

Mike Miller

2021 Violin Studio

Policy Handbook (COVID-19 Adjusted)

BILLING POLICIES

- **How often:** Lessons will be prepaid by the fifth of each month. I will email a bill a week before the end of each month that will detail the student's upcoming lessons. I expect the student to attend one lesson a week, meaning they will receive 4 individual lessons each month.
 - 30-minute Lessons = \$120/month [recommended for ages 4-11]
 - 45-minute Lessons = \$160/month [recommended for ages 12-14]
 - 60-minute Lessons = \$200/month [recommended for ages 15+]This bill will also cover any extra expenses that have arose (example: making copies of music). I will include these expenses with a description of the expense on the bill. Because lessons are online, extra expenses should not be expected.
- **Method of payment:** Mr. Miller prefers online payments. More information on electronic payments can be found on mikemillerviolin.com/lessons. Checks (made out to Michael Miller) and cash are also accepted and can be mailed to me. Contact Mr. Miller for his mailing address.
- **Late Policy:** If payment is not made by the fifth of the month, the student's lessons will be cancelled until payment is made. This means that the cancelled lesson will not be made up. Communication is key! Talk to me if there are any difficulties in making a payment on time.
- **First Lesson:** I love to use the first lesson as a time to get to know more about the student and their interests! Students are expected to bring their instrument and a piece they are working on (this could be anything from a scale to something they are working on in orchestra). These lessons should take about 45 minutes with a little time to go through this handbook with the parent and student included in that time.
 - I will charge the first lesson as a 30-minute lesson, \$30. Payment will be expected on the day of the lesson online (or mailed out if that is preferred.)

SUPPLIES

- Students are expected to purchase or rent their own supplies (instrument, bow, rosin, shoulder rest, mute) and sheet music. Ask me if any assistance is needed in finding the right place to make these purchases.

LESSON CANCELLATION

- **Advanced Notice:** If an issue that arises, let me know at least 24 hours before the scheduled lesson. If this is not fulfilled, the student's lesson *will not be made up*, and the lesson will still be charged. The only exception to this rule is if there is a family emergency or sudden illness.
 - Letting me know about cancellations earlier will allow for more time to go over rescheduling options.
- **Policy for student cancellations:** If the student cannot attend their scheduled lesson and the cancellation is reported in a timely manner (as stated above), the student will be allowed a make up the lesson. To notify me of a lesson cancellation, sending an email is preferred. If the cancellation is to occur within 24 hours before the lesson, a call or text in addition to the email is appreciated.
- **Tardiness:** If Mr. Miller is not notified within the first 15 minutes of the lesson of any issues, I will assume that the lesson has been cancelled and there will be no make-up lesson scheduled (no refund).
- **Policy for teacher cancellations:** If I have a schedule conflict with the student's lesson or sudden illness/family emergency, the lesson will be made up at a mutually determined time. If this rescheduled lesson is missed, there will be no make-up lesson.

MAKE-UP LESSON POLICY

- **Make Up Lessons:** If the student is eligible for a make-up lesson, the amount that was pre-paid for the cancelled lesson will go towards this lesson. I will send make up times in an email for the student and parent to review and respond to. If a time cannot be found within two weeks of the cancelled lesson, the lesson will not be made up.
- **Extended Absences:** If the student will be absent for multiple weeks (2 or more) but would still like lessons during that month, the parent is to inform me before that month's bill is sent out (12 days before that month). The student will then only be charged for the amount of lessons that are agreed upon.
- **How many can be made up:** I only will allow two lessons to be rescheduled each month. If any more than two scheduled lessons are cancelled, the missed lesson will not be made up and charged (no refund).

DISCONTINUING LESSONS POLICY

- **Student discontinuation:** If the student chooses to withdraw from lessons, they are to either email or write to me that they are doing so. Though this subject may seem strange to talk about, it is absolutely okay to bring it up and have discussion about. When I have received the email or letter, the student will not be billed for the following month.
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INSTRUMENT MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

- I am not a professional in violin repairs. If something drastic happens to the instrument, it is best to bring the instrument into a violin repair shop. If the parent is unsure of the extent of the damage and wants to check with me before bringing it in, it is okay to send me a picture to inquire about the instrument's condition.
- **Broken String:** Don't panic! Strings wear over time, and if they are not replaced the tension of the tightly-wound string can cause the metal to break apart. Do not try and remove the string or other strings! Parts of the violin are held together by the tension of those strings. If there is not enough pressure on the body of the instrument, the bridge and the sound post could potentially fall over. Bring it in to the next lesson or bring it into the shop for a quick fix.
- **Bridge Collapses:** This is another situation in which it is better to leave the instrument as it is instead of fix it yourself. The bridge (the flat piece of wood that holds the strings up in the middle of the instrument) has a very specific placement on each violin, and it is important to bring it to the next lesson or a repair shop for a professional to adjust.
- **Finger Nails:** For the health of the strings and the health of the student's hand it is required for students to trim their nails and keep them from getting too long. It is still okay to use nail polish if the student wishes, but the length can cause harm.
- **Cleaning Cloth:** Each time the student finishes practicing, it is important that they wipe the rosin off of their strings (this will accumulate where the bow makes contact with the string). The student should grab a cloth that does not leave behind residue (microfiber cloths work well) and scrub the rosin off of the string with pressure. This can result in a loud screech! To minimize this sound, put the other hand on the strings to stop them from vibrating so much.
 - Another important place to wipe rosin off of is the wood of the bow. Make sure after each use to clear this off. Rosin can eat away the varnish on the wood!

- **Suggested Repair Places near Woodbury:**

- Fein Violin, Ltd.
 - (651) 228-0783
- Clair Givens Violins
 - (612) 375-0708

OFFERED SERVICES

- I expect the student to purchase their own equipment and sheet music. If this is ever an issue, feel free to contact me.
- **Sheet music vendors:**
 - Schmitt Music
 - (651) 770-0091
 - [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)
 - [Sheetmusicplus.com](https://www.sheetmusicplus.com)
- **Where to get strings:**
 - Schmitt Music
 - (651) 770-0091
 - Fein Violin, Ltd.
 - (651) 228-0783
 - Clair Givens Violins
 - (612) 375-0708
 - [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)
 - [Sharmusic.com](https://www.sharmusic.com)

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE TIPS

- Remember: practice does not make perfect, “practice makes permanent” (Bobby Robson). It is important for the student to make sure that they are practicing efficiently over practicing for a long period of time. A great practicer can achieve more in 30 minutes than a bad practicer can in 2 hours.
- I do not suggest that the student practice for hours the night before their lesson, but it is important that the student finds time to practice a little bit every day. Playing violin involves the training your muscles, and a missed day of practice could allow the muscles to forget the previous day’s practice.
- It is important for the parent to get involved in their child’s life as a musician. I only see the student once a week, so the parent become the student’s “home teacher.” Try to keep them motivated and their love of music strong. You can also visit during lessons and take notes if that helps.
- If anything’s hurting, STOP! Violin is not supposed to hurt, and the damage can be permanent. Be sure to address this in the next lesson, and I can give you tools to play healthier.
- Happy practicing!

“Music can name the unnamable and communicate the unknowable.”

~Leonard Bernstein~