

Brendan Finucane

Welcome to my Private Studio!

The following policies will ensure the success of future lessons.

Private Lessons

I currently teach at the Chicago Waldorf School, at my home studio (6951 N. Ridge Blvd) and remotely via Zoom. Beginners typically take 30 minute weekly lessons (\$40/lesson), and intermediate/advanced students typically take 45 minute weekly lessons (\$60/lesson). Subject to scheduling availability, I can commute to student homes for an additional fee.

Lesson payment is in cash, via check or Zelle, and should be made at the beginning of the month, or on the day of each lesson.

A mask must be worn for in-person lessons until further notice.

Knights of Jazz

Along with the weekly private lesson this year, students 5th Grade and above are strongly encouraged to participate in Knights of Jazz String Band if scheduling allows. This is my version of "cello choir" which some private teachers offer. The goal of KJSB is to provide students (and their teacher!) a launchpad into the wonderful and timeless music of The Great American Songbook in a constructive ensemble setting.

Rehearsals will likely be 45 minutes on Sunday mornings. KJSB Jr. is for 5th - 6th Grade students, followed by KJSB Sr., which is 7th Grade and up. Students should arrive promptly to rehearsals and set up quickly.

Beyond regularly scheduled cello recitals, there may be additional performance opportunities for KJSB during the year.

Cancelations

In case of conflicts with regularly scheduled lessons, a 48-hour cancelation notice by email or phone is requested. A make-up lesson for the week is often possible, subject to mutual availability.

If your child is sick, please let me know as soon as possible.

Keep in mind that multiple missed lessons will negatively affect progress on the instrument.

Lesson Expectations

Students should be on time for each lesson. There is no guarantee for an extension in the lesson time if a student arrives late.

If I need to be late to a scheduled lesson, I will notify the student/parent by phone and the lesson will be held for its entire length.

Students are expected to be ready and prepared to begin the lesson at the start time. Use the restroom, wash hands, have a snack and water before the lesson. If the lessons are held at the student's home, instrument and music should be set up by the lesson start time.

The student should always have all their books, pencil, and notepad ready for the lesson.

Nails should be trimmed short (especially important on the left hand). Long nails encourage poor technique and intonation.

Students are expected to be prepared for lessons, which means having completed the practice assignments. Having practiced ensures readiness to learn new skills and concepts.

Respect, communication, and willingness to learn and participate are fundamental for a successful lesson.

Home Practice

Every week, students will receive practice assignments. They are expected to practice 5 days a week.

Very important: practicing consistently makes a huge difference in progress, which leads to positive feelings and thus to further motivation!

Special Notes For Parents And Guardians

I encourage you to attend the lessons where possible, especially during the first year. At the lesson, you can observe, take notes, and note how to practice any new skills. In this way, you can help your child to practice at home.

It is totally normal for children to struggle with daily practice. Helping to build good habits and routines from early on is very helpful. Dedicate a specific space, and a specific time every day to music practice. Encourage a short session (even just hugging the cello for a minute!) rather than completely skipping a session. Setting a progress goal or offering a treat after a certain number of practices can be helpful. Scheduling an extra recital, perhaps for grandparents or cousins (via Zoom or in-person!) can also help with motivation.

I encourage you to take a moment during the week to ask your child to play something for you. Give them honest and gentle feedback -- compliment them on their progress and encourage them to keep practicing.

Take time every day to listen to cello music. Doing so helps students familiarize themselves with the music and the instrument, and develops their listening and confidence. Youtube is an amazing resource for cello, past and present.

Summer Lessons

Lessons are expected to continue during the summer when the student and I are both in town. This helps keep forward momentum,, and it is nice to decouple cello from school too.

If you are planning a long trip, it is highly recommended to bring the instrument to practice (if space permits!)

Recitals

Students are expected to perform at least once per semester at the scheduled recital.

Recitals are a great opportunity for the student to show their work to family and friends. The recital gives the student a goal to aim for and kickstarts the Practice -> Progress -> Feelings Of Success -> Motivation -> Practice cycle.

Recitals will be in-person or via Zoom, Tbd.