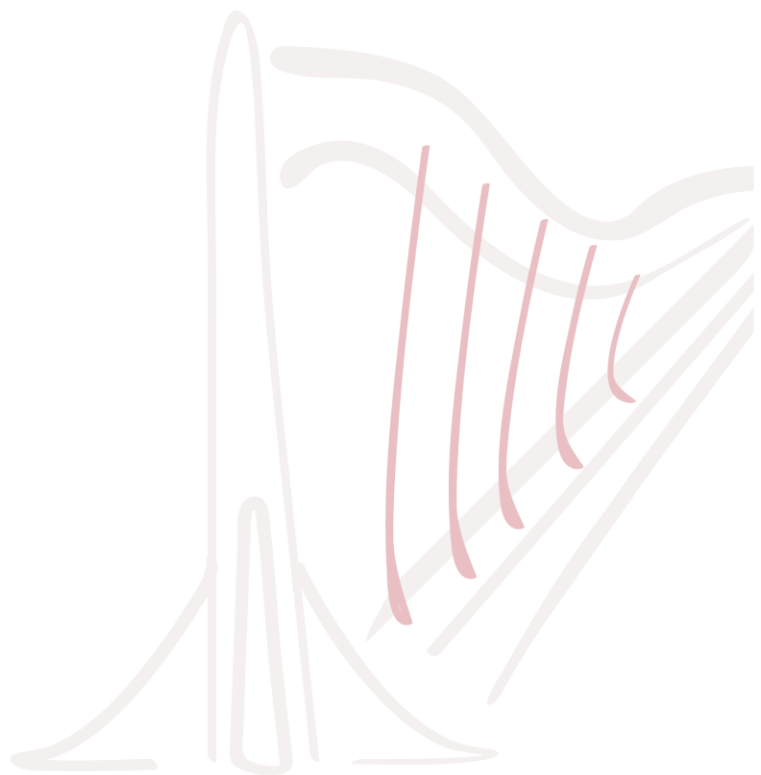




# Fall 2023 – Spring 2024 Music Studio Guidelines



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## Teacher Contact Information

Cell Phone: (256) 221-0922 Please call or text. Texting is preferred because I may be able to answer texts faster than I can return calls.

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

Business hours: Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm. There are no business hours on federal holidays. You may call, text, or email me beyond regular business hours and I will return messages as soon as I am able to, but a fast reply is not guaranteed.

## **Mission Statement**

My mission as a teacher is to equip you with all the tools you need to become a mature harpist or pianist and to help you accomplish your harp goals. These goals vary from student to student, but I honor each one. If your desire is become a professional musician, wonderful! Or if you'd rather just learn to play for your family and friends, fantastic! Or if you want to the joy of music and harp to those in nursing and hospitals, great! All goals are worthy and are respected in my studio.

My desire for my studio is for it to be a warm, kind, fun, and interactive environment. Your thoughts and opinions about the repertoire and musical interpretation are welcome. I have found that the best lessons are ones where both teacher and student contribute to the learning process.

I strive to teach ergonomic, pain-free playing. My desire is that none of my students develop injuries from learning harp or piano. This is critical because I personally know how painful, disappointing, and disastrous an injury incurred at a musical instrument can be. I developed tendinitis both from piano and harp lessons due to the inattention of my teachers. I wish no other student the same fate. Pain-free playing requires the cooperation of both student and teacher, and students will be expected to pay careful attention to their posture, hand positioning, and other facets of bodily wellness while learning harp. Students must notify me immediately when they experience any pain while playing harp.

## **Admission to Studio**

All are welcome to take lessons in my studio, no matter their age or musical experience. However, admission is at the discretion of the teacher and is contingent on the student/parent/guardian reading and signing the Fall 2023-Spring 2024 Music Studio Guidelines Agreement (the last page - page 7) and returning signed agreement back to me by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

## **Payment Policy**

Lessons are \$30 per 30 minutes, \$45 per 45 minutes, and \$60 per 60 minutes. Cash or check accepted. Please make checks payable to Olivia Hitt. Due to the financial situations of my students, I do accept payments at each lesson instead of monthly installments (though monthly installments are welcome if the financial state of the student allows them to pay in advance for the entire month). That being said, if you desire to commit to the option of paying-as-you-come to each lesson, payment is due at the beginning of each lesson. No exceptions.

A few guidelines about check payments: Bounced check fees will be the responsibility of the student/guardian. If your check bounces, you will need to pay the lesson balance again in addition to the bounced check fee ASAP. Also, I will not alter your name, signature, date, or check amount. If a check is written incorrectly, a corrected check will be required.

## **General Lesson Information**

Harp: Private instruction is given on my Fireside lap harp, my Pathways Studio lever harp, my Thormahlen Serenade lever harp, or my Camac Athena pedal harp. In special situations, the student may have to bring their own harp to my studio for lessons. Lessons will be given weekly or bi-weekly (2 lessons per month) as suits the student's ability and schedule and the teacher's discretion.

Piano: Private instruction is given on my Wurlitzer spinet piano. Lessons will be given weekly or bi-weekly (2 lessons per month) as suits the student's ability and schedule and the teacher's discretion.

### **Harp Rentals**

There are a few harps that I can rent out to my students. Please see my website for pricing, size, and availability. <https://www.oliviahittharpist.com/rentals>

### **Weekly Lessons vs. Bi-weekly Lessons**

Weekly lessons are highly recommended because typically the student will retain instruction from lesson time better when they practice during one week's time and will be more focused and successful than those that choose to only take bi-weekly lessons.

Bi-weekly lessons are an earned privilege; they will only be given at the discretion of the teacher and may be revoked for insufficient practice habits. I expect bi-weekly students to progress the same amount each week as their weekly counterparts (i.e. I expect 2 weeks' worth of progress from a bi-weekly student). It is NOT acceptable for a bi-weekly student to take the first week off after their lesson and then cram during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week. Such behavior is an example where their bi-weekly lesson schedule would be revoked and weekly lessons instituted or terminated entirely.

### **Lesson Scheduling**

Lesson time availability is subject to the teacher's studio schedule.

### **Practice Expectations**

Students are required to practice a MINIMUM of 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week. Longer practice expectations will be determined by the teacher as the student progresses and will be verbalized as well as recorded in the student's notebook.

### **Required Lesson Materials**

Every student is required to come to lessons with a notebook that I can write assignments into. This notebook will serve as a reminder to student and teacher (and if a student is a minor - their parents) what items are to be practiced every day for the upcoming lesson.

Every student is expected to bring all their lesson books to every lesson. Do not expect the teacher to have a spare copy of every book and piece of music that every student is working on at the moment on hand.

### **Practice Materials**

The following items are required for each student to have for practicing at home:

- Harp if harp student, Piano or keyboard if piano student, music stand, and bench
- Tuner or tuner app
- Metronome or metronome app

The following items are recommended for each student to have to aid with practice at home but are not required:

- Practice logs - a good way to keep track of what you're practicing and how much you're practicing each day. There are varieties available for free online. Practice logs may become required at teacher's discretion.

- Manuscript paper
- Music dictionary
- Note flash cards or apps - good way to learn notes faster if you're a beginner
- MuseScore – free music notation software for the budding composer
- Audacity – free recording software for the budding recording artist

### **Lesson Attendance**

For the parents/guardians of a minor student, the parent/guardian will be required to be present during the lesson. Extra seating will be provided in the music studio. I strongly encourage parents to be involved, especially those with younger students. The more the parent is involved, the more the child is likely to learn.

Alternate pick-up person(s) other than parents/guardians must be communicated by the parent/guardian to Olivia directly via written instructions (email or text). A student minor will not be released from lessons to the care of unknown people without prior parental/guardian permission.

Parents/Guardians or designated pick-up person(s) **MUST** pick up the student at the end of the lesson. If the parent/guardian or pick-up person does not arrive within 15 minutes of lesson end time, the parent/guardian will be called. 2 or more late pick-ups will result in the teacher's consideration of termination of lessons.

Students are expected to attend their scheduled lessons faithfully in order to reap the full benefits of the teaching and learning process. Erratic attendance may result in the termination of lessons, unless poor attendance is caused by unforeseen, uncontrollable circumstances (illness, family funerals, etc.). Summer lessons operate on an entirely different schedule and will be discussed ahead of time.

### **Late Policy**

If the student arrives late to a lesson, the lesson will begin immediately but will still end at the regular time. I have to keep a strict timetable since I employ a babysitter during lesson times and to make sure that the next student gets their full amount of lesson time.

If the teacher arrives late or begins the lesson late, an allowance will be made so that the entire lesson time is accounted for. I will accommodate the student's schedule in this matter. Depending on how much time is lost, it may mean staying later after the end of the normal scheduled lesson or it may mean we will need to have another lesson in a week's time to make up for the lost time.

### **Lesson Cancellation**

If you miss a lesson without first notifying me and cancelling the lesson, you will be charged for the lesson. You must notify me **12 hours** in advance to cancel a lesson. This rule does not include illness or the other uncontrollable circumstances mentioned above. In those cases, contact me as soon as you know to cancel the lesson.

Illness – If a student has a fever or is deemed to be contagious for any other reason, **do not come to the lesson!** Do not come if you have a cold, fever, flu, stomach bug, Covid-19, or any other contagious disease or virus. Please go to your doctor and recuperate at your home. Please allow

24 hours after the sickness passes before attending your lesson. If you are not well within the 24 hours before your lesson time, you **must** cancel your lesson (but without incurring a payment penalty). This is paramount for music lessons in particular since you will be using my personal harp in my personal studio and you could spread the illness to me, my family, or my other students since we are using shared instruments and surfaces. We can reschedule the lesson as necessary with no payment penalty. If I am ill or any of my family members are ill, I will extend the same courtesy to my students.

Weather - For weather-related cancellations, I usually follow the Huntsville City School system's and Redstone Arsenal's determination. If they cancel, it is most likely our lesson will be delayed or cancelled. If you live beyond the Huntsville city limits, discretion by both teacher and student will be used to determine if both weather and road conditions are safe for the student to travel in to get to and from lesson. Students will not be penalized for weather-related cancellations.

### **Lesson Make-ups**

If you miss a lesson for any reason, I encourage everyone to inquire if there is another available lesson slot before your next regularly scheduled lesson. Cancellations happen and there might be another lesson slot time not normally available that I can schedule a lesson for you.

### **Studio Recitals and Rocket City Harp Ensemble**

There will be one recital opportunity (possibly two) per calendar year. Students are required to participate in at least one recital either by playing a solo/duet or by performing with the Rocket City Harp Ensemble. Participation in the recital in both a solo and ensemble format is strongly encouraged! Repertoire appropriate for the performance will be discussed at lessons and will need to be approved by the teacher. Barring sickness, injury, or family emergency, all students will be required to participate. Failure to participate in a recital will culminate in termination of lessons. No exceptions.

### **Termination Policy**

The teacher reserves the right to permanently terminate a student's lessons based upon, but not limited to: non-payment, non-attendance, insufficient practicing, inappropriate behavior/attitude, and abuse of my instrument or my studio. All terminations will be discussed with the student (if minor, their parents) before taking effect. Everyone will be given a chance to rectify whatever issue it is that is causing problems.

### **Other**

Social Media – You may follow me on Facebook, Instagram, or my website for nifty harp tips, ideas, and concerts! Please see the list below:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/oliviahittharpist/>
- Instagram: @rocketcityharpist (Olivia Hitt)
- Website: [www.oliviahittharpist.com](http://www.oliviahittharpist.com)
- YouTube: Rocket City Harpist (<https://www.youtube.com/@rocketcityharpist>)

### **Resources**

Here are some great places to purchase harps, harp covers, harp accessories, music, strings, harp insurance, and other related items. I am not a representative for any of these places. I am only suggesting them because I myself have found them to be useful over the years as a harpist.

- Atlanta Harp Center - <http://stores.atlantaharpcenter.com/>
- Virginia Harp Center - <https://www.vaharpcenter.com/>
- Melody's Traditional Music - <https://folkharp.com/>
- Vanderbilt Music - <https://vanderbiltmusic.com/>
- Harp.com - <https://www.harp.com/>
- Lyon and Healy - <https://www.lyonhealy.com/>
- Camac - <https://www.camac-harps.com/en/>
- Four Seasons Harp Covers - <http://harpcovers.com/>
- Harp Column Magazine - <https://www.harpcolumn.com/>
- Folk Harp Journal - <https://www.harpkits.com/folk-harp-journal.html>
- American Harp Society - <https://www.harpsociety.org/>
- Wind River Harps (Dave Boling) - <https://www.windriverharps.com/index.php/contact>
- South Huntsville Celtic Slow Session - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1667518250373963>
- JPG Harp Connections - <http://www.harpconnections.org/>
- Ivan Gardner, harp technician - [ivangardner@hotmail.com](mailto:ivangardner@hotmail.com)

### **Lever Harp Regulation**

The strings on a lever harp need to be entirely changed every 1-2 years. Please refer to your harp maker's stringing chart to restring appropriately. DO NOT GUESS. I am happy to assist with any questions. I can also change your strings for you for a fee. If your lever harp has issues staying in tune with levers engaged, or if you have odd noises occurring when you flip a lever, you may need to get the levers regulated. Please let me know and we can contact the appropriate source for help. Dave Boling, harp maker of Wind River Harps here in Huntsville, is an excellent local source of lever harp regulation issues and questions. Ivan Gardner, the circuit pedal harp technician, may also be a good resource. Please read the next paragraph for more information about Ivan Gardner.

### **Pedal Harp Regulation**

The strings on a pedal harp need to be entirely changed every 1-2 years. Please refer to your harp maker's stringing chart to restring appropriately. DO NOT GUESS. I am happy to assist with any questions. I can also change your strings for you for a fee. It is recommended that if you are a professional harpist that you get your harp regulated at least once a year. For all others, you may get your harp regulated every two years. There are many harp technicians available. Atlanta Harp Center hosts many of them throughout the year who you may take your harp to get it regulated. They announce their harp technician visits periodically on their website and social media. Ivan Gardner is my harp technician and I highly recommend him. He travels quite regularly to Huntsville to regulate the harps in the area, which is when he regulates mine. If you wish him to be your harp technician, please let me know and I will try to get you on his list for the next time he is in Huntsville. For more information, please email Ivan at [ivangardner@hotmail.com](mailto:ivangardner@hotmail.com).



## Fall 2023 – Spring 2024 Music Studio Guidelines Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and agree to the studio policies of Olivia Hitt Harpist as stated in the Fall 2023 – Spring 2024 Music Studio Guidelines.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student (or Parent/Guardian, if student is under the age of 18) Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Student/Parent/Guardian Contact Information

Please fill out all information.

Parent/Guardian email: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian cellphone: \_\_\_\_\_

Student email: \_\_\_\_\_

Student cellphone: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact 1 (name and cellphone): \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact 2 (name and cellphone): \_\_\_\_\_

Who is allowed to pick up the student from lessons if the student is underage?

Pick-up person(s) and contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Any allergies I should be aware of? (My private studio is located closely to both my dining room and my kitchen and I want to be careful not to expose my students to anything they are allergic to): \_\_\_\_\_

Any underlying medical conditions I should be aware of that might impact student's practice or performance? \_\_\_\_\_