

Rachel's Music Lessons: Studio Policy and Information 2024-2025

Lesson Payment

I accept payment by cash, cheque, or Interac eTransfer.

Please pay etransfers to RMcLellanMusic@gmail.com. Cheques must be made out to Rachel McLellan. Invoices will be sent out on the first of each month. Please pay in full at the beginning of the month. Lessons will be halted if two weeks pass without payment and will resume upon payment in full. I currently charge \$32 for half hour lessons and \$58 for full hours.

Parents in the studio

For the first lesson, and sometimes the first few, I recommend parents sit in to observe. Beyond this, I welcome parents to watch whenever they would like, however, I find many of my students are distracted by family and don't always do their best work when they are 'being watched.' Parent attendance in lessons is always up to the parent and student, and their own comfort levels.

Lesson times and cancellations

I do not answer my phone during lessons, but feel free to leave a message or text and I may be able to answer it in between students. I do my best to respond to emails and messages within 24 hours.

Lessons occur at the same time and day every week. **I do not offer every-other week lessons.**

Please inform me of any lessons that will be missed as soon as possible. Make-up/rescheduled lessons will be available with a minimum of 24 hours' notice of cancellation, via phone, text message, or email. This is to respect both your time and mine.

If the student is feeling ill, please stay home. We can then complete lessons online or reschedule. This is especially important with my young child at home. Thank you for understanding.

Lesson time will not be made up for students who arrive late. If you need to discontinue lessons during the year, I ask for at least a month's notice.

Piano and Metronome

All piano students MUST have a piano at home for practicing. A tuned acoustic piano is ideal, but a digital piano with 88 weighted "touch sensitive" keys plus proper foot pedals is acceptable. Lesser digital pianos are only for beginner students, and I encourage you to upgrade as soon as possible. Acoustic pianos should be tuned at least once a year. Although tempting, please do not label the piano keys with alphabet stickers. Students will learn to find notes using the black key patterns and other keyboard geography tools.

I recommend voice students have a piano to help with music theory/comprehension and starting notes.

If you are unsure about committing to purchasing a piano, electric pianos can be rented through Long & McQuade in Calgary. Electric pianos can be purchased from many locations, and good deals can be found on secondhand ones on Facebook Marketplace and Kijiji. I'm happy to help with your selection – just ask!

All students will need a metronome, or a metronome app. Google Metronome is easy– simply google 'metronome'.

Practice Expectations

If there is a lack of progress, there is probably a lack of practice! Ideally, **most students should practice 4-5 days a week.** Specific amounts of practice time are not assigned to each student. Instead, students should practice long enough to complete their weekly assignments. If you feel your student needs a specific amount of time assigned, I am happy to talk with you to determine what will work best.

The quality of practice time is more important than the quantity of practice time.

Support from parents is an integral factor in a child's musical development. Create a quiet space where the student can practice and schedule a time for practice each day – consistency is key. **Your child will need you to remind them to practice**, and you may need to help them read their lesson notes to remember what to do.

If practicing is not possible, I gently recommend re-evaluating the value of lessons at this time for your student. I have a large waitlist and many interested students who would like to take lessons with me.

Collaborative Pianists

I am not a professional accompanist, and for this reason, **I do not play piano for my singing students for public performances**. This is to ensure the singer has the best experience with the right kind of support from an accompanist. This means that there will be external fees for pianists for performances (ex. festivals, exams). The fee will be determined by the pianist, and you will pay them directly. This will include rehearsal time and the actual performance. I can provide pianist recommendations.

Lesson Procedures

Please arrive a few minutes prior to your lesson time. Students are welcome to come in when they get here to take off their shoes and wash their hands or use hand sanitizer.

I do not provide childcare. Siblings who take lessons back-to-back are welcome to wait and silently read, draw, or work on homework during each other's lessons. I have a digital piano with headphones for students to practice on or warmup during their sibling's lesson. Please bring enough materials to stay occupied and quiet.

Food, gum, and non-water drinks are not allowed in the studio. Water bottles are welcome but must stay on the table or the floor and have a top that closes. No water bottles are allowed on the piano.

Lesson Supplies

I can either purchase books for you and be reimbursed, or you are welcome to purchase books yourself from Long & McQuade, MusicWorks, Amazon, etc. I will let you know what books your child needs.

Please ensure your child brings the following to every lesson:

- Piano lessons
 - Piano Adventures Lesson and Theory Books (unless using a different series)
 - Other assigned books (technique, performance, Royal Conservatory books etc.)
 - 3-Ring Binder for sheet music, handouts, and lesson notes
- Voice lessons
 - Full Voice workbook
 - Other assigned books (theory, repertoire, Royal Conservatory books etc.)
 - 3-Ring Binder for sheet music, handouts, and lesson notes

I recommend keeping all these items in a separate 'music bag' so they are not misplaced during the week. If a piece of sheet music is forgotten at home, we will likely not be able to work on it that day.

Online Lessons

Online lessons can be held on several different platforms including Facetime, Zoom, and Skype. Please contact me if you would like online lessons to best determine the platform and device settings.

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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