



# Practice Guidelines

Welcome to the wonderful journey of supporting your child in learning about themselves – their creativity, self-expression and artistic voice – and about the joy of music and collaborative music making. We would like to ensure that this journey is the best that it can be, so please take the time to thoroughly review these Practice Guidelines:

**YOUR ROLE AS PARENT:** To make the most of your investment, it is important to understand that the weekly lessons and rehearsals are only one – albeit significant – part of your child's musical journey. Most of the student's progress takes place at home, so practicing DAILY at home is crucial. This means your role is just as important as the teacher's.

Get acquainted with your child's weekly assignments, whether verbally with the teacher or from reading their notebook/ handouts or posts on the associated app. Then help them stick to it!

Being part of an ensemble or taking lessons is a long-term commitment, and any long-term commitment has its normal ups and downs. When your child seems to be losing motivation or interest, coach them to help them keep going through these valleys.

We believe collaborative music making brings meaning to all those isolated practice hours at home. Participating in an ensemble increases motivation, accelerates progress and overall deepens the joy they experience as a musician.

Go over - and regularly review - these important concepts with your child:

1. Practicing must become a habit. Set a weekly schedule for practice before or after some kind of trigger event – although ideally *before* video games, TV or homework. Practice can also be broken up into two or three shorter sessions.
2. Practice Daily: Aim to practice 6 days a week and a minimum of 5. Practice should NOT be something you do "if you have extra time." It is as important as brushing your teeth!
3. Compartmentalize Practice: Whether this means taking small amounts of material to practice slowly, or breaking up the session with various activities, practice is much more effective if there is a strategy, rather than just randomly playing what you feel like playing.
4. Remove all distractions. Make sure the tv/radio/sibling/phone/videogame/pet isn't in the same room.
5. Make all materials READY TO GO: This includes instrument, sheet music, stand, rosin, metronome, tuner, Cd player, practice notebook, etc. Ideally these are already easily accessible in a designated practice area in the home.

**TEACHER/ INSTRUCTOR ROLE:** A private lesson teacher is a guide that shows the way according to the specific needs, interests, strengths and weaknesses of each student. This may take the form of assigning specific repertoire, exercises, etudes, scales, etc or helping the student and parent develop good practice strategies. Ensemble instructors similarly guide each ensemble in setting goals and making weekly decisions as a group, allowing them to take ownership over their progress. Instructors may give specific directions/assignments when needed, and this can be at both an individual and group level.

Communication is key to keeping your student inspired and engaged! **Happy Practicing!**