

Robby Burns Lesson Handbook and Contract 2016-2017

Schedule, Payment, Cancellation

Your child will receive weekly lessons during the months of the school year, starting on September 1st, 2016 and progressing throughout June 2017. A monthly tuition will be due during the first lesson of each month, depending on the length of your lesson.

Weekly 30 minute lesson - \$120 dollars a month
Weekly 45 minute lesson - \$180 dollars a month
Weekly 60 minute lesson - \$240 dollars a month

Checks are preferred but cash is acceptable. Credit cards are also acceptable but require a \$3 transaction fee. The monthly tuition is a flat rate that remains the same every month. Lesson payments that are not received by the second lesson of the month will require a credit card transaction, including the \$3 fee.

Lessons can be discontinued at any time as long as payment for the rest of the current month is honored. I am not able to guarantee that the same time slot will be available to you if you take a break and later wish to resume.

Once we establish a weekly time slot, we will meet every week during that time except for the dates below, which are holidays and breaks during which many families travel. The tuition fee is flat every month, even during months where you receive one more or one less than the typical four lessons. Lessons that are cancelled by you or by myself will require a make up lesson. Lessons that fall on the holidays below do not require make up lessons.

Note: In rare cases, a particular holiday may interfere with more than one of your lesson time slots during a single month. When this particular situation occurs, these lessons are treated like makeups so that you are always ensured a minimum of three lessons in a month.

Halloween (October 31st), Thanksgiving Break (November 23-26th), Winter Break (December 24th—January 1st), Spring Break (April 10-15th), Memorial Day (May 29th)

I keep track of missed lessons but you are responsible for scheduling the make up lessons. Cancelled lessons that I am not informed about within a reasonable amount of time in advance (at least eight hours) are considered “no shows.” Make up lessons are not received in this case.

Inclement Weather

Inclement weather cancellations will follow the Howard County Public School System announcements for that particular day. If school is not closed that day, it is

the parent's responsibility to call and cancel lessons if he/she feels the roads are unsafe. Lessons cancelled due to inclement weather require makeup lessons.

Materials and Preparation

Unlike most other instruments, percussion is a *family* of instruments, all of which will be touched upon throughout the course of your child's study. This means that there is a range of materials required for lessons. See below for a general list of required books, sticks, mallets, and instruments that your child will need. When our lessons begin, I will tell you specifically which materials your child will need at the start. As your child develops their skills, a wider variety of instruments and books will be required. Often a particular area of interest of the student will spur the recommendation of a new material. I always try to keep the cost of these requirements down but please keep in mind that unless I state otherwise, these materials are necessary parts of our lessons and students are expected to come to all lessons prepared with them.

I understand that sometimes things happen, but as a general rule, students must come with the required materials. It is better for a student to not come to a lesson than to show up without sticks.

I recommend steveweissmusic.com and percussionsource.com for buying materials. Local music stores like Music and Arts Center and Mike's Music are also recommended and usually stock all of the materials below.

Frequently Required Instruments:

We can discuss appropriate models and price ranges that suite your needs.

- *Snare drum*
- *Mallet instrument* (a small xylophone or marimba is ideal, but a small bell set can work if it is all that is available)
- *Drum set*

Frequently Required Sticks and Mallets:

- *Concert snare drum sticks* (Vic Firth Tim Genis model)
- *Drum set sticks* (Vic Firth 5A model)
- *Hard mallets for use on xylophone and bells* (Innovative Percussion IP905 James Ross model)
- *Yarn marimba mallets* (Vic Firth Robert Van Sice M113 model)

Frequently Required Books:

This list varies extremely by the student's starting ability. Students will always be working out of a minimum of about four method books. Most of my students start with some of the following methods and then progress on to more advanced material.

- *Alfred's Beginning Snare Drum Method*, Sandy Feldstein, Dave Black
- *Alfred's Beginning Drum Set Method*, Sandy Feldstein, Dave Black
- *Intermediate Snare Drum Studies*, Mitchell Peters
- *Fundamental Method for Mallets*, Mitchell Peters
- *Developing Dexterity*, Mitchell Peters
- *Modern Method for Timpani*, Saul Goodman

Frequently Required Tools:

- *Practice journal.* This can be as simple as a physical notebook or the notes app on your child's phone. I also take notes on student assignments each week and this can be emailed to you by request. Unfortunately, I have not found a way to automate this yet.
- *Metronome.* A metronome is required for lessons. It must be a model that can handle odd time signatures and subdivide the beat multiple ways. I strongly recommend installing the free app called Tempo on your child's mobile device. It is preferred that students bring the metronome to each lesson.

Practice Expectations

I will always set specific goals for my students to meet the following week. These are flexible in range. An objective could be stated as loosely as "learn this piece up to the starred section" or it could be stated as specifically as "play measures eight through twenty at 78 beats per minute without any hesitations." Setting goals is an essential, but flexible, part of the process. I am always learning and testing the limits of my students. A student should never be afraid to walk into a lesson if they have not met the terms of my objectives precisely, but they should be able to show **consistent improvement** on their various assignments on a weekly basis. Students who show hard work ethic and steady improvement are much more successful in the long run than students with natural music aptitude and inconsistent habits.

When I recognize a pattern of unpreparedness, I will generally address this with the student a few times first before then addressing it with the parent. Once addressed with the parent, if patterns of unpreparedness continue, I reserve the choice to end our lessons at the end of the month and offer the time slot to someone else.

Performing Expectations

All of the skills your child works to achieve will be most rewarding when expressed through musical performance, both solo, and with others. It is my wish that students of mine are involved with a variety of performing opportunities outside of our lessons. Usually, this includes the school band. I also **strongly** urge my students to participate in the county and state wide Solo Ensemble Festival as well as to audition for the county and All-State honor ensembles in the fall. I will work with you to determine the appropriate music for these events.

Miscellaneous Information

To Leave or to Stay

Ideally, the parent is as involved with the lesson as the child, particularly in early ages. When a parent learns the instrument alongside the student, they can be better equipped to encourage and guide their child through the most effective practice habits. This can also serve as an added support and accountability for the child.

I also understand that some students are more comfortable or motivated when a parent is not present. Regardless of your preference, I can accommodate it. The

studio is a little cramped due to the amount of instruments it stores, but there is always at least one seat available for an extra observer. The living room of my home is a common waiting room area. It has comfortable couches and a television that I typically play musical related video content on during lesson hours. You are welcome to change the volume on the remote if you like.

I usually usher lessons in and out through the front door from an intercom. Please ring the doorbell when you arrive, but if you do not receive a timely response, and it is your lesson time, you are welcome to enter into the waiting room area on your own. You are always welcome to open the door for the next student as well if you are comfortable.

Families are welcome to spread out in the common area to do homework or relax. There is also a Giant Food, a library, and a lake, all within walking distance of my house if you would prefer to drop off your student. You can also wait in your car if you prefer.

Parking

Parking is not assigned on my street but I try to be respectful of some of my neighbor's preferences. When you have your first lesson, we can discuss the best parking options, all of which are no more than 100 feet from my house.

My Contact Information

Email: robby@robbyburns.com

I fully understand and I fully agree to the policies above.

Parent Name: sign and print

Date

Student Name: sign and print

Date

Your Contact Information

Child's Full Name: _____
Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Parent #1 Full Name: _____
Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Parent #2 Full Name: _____
Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

If I find myself in a situation where I need to reschedule a lesson, what is the quickest and most reliable method for me to contact you?

Text message Email Some other method

Please specify the preferred parent that I contact first when arranging our schedule.

Parent #1 Parent #2