

# NEIL GILFILLAN

2610 Glenbrook Ct  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

neilgilfillan@gmail.com  
www.neilgilfillan.com  
817.760.9906

## STUDIO HANDBOOK

I am thrilled that you have decided to take cello, and I look forward to learning and working together! Here are a few terms and agreements to review to ensure that we are on the same page as we begin lessons:

### 1. Obtaining Instrument and Accessories

**\*\*Please consult with me about plans to obtain an instrument and materials BEFORE doing so.\*\***

Locally, you may visit Shar Music in Ann Arbor. It is very important to make sure you have the correct size of instrument. The staff at Shar is quite knowledgeable and will assist in fitting you and/or your child to an instrument. Throughout the year, I will check in with you about your child and his or her changing size needs.

Some necessary accessories: rosin, cleaning cloth, metronome/tuner, pencil, practice planner/notebook, sheet music (to be determined in the lesson), recordings (to be determined in the lesson)

**\*\*Please come to your lesson prepared!** Bring your instrument, sheet music, and notebook to every lesson. **Failure to do so may result in being turned away from your lesson\*\***

### 2. Arrival

Please arrive 5 minutes early to your lesson. If you are late, your lesson will still end at its scheduled time. Whether or not I have students before or after your lesson time, it will not be possible for me to run late. If you are going to be more than a few minutes late, please text and let me know, since I may be teaching. My phone number is provided at the top of this sheet. When you arrive, feel free to come down 5 minutes before your lesson start unpacking quietly while the previous lesson is wrapped up.

### 3. Practice

Your practice time at home is essential to your child's overall progress. There is only so much that we can do in lessons if the student is not practicing at home. If practicing at home is a struggle, which is normal, please feel free to communicate with me via email or phone so that I may offer some suggestions or ideas. Please let me know about this ahead of time instead of using lesson time, so that I may best prepare for your child.

My expectation of my students is that their sessions at home run the length of their lesson with me, at least 5 times per week.

### 4. Performance Opportunities

**Group classes** are an opportunity for your child to get together with other students from the studio and perform and learn together. Students will review pieces they have learned in their private lessons, learn some Music Theory, and benefit from the social dynamic that group lessons have to offer. These will be offered 24 out of the 36 weeks of lessons. As of right now, group classes are offered to those who sign up.

# STUDIO HANDBOOK

**Improvisation/Alternative Styles Workshops** are offered eight times this school year. Here, we will go over the skills needed to be a 21st century string player, including blues scales, rock rhythms, basic music theory, chop techniques, and chord changes. Students will play original compositions, improvise their own tunes, and learn how to play modern songs on their instrument in a jam session with others.

**Recitals** will be scheduled twice per year, once a semester. Participation is expected for everyone. This is their opportunity to take what they studied over the semester and share it with others.

**Outreach** offers 3 more performing experiences and provides the opportunity for your child to use their skills to make a positive impact on our community.

## 5. General Lesson Protocol

-For everyone's health in the studio, if your child is sick and/or missed school due to illness, please cancel your lesson or switch with another studiomate if possible.

**Please do not show up sick.** I reserve the right to turn away you or your child if either show up sick to the lesson. This includes but is not limited to: flu, common cold, pink eye, head lice, bed bugs, etc.

- It is important for the parent (of students ~13yo and under) to attend the lesson and take notes during the lesson for the student's reference and instruction at home

-If there were any situations that interfered with last week's practicing (or other relevant information such as the death of a family member, pet, etc.) please inform me via email, phone, or at the beginning of the lesson if the situation requires

-Please let me know if your child is facing any learning challenges that would be relevant for me to know about in a lesson situation. This gives me a chance to prepare and make the most of our lesson time.

-While I do request parental attendance in the lessons, I do also request awareness from the parent to know when they are being disruptive rather than helpful.

## 6. Student Responsibilities

-Bring instrument, shoulder rest, foot chart (if applicable) rosin, music, and notebook to each lesson

-Be ready to learn and cooperate during lesson

-Treat parent/guardian with respect and cooperate during home practice

## STUDIO HANDBOOK

- Practice [length of lesson time] five days per week, minimum
- Listen daily to the pieces you are working on
- Please wash hands before lesson and daily practice, and **keep nails short!**

### 7. Parent Responsibilities

- Pay on time; If something prevents you from paying on time, please let me know.
- Refrain from creating disruptions during lessons, unless I request your involvement. Hearing instruction from two different “teachers” can be conflicting while a student is learning something new.
- Take notes or video record each lesson, for your son’s/daughter’s benefit.
- Help your son/daughter organize and set aside time for daily home practice.
- Encourage your son/daughter to listen to recording of current pieces daily.
- Encourage the completion of all lesson assignments—help keep them motivated and accountable!
- Please keep the lines of communication open and active--** I love hearing from you about your child's practice and progress on the home front, as well as any feedback you have about how things are going in the lesson from your perspective.  
**Feel free to email or call me any time with your thoughts and comments!**

### 8. Teacher Responsibilities

I provide each student with a supportive and informative approach that develops problem solving and inquisitive but educated practice habits. These skills and habits set students up for success.

I seek to nurture students beyond the music we study together. Lessons provide an environment for fun, discovery, and freedom of self-expression, but also an exercise of discipline that applies beyond the scope of learning an instrument. These building blocks of the lesson further set students up for success in everyday life.