

A Voice 4 Strings Studio

Attendance and Financial Policies

Spring 2022 Semester

Thank you for registering for private violin or viola lessons with A Voice 4 Strings. Congratulations! Research has shown *playing* the violin and viola helps the brain's left hemisphere, right hemisphere, and its interconnections. It can be a stress relief, can help lower anxiety, and is a great emotional outlet. It can increase self-confidence and positively affect focus and memory skills. Daily practice regimens even can help lead to greater self-discipline and self-awareness. With all these wellness benefits, learning and playing the violin, and viola, is a challenge that can be well worth the efforts!

Weekly Lessons: In registering, student families have made a commitment to AV4S, and themselves, to consistently attend weekly lessons during the full semester, unless arranged with the teacher prior to beginning the semester. There is a minimum of eighteen (18) weekly mandatory lessons in the Spring 2022 semester which runs from January 10, 2022 to May 27, 2022. The student schedule can be found online at www.avoice4strings.com.

Materials needed at each lesson: violin/viola, bow, shoulder rest, rosin, the repertoire music book or notebook, and any other materials the teacher has distributed, or requested be present, for next lesson. For ease and accessibility, it is recommended the student keep these items in a music bag or within the instrument case.

Lesson preparation: The student needs to be prepared for each lesson having fully reviewed the week's assignment. Preparation includes fulfilling listening and practice assignments. Please refer to notes from previous lessons if there are any questions of what, or how much, to practice.

For ease of playing the instrument: students are to keep their fingernails trimmed and their hair pulled back and away from their face during lessons. It is advisable to keep a supply of hair ties or bobby-pins and nail-clippers in the student's violin case or music bag for instances when needed.

Lesson Location Information, Disclaimers and Requests:

For Students attendance at the New Market Studio:

- Parking in the main gravel driveway is encouraged for smaller vehicles only. Larger vehicles, such as extended cabs or vans, are encouraged to utilize the front yard "grassed over drive" location, utilizing the culvert to cross the ditch safely and continue just in off the roadway. Please do not park behind other vehicles in either location, since this may block their exit. Text the teacher immediately if there is an issue with locating a proper parking place.
- Remember to lock your vehicle. A Voice 4 Strings, the teacher, and the residence property owners are not responsible for any damage, or theft, to vehicle, or vehicle contents.
- Parental supervision of their children is required at all times.
- Maintain respect of the residence property and its' owners.
- It shall be understood, that if a student family is outside the sight of the teacher, but still on studio property, actions are done at their own risk.

- A Voice 4 Strings, the teacher, and the resident owners do not accept responsibility for any accidents or injuries occurring on, or in using the property.
- If something belonging to a student family or someone else, gets hit, scratched, broken, dented, collapsed, or damaged in any way, please tell the teacher immediately. Student family may possibly be held liable.
- Students are requested to access the side entrance, remembering to close the door, gently, behind them, unless directed otherwise.
- To minimize tracking of dirt, debris, and germs into the studio, it is requested, that all students remove their shoes upon entry, before heading down to their lessons.

For student attendance via in-person, at home lessons:

- Please have a convenient and open parking place available for the teacher. If one is not available, the lesson may be delayed but not extended.
- It is important the lesson area be uncluttered and prepared for teacher arrival and instruction.
- Be sure the lesson area is in a quiet location, away from distractions, loud noises, and other conversations. If the student is being distracted, or feels their lesson is a distraction, they will potentially not be engaged at their fullest extent and instruction may become ignored. The teacher should not have to talk loudly at the student for the student to be able to hear; if so, the student may misconstrue he/she is being yelled at and become tense and withdrawn.
- Music stands and instruments are to be set up before the teacher's arrival.
- Parental supervision of their children is requested to be in place at all times. See the '*Parent Involvement for Students ages 4-17 years old*' section to become familiar with the level of involvement still requested during lessons.

For student attendance via E-Lessons:

- Access to a computer/laptop/tablet must be available to, and provided by, the student. If those are not available, a phone with camera capabilities may be utilized, as a least preferred option.
- For best technological outcomes, the student is encouraged to have a fast and reliable internet connection.
- Keeping the computer/tablets operating systems up-to-date is one of the best ways to prevent malware. Antivirus applications are also helpful. Student families are responsible for managing and updating these systems regularly.
- Lessons are held on Skype. Skype is the preferred online application that provides free voice with video calls for both parties involved in the lesson. A Microsoft account is required to use Skype. Microsoft offers all account holders the option to set up two-factor authentication and it is strongly recommended that it be utilized to help deter would-be hackers. If Skype becomes unavailable, back up applications, in order of preference, are: *FaceTime* (requires an Apple device), *Signal* (needs to be downloaded on student's phone before computer access is available), *WhatsApp* (needs to be installed on student's phone before able to access on desktop and currently requires Windows 8 or higher), and *Zoom* (lowest preference due to audio inconsistently picking up audio from instruments).
- Recordings, and/or downloading, of online lessons are not allowed.
- If a "disconnect" occurs during a lesson, the teacher will attempt to re-contact the student through the same application. Contact can occur via texting on the same application, or via student/parent cell phone, to discuss further options.

Punctuality & Tardiness:

For Students taking Studio lessons:

-Lessons will be scheduled at least 10 minutes apart to allow for sanitizing in-between. Please text the teacher upon your arrival and wait outside the studio until a text message is received from the teacher stating the lesson area is ready for your arrival.

-If student arrives tardy, it will be at the teacher's discretion if the lesson will be extended. Please do not expect the instructor to extend the lesson into the next lesson timeframe.

-If a student is over ten minutes late to his/her scheduled lesson time, regardless if a late notice is/was provided to the teacher, the entire lesson could be considered forfeited time, based upon the decision of the teacher. See *'Make-Up Lessons'*.

For Students taking Home lessons:

-The teacher will do their best to arrive on time for home lessons, however, there may be extenuating circumstances outside the teacher's span of control that have potential to effect arrival time.

-It is important for lessons to begin and end on time, but unseen situations such as traffic, vehicles problems, or hazardous weather may arise that prevent the teacher's timely arrival. In these situations, the teacher will contact the student family(s) affected and advise them of the potential delay. Student family flexibility and understanding is appreciated.

-If the teacher arrives to the student family's home at the set lesson time and the student is not there, or then arrives home more than 10 minutes late, with or without contact being given from the family, the entire lesson could be considered forfeited time, based upon the decision of the teacher. See *'Make-Up Lessons'*.

-If a student's lesson extends past their lesson timeframe, the teacher has the option of charging for the next applicable level lesson time. (Example: A Student has a 30 minute lesson, but was being very receptive to learning and asking questions which then continued the lesson for 9 minutes past his time slot. The Teacher now has the option of charging for a 45 minute lesson due to the extended instruction given.)

-Communication is encouraged by all parties involved in lessons! However, to make sure sufficient time is given to instruction, if there are any questions, ideas, or needs to be discussed, please consider emailing or texting them to the teacher in advance.

For Students taking lessons online (E-lessons):

-Lessons should begin on time.

-Please be prepared for potential problems with technology.

-It will be at the teacher's discretion if a lesson will be extended due to a tardy online arrival. Please do not expect the instructor to extend the lesson into the next lesson timeframe. If a student is over ten minutes late to his/her scheduled lesson time, regardless if a late notice is provided to the teacher, the entire lesson could be considered forfeited time based upon the decision of the teacher. See *'Make-Up Lessons'*.

Parent Involvement for Students ages 4-17 years old: Parents should be attentive and keep a lesson notebook to take specific notes about the lesson and practice assignments. The instructor may request to look over the notebook periodically to make sure the parent/guardian understands the assigned lesson points.

Cell phone use during the lesson is a distraction to the student and the teacher. Please keep cell phones on silent and kept away during lessons.

-If there is a high-priority call that does require your immediate attention, please excuse yourself from the lesson area before answering, keep the call short, and get re-involved in the lesson as soon as possible.

Sibling attendance during lesson: Parental supervision of their children is required. When siblings are in attendance at lessons, the parent's attention, as well as that of the student (and instructor), is divided. Siblings are welcome to attend lessons if the parent can assure they will not be a distraction. If you think your student's sibling(s) will cause distraction from lesson, please make childcare arrangements in advance.

Practice, if done purposefully, is helpful and is a requirement for success in lesson. At home, the parent takes on many roles; this includes "the scheduler", "the motivator", and "the home instructor". The parent(s) should always monitor their child's practice progression and consistency. All children should be positively nurtured toward their fullest potential and encouraged through any challenges they may encounter.

-For students between 4-10 years old, parental assistance, supervision, and encouragement during daily practice is mandatory.

-Parents of students ages 10-17 are highly recommended to encourage and observe daily practice.

-The teacher will be of assistance if any questions arise on how to best manage these requests.

General Financials for Spring 2022 Semester:

½ Hour Lessons = \$63.00 per month

¾ Hour Lessons = \$94.50 per month

1 Hour Lessons = \$126.00 per month

Financial commitment is for the entire registered semester, in whole, regardless of a student's attendance, outcomes, and/or participation levels.

Invoices will not be issued regularly. At no time will lack of invoice received indicate there is not a payment due.

Balances, charges, and payments are available to view online in the parent or adult- student log-in in the online portal found at www.avoice4strings.com.

Payments can be made by check, or cashier's check, and will be accepted by the teacher, in person only. Payments can also be made online by debit or credit card using the portal log-in at www.avoice4strings.com. Payments online will have a small convenience fee assessed by the card processor.

-At no time will cash, or money order, be considered an acceptable form of payment unless previously arranged with the teacher. See '*Payment Due Date*' and '*Late Charges*'.

Payment Due Date: Semester totals can be paid, as outlined above, in five (5), equal, monthly payments, or at the beginning of the semester, in full.

-Monthly payments will be due on the last day of every month in the semester.

-At lessons that occur during the last week of the month, to make sure sufficient time is given to instruction yet does not interfere with the learning time of others, please have payments ready to be given to the teacher before the lesson concludes.

-Communication is encouraged by all involved in lessons; if there are any questions, ideas, or needs to be discussed about payments, please consider emailing or texting them to the teacher in advance of a lesson.

Late Charges: A monthly payment that is received by the teacher after the last day of the month will be considered late. There will be a one-day grace period.

-When an on-time payment is not made, a late-charge of ten dollars (\$10.00) will be applied the student's account on the second day of the following month. An additional charge of ten dollars (\$10.00) per month will be placed on the student's account until the original payment, plus fee(s), is received by the teacher. For convenience, late payments can be made using the link provided in an overdue invoice reminder email, if one shall be received.

Long Overdue Balances could change a student family's good standing to be reconsidered and lessons could be cancelled by the teacher. If outstanding balances are continued past 120 days, civil charges could be pursued.

Return Check Charges: If a check or debit/credit card payment is returned for insufficient funds, the student family, or financially responsible person, will acknowledge this as unacceptable and will be held responsible for payment or reimbursement of all fees incurred by the Teacher and the business. These fees include, but are not limited to, financial institution fees, lack of money available for use fees, and non-sufficient funds fees. In addition, the late charge fee, mentioned in "Late Charges", could be imposed.

Illness/Injury:

Student Illness: Students and student family should be free of symptoms of illness in order to attend in-person lessons.

-If a student is ill or has become injured, please contact the teacher by phone call, giving as much "heads-up" consideration time as possible. If no answer, leave a voicemail and then also text (or email if you do not have text message capabilities) immediately as a consideration to let the teacher know the student will be unable to attend. This is very important! The teacher has planned routes of travel and other considerations of which a cancelation could cause significant changes to be made.

-Depending on the severity of illness or injury, affected lessons may be moved to E-Lessons for the appropriate quarantine timeframe recommended by the CDC and the VA Department of Health. See 'Make-Up Lessons'.

COVID 19/Coronavirus: COVID-19 spreads when an infected person breathes out droplets and very small particles that contain the virus. These droplets and particles can be breathed in by other people; land in their eyes, nose, or mouth; or land on surfaces that people touch. The risk of COVID-19 transmission increases when people gather together with other households.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Cough
- Muscle or body aches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever or chills
- Sore throat
- Headache
- New fatigue
- Congestion or runny nose

-Some people infected with the coronavirus have mild COVID-19 illness, and others have no symptoms at all. In some cases, COVID-19 can lead to respiratory failure, lasting lung and heart muscle damage, nervous system problems, kidney failure or death. *Please seek medical attention and/or CALL 911 if anyone has severe shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.

Mandates: As frustrating as it is to have to keep pandemic protocols in mind, AV4S is happy to have the ability to meet in person currently and will continue to do so, as able. If a mandate occurs during the semester that prevents in-person lessons, it is expected that the lessons will continue with AV4S in an E-lesson format, until the mandate is lifted. Lesson refunds will not be issued due to this being a possible un-preferred preference.

Precautions: The coronavirus is highly prevalent in our area and AV4S will still be taking the recommended precautionary steps to avoid spreading this nasty virus.

Temperature: Prior to an in-person lesson, the student, student family, and teacher will have their temperatures taken using a forehead thermometer. If anyone in the lesson group has a temperature of 99.5 F degrees or higher, the lesson will be moved at the teacher's discretion to an e-lesson or a make-up lesson, depending on symptoms. See 'Make-Up Lessons'.

Hand Washing: After temperatures are taken, everyone involved the in-person lesson should directly wash their hands, using soap, for at least 20 seconds. The student should then quickly set up their instrument.

Masks: Due to the higher rates of COVID reported in the AV4S student area, face masks worn to cover one's mouth and nose will be required for all persons, vaccinated and unvaccinated, upon entering and exiting the New Market studio. This will be especially important with attendees that have weaker immune systems or that are at high risk of infection.

-During lessons, the student will be allowed the option of removing their mask.

-The teacher(s) will be staying masked during lessons and physically distancing when appropriate.

Communication of Illness: If anyone in an "in-person student family" is experiencing symptoms related to COVID-19, anytime during the semester, please text the teacher as soon as possible, even if it is not on a lesson day.

Inclement Weather: Please check the local weather on lesson days. If inclement weather produces a concern that you, or the teacher, will not be able to safely get to/from a scheduled lesson, you must contact the teacher *by phone call* to discuss the concern. If the teacher does not answer, please *leave a voicemail* and then *also text* (or email if you do not have text message capabilities) the teacher as soon as possible. See 'Make-Up Lessons'.

Make-Up Lessons: Due to the current prevalence of illness in the area, each student will have a limit of two (2) make up lessons, for excusable absences, this, Spring 2022, semester.

-Make-up lessons need to be scheduled with the teacher by initiation of the student/student family immediately after an excusable absence.

-Make-up lessons must be held within the same semester, before the "Last day available for make-ups" notice that is posted on the AV4S calendar found in the online portal.

-Availability of make-up lessons will be based upon both the student's and the teacher's schedules, and make-up lessons are not guaranteed. Make-up lessons will be provided on a "first-come, first-need" basis. It will be up to the teacher's discretion if a make-up lesson will occur in person, or via E-lesson.

Excusable absences from a lesson entail a student family illness, or injury, or inclement weather that prohibits full attendance. For these to be issued Make Up lessons, a proper notice must be given to, and received by, the teacher at least two (2) hours before the beginning of the student's lesson. In addition, the minimal mandatory number of lessons would need to be affected by the absence.

Un-excusable absences from a lesson entail anything where a student family illness, or injury, or inclement weather was not a factor of the student's absence; and/or proper advance notice of an absence was not given to, or received by, the Teacher.

Advance Notice Cancellation(s): Please think and plan ahead. If a student family must cancel their attendance to a lesson, for any reason other than illness, injury, or inclement weather, they must contact the teacher *by email* within the first week (7 days) of their first lesson in the semester.

-Student families should expect to receive a confirmation email within 24 hours (2 days) of the cancellation notice being emailed. If not received, please text the teacher to confirm receipt.

-Due to scheduling limitations, a maximum of one (1) lesson per semester is able to be rescheduled due to an Advance Notice Cancellation.

-Rescheduling should be initiated by the student family.

-Rescheduled lessons must occur within the originating semester.

-If an Advance Notice Cancellation was made, but the lesson is not rescheduled before the AV4S calendar deadline, the student family will not be offered a refund. Therefore, an un-rescheduled advance notice cancellation shall be considered forfeited time and the lesson absence will still contribute toward the number of mandatory lessons in the semester. See 'Weekly Lessons'.

Secondary Absences: If any originally scheduled make-up lesson, or rescheduled lesson, is not able to be attended, it will be considered forfeited time, regardless if excused or unexcused.

No Shows: a student who has been scheduled to attend a lesson, but does not attend, and has not communicated with the teacher, is considered a "no show".

-A No Show will not be given a refund, nor shall be given an opportunity for a make-up lesson. Therefore, a No Show lesson will be considered forfeited time and the lesson absence will still contribute toward the number of mandatory lessons in the semester. See 'Weekly Lessons.'

Teacher Cancellation of Lesson(s): If the teacher has to cancel a lesson for any reason (i.e., illness, injury, weather, schedule conflict, etc.), the teacher will make notification(s) either by email, text message, and/or phone call.

-Affected lessons may be moved to an E-Lesson or a Make-Up lesson may be offered. This shall be made at discretion of the teacher, with potential scheduling changes being made upon the initiation by the teacher with as much advance notice as the situation allows.

*The medical information in this policy is provided as an information resource only, and is not to be used, or relied on, for any diagnostic or treatment purposes. Please consult your health care provider before making any health care decisions, or for

guidance on any medical conditions. A Voice 4 Strings expressly disclaims responsibility, and shall have no liability for any damages, loss, injury, or liability whatsoever suffered as a result of reliance on the health-related information provided in this policy. **A Voice 4 Strings reserves the rights to change these policies at any time, of which, student families will be promptly updated if such occurs.

