

Thank you for choosing me as an online educator to meet the on-going individual needs of your student. I've found clear expectations for both learners and caregivers provides an excellent foundation for a good working relationship. Please look over this document for information that could impact our scheduled classes.

COMMUNICATION:

Communication for this class happens via email and blog posts.

- Weekly class summaries/blog posts for our lessons: www.michelleptacek.com. **Feel free to subscribe to the blog in order to have these posts go directly to your inbox each Friday.**
- Please help your student keep track of the Zoom link sent to you upon first payment via PayPal invoicing.
- Students with an email account are welcome to directly email me with questions and comments.

When something different happens specific to your student's cohort, I send out the information as a group email message. While you can respond to group messages, please feel free to email me directly as well.

I love getting back to people in a timely manner. In general, you can count on me getting back to you in 24 hours or less. I check my messages frequently M-Th, 8:00amCT – 3:00pmCT, less so on weekends. Friday afternoon comprises my specific office hours for lengthier emails or phone calls. Sometimes these are booked as consulting and other times they are booked as a 1:1 lesson (see website for current prices: www.michelleptacek.com).

Concerning communication among students, many of them message each other in the classroom using chat. Students occasionally share emails with one another and game pins. If for any reason you are not comfortable with this, please let me know. Otherwise, if a friendship is developing overtime in my classroom, I do not place outside limitations on it. As a general note, in these situations, I am not monitoring nor responsible for any communication that takes place outside of class.

ABSENCES:

Please give at least 24 hours notice if possible via email for all absences. If a student doesn't attend for a few days, I will definitely follow up to see if everything is OK. You will be charged for these days.

If I need to be absent for any reason, I will try to notify you as far in the future as possible. **Chances are, if I am absent, it is due to an emergency situation that has developed within 24 hours (sick child, snowstorm, loss of power/internet).** In this case, I will try to notify a selected parent from your cohort via text message so they can

contact the rest of you via email. **Please note, three of these days per semester will be built into the payment system.** (This is the equivalent of a daily teacher being given six sick days a year.) Beyond that, if absent four or more days total per semester, I will refund you on the next invoice or via PayPal for each missed day beyond three days. Please note – I do not plan on using these days. Over the course of several years, it has only happened once. I have excellent attendance.

Given your understanding regarding the situations above, given plenty of notice, I am willing to prorate your invoice for up to two weeks in a row (with no charge) due to planned vacations, holidays, etc. when notified before invoices are sent out the last week of the month. If a student would like to miss more than two weeks in a row, they will have to forgo the slot with the hopes of joining again later (or pay for missed class periods in order to hold the spot). Please feel free to contact me with any other questions about absences.

Vacation dates for your calendar (looking ahead):

Below is a list of dates I take off each year (at no cost to you). The below dates often correspond with popular U.S. holidays.

- M-F fall break that starts Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Thanksgiving (Thursday) and that Friday
- The last week of December and the first week of January
- M-F spring break that corresponds with the first week of daylight savings
- Good Friday and the following Monday
- Memorial Day and the following week (break to get ready for summer sessions)
- Three weeks in summer when I am synchronous full-time for my doctorate (typically the end of June)
- The week of the Fourth of July
- The week before Labor Day and Labor Day (fall sessions officially begin the Tuesday after)
- I meet with students 8:30amCST - 2:50pmCST
- I meet with 1:1 students and homerooms M-F except in the summer months when I move to Tue./Wed./Thur. (DYS Summer Homerooms on Tue. and Thur.)

PAYMENT:

Monthly invoices will be sent towards the last week of the month before the month being paid for (for example, on Jan. 25th I would send out the invoice for Feb.). I group the weeks (4 or 5 weeks total per month) in units of five days, sometimes with a few days leading into the next month. This is why the price occasionally varies month to month.

Please pay the monthly invoice in full before the first Zoom session listed on the invoice. Please note, if a week goes by without paying the invoice, I will send a reminder via PayPal. If a caregiver goes two weeks without paying, at the beginning of

the third week of the month, I will not let the student into the Zoom session. (I have never had to do this before, and hope not to in order to save the student any confusion and preserve our relationship.) **If you would like to pay for the semester in full, please contact me.** We can make this happen to save you from having to remember to pay and also save PayPal fees on my end.

Billing takes place on a monthly basis via PayPal. Students are expected to attend at least three days a week on a regular basis. (A three to four day option is offered on a consistent basis due to scheduling issues, but then the price becomes \$1 more/class for 4 days and \$2 more per class for 3 days. Please see www.michelleptacek.com for more specificity regarding current rates.)

HOMEWORK:

Most students take this class as an additional aspect of their intense educational journey. Occasionally, I offer optional homework regarding social-emotional needs (journaling activities that take less than 30 minutes). Please monitor the weekly update on the blog for a run-down of these assignments if you would like your student to complete them. It is optional whether they would like to share these with me via email, share them in class, or not at all. If you would like them to not have homework in this class, that is perfectly fine.

SCHEDULE CHANGES:

Students enrolled in DYS Homeroom are expected to be enrolled at least three days a week for classes that run 25-30 minutes long. If a student is attending five days a week and wishes to go down to three days a week, please give me notice and conduct this at the change of the month on a new invoice. Likewise if a student would like to move from three days a week to five.

BEHAVIOR:

Luckily, most of the students I encounter are absolutely excellent to work with! I love doing what I do! If small issues arise (such as going to the bathroom during class, not coming prepared, acting overly defensive, etc.), I will typically try to handle it myself. **If it becomes a chronic issue or impacts the enjoyment of others, I will message you directly. If the situation does not improve, I may suggest discontinuing this class or finding a better fit.**

When a student is late to class:

I understand life is busy and students are occasionally late to online classes. That being said, if a student is chronically late to class and it is impacting other learners, I will contact you about a plan to decrease this behavior. **If a student joins class late (even by a minute or two), please have them join on mute.** Chances are, we have already started class or another student is sharing.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:

Because the daily homeroom setting allows me to get to know students really well, many families over the years have requested a letter of recommendation. I bill for this service at my 1/2 hour 1:1 rate (\$60 as of 9/1/2024 - subject to change). I'm honored to write these letters. Please reach out to me via email with specific requirements and contacts listed on the application. Thank you!

DISCLAIMER:

While my master's thesis covered research on the topic of bibliotherapy, I am not a certified bibliotherapist. Please see a certified mental health professional for all mental health needs.

Interested in enrolling?

Semester sign-up forms are distributed in select communities online. If you've heard about this class from a different source, please use the contact form on the website (www.michelleptacek.com) and be prepared to forward your Davidson Exchange email.

Please take a look at the social contract your student will be asked to sign via annotation at the beginning of the semester (next page).



OUR SOCIAL CONTRACT

Safety

Pertains to emotional safety. In order for people to feel comfortable in the space, they must feel free of judgment or negative scrutiny so that their voices may be heard.

Trust

Trust pertains to following the rules, as well as the expectations of our fellow classmates.

Respect

Refraining from interrupting one another, paying attention when it is not your turn, and being mindful about the language you use when talking to other students.

Cooperation

Acknowledgement that the interests of an individual need to come second to the enjoyment of the whole group. Sometimes, compromise is necessary to learn and have fun.

Consent

Consent is needed to alter the planned activities, outside of the set rules. Please acknowledge the teacher's duty to lead. Consent must be asked in any situation which deviates from the set plan.

Student Signature:

Mrs. Michelle
TAG Teacher