



After-School Music

## Lesson Information & Policies

for young students | updated for the 2018-2019 school year

*Dear Parents,*

*As we embark on a new school year, I am thrilled to once again to be teaching music to your children!*

*If you have known me for any length of time, you know that teaching music is my passion. I am 100% committed to helping each of my students learn to play and master a musical instrument. And, it is with great pleasure that I am able to offer new opportunities each year.*

*In order for me to offer each new opportunity, teach effectively, and honor my commitment to my students, I must be sure we are all on the same page.*

***I assure you that it is to each parent and student's benefit to read over the information and policies here, take advantage of all resources available, and adhere to all guidelines for the duration of all after-school music studies.***

*Thank you for your consideration and please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.*

*Sincerely,*

*Mr. Matthew Cline*

## TEACHER'S COMMITMENT

First and foremost, allow me to introduce the details of my personal commitment to each and every one of my students.

As my private music student, you can expect **me** to:

- ♪ treat you with respect, give you my best, and listen when there is a concern
- ♪ return calls, texts, and emails from your parents as quickly as possible
- ♪ start lessons punctually and notify you promptly upon any delays
- ♪ tailor curriculum to match your interests and learning needs
- ♪ give you a complete, comprehensive understanding of all musical concepts
- ♪ coach you in preparation for recitals and concerts
- ♪ help you plan and develop a repertoire for spontaneous performances
- ♪ clearly define your weekly assignments and regularly update your parents
- ♪ find and create unique exercises and resources to aid in your music development
- ♪ store custom sheet music and exercises online for easy access
- ♪ provide a library of books and sheet music for borrowing and lending
- ♪ make myself available for make-up lessons whenever possible

## PARENT & STUDENT'S COMMITMENT

In consideration of my commitment to all of my students, there are just a few commitments I expect from student and parents.

By signing up a student up for private music lessons, every **parent** or **guardian** commits to:

- ♪ respecting the time of all my students by:
  - ♪ scheduling lessons in advance
  - ♪ carefully considering other engagements (work, school, sports, etc) when setting a lesson time
  - ♪ ensuring that your child knows **when** and **where** to meet me for lessons
  - ♪ cancelling or rescheduling lessons only when absolutely necessary
  - ♪ giving at least 24 hours prior notice of any cancellations, when possible
- ♪ making advanced payments
- ♪ ensuring that your child brings all necessary materials to school on the day of their lesson including their sheet music, instrument (when applicable), and any other accessories needed or requested (such as a guitar pick, tuner, valve oil, cleaning supplies, iPad / Android tablet, etc)
- ♪ informing me of any and all situations or events that might affect your child's practice or performance (i.e. physical or mental illness, injury, upcoming events or trips, difficulty in school, a failed audition, loss of interest, lack of discipline, etc)

By participating in private music lessons, every **student** commits to:

- ♪ respecting the time of my other students by arriving to lessons on time  
(*or early, if time is needed to set up*)

- ♪ respecting your lesson time by attending all lessons ready to begin playing
- ♪ listening and staying on topic for the duration of the lesson
- ♪ always practicing between lessons and as often as possible
- ♪ asking for help when it is needed
- ♪ participating as much as possible in recitals, master classes, and other group activities

## WHAT IS INCLUDED

Every student enrolled in private lessons will receive the following:

- ♪ instruction from a trained teacher with 15 years of teaching experience and over 22 years of performance experience
- ♪ an individualized course of study to meet the student interests and learning needs
- ♪ up to the equivalent of the student's lesson time in my time during the week for lesson planning, scheduling, answering questions, and creating materials
- ♪ customized songs and exercises often written specifically for the student
- ♪ an opportunity to win rewards for practice and participation
- ♪ the freedom to borrow one book at a time from my music library

In addition, tuition costs reflect my purchase of developmental resources for myself, such as continuing education and professional association memberships, to ensure I am current on the latest and best teaching methods and techniques and able to instruct students in the most effective manner possible.

## THE STUDENT PORTAL

### Portal Features

**New for the fall of 2018**, all parents have been set up with access to a full-featured Student Portal. While use of this portal is currently optional, you will find a lot of benefits to accessing this portal.

Through the **Student Portal**, both parents/guardians and students are able to:

- ♪ View the student's upcoming lessons & events
- ♪ View all past lesson notes
- ♪ Track practice time
- ♪ Download current sheet music and other helpful music files
- ♪ Track your child's repertoire
- ♪ View email history

Additionally, the "parent version" of the Student Portal allows parents/guardians to:

- ♪ Access all of your child's information listed above
- ♪ View family account information
- ♪ View current and past invoices\*
- ♪ Make payments
- ♪ Schedule make-up lessons

\* For most students, past lessons will only be displayed after future lessons have been completed dating back to August 2018. Parents of students who had lessons over the summer 2018 will also see lessons from this time period. Additionally, select unpaid lessons have been added for parents of students who have an outstanding balance from spring 2018.

## Accessing the Portal

Visit <https://studiocline.com/login> anytime to access the portal!

**Username:** The Student Portal requires an email address to be used as the username for every account. Parents and guardians will use the email address in which they receive communications from Studio Cline. Students can choose to use their own email address (if they have one) or may be given a username with an email address on Studio Cline's domain. For example: **student@studiocline.com**. (This email will only serve to allow students to access the Student Portal and will NOT give the student access to email messages sent to this email address).

**Password:** Every parent/guardian or student who wishes to access the Student Portal will need to set up their own password. If you did not receive an email with your password setup link, please contact me and I will resend it.

Currently, only parents/guardians and students in middle school or higher have received information on accessing their account in the Student Portal. If you are a parent of an elementary school student and would like your child to be able to access their account on their own, please let me know.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Upon registering for lessons, it is extremely important that I receive a valid **email address** and **mobile phone number** for all parents and guardians who wish to be active in their child's music lessons. If you wish to add more contacts than the registration form allows, please contact me directly with the information listed below.

Communications from Studio Cline will come from the following places:

- 🎵 [music@studiocline.com](mailto:music@studiocline.com) (for all emails)
- 🎵 888-732-6134 (automated SMS notifications)
- 🎵 310-876-2141 (calls and direct SMS communication)

**Please add the above details to your contact lists to be sure you receive all communications promptly.**

Parents and guardians of all students will be set up to receive email and text message (SMS) notifications, which will be used for the following purposes:

- 🎵 automated weekly reminders of lesson times
- 🎵 lesson cancellations
- 🎵 invoice details and payment reminders
- 🎵 weekly lesson follow-up with notes and assignments
- 🎵 delivery of other important lesson info

More details on these notifications can be found later in this document.

To contact Studio Cline, please use the following methods:

- 🎵 Email [music@studiocline.com](mailto:music@studiocline.com)
- 🎵 Call or text **310-876-2141**
- 🎵 Stop by Open School during the following times:
  - After school Monday to Friday
  - During school Wednesday to Friday

Please note that **you will NOT be able to reach me at the toll-free (888) number used for automated SMS notifications**. If you wish to contact me directly, please use the local (310) phone number.

## SCHEDULING & CALENDAR

At the start of lessons and again at the beginning of each semester, parents/guardians and students will select and commit to a regular weekly lesson time. It is encouraged that parents/guardians and students consider all other plans for the semester, including school events and any other extracurricular activities that may interfere with the selected lesson time. It is then the parent/guardian and student's responsibility for the student to attend all lessons at the scheduled time.

The details of the student's next scheduled lesson will be listed on the "Home" page of Student Portal. All lessons past lessons scheduled after June 5, 2018 and all future lessons will also be listed on the "Calendar" page of the Student Portal. Please note that, by default, the Calendar will display not only lessons scheduled for the current student, but also time slots available for make-up lessons and other important scheduling notices. Only lessons marked with the student's name and an icon displaying the outline of person's head and shoulders are lessons scheduled for the student related to whomever is accessing the Student Portal.

## REMINDERS

As indicated previously, parents and guardians of all students will be set up to receive automated weekly reminders of lesson times via email and text message (SMS) notifications:

- 🎵 The email, sent approximately **3 days prior** to the lesson, will serve as confirmation that the lesson will be held as planned and provide an opportunity for you to review your calendar and give notice of any scheduling conflicts.
- 🎵 The text message, sent the **day before** the lesson, will serve as a reminder to prepare for the student's lesson. Please make sure the student has packed everything needed for the lesson, especially sheet music and their instrument (when applicable).

If, for any reason, you find upon receiving a lesson reminder that your child is unable to attend the scheduled lesson, **please notify me immediately**. You may use the cancellation link in the email or text message, or contact me in one of the following ways:

- 🎵 Email me at [cancel@studiocline.com](mailto:cancel@studiocline.com)
- 🎵 Call or text me at **310-876-2141**

IMPORTANT NOTE: It is to be assumed that **if Open School is in session** on the day of a regularly scheduled lesson that **the lesson will take place as planned**, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU RECEIVE A LESSON REMINDER. Please check the Calendar in the Student Portal and/or the Open School calendar (<https://opencharter.org/calendar>) to be sure your child is ready to go on their lesson day.

## LESSON TYPES

### Small Group Lessons

Students are encouraged to start with **small group lessons**. This is absolutely the best environment to be introduced to an instrument and to learn the basic concepts of music.

Some of the other benefits of small group lessons include:

- ♪ learning skills that are better understood in a group setting
- ♪ discovering better how music is connected
- ♪ being motivated from peers
- ♪ having more fun learning

Groups are structured in a way that is both fun and engaging for all students. In addition, three types of group lessons exist to cater to each student's unique learning style:

#### ♪ Shared Lessons

*2-3 students share one lesson time with a more private instructional feel*

#### ♪ Mini Class Ensembles

*2-5 students share one lesson time all together as a whole group*

#### ♪ Band-Like Lesson Combos

*3-4 students share one lesson time that alternates between a private feel and the full group*

See <http://studioonline.com/groups> for more information about the different options.

Most small group lessons will be 30 minutes in length. More time will be allotted on a case-by-case basis for advanced groups and groups with more members.

### Private (1-on-1) Lessons

**Private (1-on-1) lessons** are best suited for students who either:

- ♪ Are highly committed to their instrument and exhibit above-average practicing, **OR**
- ♪ Struggle with the group setting, despite regular practice at home.

Students who culminate from Open School and wish to continue lessons with me may also choose private lessons.

Private lessons can be scheduled for 20, 30, 45, or 60 minutes. Longer lessons are reserved for more advanced students with longer attention spans and a better retention of knowledge (as more material will be covered).

For most elementary students who adequately prepare and arrive punctually, 20-30 minutes should be plenty of time for a private lesson, allowing for:

- ♪ a brief warm-up (2-3mins)
- ♪ a review of practiced material (5-10mins)
- ♪ introduction to new material (5-10mins)
- ♪ questions (2-3mins)

Any remaining time will be used to cover more advanced materials and techniques.

Middle school students and older are typically recommended to have 45- or 60-minute lessons as they are studying longer, more challenging pieces and the review of more advanced techniques is a regular part of the lesson time.

## PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

### Why Practice?

Practice outside of the weekly lessons is absolutely essential to a student's success. Natural talent comes second to practice every time. A student without natural talent who practices regularly will always surpass a student with natural talent who does not practice.

Furthermore, students who do not practice will often forget what is covered in the lessons from week-to-week. This creates for an immense lack of progress, which in turn means that the student will almost certainly feel as though:

- ♪ every lesson is just the same boring thing over and over  
*(because it will be)*
- ♪ he or she has little-to-no repertoire to play or perform, and  
*(because not much has been learned)*
- ♪ he or she is simply not capable of playing an instrument  
*(because the student will be overwhelmed and frustrated by the slow learning process)*

In 15 years of teaching, I have **never** had a case where any of the above statements were true for a student who practiced regularly.

### Practice Requirement

**At minimum**, every student should practice **5-10 minutes** a day for **at least 5 days a week**.

I find that students benefit a lot more from setting a goal of practicing a small amount each day as opposed to 1) having a practice goal that is too demanding to accomplish regularly or 2) practicing for an extended time just one or two days each week.

A smaller daily goal makes practice both:

- ♪ more likely to become a habit and
- ♪ easier to fit in even the busiest of schedules.

Obviously, the more a student practices, the better he or she will become. When the student has more time available on a given day, the practice session should be extended as much as possible.

## How to Practice

It is also important to consider that **just playing an instrument** for a few minutes **is not the same as practice**.

The primary keys to successful practice are as follows:

- ♪ **playing slow enough to play the correct notes the first time and every time**  
*(mistakes happen, but it takes more energy to correct a mistake than to avoid it in the first place)*
- ♪ **focusing on the most difficult sections**  
*(only occasionally playing through the whole song at once)*
- ♪ **practicing often enough to remember what was discussed in the lesson**  
*(you can only apply what you learn if you remember what it is you learned)*

Most every student has the tendency to want to play through the music too fast and always start from the beginning of the song every time. Both of these practices are counterintuitive and slow progress significantly.

### ASSIGNMENTS

Each student will be assigned materials to be worked on or completed over the course of the week in between lessons. The exact nature of the assignments will vary based on the instrument, the age of the student, and the student's skill level, but will often include:

- ♪ songs to practice
- ♪ exercises to build strength and dexterity (such as scales and rudiments)
- ♪ skill-building worksheets (to help with the understanding of the instrument)
- ♪ music theory worksheets (to develop a general understanding of the music being played)

**New for the fall of 2018**, assignments will be emailed to the parents (and students with an email address) typically within 24-48 hours of the completion of each lesson. All emailed assignments will also be available for viewing in the Student Portal.

It is highly suggested that parents sit down with their children each week to review any assignments and encourage the student to focus on what is assigned.

### STUDENT INCENTIVES (a.k.a. "Music Money")

Let's face it. Students are simply more motivated if there is a tangible reward. We could certainly say that musical success is its own reward, but success takes a long time!

This is why I have created a reward system to better celebrate my students' little, not-quite-as-tangible successes along the way.

This is what I call **Music Money**.

Students are rewarded with Music Money for accomplishing small, but important tasks such as practicing, remembering to bring their sheet music (and instrument, if applicable), focusing during the lesson, completing bonus activities, participating in recitals, and more.

At present, Music Money is “virtual” (only in writing) and usually determined by me after the completion of the lesson. Starting in August of 2018, I will be noting each student’s Music Money earnings and current Music Money balance in the lesson follow-up emails. *(I may at some point begin printing play money to hand to students, but this is still to be determined.)*

The youngest students (kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades) will also occasionally receive stickers as they are not yet as motivated by idea of “money”.

Once a student has earned a certain amount of Music Money, he or she can cash it in for music-related goodies, such as sheet music for a song they like, a special practice recording for a song to play along with, an opportunity to learn another instrument during their lesson, etc.

See <http://studioonline.com/music-money> for more details.

It is worth noting that, while I do occasionally give out candy and other non-music-related gifts, these are never as a reward for accomplishments, only as a treat for all students on special occasions.

## CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY

There is no question that music can be made without the use of modern gadgets. However, even in its purest form, music uses technology. Musical instruments in and of themselves are inventions and tools, created and used to perform the tasks of playing melodies, harmonies, and rhythm.

But, in this day in age where there are so many technological resources to aid in learning music, it is quite a huge benefit to the student to use what is available.

The primary app I recommend to all students is called **MuseScore**. This comes as a completely free cross-platform desktop app (works on any computer running Windows, Mac, Linux, etc) and also as a \$2 app called **MuseScore Songbook** for iPad/iPhone and Android. The desktop app is a lot more powerful, but the mobile app is a lot more simple and easy for students to use during practice. In the lesson follow-up emails, I will often include links to download the MuseScore files for students to practice with at home.

There are many advantages to using MuseScore as a practice tool. In particular, it makes it a lot easier for the student to understand difficult musical concepts and play the music as it is intended. For example, when working with paper sheet music, fingering aids can be added to the sheet music for simple songs to make sure students know what notes to play and how to play them. But, only in MuseScore can a student follow each note *as it is being played* to better learn how the notes sound.

Where MuseScore really excels as a practice tool, however, is with rhythm. Practically no visual aids (other than the sheet music itself) can be added to paper to make rhythm easier to understand. This makes it a difficult concept to grasp even in its simplest form. Weekly lessons play an important part in the process of learning rhythm as I am able to demonstrate how new rhythms are to be played. However, rhythm is also quite easy to forget, and I only have a short amount of time with the students each week. The MuseScore app gives students the ability to see and hear exactly what the rhythm looks and sounds like every time they practice.

To learn more, visit: <http://studioonline.com/musescore>

There are so many more great apps as well, such as metronomes and instrument-specific apps. A few of them are already discussed on my web site. More will be added soon! Bookmark the following link to see all the great resources I will share about: <http://studiocline.com/music-tech>

## PAYMENTS & INVOICING

Thanks to the new Student Portal, there are now more billing and payment options than ever. You can choose to pay per lesson, once a month, once a semester, or for a set number of lessons.

A new invoice will be emailed to you at the beginning of each term of payment, covering all lessons for the duration of the term of payment. Invoices will also be available for viewing online at any time through the Student Portal, which can be accessed by visiting: <http://music.studiocline.com/login>

Also new starting August 2018 are **advanced payment discounts for all lessons!** Advanced monthly payments will receive **5% off** the listed price. And, advanced payments for a whole semester or a package of at least 12 lessons will receive **10% off!**

**All payments must be made prior to the start of each lesson.** Payments are accepted in the form of cash, check, credit card, bank transfer, or PayPal Credit (a buy now, pay later option) and may be submitted in person or online via PayPal. If you are having difficulty affording a payment, please inquire about potential scholarships and payment plans.

## CANCELLATIONS

It is highly suggested that cancellations are kept to a minimum. Both in private and group lessons, cancellations are **disruptive to lesson plans** and have a **negative impact on motivation**, both for the individual missing the lesson and for the other members of any group in which the student participates.

Should the occasional unforeseen conflict with the student's scheduled lesson time arise, it is very important that I be contacted **by a parent or guardian as soon as the conflict arises** and, if possible, **at least 24 hours in advance** of the scheduled lesson time.

## MAKE-UP LESSONS

Starting August 2018, **make-up lessons are now available for all lesson types** and are easy to schedule online using the new Student Portal!

**Make-up credits** for the student will be issued in the Student Portal when lessons are canceled by the instructor or lessons are canceled by the parent or guardian at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled lesson time. These credits may be used any time within the course of the current school year.

To use make-up credits, follow these three simple steps:

1. Look on the calendar in the Student Portal for any lesson time that does NOT already have the student's name.
2. Check the title of the calendar entry for any specific lesson details.  
*For example, "Private Lesson", "Shared Lesson, Piano", or "Band Practice"*
3. Click on the calendar entry and then click "Register" and follow the on-screen instructions.

## Private Lesson Make-Up Options

For students taking private (1-on-1) lessons, the number of open slots indicated for the lesson time must also be considered. For example, “(Open, 0/1)”; the first number (0) being the number of students already booked for the given time slot.

Make-ups for private (1-on-1) lessons may only be scheduled in time slots that do not have other students already scheduled.

Ideally, private students will schedule make-up lessons for a time reserved for private lessons, which will state “**Private Lesson (Open, 0/1)**”. However, you may also schedule your lesson for any lesson slot marked as “Private or Shared Lesson” or simply marked as “Music Lesson”, **as long as the first of the two numbers in the entry title is “0”**.

*Examples: “Private or Shared Lesson (Open, 0/2)”, “Music Lesson (Open, 0/2)”, “Music Lesson (Open, 0/3)”*

## Shared, Group, and Band Lesson Make-Up Options

For shared, group, and band-like lessons, the ideal options for each of these lesson types are list below.

However, ***if you are unable to find an ideal time for a make-up lesson***, you may alternatively choose a “Private Lesson” time slot. The lesson will then be held for 10-15 minutes in a private (1-on-1) setting.

**For students taking Shared Lessons**, make-up lessons are ideally scheduled in a time slot marked “Shared Lesson” and labeled with the same instrument. For example, a student taking shared piano lessons will want to schedule a make-up lesson in a slot marked “Shared Lesson, Piano” if such a slot is available. However, if no “Shared Lesson” slot is available for the instrument the student plays, any slot marked “**Shared Lesson**” will be acceptable.

**For students taking Group Lessons**, it is *ideal* for the make-up lesson to also be in a group setting. Make-up lessons in a group setting MUST be scheduled for the same instrument. For example, a student taking a group ukulele class can only join a make-up lesson marked “**Group Lesson, Ukulele**”.

**For students taking Band-like Lessons**, a band-like setting is also the ideal setting for a make-up lesson. Unlike for other lesson types, not all absences for a band-like lesson will result in an available make-up lesson spot. This is due to the fact that band-like lessons rotate between instruction, full-band rehearsals, and individual practice sessions. Students can only join another band for make-up during an individual practice session. Look for “**Band Practice**” on the calendar to find a time for make-up.

## MISSED LESSONS

A missed lesson is defined as any scheduled lesson in which any of the following scenarios occur:

- 🎵 the lesson is canceled by the student, but I do not receive notice from a parent or guardian
- 🎵 the lesson is canceled by the parent or guardian less than 24 hours in advance
- 🎵 the lesson is unattended by the student without prior notice

**Missed private lessons may not be made up and advanced payments for missed group lessons will not be refunded or applied to future lessons.** More than three missed lessons will likely result in the student giving up his or her lesson time or spot in a group to another student.

## **LESSON TERM AND TERMINATION**

Lessons begin on the date of the first scheduled lesson and are billed weekly for every day Open Magnet Charter School is in session or a cancellation is made by either the teacher or a parent or guardian.

Parents and students may choose to discontinue lessons at any time for any reason. When canceling, students are encouraged to finish out their current term of paid lessons.

## **REFUNDS**

In the event that a lesson is canceled either by the instructor at any time or by a parent or guardian at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled lesson time and a suitable make-up lesson spot is not available, advanced payments for all unused lessons may be refunded at the end of the lesson term, applied to future lessons, or donated to the Resource & Reward Budget (see below).

Should a student discontinue lessons and choose not to attend all paid lessons, a refund for any unused lessons may be requested and will be issued only for lessons in which a new student is found as a replacement and after the time in which the new student's lessons begin. This amount may also be donated to the Resource & Reward Budget (below).

## **RESOURCE & REWARD BUDGET**

Money received from missed lessons will be placed in a special budget for general resources for all students, such as sheet music, instrument purchases and repairs, practice and participation rewards. Donations for this fund are also welcome and parents who cancel a student's lesson with advanced notice may also choose to contribute to this fund by applying their advanced payment to this fund (instead of requesting a refund or applying it to future lessons).

## **FURTHER LEARNING**

I highly encourage students and parents to seek out additional learning material on their own.

A great place to start is my web site, which has lots of great (and free) music learning resources:  
<http://music.studioline.com>

Here is also a list of some web sites with free sheet music and other resources:

<http://makingmusicfun.net>

<http://www.8notes.com>

<http://www.imslp.org>

<http://www.mutopiaproject.org>

[http://www.free-scores.com/index\\_uk.php3](http://www.free-scores.com/index_uk.php3)