

## *It's much more than just music...*

In a few years with the HeartStrings program, your child will greatly expand their musical abilities.

**And,** they'll learn incredible life skills that go far beyond music.

*These life skills are part of our curriculum:*

- Confidence
- Character development
- Communication and self-expression
- Learning to be a “talented learner”
- Problem solving and concentration
- Discipline—how to use discipline to meet personal goals
- Leadership and teamwork skills
- Emotional sensitivity and awareness of others
- Cultivation of a passion for lifelong learning and self-development
- Being able to say, “I know the process for getting really good at something”

*plus, these musical skills:*

- Creativity, artistry, and self-expression
- Playing by ear
- Classical technique
- Rock/Pop/Fiddling/Jamming
- Music reading
- Improvisation (making up their own music)
- Comfort with performing
- Ability to play with others
- Joyful music-making for life!

***We believe that a child's success and happiness in***

***life depends on the environment their parents set up for the them.***

HeartStrings helps YOU (the Parent) make music, learning, and expression a substantial part of your child's world...

**\*\*To minimize the amount of time our students spend traveling, HeartStrings lessons and group events/workshops will be primarily online this year, with possible special in-person lessons or events as the opportunities arise.\*\***

## **HeartStrings Academy Info and Policies 2025-2026**

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# 1. Parent Involvement and Responsibilities:

- **Home Environment**
- **Home Practice**
- **Lesson Attendance**

The home environment you set up is a key factor in your child's progress. We'll show you how to set up a rich musical home environment, and how to achieve daily, joyful practice with your child.

- **Parents attend all lessons** for students who are not yet independent learners. (Children can become independent learners at any age—on average, around age 12.)
- The parent is the lesson note-taker and home practice assistant.
- A portion of each lesson may be dedicated to coaching the parent on their home responsibilities.
- For children below age 7, attention span often only allows for a short lesson—in this case, much of the lesson may be dedicated to the parent.
- An occasional lesson may be used as a parent/teacher conference without the child. Parents often find that these are incredibly valuable. Some or all of your “flex lessons” may be used for this purpose.

## **You, the parent, support your child by providing the following:**

- **DAILY & JOYFUL** practice with your child. Yes. You practice together. It may not always feel easy to achieve the “daily” part, or the “joyful” part, but “daily and joyful” is even more important than advancement in repertoire! Ironically, if you succeed in finding daily, joyful practice, the achievements will come. So how do you find Daily and Joyful practice? Your teacher will dedicate a few minutes of every lesson to coaching you on how to achieve this with your child.
- **Scheduling a regular, daily, IDEAL time to practice** How long? 5-30 mins at first, and then work up to practicing as long as your lesson. It's much easier to get kids to practice if it becomes a daily expected habit. HeartStrings requires our students/parents to practice daily together on the assignments given in the lesson. However, joyful practice trumps even the teacher's assignments, so be creative about making it joyful, and let your teacher know if you didn't get to all of the assignments in order to have a lot of fun. Also, take one day off per week to rest!
- **Providing a comfortable, well-lit, place to practice** that is inspiring and free from distractions.
- **Purchasing the necessary supplies:**
  - a quality instrument, bow and case (not from Ebay) —ask your teacher
  - a music player or sound system + recordings as assigned
  - a home video recording and playback system (this can be a smartphone)
  - a nail clipper in the case (and personal daily parental manicure service)
  - a music stand
  - music as assigned
  - strings, shoulder rest, rosin, etc., as needed.
- **Cultivating a music playlist** (with your teacher's help) and **playing it every day.**
- **Reading Shinichi Suzuki's beautiful book(s) “Nurtured by Love,” and/or “Ability Development from Age Zero”** — they're a quick read (available at

[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com))

- **Encouragement!** Children need our encouragement much more than they need criticism, so give it freely as they progress, just as you would encourage a baby taking her first steps. **Show that you are interested in their music, and they will be much more interested in improving.**
- **Parent/Teacher communication is encouraged and essential to our work together.** Please ask questions (sometimes lots of questions!) In order to give your child the best experience possible, please also make a point of letting the teacher know anything important by email/phone before the lesson, or at the beginning of the lesson. If you encounter any difficulties or problems along the way with home practice (it's normal, and we can help!), or if there's confusion about an assignment, confusion about what your teacher is doing in the lesson, or any questions or concerns of any kind, please discuss it with your teacher at the lesson, email your teacher, or text your teacher to set up a time to chat on the phone.
- **Send videos via text throughout the week** of the student's practice, and your instructor will provide feedback!

## 2. Individual Lesson Procedures

Each year, you will receive **37 total lessons** (32 individual lessons and 5 "flex lessons" to be scheduled as needed in the Summer, during the year as extra lessons, or as parent lessons or conferences when you need help with how to practice at home). For parents of children who are not yet independent practicers (under age 12), the lesson is as much for you as it is for your child. Here are a few things you can do to maximize you and your child's lesson experience:

1. Please attend regularly! Prompt attendance at lessons, equipped with instrument, parent notebook, teacher/student notebook, pencil, and repertoire books, ensures a consistent experience for your child, so they can focus on the learning.
2. Please arrive at your "get ready" time, which is 5-10 minutes before the actual lesson time.
3. Help your child get ready. Rosin their bow. Put the shoulder rest on the violin.
4. Please keep a fingernail clipper in the, and trim your child's nails daily before playing.
5. For online lessons, please get the violin and music ready 10 minutes before the lesson and enter Discord to watch the last few minutes of the lesson before you. For in person lessons, five minutes before your lesson time, please come quietly into the studio area, with violin in rest position, and observe the last five minutes of the lesson before yours. Please help your child **have this moment of calm before their lesson begins**. The moment of calm helps them get ready to learn, especially since traffic, parking, etc. can be rushed and hectic for the parent and child. Also **observing** a small part of the previous lesson is part of our program for many reasons—one being that many things like lesson behavior, violin techniques, etc., are passed along more easily through observation. Once you've entered the teaching space, the teacher is very aware that you are there, and is often choosing things they want your child to see and hear.
6. When the previous lesson is finished, your child holds their violin and bow in rest position and greets the teacher with a polite "hello."
7. Please take careful notes and ask questions so that you're clear about exactly what

to do in your daily home practice together.

8. The last five minutes of each lesson may often be dedicated to wrapping things up, and reviewing and writing down assignments. The student and teacher thank each other with a musical bow, and then you help your child pack up the violin and leave the studio quietly as the next lesson begins (or stay and observe a bit more, if you would like to).
9. Please don't bring food or drink into in person lessons, and if you bring younger siblings (they are most welcome!), please bring something to keep them occupied during the lesson.

**\*Please note that lessons cannot be extended for late arrivals.**

### **3. HeartString Events and Workshops:**

Additional events and workshops will be scheduled throughout the year and are included with your tuition at no additional cost. These opportunities are part of the program as a whole and will include collaborations with other teachers and social interaction with students from other studios.

Attendance and participation is essential to our work together! "The game" of music is played with others—fellow musicians and audience members. It's an often-overlooked but important part of music lessons.

### **4. Missed Lessons and Missed Group Event Policies:**

If your Teacher misses, you are entitled to a makeup or a tuition credit on your account.

If the Student misses, you lose the lesson. There are no make-ups for student-missed lessons or missed group events.

The teachers in our program are accomplished performers and occasionally concerts or touring come up which may cause a lesson conflict. **Lessons missed by the teacher at any time for any reason will be rescheduled at a mutually agreed upon time, usually within the week of the original lesson, and if a mutually agreed upon make-up time is not found, the student will receive a credit on their account for the price of one lesson.**

The Calendar is finalized at the beginning of the school year—**please take note of the weeks we don't have lessons.**

**Missed lessons by the student will not be made up, and tuition will not be refunded.** If you know ahead of time that you will miss, please let your teacher know at the beginning of the term, or as soon as you know. Your teacher is not obligated, but may attempt to reschedule if there is a space in their schedule. For last-minute illnesses, please text as soon as you know—one day prior if possible. If texting day-of lesson, please text at least one hour beforehand.

**Swapping Lessons:** Students who know in advance that they'll miss a lesson may switch lessons with another student. A list of students' contact info and lesson times will be available through a shared Google calendar (To view this calendar, a Gmail address is not required--you can create a login with any email! Please contact us if you require any assistance with getting set-up to view the calendar.) Find a time that works

for you on the Google Calendar, and text or call the corresponding parent to see if the swap is possible. If the parent confirms they can swap with you, text a confirmation of the swap to your instructor, the Administrative Assistant, and the other parent.

## 5. Registration, etc.

Register online with a credit card at [HeartStringsAcademy.com/enroll](https://HeartStringsAcademy.com/enroll) or in person (must be **before the registration deadline for in person registration**) by cash/check. A payment plan is available with online registrations only and can be charged monthly, quarterly, or biannually.

**Schedule:** Please see your teacher’s published calendar for times and dates of all group activities and for a schedule of individual lesson weeks. You will schedule your individual lesson day and time before you register.

**Tuition:** The yearly tuition includes a total of 37 lessons (32 scheduled lessons and 5 “flex” lessons—“flex” lessons are to be used as needed—for Summer lessons, extra lessons, or in person parent conferences.)

Tuition may be paid in full or you may choose from several different payment plan options. When signing up for a payment plan, we require your Electronic Tuition Payment Authorization for us to initiate electronic debit entries for payment of the agreed upon tuition from your chosen payment method (bank transfer or credit card). This authority will remain in effect until you have canceled it in writing or until your tuition obligation is fulfilled.

**You may quit at any time but there are no refunds for partial months and payments that have already been debited. If a refund request is made and granted for other reasons, you will receive the paid amount less any credit card transaction fees incurred by HeartStrings.**

**There is a one-time \$100 administration fee charged at your initial registration.**

**Violin rental *MAY* be available for \$30/month. This option can be discussed at your initial consultation.**

**Your teacher’s lesson rate for is**

**\$84 per half-hour, \$126 per 45 mins, and \$168 per hour**

**Need-based Scholarship Assistance** is available on a limited basis. If you are in need of financial assistance in order to be able to afford lessons for your child, please inquire about our scholarship application.

**Extra Lessons:** If you would like your child to have a second lesson per week, or an occasional extra lesson in person or skyped, you may use your included five floating or flex lessons. These can be arranged by contacting your teacher’s Administrative

Assistant. If you require more than the five flex lessons included in the tuition, they will be billed at the teacher's hourly rate.

**Summer Lessons:** The Summer schedule is more flexible, but Summer lessons are required to retain a place in the studio and are part of the yearly tuition. Summer lessons are scheduled in the Spring. Generally, there are no group events in the Summer, however performance opportunities may arise.

## **Location:**

### **Lewisburg, WV location**

In-person lessons will be held in Classroom 3 at Carnegie Hall, 611 Church Street, Lewisburg, WV 24901. Please enter on the Church Street side of the building, and take the elevator to the second floor.

### **Instructor mailing address**

Russell Fallstad, 1205 Court St N, Lewisburg, WV 24901

## **Contact Info:**

On lesson day, the best way to contact Russell is by **texting**.

Text/Phone/Voicemail: 435-232-2860

Email: [Russellfallstad@gmail.com](mailto:Russellfallstad@gmail.com)

Facetime address: [russellfallstad@me.com](https://www.icloud.com/invite?me=russellfallstad@me.com)

**Referrals Policy:** Help us spread the word about HeartStrings and be rewarded. If your friend's family signs up for lessons, you will get \$125 off your next bill for every child that signs up! The new registrant will just need to mention your name on their registration form(s).

**Photo and Recording Policy:** HeartStrings Academy reserves the right and may give permission to appropriate staff or outside media, to photograph and record (video or audio) classes, programs, and participants at all our facilities. Please be aware that these photos or recordings are for promotional purposes and may be used in future print or electronic publications and media communications. By accepting our photo/video policy during registration, you consent to the video or audio recording or taking of photographs for these purposes.

**Now you're ready...hooray!** It's a big decision you've made for your child, so congratulations and welcome to you and your family! We look forward to exploring the wonderful worlds of music, learning, and expression with you and your child.