

Christine Breeden's  
**2025 Bassoon Studio Handbook**  
*For new bassoon students and their families*

New students and families,

Hello and welcome to the bassoon studio; I'm so glad you are joining! I look forward to working with your student and getting to know your family. I have provided this handbook in hopes to answer some questions you may have, as well as provide a reference for studio policies and procedures.

Private lessons are an invaluable investment in your student's education. Not only will lessons help them excel in their music classes, but they will learn countless skills that will benefit them in other subjects and even beyond the classroom. As a private teacher, I work to guide, challenge, encourage, support, and listen to my students as they learn. In return, I ask that students approach lessons with preparation, curiosity, persistence, and an open mind.

Please read this handbook carefully, and feel free to contact me with any questions. The final pages include a form to complete and sign; please do so and return via email prior to our first lesson. I look forward to getting started!

—Christine Breeden (she/her)

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## About me

I am originally from Normal, IL, where I began playing bassoon at age 12. My first teacher was Michael Dicker at Illinois State University, and I studied with him until I graduated high school. Music was very central to my life, and I knew I wanted to become a professional bassoonist. This drive led me to study Bassoon Performance at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with Professor Tim McGovern. In addition to playing in several of the university's orchestras, bands, and chamber groups, I also freelanced with numerous orchestras across the state, and occasionally taught lessons. As a junior, I won the Smith Solo Competition, and was the selected recipient of the School of Music Woodwind Achievement Award.

I then pursued my Master's in Bassoon Performance at the University of Michigan, where I studied with Dr. Jeffrey Lyman. At Michigan, I was incredibly fortunate to work with renowned faculty and professional musicians on the international stage. My coursework and accompanying field experience in performance, education, and arts administration empowered me to confidently enter the professional creative sphere. As a world citizen and lifelong learner, I am deeply committed to approaching all subjects with an open mind. I believe music is one of many tools we can use to shape a more inclusive society, where individuals of all backgrounds can feel seen, understood, appreciated, and valued.

In addition to music, I enjoy spending time with my family, cooking, painting, being outdoors, listening to podcasts, and spoiling my cat! :)

## Scheduling

Lessons are held in person or via Zoom\* on a weekly basis in time slots of 30 minutes, 45 minutes, or 60 minutes. While a shorter lesson may better suit a young student's attention span, I strongly encourage 45-minute or 60-minute lessons for students 12 and older. This allows us the time necessary to cover the materials and concepts your student needs in order to consistently improve and reach their goals.

### **\*A note on Zoom lessons**

In-person lessons are always preferred due to the demands of learning an instrument. At the same time, Zoom allows for greater accessibility for students who live far away, cannot drive, or are very busy. I do not advise starting lessons remotely, but a remote or hybrid arrangement can be made if continuing lessons would not otherwise be possible.

### **Rescheduling policy**

Lessons may be rescheduled by trading with another family, or contacting me at least 24 hours in advance. If 24-hours notice is not provided, or if the student is a no-show, payment for the lesson will still be due. Please be conscious of how often you request to reschedule, as this impacts other students' schedules as well as my own. If I need to reschedule, I will also be sure to provide at least 24-hours notice.

## Lesson Rates and Payment

My lesson rates are as follows:

\$40 for 30 minutes

\$50 for 45 minutes

\$60 for 60 minutes

I accept payments via check, Venmo, Zelle, PayPal, Apple Pay, and Facebook Pay. Payments can be made on your choice of the following intervals, whichever best suits your needs:

- Monthly in advance (*4 or 5 lessons, depending on the month*)
- Bi-weekly in advance (*2 lessons*)
- Per-lesson, *must be paid upon completion of the lesson*

### **Missed payment policy**

Please note that all payments must be made no later than upon completion of the lesson. This helps ensure the sustainability of the studio, as well as the availability of lessons to every student. If a situation does arise where payment must be delayed, please let me know. I understand that financial circumstances may change unexpectedly, and am open to discussing an arrangement that can accommodate individual needs.

## How are lessons structured?

While lesson structures and curricular plans may vary between students and evolve over time, below are sample lesson templates and curricular outlines that provide an idea of what to expect.

### 30-minute lesson

- 4:00 - Welcome, discussing the past week. Any new challenges in ensemble music? Are reeds working? How did practicing go? Any major difficulties in assigned materials?
- 4:05 - Warm up duet and fundamentals. I use long tone duets to help students warm up, engage their auditory skills, practice sight reading, and utilize musical leadership skills. Fundamentals might include one-octave scales, rhythm reading, articulation, and dynamic exercises.
- 4:12 - Performance and discussion of prepared materials, such as an etude or short solo.
- 4:27 - Questions, discussion of upcoming assignments
- 4:30 - Lesson end

### 45-minute lesson

- 4:00 - Welcome, discussing the past week. Are any auditions or tests coming up?
- 4:05 - Warm up duet, and fundamentals including two-octave major scales, articulation style, vibrato, and fingering techniques
- 4:15 - Performance and discussion of prepared materials, such as a Weissenborn etude or a movement of a solo
- 4:30 - Instruction on reed adjusting
- 4:42 - Questions, discussion of upcoming assignments
- 4:45 - Lesson end

### 60-minute lesson

- 4:00 - Welcome, discussing the past week. Did the student make any new reeds? Any orchestral listening or repertoire of interest?
- 4:05 - Warm up duet, and fundamentals including three-octave major scales and arpeggios, minor scales, vibrato, tone, and extended range techniques
- 4:15 - Performance and discussion of prepared materials, such as a Weissenborn or Milde etude, movement of a concerto, and/or excerpts
- 4:40 - Instruction on reed making
- 4:55 - Questions, discussion of upcoming assignments and musical goals
- 5:00 - Lesson end

## Sample Curricular Outlines

	Technique	Study materials	Solo repertoire	Reeds
<b>Beginners</b>	Major scales, 1 octave Fingerings, flicking, half-hole Rhythm reading Dynamics Intonation	Huddleston Foundations Weissenborn Exercises	Schoenbach, <i>Solos for the Bassoon Player</i> Waterhouse, <i>Solos Vol. 1</i> Weissenborn, <i>Romanze</i>	Light sanding Adjust tip opening
<b>Third-year players</b>	Major scales, 2 octaves Articulations Sight reading Tone, Vibrato	Weissenborn 50 Studies	Galliard, <i>6 Sonatas</i> Telemann, <i>Sonata in F minor</i> Milde <i>Concertino</i>	Adjust wires Finishing blanks
<b>11th grade</b> not going on in music	Major scales, 2 octaves Major arpeggios, 2 octaves Minor scales, 2-3 octaves Tone, Vibrato	Weissenborn 50 Studies Milde Scales & Chords	David, <i>Concertino</i> Fasch, <i>Sonata in C</i> Pierné, <i>Solo de Concert</i> Kozeluch, <i>Concerto in C</i>	Making blanks Wrapping blanks (depending on student interest)
<b>12th grade</b> going on in music	Major/minor scales, all octaves Major/minor arpeggios, all octaves Tenor clef Harmonization	Milde Concert Studies Piard Bassoon Studies Orchestral excerpts Orchestral listening	Weber, <i>Concerto in F Major</i> Mozart, <i>Concerto in B-flat</i> Vivaldi, <i>Concerto in E minor</i> Weber, <i>Andante and Hungarian Rondo</i>	Shaping/profiling cane Making blanks Wrapping blanks Nearly independent

## Materials

The following materials are necessary for all beginning bassoonists:

- **Bassoon**, including seat strap, bocal, instrument swabs
- **Tuner/Metronome** (there are free apps for this if your student has a smartphone)
- **Reeds\*** (see below)
- **Reed case** that holds *at least* four bassoon reeds
- **Small cup with lid** to soak reeds
- **Pencil** (bring to every lesson)

As your student progresses, there may be additional materials I recommend acquiring. I am happy to provide information on where to find these items, and estimated costs.

### \*Reeds

Reed making is an important (and fun!) skill to have as a bassoonist. Instruction in reed adjustment and reed making will be incorporated into lessons, with the goal of the student becoming familiar with and confident in the process. After several years, the student may also be able to make a reed from start to finish on their own if they are interested. For all students taking weekly lessons, I provide reeds as needed for \$15 each (discounted from \$25 price). I highly discourage generic store-bought reeds, due to inconsistent products and below-standard quality.

**\*\*\*Please complete the following form and submit it to me via email  
prior to the first lesson.\*\*\***

### **Student Information**

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Pronouns: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Student phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Student email: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Guardian 1 Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Pronouns: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Text capable? \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Guardian 2 Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Pronouns: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Text capable? \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Would you like to make your guardian contact information available to studio  
families for scheduling purposes?**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**Chosen lesson length:** \_\_\_\_\_ 30 minutes \_\_\_\_\_ 45 minutes \_\_\_\_\_ 60 minutes

**Chosen payment interval:** \_\_\_\_\_ Monthly \_\_\_\_\_ Bi-weekly \_\_\_\_\_ Per-lesson

**Student Musical Background**

When did your student start playing bassoon?

Did your student switch to bassoon from another instrument? If so, what instrument?

Has your student taken private lessons in the past?

Please describe any other relevant musical experience:

**Handbook Acknowledgement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (*guardian name*), have read this studio handbook in its entirety and have shared the expectations with my student. I agree to adhere to the stated scheduling and payment policies to the best of my ability, and I understand that failure to do so may affect whether my student can remain in the studio.

Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_