Things to Think About when opening a new Music Studio:

1. S**et out your policies clearly and in writing** so there are no misunderstandings between the parents and yourself.
2. Find a **private area** in your home to keep interruptions to a minimum in your **teaching space**.
3. How will you find students? What forms of **advertising** work in your area?
4. How will you select or **interview** students? What questions will you ask?
5. One thing to be established at the onset should be **payment**: How much should I charge and how would I accept payment? It is good to have one policy in effect so that you don’t spend a lot of your time bookkeeping. Careful records of all financial transactions should be kept.

When deciding your lesson fees, factors may include

* the economy in your geographic teaching area
* the number of existing teachers in that area
* what is a fair wage in your area or what do other teachers of similar experience charge
* whether you are offering any special programs (i.e. Music for Young Children)
* whether you give a discount for multi-student families?
* whether you have a registration fee and what that fee covers

Terms of payment – could vary between per week, per month, per term or even per year. Will you accept cheques, e-transfers, cash, credit or debit cards?

A common financial arrangement is to ask for post-dated cheques for the year made out for the 1st of each month.

1. **Missed Lesson Policy**: who is the onus on – you or the student/parent? What is fair and reasonable for you and your family, and for your student and his/her family?
2. Most teachers prefer to replace a lesson if possible, rather than give a refund. You need to decide and state clearly an acceptable reason for replacing a lesson. Some things are unavoidable, such as illness or a family emergency. Convenience or social events such as a birthday party might not seem so pressing. Missed lessons will be made up at the teacher’s discretion depending on the student’s need and time available. Will you under any circumstances refund lesson fees? Some teachers feel do not replaced a lesson for any reason. Once again this is your choice, but it should be clearly stated in your communication with the parents at the beginning of the year.
3. **Expectations** – what is expected of the teacher? A professional attitude; expertise, both academic and practical; and a cheerful encouraging attitude.

What is expected of the **student**? Being present on time with the necessary materials seems a good start, but cannot be taken for granted. The work should be covered in a reasonable manner – perhaps a practise sheet or book can help set out the requirements from week to week. Do you want a written contract setting this out?

What is expected of the parent? Provides a suitable instrument to practice on; set a quiet and uninterrrupted practice time and place; a supportive attitude. Should the parent participate in the practising? Attend lessons?

1. **Music books** and learning materials: Will you loan out music? What is your policy if books are damaged? Will you purchase music for the student on behalf of the parent or expect them to supply it?
2. Will you incorporate **group lessons** into your teaching year? How many will you have and are they included in regular fees, or charged a special rate? What is your policy on **recitals**? How many will you have a year, is participation mandatory, and is there a fee involved? Will you expect your students to take **exams** and participate in **festivals**?
3. Some people like to point out that the ½ hour or hour framework is just a guideline of the time needed to cover the work prepared by the student, and not a contract to “teach” for the time allotted.

Further ideas can be gleaned from associates who have been teaching for a long time, or from many of the texts on Teaching that include Studio Management, such as those by Shaum & Cupp; Denes Agay, and Bastien to name a few.