

# Sarah Howell's Private Instruction

Lesson Information and Business Policies  
2023-2024 Peachtree Learning Center

## ➤ *Schedule*

Schedule includes weekly lessons and is based on Peachtree's calendar (can be found on [peachtreelearningcenter.com](http://peachtreelearningcenter.com), and it includes breaks and other holidays. You will be committing to lessons for the entire semester.

## ➤ *Lesson Rates/Financial Information*

\$22 30 minute private lesson

\$44 one hour private lesson

- Monthly bills are computed by taking a full semester's worth of lessons and prorating it out over 5 invoices (Aug-Dec, Jan-May), so each month's bill is the same amount per semester. Invoices are sent via email during the first week of the month, and are due upon receipt. Payment can be made via PayPal, Venmo, check, or cash.

## ➤ *Cancellation Policy*

As part of my contract with Peachtree Learning Center, I am required to support the following cancellation policies. In the event of a missed lesson, please note the following:

- Tuition is only refunded in the event of the instructor's absence and a make-up lesson cannot be scheduled.
- If you know in advance (a minimum of 24 hours' notice) that you will be absent, your instructor will do her best to have a make-up lesson time available. She is not obliged to offer a refund in the event of the student's absence.
- If your child becomes sick and needs to be absent, please notify your instructor as soon as possible. Your instructor will do her best to schedule a make-up lesson, but if that is not possible, he/she is not required to issue a refund.

Per our insurance policy, if Peachtree Learning Center has to close due to inclement weather, every activity held in the building that day must be cancelled. If a make-up lesson cannot be provided, the student will be credited for that lesson.

If there is stormy weather (possible tornados, etc.), Peachtree may not have time to make a

call on cancellation. This would be left up to the teacher & parent. If a teacher or parent feels unsafe traveling, a make-up lesson will be offered.

During the summer and other extended breaks Sarah may offer lessons, but we will schedule those outside of Peachtree's school calendar.

### ➤ *Practice Requirements*

Practicing is vital to a student's musical training. If there is no practice, there won't be progress. The work begins with the teacher – it is completed in the practice room. Students will progress best when they practice every day, as repetition is the key. Length of practice sessions will vary with the student's skill, starting as small as 15 minutes per day. The student will have an assignment sheet listing the coming week's practice expectations. A parent should be involved in the student's practice for encouragement and reminders of what was talked about in the lesson. Motivational incentives will be given to help encourage young students in this discipline!

Listening to music is also very important for a child's musical development, especially the songs he/she is working on. Songs to listen to will be assigned each week and will be recorded in the student's practice book.

### ➤ *Parent Involvement*

You as a parent are your child's #1 fan, and the main motivator for them to persevere and excel!

It is always helpful for you to attend lessons with your child. It is encouraging to your child, but also it enables you to know how to help your child at home. Parents are welcome in lessons, and you are encouraged to take notes, videos, or pictures; anything that might help you both remember what is talked about at home! Young babies are welcome to sit in the lesson with Mom, as long as they can be quietly engaged and not distracting to the student.

Helping your child during practice time can also be very motivating and encouraging. This is the time to remind your child what was discussed and corrected during that week's lesson and to encourage his/her progress. Pointing out mistakes during practice and helping correct them is very useful, and this will keep your student accountable. I will give you specific things to watch out for every week.

### ➤ *Items Needed*

#### **Every student**

You should have a **metronome/tuner**, preferably not just an app on a device (although those are handy, they can often lead to distractions by incoming messages and alerts). I recommend the Korg metronome/tuner, found at any music store or website. Mandolinists should have a guitar clip-on tuner. D'Addario makes a good, low profile one.

**Notebook!** I will sell notebooks to younger students to incorporate a sticker reward system and practice accountability section. Older students (above age 10) should bring a notebook for lesson notes and assignments to each lesson. Specific music books will be discussed individually.

You will, of course, need an **instrument!** It is important that the purchased instrument is of high quality, as it can be frustrating for a young child to work hard on their craft and be inhibited by the quality of the instrument they are playing. Feel free to contact me for recommendations in where to purchase or rent violins or mandolins.

Mom & Dad's investment in their young child's instrument can be very motivating to their children. When your young student sees you make a sacrifice for the sake of investing in their craft and talent development, they realize how seriously you are taking their musical education, and feel very valued and loved. In return, they will value the instrument, lessons, and time practicing at home all the more.

If you are an older student, they will always put great value in an instrument invested in by the parents. As you increase the quality of your instrument through your years of training, this also provides a wonderful opportunity for a teenager to start investing themselves in their musical pursuit. The importance of having quality equipment to serve your skill is true for all disciplines of training or career launch.

## **Violin**

Strings: "Dominant" made by Tomastik Infeld. This can vary the more advanced the instrument is, but these are excellent go-tos. Make sure you purchase the right size for your instrument. Be prepared to change strings at least once a year.

Rosin: Salchow

Bow rehair: be prepared to rehair your bow at least once a year. For cheaper or beginner bows, it might be the same value to just replace the bow.

Shoulder Rest and Chin Rest: this is all very personal and will be discussed on an individual basis.

## **Mandolin**

A strap that is attached at exactly the right height for each student is vital. I often help students determine the strap length they need, and it is common to make adjustments as children grow.

Picks: Jim Dunlop Primetone Guitar Picks (smooth, 1.5) as beginner picks or backup picks, found at a local music store or any website. Ideally, you would be ready to invest in the Blue Chip Pick 55 ([bluechippick.net](http://bluechippick.net) or found at Carter Vintage Guitars in Nashville) at least by the end of your first year of playing, if you do not start out with one.

Strings: D'Addario EJ74, D'Addario XT 11-40, D'Addario EJM74 (nickel). If there's an option, choose medium gauge. Be prepared to change strings 2 or 3 times a year.

Pickups: if you plan to perform much outside of the annual recital (which is the goal!), I HIGHLY recommend getting a pickup installed in your instrument. This allows you to be directly plugged into the sound system, which will give you a 90% better chance of actually being heard in any live performance situation. Mandolins are notoriously hard to mic, and it is really best to be able to plug in. When you are ready and want to have one installed, I will share a sheet of recommended brands (as with everything, it can get specific and there are a lot of cheap ones out there that aren't worth the price).

### ➤ *Performing*

As a growing musician it is very important for your child to learn to play in public and share their music with others. Recitals are designed to keep the student accountable in his progress, challenge him to perform at his/her best, and be motivating. I love to offer performance opportunities for my students, but there is also an importance in having frequent "home recitals". This could be simply playing a scale for Dad after work, showing siblings the proper bow hold, or inviting Granddad, Grandmom and cousins to come watch songs that have been mastered! "Home audiences" are the most relaxed and gracious because the student already knows that he/she is accepted and loved by all there!

Each student is required to participate in Peachtree's Spring Recitals (see Peachtree's website for the dates). Advanced students will be invited to perform in an advanced recital in the month of November. Younger students should attend, as it is inspiring and encouraging to watch older, more advanced players perform.

Other great musical activities to do are to go to concerts as often as you can! Live music is always a fun thing for the whole family to go watch, and a young musician can learn a lot just from sitting in the audience! Check out the Nashville Symphony's season of children's concerts called the Pied Piper series. They also provide educational field trip opportunities through the school year. Also, keep your eyes open for events here at Peachtree!

### ➤ *Communication*

Please feel free to talk to me at any time with any question or concern. I also want my students to feel like they can come to me with any questions or concerns. As your teacher, I am here to help you excel, and I am honored to partner with the parents of each family in the musical and artistic training of their children.

### ➤ *Teacher's Pledge*

I promise to teach each student to the best of my abilities. I promise to be fair and professional in all my dealings with the student. I promise to continue diligently developing my skills as a violinist and mandolinist so that I can pass on as much musical ability as I am able. I promise to treat each student as I would like to be treated. I promise

to discover what motivates and encourages each student in order to meet his/her individual needs. I promise to be available to each of my students and his/her parents - feel free to call or email me at any time with questions!

### ➤ *Student/Parent Pledge*

Once a parent has read and agree to these policies and procedures, please sign the "Policies Pledge" on your student's registration sheet and retain this information for your personal records. Please give the registration sheet to me at your first lesson, or email a scanned copy.

### ➤ *Sarah's Contact Information*

Cell phone #: 931-881-5542 (call or text)

Email address: [sarahmerrittmusic@gmail.com](mailto:sarahmerrittmusic@gmail.com)

Facebook/YouTube Music Pages: @sarahmerrittmusic, @aster.music.official

Instagram: @sarah.stringplayer, @aster.music.official

# Sarah Howell's Private Instruction

Registration Form ~ 2023-2024 Peachtree Learning Center

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Birth Date and School Grade: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Email Address (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

*(The provided email(s) will be added to Peachtree's email list for newsletters and any last-minute cancellation information. Note: information will be primarily communicated via email for lessons and Peachtree in general.)*

Cell Number (indicate name): \_\_\_\_\_

## **Parental Agreement:**

I have read and agree with the policies and procedures given to me by my child's teacher, Sarah Howell, and I understand they are in accordance with Peachtree Learning Center policies. I will not hold Sarah Merritt or Peachtree Learning Center responsible if me or my student contracts the COVID-19 virus in the vicinity of Peachtree.

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*Parent's Signature and Date*

## **Practice Agreement** (applicable only to those 12 and up):

I, the student, agrees to invest my personal time at home per practice schedule we discuss in lessons, barring illness or travel, to the best of my ability.

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*Student's Signature and Date*