

Updated July 2002

Teacher PIANO STUDIO

Also offering
Kindermusik for 2 months – Age 5

email, phone

Studio Policy for Academic Year 2002-2003

[The first two pages are this teacher's POLICY, a detailed HANDBOOK follows.]

THE TEACHER

Teacher has been teaching piano for over 10 years, and Kindermusik for 2 years. Teacher is a member of the Music Teacher's National Association, New England Piano Teacher's Association, and the Massachusetts Music Teacher's Association. She is currently State President of the MMTA. She has studied with Dr. Eleanor Carlson at U/MA Dartmouth, and Dr. Jose DaCosta of the New England Conservatory, and is a Certified Kindermusik Teacher.

INSTRUCTION

All students enrolled in Teacher Piano Studio are offered a well-rounded program of instruction with training in repertoire, theory, musicianship, ear-training, technique, and sight-reading. The private lesson is the core of instruction. Students may also elect an additional individually-tailored computer curriculum using the latest technology designed to give students a broader appreciation of the many forms of music and also to refine music theory and notation skills.

Group lessons will be held 6 times during the school year session. Attendance is expected.

TUITION & FEES

Enrolling students are reserving their placement in the studio for the entire year. An Enrollment Fee is due each Spring. This is non-refundable and should be enclosed with your enrollment form. Early Bird Bonus – take \$5 off of your Enrollment Fee if forms are received by May 10, 2002.

Tuition is \$xxx.00 per year, which is payable in Monthly Installments of \$xx.00, which is due on or before the first of the month. Tuition is not refundable. There will be a \$xx.00 late payment fee is added to accounts not paid by the 15th of the month. Returned check fee is \$25. Tuition payments are not based on the number of lessons in a given month. It is a yearly fee, indicating a commitment to study for the entire year. An increase in tuition may be expected each September.

Methods of Payment:

One Yearly Payment \$xxx.00
2 Semester Installments [1/2] due September 9, 2002
- and [1/2] due February 3, 2003
Monthly Payments[1/10]

Additional Fees

Enrollment Fee (Required for Registration)

A non-refundable Enrollment Fee is required for each academic year. This enables me to provide students with loaner music, incentives and rewards, miscellaneous handouts, and use of accompaniment midi-disks during lesson time.

Enrollment Fee Schedule:

- 1 Student \$25.00
- 2 Students from the same family \$45.00
- 3 Students from the same family \$65.00

Early Bird Bonus – Take \$5 off your total Enrollment Fee if forms are received by May 10, 2002

Music Book Deposit Fee (Required for Registration)

A \$30.00 music book deposit is required for all students. This money will be kept on account for your child, and any music that is bought for him/her will be deducted from that balance. If your child's Music Book Deposit drops below \$2.00 (the minimum cost of a piece of sheet music), you will be notified and asked to bring it up to the \$30.00 balance. Any money left over will automatically be applied towards your child's next year's Music Book Deposit. If your child does not continue lessons, that money will be returned to you.

Computer Lab Fees

Computer Lab Tickets cost \$12.00 for 4 tickets. They are bought in blocks of 4 tickets.

Computer Lab time is independent time scheduled 15 minutes before or after the student's lesson time. Computer time which has been purchased is expected to be used at each successive lesson, and is not allowed to be held for periods of time unless the student misses his/her lesson due to sickness.

Recital and Festival Fees

A \$20.00 Recital fee per family is required to each studio recital, to cover the cost of trophies and other expenses.

Studio Festival Fees and Non-Competitive Evaluation Fees are not included in tuition. Exact entry fees will be announced closer to enrollment time for each activity.

I have read, understand, and will comply with the Studio Policy of Teacher Piano Studio.

Parent's Name Date

STUDIO HANDBOOK

2002-2003

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Tuition and Fees

Tuition is \$XXX per year, which is payable in Yearly, Semester, or Monthly Installments. Monthly installments are due on or before the first of the month. Tuition is not refundable.

Additional Fees:

A non-refundable Registration Fee is required for each academic year. This enables me to provide students with loaner music, incentives and rewards, miscellaneous handouts, and use of accompaniment midi-disks during lesson time.

A \$30 Materials Fee will be kept on account for your child. It is to be replenished each September, or as necessary. The cost of new music is deducted from your materials account.

Attendance

A specific time period has been reserved exclusively for your child, and you are paying for that time. Please make sure your child arrives on time with music, assignment book, and any other relevant materials.

Cancelled/Missed Lessons

No make-up lessons are given for lessons missed by students; or in case of inclement weather, or school cancellations. If Public School is cancelled in the ORR School System, piano lessons are also cancelled.

Student absences cannot be credited or refunded. In case of absence, a swap of lesson times with another student can generally be arranged through the Swap List.

“No Shows” will not be rescheduled or refunded. Your lesson time is reserved exclusively for your child.

Makeup Lessons will not be offered for lessons missed due to family vacations during the school year.

If I must cancel a scheduled lesson, I will make it up at a time that is convenient to me.

Swap List

If you would like, you may participate in the Swap List. You'll receive a copy of everyone's name, phone number and lesson time. You may use this list to rearrange lessons for

important and unavoidable conflicts. Once you have made a Swap, please confirm your exchange and call me to let me know. I am not available to teach at times not listed on the Swap List.

In the event of a misunderstanding and two students arrive at the same time, I will teach the one who is regularly scheduled at that time, unless both parties agree to a change.

Summer Lessons

A Summer Lesson information sheet will be distributed in the Spring Semester. Summer lessons are paid for in blocks of lesson time. Missed summer lessons are not refundable. A Summer Swap List may be gotten from the teacher. It will enable you to contact another student to switch lesson times if you find a scheduling problem.

Termination Policy

If parents or students choose to discontinue lessons for any reason, they are expected to notify me at least 30 days in advance, or pay for one month's tuition, so that I will have adequate time to find a replacement.

I reserve the right to terminate the lessons of anyone who does not abide by the policies outlined in this Handbook or in the Studio Policy. I also reserve the right to terminate a student if any of these circumstances occur:

- Constant disruptive or disrespectful behavior
- Repeated failure to prepare assigned material
- Equipment damage or theft
- Continue failure to pay tuition on time

The Studio Program

There are 35 lessons during the school year: 29 Private Lessons (30 minutes) and 6 Performance Classes/Group Lessons (60 minutes).

Group Lessons

Group lessons benefit the piano student in many ways, including:

- Meeting others who are striving toward similar musical goals, and thereby encouraging and inspiring one another
- Understanding how music can be interesting and fun by participating in games and activities that require a larger group
- Some techniques are absorbed more easily in a group, and some students are especially motivated to learn when in a group.

At Group Lessons, students participate in mini-Recitals, learn Music History through games and videos, learn about the lives of the great composers, and get to know one another. One of the most important things in making music is making it in a group. Students of other instruments play together in groups all the time (band and orchestra), and having Piano students get together to play and learn is an important part of their musical education. Plus, group lessons are lots of fun.

Group lessons are scheduled during Group Lesson Weeks, clearly marked on your Studio Calendar. Each child will be assigned to a specific group, and that group will be given a specific day and time. Group lessons are scheduled on Mondays and Tuesdays. If for any reason your child cannot attend his or her assigned group lesson, he or she may attend a different group lesson during that SAME WEEK. Group lessons cannot be made up at a later date. Changing the group that your child attends means that he or she may be working with a group of students that are either older or younger than they are.

Groups will be arranged by age/level, and will be assigned prior to lessons beginning in September. Group lesson attendance is mandatory.

Parents and Others at Lessons

Experience has shown that the vast majority of students are more relaxed and perform better for the teacher if parents and/or visitors are not present at the lesson. Therefore, in order to insure the best possible learning environment for your child; parents, friends and other family members will not be expected to attend lessons unless prior arrangements have been made.

Computer Lab

In my studio, I am always promoting Total Musicianship. This means that I want my students to not only learn to play their instrument, but also to be able to do the following:

- Understand the Theory behind music
- Develop an understanding of Music History
- Learn about the individual composers
- Become familiar with the Terminology used in music
- Develop notational awareness
- Develop skills in ear training, listening and sight-reading
- Explore Composition

I believe that all of these skills are necessary for Piano students of today, and it is easy to see that all of this cannot be fit into a 30-minute lesson. But all of these things can be introduced and developed with Computer-Assisted Instruction. During Computer Lab time, students can explore, drill skills, listen to all kinds of piano music, analyze that music, and begin to create their own. Computer-Assisted Instruction provides visual feedback for an aural art. It increases a student's learning potential, deepens a student's musical understanding, and adds challenge and excitement to drills and studies.

All students in Grade 1 and up are encouraged to enroll in Computer Lab. Lab time is spent in 15 minutes of working independently on the computer on materials which reinforce concepts that have been presented at lesson time. The curriculum will be tailored to each student's individual needs. Process will be monitored on a regular basis and adjustments to the students' program will be made as necessary.

The technology in the studio is intended to provide students with additional opportunities to build and reinforce various musicianship skills. Students are expected to respect all studio property and to use equipment carefully. If I find that students are creating problems, I reserve the right to discontinue their equipment use, or in extreme cases, to dismiss them from the studio.

Computer Lab time is independent time scheduled 15 minutes before or after the student's lesson time. In that time, the student is required to complete the required assignment. Computer lab time is bought in blocks of 4 sessions at a time. Computer time which has been purchased is expected to be used at each successive lesson, and is not allowed to be held for periods of time unless the student misses his/her lesson due to sickness.

A short list of the software and programs that your child will have access to during computer time are:

Music Ace 1 and 2
Musition
Ear Training Expedition 1 and 2
Alfred's Theory Games 1 - 5
Alfred's Essentials of Music Theory 1, 2, and 3
Midisaurus, 1 – 8
Julliard Music Adventure
Jump Start Music
Finale Notepad
Zane History of Music

These programs are all designed to help your child develop skills in music theory, ear training, notation and music history. I have found that students who participate in computer lab score very highly in note-naming and symbol recognition – a very important part of reading music fluently and understanding the theory behind it.

Student Responsibilities

The actual work of learning the piano and succeeding at it is your responsibility. These lessons belong to you, and you are responsible for:

Committing to practice a minimum of 5 days a week, for as long as you need to reach your daily goals.

Bringing assignment notebook, handouts, and all music for the week's assignment to each lesson.

Following all directions on the assignment sheet and complete each week's assignment.

Ask questions when you don't understand.

Realizing that the amount of time spent in correct and thoughtful practice is directly related to your advancement rate.

Coming to lessons with a positive attitude to learn.

Parent Responsibilities

Praise and encouragement are your greatest tools in helping your children succeed in piano lessons. Your involvement will let your children know how much you really enjoy music and want to share it with them. It is important to sit down and listen to each child's practice immediately following his or her lesson, and to also listen again before the next lesson and comment upon the improvement you hear. Students who do not practice immediately after their lessons forget up to 80% of what transpired. To help your child succeed, you are responsible for:

Providing a quiet and undisturbed time for practice.

Providing a tuned and well-maintained instrument.

Assisting your child in making and keeping a regular practice schedule.

Providing support, encouragement and discipline for regular and consistent practice.

Reviewing weekly assignments and help your child follow through specific practice steps.

Reading and upholding all Studio Policies in this handbook and being on time for all scheduled lessons, classes, and recitals.

Paying for tuition and music books by the first of each month.

Students often go through periods of hardship during piano lessons or practice time, and frustration is a common factor in a child's development while struggling to learn new concept and develop musical skills. Parents are encouraged to contact me if they have questions or concerns regarding any problems the student may have.

Teacher Responsibilities

Teaching students how to practice.

Finding appealing music for each student.

Finding appropriate music for each level.

Make lesson time productive.

Continually seek to improve my teaching skills through research, study, observation, and workshops.

Developing in students an enthusiasm, respect, and love for music.

Discovering the uniqueness of each student and respecting differences of musical taste and personality.

Teaching a program aimed at developing the whole musician.

Creating a studio atmosphere where students are free to feel comfortable and confident, recognizing both the seriousness and fun of study.

Encouraging laughter and discovery.

Providing motivation through performance opportunities and incentives.

Provide advance notification if unable to hold a lesson.

Teacher Objectives

As a music educator it is my goal to give your child the best possible musical education. I belong to several Professional Organizations (I am currently serving my 3rd year as the State President of the Massachusetts Music Teacher's Association). Last year, I was named to the Technology Committee of the National Keyboard Pedagogy Conference. This year, I have also had an article published in "Keyboard Companion" magazine, on guiding new teachers who are interested in adding technology to the private lesson. I continue to attend workshops and educational programs, subscribe to Professional Publications, and engage in lessons and other activities on a continuing basis in order to provide opportunities for professional growth, and enhance my own teaching and performing skills. By continuing to study and practice, and by re-evaluating my teaching goals and methods, I hope to achieve the finest individualized instruction for my students. I want my students to work hard, to trust themselves, and develop a "CAN DO!" attitude.

Practice Expectations

Piano study is a partnership between student, parents, and teacher. The lesson is a very small part of the week. It is the responsibility of the student and the parent to see that the remainder of the week is productive.

Practice Length

I no longer require a certain length of time to be spent practicing – I want students to be concerned with reaching goals and not watching the clock! All ages benefit from breaking up practice sessions into 2 or more parts (esp. for children under 7!). Here is an estimate of the minimum amount of time needed to reach daily goals:

Preschool ~ 15-20 minutes
Early Elementary ~ 20-30 minutes
Mid Elementary ~ 30 minutes
Late Elementary ~ 40 minutes
Early Intermediate ~ 50 minutes
Mid Intermediate ~ 60 minutes
Late Intermediate and beyond ~ 1½-2 hours

At the Intermediate level students need to practice a minimum of 1 hour a day to cover the longer, more demanding repertoire and technical work.

Practice Environment

Set up an inviting music corner. Choose an area of the house away from television, telephone, and other distractions. If possible, find an area that is separate, but not too remote, from family activity. Make this music area attractive to them, decorating it with objects that mean something to them and to their music. Arrange their music in an accessible, well-organized place in music cabinets, drawers, or folders. Make sure the light is excellent (both day and artificial), and that the chair is the right height, with forearms parallel to the floor. If possible, include their own tape recorder so they can listen to their own playing often.

Motivation

Even a student who loves music and has a strong desire to play the piano needs encouragement – not nagging – to practice. The “honeymoon” of the first few months quickly fades, and both students and parents realize the amount of work, effort, and patience involved in studying such a complex instrument. Children should not be “forced” to take lessons if they have absolutely no interest in music. A parent’s insistence on piano lessons may prevent the child from discovering and developing a talent in sports, dance, or any other creative art. However, if a child shows any interest in music, that doesn’t mean he or she will embrace the discipline of daily practice! Parents need to provide structure and discipline for consistent, productive practice. It is unrealistic to assume that a young child will go to the piano and practice productively without a parent’s active involvement. Parents can be encouraging in many ways:

Show your support by attending recitals.

Ask for a mini concert after dinner the next time you have company.

Never complain about having to tolerate the music of practice time or the scheduling difficulty of fitting lessons into busy lives.

Take an interest in weekly assignments and be involved in the learning process.

Create a home environment filled with music, by playing CD’s that feature the piano, having other family members play and/or sing, and attending live concerts or watching

them on PBS. The local Library System has ample choices of music books and videos; take advantage of the many free items available!

Show an interest in specific pieces. Comments such as, "I love to hear you play 'Bear Dance'", "I can really hear how you've improved the dynamics in 'Long, Long Ago'", or just singing a lesson piece around the house shows that you are INTERESTED in what your child is doing.

Ask "Have you made and enjoyed some music today?" instead of "Have you practiced today?" Remember that motivation often occurs after one is engaged in an activity. The discipline of simply getting on the bench and playing is an important first step!

Research on Motivation

The writings and extensive research by Kohn in his book, "Punished by Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes" are worth examining. Here's the basic idea:

Kohn believes it is essential to differentiate between evaluative praise and descriptive praise. He conceives of evaluative praise as an expression of approval without explanation (e.g., "That was very good"). In contrast, he conceives of descriptive praise as a straightforward expression of information about a performance (e.g., "I heard a steady tempo from beginning to end."). Evaluative praise may influence short-term behavior, but the conclusion in study after study is that it does not work in the long run.

Quotes On Motivation

The following are some of my favorite quotes regarding motivation.

"Music education, like other academic pursuits, is something a child will frequently not appreciate until years later. I often ask parents, 'Do you allow your child to stop reading if he loses interest in books? Would you let your child quit math if she did not want to learn her multiplication tables?'"

"Children should not be the masters of their own destiny, parents should be. Most children left to their whims and preferences would probably choose a diet of candy and soda pop, days of amusement park rides, and evenings of television. Children are simply not mature enough to know what activities are going to enrich their lives. The most worthwhile endeavors of life require hard work and concentration. It's no wonder we have to instill discipline, perseverance, and motivation to help our children become doctors, lawyers, teachers, and musicians."

Richard Kubow

An Open Letter to Parents

National Piano Foundation

“You can encourage parents to give their highest praise to the child’s attitude toward and involvement with the instrument rather than to her skill at executing any particular piece.”

Rhoda Rabin
At the Beginning
Teaching Piano to the Very Young Child

“Musicians and music educators agree that parents’ attitudes can make a decisive difference in the achievement of a child. Expect good progress and it is likely to result!”

“Quality and regularity are just as important as duration. A short practice period when a student is well rested and fully concentrating will accomplish more than a longer period when he is tired or distracted. Several short daily practice periods can be more effective than one longer session.”

“Avoid needless arguments about practice. Post a schedule and keep to it, making up practice if missed within the week. Avoid over-scheduling your child’s activities. Good health, social life, and real accomplishment all suffer when a child is committed to too many extra-curricular projects.”

Patricia Taylor Lee
How to Help Your Child Succeed at the Piano
National Piano Foundation

“Do not require any student to practice a certain amount of time. Try to persuade parents that the clock enters into practice in just one way: the time to begin practicing. Once a student has started to practice, her job is to follow every step on her lesson assignment.”

“Well-meaning parents offer all kinds of non-musical rewards for faithful practice, some better than others. The worst motivator is the threat of punishment for not practicing: things like getting grounded, a cut in allowance, or extra household chores. Only slightly better is the reward system: a penny-a-minute-for-practice, candy, or extra TV time. Usually these rewards are tied to minutes spent at the piano, rather than to accomplishment while there. Whether parents offer punishments or rewards, they are actually bribing their children. What makes these parental incentives extrinsic is that they have nothing to do with the music itself.”

Frances Clark
Questions & Answers

Recitals

There will be 2 annual recitals held at the Dartmouth Bible Church – one in December and one in May. Students will get to perform on a beautiful-sounding Yamaha grand piano.

Choosing Pieces for Recital

I will try to avoid the exclusive focus on a few “hard pieces” at the expense of gaining long-term musicianship skills and creativity. My goal is for students to become independent musical thinkers, readers, and performers later in life. I have encountered too many adults who studied a handful of “impressive-sounding” pieces as children, but never really understood and internalized the pieces as musicians, and still do not have the reading skills necessary for musical independence. They also no longer play the piano for pleasure. Sometimes a parent’s or a teacher’s desire to hear “immediate results” can preclude real learning and long-term retention.

Recital Rules & Reminders

Arrive 10 minutes early; enter between pieces if late.

Bring a snack to share that is proportional to the number of guests you invite (i.e. – bring more than 6 cookies if you’ve invited 12 guests!).

Silence is expected during all performances; please remind your children to never talk or make unnecessary noises during a performance.

Bring batteries for any video recorders, etc. Access to outlets may be limited.

No smoking.

Please monitor small children; no one should play the piano after the recital without my permission.

Turn off all cell phones and beepers.

No flash photography while students are performing.

Invite all of your family and friends!

Recital Preparation

Preparation for the recital begins the moment a student begins to think and play his or her pieces for the very first time. Students who have consistently followed through with ALL of their practice steps have a much greater chance for a successful performance. Use the suggestions below to help students strengthen their grasp of each recital piece. The following suggestions and challenges may help students practice PERFORMING and develop concentration.

Students, try to...

Perform for family and friends; keep going after mistakes!

Perform with distractions to challenge your concentration. Invite your audience to cough, talk, move around, make noises, etc. (Please follow this up with another performance with a quiet, respectful audience!)

Perform with the lights off or with your eyes gently closed.

Perform with someone sitting to your immediate right. A trick to performing is being aware of the audience, but not focusing on them. Imagine the sounds you want to create, and listen for them!

Have someone interrupt your piece in the middle (and create a mistake and a loss of concentration). Can you pick up where you left off? If you always “play through” your pieces without any focused study on each section, you will have trouble re-starting the piece!

Record your piece on a cassette and listen to it carefully. Do you hear what you see in the music?

Studio Awards

There are 2 Trophies in the Studio which are used on a continuing basis. The “Practice Minutes Trophy” is awarded each month to the student who has practiced the most number of minutes, and the “One-Minute Club” trophy is awarded to the student who names the most notes in the One-Minute Challenge. Each of these trophies is kept by the qualified student for one month, and is returned at the last lesson of that month. If a student does not return the trophy, or returns it damaged, they must assume the replacement cost of the trophy.

At the end of the year, all students are presented with Certificates of Study from the Music Teacher’s National Association. These Certificates signify the successful completion of every 2 years of music study.

Music Library

My extensive Music Library offers the students a chance to play from a variety of books without having to purchase them. Any borrowed music that is not returned or is returned damaged will be charged to the student at its replacement cost.

Piano

Be certain that your piano is in good condition. It is very difficult to enjoy playing on an out of tune instrument. A parallel experience might be riding your bicycle with a flat tire. It would work, but would you enjoy it? I recommend Peter West, Piano Tuner and Technician. His phone number is xxx-xxxx.

Fingernails

Fingernails, which are too long, preclude development of proper piano technique. Please be certain they are trimmed very short.

Picking up your child

If someone other than parents will be picking up your child, please advise me in advance. For their safety, students are not allowed to leave the Studio with strangers. Students are also not allowed to wait for parents outside.

Questions and Comments

I am always available to talk to parents about their child's progress, or to answer any questions you may have. In order to keep disruption of lessons to a minimum, please call me any evening after 7:30 and I will be happy to speak with you.