

Parental Responsibilities

One of the greatest assets that a student musician has is a parent or guardian who is as interested in the student's success as the student is. Although many parents are not interested in nagging their children to do what is required we know of no parents, for instance, who are not willing to make sure that their child gets to every soccer practice. Just as in recreational sports, your child knows what to do once they get to practice. All you need to do is make sure that they get there! Patience, Encouragement, Imagination, and Common Sense will help you to help your child do their best.

1. **Patience** is repeatedly reminding your child to do their daily practice. Our expectation is 210 minutes per week. **Students have a practice record which must be signed and turned in each week at sectionals.** It is not unusual for your child to experience "slumps" in their practice routine. All of us have experienced times when we lack the self-discipline to do the things that need to be done. We need to be patient with ourselves and try to get back on track.
2. **Encouragement** when the going gets rough. In music, as in life, some things are learned easily, while others require intensive and repeated application. Parental understanding is critical.
3. "**Imagination** is more important than knowledge" said Albert Einstein. Knowledge is just the transfer of information, but imagination creates things that had no prior existence. Be imaginative in creating a musical atmosphere in your home. Tune in to interesting musical programs on the stereo and TV, invite friends who play instruments into your home, have students perform for you, have them record themselves, in short, make your home a haven for the arts.
4. **Common Sense** is often not so common. Avoid undue stress. A balanced schedule of interests into which music and its practice fits as a natural element will pay big personal dividends.

Practicing Conditions

As students advance in musical study, the regularity and quality of their practice increases in importance. This can be promoted if parents see that the students have favorable practice conditions.

Schedule a regular time or times each day for practice.

1. A quiet place with good lighting and ventilation aids concentrated practice. **A music stand is a necessity.**
2. The instrument must be in first-rate mechanical condition. The higher the quality of instrument (and bow) the higher the possibility of quality sound.
3. Praise work well done. A congratulatory remark may be interjected during a practice session, or later, perhaps at mealtime.
4. Plan activities ahead, knowing that your child's participation in rehearsals and concerts is not only required, but, most importantly, is vital to the success of the entire ensemble. A performing group is a team and as such we must be able to rely upon the other members of our team.
5. **Never use practicing as a punishment.**