacher! Helping you reach an ever-higher level of personal and performance achievement is your teacher's highest priority. Quality communication allows you to have the most enjoyable lesson experience and reach your greatest potential.

- ii. **During Lessons and classes**

1. **Arrive early** for all scheduled lessons, classes, and performances. For Skype lessons, please be online and visible at the scheduled start time of your lesson. If another lesson is in progress, please quietly unpack your instrument and make every effort not to distract from their lesson. Please see the attendance policy for additional details.
2. **Be respectful** of Hedy, the studio, your parents, your siblings, and your teacher during your lesson. Please ensure that all books, games, and toys are returned to their original condition and location.
3. **Ask questions** if something is unclear. If an assignment did not make sense, please ask about it at the beginning of the lesson!
4. **Unpack your instrument quickly** and let your teacher know if anything is sounding strange on your instrument at the beginning of the lesson.
5. **Silence your phone!** Please refrain from using devices in the lesson when they are not directly benefiting the progress of the student. If you need to take pictures or make recordings related to the lesson, this is acceptable.
6. **Take notes** throughout your lesson or at the end. It is highly recommended you use the provided Lesson Manual for taking notes on your lesson.
7. **Record your lessons.** Due to the rapid pace of many lessons, it is possible you may not be able to write down every direction or recall demonstrations perfectly. Recording your lesson is highly recommended.
8. **Take everything with you.** Make sure to take your instrument, metronome, and music with you. Double-check the music stand before you leave!

- iii. **Between Lessons**

1. **Practice.** See the separate section on this below.



2. **Use your lesson notes.** Treat your lesson notes as a checklist and try to improve on every point each time you practice.
3. **Listen!** Listen to your lesson recordings, listen to recordings of your pieces and etudes, listen to pieces and excerpts recommended during the lesson, listen to your improvisation studies, listen to your music theory assignments, do score study, and, of course, enjoy your non-classical music, too!
4. **Ask questions.** Email or text if something is unclear. No question is too inconsequential! Do not wallow in confusion between lessons; ask questions!
5. **Practice with your parents.** For younger students, daily practice with parents is essential, but even for older students, another opinion can be very helpful. Asking siblings should be done at your own risk; they are known to bite.

b. **Parents/Guardians**

- i. **For beginners or students under age 12,** your involvement is essential, both in the lesson and in-home practice. When you actively follow and participate in lessons, take notes, ask questions, and practice daily, your child will progress rapidly. After the first couple of months, the novelty wears off and daily practice becomes a challenge. Be positive and encouraging, and realize that string instruments have an intense learning curve. As a parent, you are the coach. Often, practice goals seem far away or impossible, but you can provide direction, diligence, and encouragement.
 1. **Be engaged in the lesson.** Your child will only be as invested as you are. Turn the phone off and join in the lesson! If your child is under the age of 12, you must be present for the entire duration of the lesson.
 2. **Take notes.** Even the most organized children struggle to take lesson notes that are useful after two days. Model good note taking from an early age so your child can be organized and independent later!
 3. **Record or take pictures.** Sometimes good notes are not as helpful as a quick video or picture. Feel free to ask your teacher if you can take a picture of a lesson point or for a recorded demonstration for use in practice.
 4. **Mention any difficulty.** Is practice a perpetual battle? Does your child's instrument never seem to sound right? Feel free to contact your teacher between lessons or bring up your concerns during the lesson. An early solution often prevents a meltdown later.
- ii. **For students 12 and older, or in Suzuki Book 4 and up.** You continue to be a practice coach, but most of the lesson responsibility shifts directly to the student.
 1. **Require daily practice.** As school schedules fill up and social events become more frequent, it is essential to continue daily practice. If this becomes



negotiable, momentum will slow, complaints will intensify, and eventually your child will want to quit.

2. **Get involved.** Between age 12 and 18 is the ideal time to become involved in activities, such as chamber ensembles, youth orchestras, music history and theory classes, Solo Fest and All-State, summer festivals, and competitions. These opportunities can provide lasting friendships, scholarships, and resumé-worthy experiences for your child and allow you to network with other orchestra parents.
3. **Advocate and encourage.** As with beginning students, your role is to be positive and encouraging, while providing the necessary direction and impetus for your child to reach their goals. At this stage, it is not essential to direct every practice session or check on every lesson point, but a passing compliment or call to focus will work wonders.

c. **Siblings, Friends, Family, and Guests**

- i. **Observation is wonderful, provided it does not detract from the ongoing lesson.** Feel free to read the books, play with the toys, draw, or play a board game if you are quiet and respectful of the lesson environment. Please respect all the items in the studio and return them to their original condition by the end of the lesson.
- ii. **Silence your cellphone and your devices!** An unruly gadget can completely derail a lesson or performance. If you absolutely need sound, bring headphones.

IV. **Payment and Scheduling Policies**

a. **Enrollment**

- i. **To participate in any lessons or classes for the academic year, a completed enrollment form must be submitted before participation will be permitted.** Parents or guardians must submit contact information and agree to the studio policies contained in this handbook.
- ii. **PLEASE NOTE.** Lesson arrangement for students enrolling for lessons or courses through Sforza Suzuki Strings will need to separately apply for tuition reduction through the non-profit organization. Applications for tuition reduction will require additional processing time and necessitate additional attendance and achievement expectations. If you intend to apply for programs at the Drew Robertson Music Studio through Sforza Suzuki Strings, the standard enrollment form is required.

b. **Tuition**

- i. The school year is divided into four terms, primarily to divide tuition payments equally. Each term contains 12 weeks. Tuition must be paid in full before the start of each term.



Out of respect for teachers' time commitment, tuition is nonrefundable. Families commit to their lessons for the duration of the complete term.

- ii. Tuition includes a weekly private lesson and any additional lessons or meetings prescribed by your teacher, including instrument fittings or adjustments. Students enrolled in weekly lessons receive a tuition discount to participate in group class and academic courses through the school, and receive free admission to any masterclasses, lectures, concerts, or studio events.
- iii. **Term Dates.** Please refer to the studio calendar at the end of this document. The calendar is also available on the studio website and is posted in the hallway at the school.

c. Payment Methods

- i. **In-Person** – Payments may be made at the beginning or end of a lesson. Checks and cash are accepted. Please make checks out to Drew Robertson Music Studio. Only quarterly or half-quarter payments are accepted in person.
- ii. **Online** – On www.drewrobertsonmusic.com, select the Enroll tab, then select “Submit Payment.” Follow the directions online. You may choose from the three payment options below.

d. Payment Plan Options - Payment can be broken up in three ways:

- i. **Quarterly** – Payment is submitted before the start of lessons for the entire quarter. If the student is currently enrolled in lessons, quarterly payment must be submitted no later than the second lesson of the next quarter to continue to reserve the time.
- ii. **Half-Quarter** – Payment for the first five weeks is submitted before the start of lessons or within the first two weeks of the quarter, then the remainder is submitted within four weeks of the first scheduled lesson.
- iii. **Monthly** – Payment is submitted before or during the first lesson of each calendar month for the number of lessons to be taken that month. Due to the increased complexity of managing monthly lesson billing, monthly payment necessitates an additional \$10 charge each month.

e. **Payment Receipt.** When paying online, a confirmation of payment receipt will be provided after your transaction. For payments received via mail or in-person, a printed or email receipt will be provided at the first lesson of the term.

f. Tuition Costs (2017-2018 school year)

Private Lessons

| | Per Lesson Amount | 12-Week Term |
|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 30-minute private lessons | \$40 per lesson | \$480 per term |
| 60-minute private lessons | \$80 per lesson | \$960 per term |



| | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 90-minute private lessons | \$120 per lesson | \$1440 per term |
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Group and Academic Classes

| | Independent of lessons | Concurrent with lessons |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Pre-twinkle group class | \$100 per term | \$90 per term |
| Book 1-4 group class | \$115 per term | \$104 per term |
| Book 4+ group class | \$125 per term | \$112 per term |
| Technique and repertoire classes | \$125 per term | \$112 per term |
| RC Music History classes | \$150 per term | \$135 per term |
| AP Music Theory class | \$175 per term | \$175 per term |

Please Note:

- **Suzuki Method private lesson study requires participation in the appropriate level group class.** Group lessons are an integral part of the method and are an essential part of Suzuki instruction.
- Students concurrently participating in private lessons at the school receive a **10% tuition reduction** for any enrolled classes, apart from AP Music Theory class.
- Students who wish to participate in Sforza group classes, performances, and events must pay a **\$25 annual registration fee to Sforza Suzuki Strings.**
- **Delinquent Accounts** - Families previously enrolled in lessons or classes have a grace period of two weeks after the start of the new term to make a full tuition payment. The studio will not assess any late fees. **If tuition is not paid by the end of the second week of the term, lessons and class participation will be discontinued until payment is received.**

V. Absence and Attendance Policy

a. Lesson Absence and Attendance

- Out of respect for teachers and all students in the studio, it is not possible to schedule make-up lessons when a **student** misses a lesson for **any reason**. This includes illness, school events, pre-arranged vacations. Please do not request make-up lessons. The studio cannot provide any credit or refunds when a **student** misses a lesson for **any reason**.
- In the event a **teacher** must miss a lesson, it will be rescheduled at a mutually convenient time for both student and teacher, or the studio will provide a credit of 75% tuition paid for that lesson. The remainder will remain with the studio to pay for school expenses (When you pay tuition each term, the tuition amount is divided into three categories: private lessons, group classes, and expenses such as rent, utilities, insurance, etc.)
- Late attendance.** In the event a student is late to a lesson, the teacher will provide a lesson up to the conclusion of the scheduled time. If a student is more than 15 minutes



late, the lesson will be counted as a no-show and the teacher will not be obligated to fulfill the remainder of the time. The teacher is not required to make-up any lesson time lost due to late attendance and no refund will be provided. **It is recommended students plan to arrive approximately 5-10 minutes before their scheduled lesson time.**

- iv. **Illness policy.** To protect teachers and students from contagious disease, students who have a fever or who have had a fever within 24 hours of studio activities should not attend. Students experiencing nausea, vomiting, or flu symptoms should follow the same guidelines. **Teachers reserve the right to not teach lessons for students who are suffering from illness.** Students experiencing illness or who have sick siblings or family members may take a lesson via Skype during their reserved lesson time **at the teacher's discretion.**

b. **Class Absence and Attendance**

- i. As in private lessons, out of respect for teachers and students, it is not possible to schedule make-up classes or review sessions when a student misses class for any reason. **The studio cannot provide any credit or refunds for missed classes.**
- ii. **Class attendance is expected from every student enrolled in the class.** If a student is significantly late to class, unable to fulfill class requirements (e.g. incomplete work or clear lack of practice), or is absent more than four times in a term, they will be placed on academic probation. Greater than six attendance violations will necessitate forced withdrawal from the course without refund.
- iii. In the event a **teacher** must cancel a class, the material will be re-arranged to facilitate continued momentum through the course. **If a teacher cancels class, assignments or material from that class may be emailed to students and/or posted online to the course page.**

c. **School Closings.** In the event of school closing or early dismissal at Manassas or Manassas Park Schools due to inclement weather, the Drew Robertson Music Studio may close. The announcement of school closure will be announced in the following manner:

- i. The announcement will be prominently posted on the studio website.
- ii. An email will be sent to the primary contact email of all enrolled students.
- iii. For parents who have opted-in to receive text notifications, a text message will be sent to all numbers on the notification list.

Closure announcements will be posted no later than 1:00 PM on weekdays or 8:00 AM on Saturdays. Additional notices may be provided for special circumstances as needed.

Please use your best judgement regarding travel for lessons. If the school remains open, but you consider it unsafe to drive in adverse conditions, please inform your teacher you will miss your



lesson. No make-up lessons or credits apply when the school remains open and the teacher is present to teach.

Unfortunately, humans have little control over the weather, and all of us (students, teachers, and the school) are adversely affected when weather necessitates school closure. To minimize losses to everyone, the following school cancellation policy is instituted:

- First cancellation on a specific day of the week (e.g. first Thursday cancellation): Student receives 100% credit for the lesson, teacher is paid. (Studio bears the cost)
 - Second cancellation on the same day of the week (e.g. second Thursday cancellation): Student does not receive lesson credit, teacher is paid. (Student bears the cost)
 - Third cancellation on the same day of the week (e.g. third Thursday cancellation): Student receives credit for the lesson, teacher is not paid. (Teacher bears the cost)
- d. **Withdrawals.** If it is necessary to discontinue lessons, please contact your teacher immediately. Out of respect for teachers' time commitment, tuition is nonrefundable. Filling a lesson opening left by a departing student takes a considerable amount of time. The studio requires tuition be paid **before** the start of the next term, or that parents give notification they will not return next term so the lesson opening can be filled as soon as possible.

Please communicate with your teacher if you have any concerns! If there is ever a problem with lessons, practicing, group classes, academic classes, or any other aspect of the program, early communication will better equip teachers and the studio to respond to your needs and tailor lessons or activities to help students succeed.

- e. **Student Referral and Tuition Credit Program.** If you know of anyone who is interested in music study at the studio, please help spread the word! Prospective families are always welcome for an introductory parent meeting and a trial lesson. Recommendations that come from families in the community are incredibly valuable, so the following referral program is implemented for currently enrolled families:
- i. If you refer one new student to the school and he or she enrolls in the program, your student will receive a credit toward two lessons!
 - ii. When the new student enrolls for a full term, the lesson credit will be applied to the account of the referring family during the same term.
 - iii. If the new student enrolls within two weeks of the end of the current term, the account of the referring family will be applied to the following term.

VI. Conduct Guidelines for Students and Parents

- a. Great effort has been made to ensure the studio environment is a comfortable and inviting learning environment. In addition to the Please adhere to the following guidelines, in addition to the lesson expectations previously listed:



- i. **Parents, please monitor your children's behavior and supervise the use of the restrooms.** Younger children, especially, need assistance ensuring that the restroom is in good condition for the next occupant's use.
- ii. **Please do not run inside the building or rapidly round corners.** The instruments used by teachers and advanced students are valued in the tens of thousands of dollars. Walk with care inside the studio to prevent costly collisions.
- iii. **Please take care not to wear wet, snowy, icy, or muddy shoes inside the studio!** If your footwear leaves a visible print on the floor, please leave it on the floor mat by the entrance.

VII. Releases and Liability

- a. **Information and Privacy Policy.** The Drew Robertson Music Studio, L.L.C. (RMS) will never sell or give away any personal information (name, address, email, etc.) to any third party. If you use the online payment options through the website, the information security policies of Stripe or PayPal apply. RMS is not responsible for the loss or theft of personal or financial information incurred from use of these payment options.
- b. **Indemnification.** Student and parent/guardian will not hold the Drew Robertson Music Studio, L.L.C. (RMS), including its teachers, staff, observers, and volunteers, responsible for any loss or damage of personal property while attending or participating in RMS activity. Student and parent/guardian release, and will hold harmless and indemnify RMS from and against any claim, demand, action, or judgment that student and parent/guardian or any other person ever had or may have against RMS, for any loss, cost, or expense (including attorney's fees) or damage or injury known or unknown, real or personal, sustained by student and parent/guardian while in attendance or participating in any RMS program. Student and parent/guardian willfully assume any physical injury risk to the student that is inherent to training. Student and parent/guardian grant consent for RMS instructor to apply physical contact to the student for the purpose of making any technical correction that is appropriate for instruction according to accepted artistic practices. Student and parent/guardian authorize RMS to obtain any medical treatment that the student needs in connection with RMS training. Student and parent/guardian will pay all or whatever amount that treatment costs and will also hold harmless and indemnify the RMS from any claim, cause of action, damage, or liability arising out of or resulting from that medical treatment.
- c. **Photos and Videos.** The Drew Robertson Music Studio, L.L.C. reserves the right to photograph and video record students for training and promotional purposes. If materials are to be used for promotional purposes, parents and students will be notified. Names or personally identifying information will never accompany photographs or videos of students or student performances without express parent and student approval.
- d. **Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy as to Students.** The Drew Robertson Music Studio, L.L.C. (RMS) admits students of any race, gender, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, or orientation to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. RMS does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, color, national or



ethnic origin, religion, or orientation in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship, and other school-administered programs.

- e. **School Policies and Teachers.** The Drew Robertson Music Studio faculty members are highly trained and experienced professional musicians committed to the education of every child in the studio. School policies are designed with the intent of minimizing fluctuation in teacher income for events that are not in their control (e.g. student cancellations, school closure, etc.). That said, please understand that teachers are also committed to making sure your child receives every lesson in the term and will make up or credit those lessons which the **teacher** cancels, according to school policy. Please carefully review the policies so you understand all the procedures of the studio.

VIII. Performances.

- a. Performances are an integral part of playing a musical instrument. Recitals, outreach concerts, auditions, assessments, and competitions are excellent ways to develop valuable skills that will last a lifetime. **For a complete guide to performance requirements and etiquette, please consult the separate document "Performance Practices."** To achieve artistic success and personal fulfillment, the following abbreviated performance practices are exercised at the school:
 - i. **Participation in a studio, solo, or afternoon recital requires the recommendation of your private lesson teacher.** Please discuss performing on a recital with your teacher as early as possible to provide ample time to polish and refine the piece. It is expected that students will participate in at least one recital each year.
 - ii. **The recital selection(s) should be "polished."** The goal of performance is not to play the most challenging or highest-level piece, but to demonstrate the highest level of skill attainment and achievement from each student and to provide a positive and encouraging performing environment.

IX. A Note About Practicing

Just like any other skill-based activity you do, playing a string instrument is only as rewarding as the time you invest into it. You would not expect anyone to master the Olympic vault or dominate grandmaster-level chess in one 30-minute session once each week, so do not expect miracles after a week of little practice. Without exception, those who have mastered string instruments have invested countless hours into perfecting their performances.

Consistent, focused, and daily practice yield incredible results. The single most essential skill in playing string instruments is mastering effective practice, and the overwhelming reason students abandon playing string instruments is a failure to practice successfully. When a student does not practice consistently and effectively, it results in stagnation. This leads to increased frustration as the student cannot demonstrate previously mastered skills or recall review pieces. Frustration yields resentment toward the instrument, parents, and the teacher, which culminates in giving up on the instrument and quitting. Practicing each day takes commitment from both students and parents, and results in greater enjoyment for everyone as the student progresses and develops an ever-expanding and colorful repertory.



It is essential that students and parents take their practice commitments and lesson assignments seriously. I try to ensure that all lesson assignments are clearly articulated and written down, but what made sense at the lesson can frequently look like a foreign language during a practice session. If any part of your assignment is unclear, please send me a text or email as soon as you realize your confusion! It is much better to practice effectively after asking for help than practicing incorrectly all week only to find your hard work was for naught at your lesson!

Effective practice will result in challenging lessons that move forward at the fastest pace you can handle as a student. You will progress rapidly and open possibilities for chamber and orchestral performances, competitions and scholarships, and unique opportunities as you advance on your instrument. Effective practice on your instrument will inform your other studies and make you a more flexible, productive, focused, and higher achieving individual, regardless whether you pursue collegiate studies in music or another field. Mastering a string instrument will open doors in countless ways over the course of your entire life.