



2023-2024 Policies & Guidelines

Welcome! I'm excited to start our work together. Below are the policies of my studio and some guidelines for a successful musical experience.

Lessons

For children: Piano lessons include a classical musical curriculum that begins with method books and continues with pedagogically appropriate classical repertoire. In order to form a whole musician, piano lessons also include fundamental music theory and ear training from the start.

For adults: Lessons are project-based. We will come up with a curriculum together based on the music that inspires you, as well as your previous experience.

Lessons are offered both in-person at my home in Hillsborough, NJ, and online via Zoom. Students may opt for exclusively in-person lessons, exclusively online lessons, or a hybrid of the two. Regardless of location, the scheduled weekly lesson day/time will remain the same for the academic year.

Tuition, Fees, and Payment

Rates for lessons are as follows:

30 minutes: \$44/lesson

45 minutes: \$59/lesson

60 minutes: \$73/lesson

New in 2023: A recital fee of \$15 per family will be charged for each in-person recital.

Tuition is due in advance by the first lesson of each month, and is reflected on an electronically issued monthly invoice.

Electronic payments are preferred. Tuition may be paid by Venmo, PayPal, or Zelle. If electronic payments are not possible, I will also accept payment via check (made out to "Megan Register").

Fees for festivals, exams, etc., are to be paid for by the student.

Attendance

Your tuition reserves you a weekly time slot. Once you register for a lesson time, it is set for the academic year.

I strive to give each student my full attention for their entire scheduled lesson time. In order to make the most of your lesson, please arrive on time. If the lesson begins late due to my tardiness, I will extend the lesson so that the student receives the full lesson length. If a student is late, the lesson will still end at the scheduled end-of-lesson time. If more than half of the lesson is missed due to student tardiness, that remainder of the lesson will be forfeited, and will not be rescheduled.

No-show or cancellation within two hours of lesson time: You have forfeited that lesson and it will not be rescheduled.

Advanced cancellation: Make-up lessons may be offered at my discretion.

Teacher cancellation: In the event that I must cancel, the lesson will be made up at a mutually convenient time, or the tuition for that lesson will be credited to the following month.

In the event of illness, please err on the side of caution. If you have a cold (coughing, sneezing, runny nose), please wear a mask to your lesson. If you are too sick to go to school or work due to a contagious illness, you are too sick to attend your piano lesson in person. If you cannot attend a lesson in person, you may attend your lesson online via Zoom. Thank you for your cooperation in doing your part to help all of us stay healthy and safe!

If you must cancel your lesson for any reason, please let me know as soon as possible. Email or text is the best and preferred way to reach me.

Materials

Each student uses 2-5 music books, a theory workbook, an assignment notebook, and a 3-ring binder. Unless other arrangements are made with me, students are responsible for purchasing necessary materials in a timely fashion. Bring all materials to each lesson.

Hands Ready to Play!

Keep nails trimmed. Playing with long nails is the piano equivalent of running in high-heeled shoes! Hands should be clean for the lesson, washed free of dirt and oil before sitting down to play. Please take advantage of the hand sanitizer near the door before approaching the piano.

Practice

A student's progress is determined by dedicated practice, not by simply attending lessons. Therefore, daily practice is essential and expected.

The practice assignment is fine-tuned to the student and to the strengths and struggles of that day's lesson. It is designed to be specific, efficient, and broken into manageable steps. By following it, material that is difficult will become easy.

Playing the piano is a mental, physical, and emotional exercise. For young students and beginners, physical mastery demands the most attention. Specific amounts of practice time are not assigned to each student. Instead, students should practice long enough to accomplish the goals that we create during each lesson. Parents, help your child find this quiet time every day, and make it part of your routine. The physical motion of playing every day will internalize good technique, build stronger fingers and posture, and help form a more free and intuitively musical student.

For adults, the main challenge is providing that consistent time for yourself, despite life's many other demands. It helps to truly think of your musical journey as a "practice" in the sense of a meditation or yoga practice. It's amazing what a little each day can do.

Instrument

An acoustic piano is your best option. Each time a key is struck on the piano, the vibration from the string travels back through the finger, creating mutual responsiveness between the instrument and the player. Students who practice on a real piano develop stronger and more agile technique, and are better equipped to express their musical intentions. A used upright piano in good condition is better than a new keyboard, and may well be cheaper. Your acoustic piano should be tuned at least once (preferably twice) per year.

A digital piano or keyboard is a useful tool for imitating the sound of a piano, but does not imitate the vibrations, overtones, or full range of dynamics. If you already have one, it can be okay for a beginner for 1-2 years. However, if a student wishes to progress to intermediate and advanced repertoire, they will be at a disadvantage with even the best digital piano. All digital pianos used for lessons must have at least 66 weighted and touch-sensitive keys, must be at the proper height, and must have a music stand and pedal.

Smaller keyboards with small or unweighted and non-touch-sensitive keys don't work for piano lessons.

Performances

I strongly encourage at least two performances each year, which can take many forms: a recital, student showcase at school, family gathering (in person or even online!), group lesson, or competitive or juried event. This is a wonderful way to celebrate the hard work of the student and to bond with fellow pianists. It's also a great way to become comfortable with nerves, and develop poise and confidence in a fun and supportive setting.

Please let me know if you are interested in participating in events such as festivals, competitions, or examinations. Some of these events are quite competitive, so we must all agree that participation in a particular event is age and level appropriate. When considering a spring piano event, note that consistent practice is imperative to a positive outcome; if a student is not prepared two weeks in advance of the event, we will not participate.

Communication

Music is highly personal, as are private lessons of any kind. There are several courses we can take in your music study, and I want it to be an inspiring and memorable experience for you. I always welcome feedback, questions, or just a conversation about your lessons at any time.