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**FLUTE STUDIO POLICY**

The Importance of a Policy Statement

This policy is intended to help the student, teacher, and parents communicate their ideas and intentions in taking flute lessons. This is only an outline, and everything in it can be approached with flexibility. I try to communicate my thoughts continually throughout the lessons, and expect that attitudes and expectations will fluctuate. Above all, I want everyone to feel free to communicate his or her thoughts to me, however important or seemingly trivial. The policy statement can give us a concrete starting point for some areas of discussion.

Scheduling Lessons

Ideally, I like lessons to be consistent in frequency and duration. This means, when scheduling a lesson, future conflicts should be considered as well as the current schedule: for example, if track is going to conflict with a certain time in the spring, then probably it isn’t a good time. Often, a change of time can mean that many students need to be shifted in order to accommodate one student’s scheduling needs. Most lessons are one hour once a week. Younger students might start with 45 minutes, and move up to an hour.

Rescheduling/Make-up Lessons

Students need to give 24 hours notice for missing a lesson. If 24-hour notice is given, then the lesson can be rescheduled or skipped at no cost to the student. If the lesson has already been paid for, then the teacher usually will deduct the cost of that lesson from the next payment. If notice is not given, the student is expected to pay for the lesson and if they desire to reschedule, they do so at additional cost. Missing too many lessons is not appropriate. Sometimes, I may need to reschedule lessons. I will do this with as much notice possible, probably several weeks. If I get sick, then you don’t pay for the lesson of course.

Practice – Time and Quality

I recommend that each student practice each day for about as long as his or her lesson is. That is, if the lesson is one hour, then the student should practice around an hour, 6 days a week. More time than this is wonderful and worth it, while less will probably end up in frustration. It’s important that the quality of the practice be good, and that the student practices in the ways assigned – marking breaths, using a metronome, singing the rhythms, etc. Time needs to be used well.

A really easy guideline is: Do what your teacher says!

Another one is: You only need to practice on the days that you brush your teeth!

Think FIT: Frequency, Intensity, and Time.

Payment Schedule / Late Fees / Cost of Lessons

Payment is monthly, paid at the beginning of each month for that month. It’s easier to keep track, and students are much less likely to miss lessons. There is currently no late fee late payment. An invoice and/or receipt will be provided upon request. 24 hours notice is required for missed lessons; if notice is given in under 24 hours, then the lesson needs to be paid for.

$70/hour $55/ 45 minutes $90/ 90 minutes

Telephone, Email and Texting

Students and parents can call me at home anytime between 8:00am and 10:00pm. My cell phone will be with me during lessons. I will only answer the phone during a lesson if it’s the next student calling. Email is my favorite method of communicating, since I teach/perform past normal waking hours often. I use email for scheduling and to post information about upcoming recitals or other events, so group emails are useful. It’s difficult for me to do scheduling via texting, but texting to let me know that you’ll be late is very useful!

How to Be Prepared for a Lesson

Students need to be prepared for each lesson in some basic ways. First, they need to come with all of their materials – flute, music, recording device, etc. Beyond that, they need to know in detail what they were assigned to have prepared for the lesson – it can be helpful to summarize what I am expecting to hear during the lesson. Lastly, they need to have done the preparation – they need to have practiced enough, done their theory, have listened to recordings, or whatever was agreed upon. If the student isn’t prepared, it may be time to revisit the goals; the student’s schedule, the teacher’s expectations, or practice habits to see where some rethinking might be helpful. Sometimes it may be just as important for the teacher to adjust the amount and type of material being assigned as it is for the student to work on preparing better.

Difficulties/Warnings

A student needs to know when he/she hasn’t met expectation – which ones and in what way. It could be a variety of problems – attitude, practicing time or effectiveness, payment, missing lessons, or respect for the teacher, the instrument or the materials. If a discussion of difficulties happens more than a couple of times, I will consider talking with the parents. If the problems continue, the student will eventually lose the right to take lessons. It is important for me to be clear, fair, and flexible, and to assume that a student that is well-informed will do their best to make things work well.

Notice

Just as I will give warnings if there is a problem that could lead to discontinuation of lessons, the student is expected to do the same. If there is a reason why the student thinks they may not continue with lessons, it is their responsibility to inform the teacher. If the problem is simply one of scheduling, a change may be possible to make it work, and if it’s a problem of lesson effectiveness, then experimenting with changes within the lessons might have interesting and positive results. Usually a 2-week to one month warning is the most helpful.

Conclusion

The Studio Policy statement is an effective tool in setting up the groundwork for a successful and effective private studio. The difficulties and problems that are part of any experience can be predicted and dealt with efficiently, thoroughly, and maturely when there has been forethought put into them. Also, with the guidelines and goals set up from the beginning, the lessons can start on the right foot, and if things seem to get off track or are not going well, a look back at the goals can refresh the sense of the commitment that was made. Private lessons are a wonderful opportunity, and I’m very happy to have you be a part of my life!