

## **Rachel's Music Lessons: Studio Policy and Information 2026-2027**

Thank you for choosing Rachel's Music Lessons. Please review the following studio policies carefully.

By registering for lessons, students and parents acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by the policies outlined in this handbook.

### **Lesson Payment**

Invoices are sent by email on the first day of each month and are payable in full at the beginning of the month.

Payment may be made by cash, cheque payable to Rachel McLellan, or e-Transfer to RMcLellanMusic@gmail.com

Current lesson rates are 30-minute lessons for \$35 each and 60-minute lessons for \$65 each.

Lessons will be suspended if payment remains outstanding for more than two weeks and will resume once the account is paid in full.

### **Lesson Scheduling**

Lessons take place on the same day and time each week. Bi-weekly lessons are not offered.

Please notify me as soon as possible if a lesson must be missed.

### **Missed Lessons & Make-Up Lessons**

A make-up or rescheduled lesson may be offered when at least 24 hours' notice is provided by phone, text, or email. Make-up lessons are offered based on studio availability and cannot be guaranteed.

Lessons missed with less than 24 hours' notice are not eligible for a make-up lesson, except in the case of illness or emergency at the teacher's discretion.

Students who arrive late will receive the remainder of their scheduled lesson time. Lost lesson time cannot be made up later.

If I must cancel a lesson due to illness, emergency, or professional obligations, a make-up lesson or tuition credit will be provided.

If you wish to discontinue lessons, please provide a minimum of one month's notice.

### **Illness**

If a student is feeling unwell, please stay home. Whenever possible, lessons may be moved online or rescheduled.

### **Communication**

I do not answer phone calls while teaching. Please leave a voicemail, send a text message, or email, and I will respond as soon as possible. I strive to reply to all messages within 24 hours.

### **Parents in the studio**

Parents are always welcome in the studio. While I encourage parents to observe the first lesson (and sometimes the first few lessons), many students become more confident, independent, and focused when given the opportunity to work one-on-one with their teacher. Every student is different, and parent attendance is ultimately based on what best supports the student's learning and comfort.

### **Online Lessons**

Online lessons are available when needed and may be conducted through platforms such as FaceTime or Zoom.

If you are interested in online lessons, please contact me so we can determine the most appropriate platform and ensure that your device and settings are optimized for the best possible learning experience.

### **Instruments and Practice Equipment**

All piano students must have access to a piano for regular home practice. A well-maintained acoustic piano is ideal; however, a digital piano with 88 weighted, touch-sensitive keys and a sustain pedal is also suitable.

Acoustic pianos should be professionally tuned at least once per year to ensure students develop accurate listening skills and proper technique. I am happy to provide tuner recommendations.

While it may be tempting to label piano keys with alphabet stickers, please refrain from doing so. Students learn to navigate the keyboard using black-key patterns, interval relationships, and other keyboard geography skills that promote long-term musical understanding and independence.

While not required, I highly recommend that voice students have access to a piano or keyboard at home. This can be a valuable tool for learning pitches, practicing exercises, and developing music theory skills.

If you are considering purchasing or renting a piano and would like guidance, I am happy to provide recommendations. Digital pianos can often be rented through Long & McQuade, and quality used instruments can frequently be found through local marketplaces.

All students should have access to a metronome, either as a physical device or through a smartphone, tablet, or web-based app. A metronome is an essential practice tool that helps develop steady rhythm and musical accuracy. Google Metronome is easy – simply search ‘metronome’.

### **Practice Expectations**

Consistent practice is the single most important factor in a student's musical progress. Students who practice regularly tend to develop skills more quickly, build confidence, and enjoy greater success in their lessons.

As a general guideline, most students should aim to practice 4–5 days per week. Rather than assigning a specific number of minutes, I encourage students to practice until they have completed their weekly assignments thoughtfully and thoroughly. If a more structured practice schedule would be beneficial, I am happy to work with families to determine appropriate goals.

The quality of practice is often more important than the quantity. Focused, attentive practice sessions are far more effective than simply spending time at the instrument.

Parental support plays an important role in a child's musical development. Establishing a regular practice routine, providing a quiet practice environment, and helping students follow their lesson notes can make a significant difference in their progress and enjoyment.

Regular practice is an important part of the commitment to music lessons. If a student is consistently unable to practice between lessons, families may wish to reconsider whether lessons are the right fit at this time. Studio spaces are limited and are reserved for students who can actively participate in the learning process.

### **Collaborative Pianists (voice students only)**

For public performances, festivals, examinations, and similar events, voice students will require the services of a collaborative pianist.

As I am not a professional accompanist, I do not provide accompaniment for student performances. This allows students to work with an experienced collaborative pianist whose specialized skills can best support their preparation and performance.

Families should expect additional fees for accompanist services. These fees are set by the pianist and are paid directly to them. Accompanist fees typically include both rehearsal time and the performance itself.

I am happy to provide recommendations for qualified collaborative pianists when needed.

### **Studio Procedures**

Please arrive a few minutes before your scheduled lesson time. Students are welcome to enter the house upon arrival to remove their shoes and wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before their lesson begins. They can then quietly wait in my entryway while the previous student finishes.

Please note that I do not provide childcare services. Siblings with back-to-back lessons are welcome to wait quietly in the studio during each other's lesson time. Appropriate activities include reading, drawing, homework, or other quiet independent pursuits. A digital piano with headphones is available for students who wish to warm up or practice while waiting for their lesson. Please ensure that students bring enough materials to remain quietly occupied while in the studio.

To help maintain a clean and safe learning environment, food, gum, and beverages other than water are not permitted in the studio. Water bottles are welcome provided they have a secure, spill-proof lid and remain on the floor or table. Water bottles should never be placed on or near the piano.

### **Lesson Materials**

Students are responsible for bringing all required materials to each lesson.

Method books and other resources may either be purchased by the family or purchased by me and reimbursed. I will provide guidance regarding all required books and materials.

#### **Piano Students:**

- Piano Adventures Lesson and Theory books
- Additional assigned materials, such as technique, performance, or Royal Conservatory resources
- A three-ring binder for sheet music, handouts, and lesson notes

#### **Voice Students:**

- Full Voice workbook
- Additional assigned materials, such as theory, repertoire, or Royal Conservatory resources
- A three-ring binder for sheet music, handouts, and lesson notes

I recommend keeping all lesson materials together in a dedicated music bag to help prevent items from being misplaced during the week.

Forgotten books or sheet music may limit what can be accomplished during a lesson, so students are encouraged to check that all required materials are packed before leaving home.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Let's make music together!

Rachel McLellan  
MMus, BMus, Registered Music Teacher

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