

**Thompson Violin Studio**  
**Emily J. Thompson, owner and instructor**  
Policies and Practices  
2019-2020

## **Method**

My approach to teaching is based on the Suzuki Method, first developed by Shinichi Suzuki in Japan in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and quickly spread worldwide to establish a community of teachers, parents and students who are dedicated to nurturing the talent in each student. I have found this method useful in many ways, including:

- Teacher: having a productive sequence for building skills;
- Parent: giving concrete ways to help and have positive interactions;
- Student: building musical and performance skills along with technique.

Students at different ages will experience this method differently, but key elements include: a careful sequence of introducing concepts, frequent listening to reference recordings, constant review of previous pieces, playing by ear/memory (especially in the beginning), and an emphasis on full tone and healthy posture.

## **Lesson Scheduling**

- Lessons are given weekly for 30 minutes. Your time slot will be confirmed after acceptance into the studio. Returning students have priority when assigning time slots for the next year.
- Students will have an initial meeting/trial lesson to see how the teacher/student/parent relationship works and make sure it is the right fit before being accepted into regularly scheduled lessons.
- Lessons can be rescheduled in advance for occasional conflicts or illness and will be put into the same week if possible, or as soon as possible afterward.
- If the lesson time is missed without calling, it cannot be rescheduled after the fact. Lesson time will not be made up for late arrivals.

## **Payment**

- Lesson payments are collected through Fons, an online scheduling and billing software. During the school year, a flat fee will be charged monthly. During the summer, the student will be charged for each lesson individually.
- The school year includes an average of four lessons per month, as well as a group lesson and recital at the end of each semester, along with special practice incentives.
- Being accepted into a lesson time assumes that you will continue lessons throughout the school year. If, under rare circumstances, the student must discontinue, the current month's fee is non-refundable.
- The fall semester includes 16 weeks, starting with two lessons in August and two weeks off in December. Payments begin in September and continue through May. There are 20

weeks of private lessons January through May. Lessons that are cancelled in advance due to sickness or conflicts need to be rescheduled by the parent by the end of the semester.

- Lessons are available and encouraged over the summer, with flexible scheduling options.

***The current monthly rate for Thompson Violin Studio is \$100.***

### **Parent Responsibilities**

- **Be present at the lesson time.** For younger students (K-4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade), it is best if the parent can stay in the room during the lesson to understand the instructions and practice assignments and generally assist at home. For older students (6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade), the parent should come in regularly for at least the last 5-10 minutes of the lesson to hear how the student is progressing and discuss any questions. This also helps with timely transition between students, so that any needed updates or discussion with the teacher is not running over into the next lesson time.
- **Provide a positive environment at home for daily practice.** Before starting lessons, consider if you can have a quiet, non-rushed time period set aside during your family's daily schedule for practicing. It might be different times throughout the week, but the goal is to have 6 days of practice per week for about as long as the lesson, depending on age and attention span. At the very beginning or with very young students, two shorter sessions per day may work better.
- **Listen to music and attend concerts as much as possible.** Students have CDs that go with their books that they should listen to multiple times per week. Other great violin and classical music is available on streaming apps or on 94.1 FM. The Fort Wayne Philharmonic offers free tickets for children with paid adults at their [Masterworks Series](#) concerts. They also host special kid-friendly concerts in their [Family Series](#).

### **Student Responsibilities**

- Be attentive and respectful during the lesson time.
- Be willing to listen and try new things you have not done before, and possibly change things you have done for a while.
- Follow practice assignments at home and write down your practice minutes.
- Practice daily. Regular quality time with your instrument in your hands is the only way to make the progress you want. Try to concentrate on one thing to do your very best at, while playing any scale or piece. Check your posture every time you start playing.
- Listen to recordings and/or watch professional performance videos every day.
- Be patient and work on singing, clapping, counting, and naming notes when reading new music so that you learn everything accurately.

## **Required Books**

[Suzuki Violin School Book 1 with CD](#) or equivalent book for higher levels  
[Musicians Practice Planner](#)

Additional scales or supplemental books as assigned

### **Parent reading assignment:**

[Beyond the Music Lesson: Habits of Successful Suzuki Families](#)

### **Free articles and podcasts:**

<https://suzukiassociation.org/about/suzuki-method/>

<http://www.suzukitriangle.com>

<http://teachsuzuki.com>

<https://www.imtex.info/istex/mediathek2>

## **Equipment**

There are a few shops in the tri-state area that have quality violin outfits for sale and rent:

In Fort Wayne: [Quinlan and Fabish](#): 260-482-9669 (also sell books, strings, and accessories)

Outside Fort Wayne (can ship rental instruments, but also worth driving to when purchasing upgraded instruments):

<https://www.sharmusic.com/Rentals/> (Ann Arbor)

<http://www.theloftviolinshop.com> (Columbus, OH)

Other recommended equipment:

[Korg TM-60 Metronome/Tuner](#)

Music stand: [Peak SMS-20](#) or [Manhasset Model #48](#)

Free music apps: gstrings - Guitar tuning app and Pro Metronome

The student may be asked to purchase a different chin rest and shoulder rest as determined by the teacher. Most students switch to either Wittner center mount or Flesch center mount (no hump) chin rests. For standard shoulder rests, the Everest EZ (black) or ES (colors) is usually recommended, or the Kun shoulder rest for students with narrow shoulders. You are encouraged to go try out shoulder rests with your instrument at a store if possible.

Thompson Violin Studio has no financial relationship with any of the vendors listed here. Please consult with the teacher before making any instrument purchases to make sure you are getting the right size and quality. It is important that you buy from a reputable instrument dealer that stands behind their instruments.