



Studio Policies

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Scheduling and payment

- 1. Scheduled lessons:** *Students are expected to pay for and attend weekly lessons at their prescribed day/time every week between September and June, except the last two weeks of December.* No lessons will be held the last two weeks of December, and December tuition will amount to the cost of two lessons. ***Students are entitled to miss two lessons without paying for them for vacations/special school functions/holidays.*** Please notify the teacher one week in advance to inform her that you will be using one of your two vacation days, and she will remove the lesson from the invoice. Once two vacation days have been used, all other missed lessons must be rescheduled at the teacher's convenience or forfeited with full payment. Lessons landing on civic or religious holidays (Religious Feast Days, Family Day, Labour Day) will be rescheduled for another day or removed from the monthly invoice according to the preference of the student.
- 2. Payment:** At the beginning of the month, an invoice will be emailed to the student for all the scheduled lessons for the month. ***All scheduled lessons must be paid for in advance at the first lesson of each month.*** My preferred method of payment is Internet e-transfer, but I also gladly accept personal checks and cash. I am unable to process credit card payments at this time. You will be issued a receipt by email upon payment.
- 3. Late payment:** A late fee of \$5.00 per week will be added to outstanding invoices that pass the payment deadline (7 days after receiving the invoice).
- 4. Missing lessons:** No refunds will be given for missed lessons that have been scheduled. If you provide 24 hours' notice of an absence I will attempt to reschedule the lesson to another day of that week based on our mutual availability. No make-up lessons will be given for lessons missed by the student with less than 24 hours' notice. The tuition for missed lessons cannot be carried forward to the following month.
- 5. Missing lessons due to illness:** In order to prevent the spread of illness, students should stay home when ill. If a student misses a lesson due to illness, that lesson will be rescheduled for another time when the student is feeling well.
- 6. Lessons missed by the teacher:** Should the teacher have to miss a lesson due to unforeseen circumstances, the full amount for that lesson will be refunded to the student or the student can choose to use the payment as credit for a future lesson.
- 7. Late arrivals:** The teacher is not required to make up lesson time if the student arrives late. The teacher will make every effort to start lessons on time, but should a lesson begin late, the student is entitled to stay for the full scheduled lesson OR to have a portion of the lesson fee refunded for time missed.
- 8. Length of term:** The regular lesson session runs from September 3, 2019-June 30, 2019. No piano lessons will be scheduled for the last two weeks of December, and each student is permitted to take one lesson off for their school system's Spring/Easter break if they



wish. I prefer to continue teaching students throughout the summer so they continue to progress, but many students change to bi-weekly lessons for July and August, or just attend two or three refresher lessons throughout the summer depending on their availability.

Rates and fees

Lesson rates

	30-minutes	45-minutes	60-minutes
Studio lessons	\$30	\$45	\$60
In-home lessons	\$36	\$54	\$72
Post-secondary student lessons	\$25	\$40	\$50

Materials

- 1. Piano:** The student requires a piano in their home to take piano lessons. If the student does not have an instrument at home to practice on between lessons they will not progress and will likely become discouraged or lose interest in playing the instrument altogether. An upright acoustic piano or a digital piano with 88 weighted keys are good starting instruments. Keyboards with fewer than 88 keys will not suffice. Families wishing to find out if their child enjoys piano lessons before buying their own digital or acoustic piano could consider renting a piano. Electric pianos can be rented from music stores such as Long and McQuade for about \$40/month.
- 2. Music books:** The student will require specific music books and a notebook containing both manuscript and regular lined paper. This notebook is essential because it allows me to record homework, communicate with parents, and draw examples during class. Music books may be purchased online or in-store at **The Leading Note**, (370 Elgin St., Suite 2) or from Amazon.ca. Students must bring their materials to each lesson, and parents should acquire the recommended books as promptly as possible, since lesson time is wasted if the student shows up without their materials.
- 3. Metronome:** The student requires a metronome, which should be purchased at the same time lessons commence. It can be an electronic or mechanical metronome, or an app downloaded onto an iPad or tablet, provided the student can access the device as needed during any practice session.

Practice expectations

- 1. Regular home practice and expectations for progress:**



Most parents place children in piano lessons with the hope that they will acquire a skill that will give them lifelong enjoyment. Students will not develop their piano skills to a level that will permit lifelong enjoyment unless they regularly practice at home. The student will begin their study by playing short, simple pieces as they learn to coordinate the many cognitive and motor demands of performing music. It often takes two to three years before students begin to play simple pieces of the classical masters, and five to eight years of study to reach an intermediate level of proficiency. Becoming an advanced player requires ten to twelve years of dedicated practice for most people.

When parents register their child for beginner piano lessons they should recognize that they are committing their child not only to the time required for the weekly lessons, but also to a minimum of 1.5 to 2 hours additional practice time that must be scheduled to occur in the home throughout the week. The amount of required practice will increase as they grow older and as they progress in their level of skill. The outcome of piano lessons is directly dependent on the amount of home-practice students engage in during the week. If the parents suspect that there is not enough time in the child's schedule for this regular practice, they should choose a different activity for their child instead of piano lessons. Three or fewer practice sessions a week will result in little to no progress, and likely will result in frustration on the part of the student. If the student is practicing more than 20 minutes a day at the beginning it is likely that they are very self-motivated and see the piano as a source of fun and enjoyment. These students will progress quickly.

The following chart summarizes the expectations of progress for a typical beginner based on amount of weekly practice:

Projected progress after 1 year of lessons based one amount of weekly practice (estimated for a typical beginner, age 6 or 7)

Practice schedule	Rate of weekly progress	Experience at lesson	Projected progress at 1 year mark
Three or fewer 10-minute practice sessions per week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Little to no progress will be made from week to week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student will likely be frustrated with their lack of progress• Teacher will almost always repeat the same lesson from the previous week• Student learns something new every 2 to 3 lessons, with interim lessons devoted to repetition and practice• Teacher will be forced to move on to teaching new skills before the old ones are mastered• Teacher constantly reminds student to practice; routine is not established• Student may dread coming to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student will be able to play a few songs by ear/memory• Student will not yet be able to read music• Student may have passed through up to one half of a primer book, but has not retained many of the lessons• Fine motor skills are unrefined



<p>15 minutes a day, 4 or 5 days a week</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow, steady progress will be observable for most students • Minimum practice requirement for productive lessons 	<p>lessons because they do not feel prepared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher will occasionally have to repeat the lesson from the previous week • Student learns something new almost every week. • Student may occasionally become frustrated with slow progress, but has mastered a few important musical challenges. • Student generally looks forward to coming to lessons • Teacher occasionally reminds student to practice; routine is basically established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will be able to perform a moderate number of songs by ear/memory • Student is starting to learn to read music and can sight-read simple rhythms in many time signatures • Students are nearing completion or have completed their first primer
<p>15 minutes a day, 7 days a week.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to quick progress will be observed for most students. • Optimal practice schedule for productive lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher rarely has to repeat the previous week's lesson. • Student learns something new every week. • Student is rarely frustrated and recognizes that they have mastered many musical challenges. • Student looks forward to coming to lessons • Teacher rarely reminds student to practice; routine is established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student can perform many pieces by ear/memory • Student can read simple music in the treble and bass clef • Student has completed their first primer book • They know a moderate collection of scales and technical exercises • Student may be starting Prep. B RCM.
<p>20 minutes per day, (two 10-minute sessions).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid progress observable for most students • Student is likely self-motivated and enjoys visiting the piano often for enjoyment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student learns something new every week • Teacher never has to repeat a lesson • Student likes challenges, occasionally becoming frustrated with difficult material, but finds solutions through practice • Student is excited to come to lessons • Student does not need to be reminded to practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student can perform many songs by memory/ear • Student has completed their first primer book and has learned a few pieces from Prep. B RCM. • They know many scales and technical exercises • They can read music at a Prep. B to grade 1 RCM level.



Parental Involvement

1. **Attendance at lessons:** Parental attendance at lessons is optional, but encouraged for the first six to eight months of lessons, especially for young beginners. Parental attendance is required if the students are too young to go to the bathroom by themselves or if they cannot put their shoes on by themselves.
2. **Involvement in home practice:** *Parental involvement in home practice sessions is necessary for the first year to two years of lessons*, but may persist depending on the age and personality of the child. Although I believe self-motivated practice and unsupervised practice sessions are beneficial and necessary for students' progress, the expectation that a student will go to sit at the piano and practice consistently of their own volition is unrealistic for many students, especially those under the age of 8. *I ask that parents make a habit of reading the student's piano homework book so that they are familiar with the expectations for each week's practice.*
3. **Knowledge of music:** Parents frequently worry that they will be unable to help their children practice because they do not know anything about music themselves. Don't worry! Providing encouragement, displaying enthusiasm for music, and reinforcing practice schedules require no knowledge of music and are the most important way parents can support their child's musical development. This may include asking the student to show you what they are working on, encouraging them to perform for friends and family, or listening to music with them. It will also include going over their list of piano homework in their notebook and asking them if they've practiced everything on the list. If the parent wishes to see exactly what the student is learning, they may attend lessons, or come observe the last 10 minutes of the lesson. Most of the material of early lessons is very simple and can be easily learned by a parent.
4. **Reinforcing practice schedule:** *The most important way parents can support their child is by reinforcing a regular schedule of practice.* Just like with adults, children will develop good practice habits if the sessions are scheduled at a regular, reoccurring time. It is best if the parent establishes when those times will be and sets them aside the very first week of lessons. Getting a kitchen timer or using a smart phone app can be a great way to help children regulate the length of practice sessions.
5. **Books and materials:** The student's progress will be severely hampered if the student does not have their music books with them at lessons. Parents should help students remember to bring all of their music books to every lesson, and ensure that their homework notebook contains fresh sheets of manuscript paper and lined paper.
6. **Video recording of lessons:** Some parents like to video-record their child's lesson for reference. This is happily encouraged. I only ask that you do not post the videos to a public website, such as YouTube or Facebook.



7. **Communication with the teacher:** Regularly communicating about the child's practice habits/attitudes, challenges they've encountered during practice, and any worries they may have about lessons can help me address learning issues promptly and effectively during lessons. Please do not hesitate to ask questions or raise concerns with me by phone, email, or after a lesson.

Recitals and Performances

1. **Recitals:** Students are encouraged to perform at all scheduled recitals. The dates and locations of recitals will be confirmed one month in advance. Recitals will take place at the beginning of February and the end of May. The location of the recitals will be in downtown Ottawa, at either St. Joseph's Parish or the University of Ottawa Friemann Hall. You may invite as many friends or family members to the recital as you would like.
2. **Master classes:** Occasionally group classes will be scheduled to enrich students' performing experience by hearing one another perform or by playing for visiting teachers. These classes are optional for all students, unless required for exam or festival preparation. The cost of attendance at each master class is **\$15**.

RCM Examination Preparation

1. Students preparing for exams or festivals are required to perform at all scheduled recitals and must attend minimum 45- minute lessons.
2. Preparation for an exam is decided based on the discretion of the teacher. I will recommend a student register for an examination only when I am certain that the student demonstrates exceptional performance of the examination requirements.
3. Failure of an exam, (score below 60%), is rare, and only occurs if the student is not practicing regularly. If the student is not prepared for the upcoming exam, the teacher reserves the right to recommend withdrawal from the exam. If the student proceeds with an exam despite the recommendation of withdrawal and fails, the student will be dismissed from the studio.

Withdrawing from Lessons

1. **Withdrawal:** Students may with withdraw from lessons at any point by providing written, two weeks' notice. The two scheduled lessons following written notice must be paid for, and the student is entitled to receive those lessons.
2. **Common reasons for quitting lessons:** Playing the piano can be fun and rewarding, but many students (adults and children alike) are surprised that to find that it can be very



challenging, especially at first. It can also take time to fall into a routine of regular practice. Although the decision whether or not to continue a child's lessons is up to the discretion of the parent, I encourage parents to consider committing to a minimum of one year of lessons before deciding to terminate lessons. Common reasons for quitting include:

- a. Lack progress due to minimal home practice.
- b. Frustration with mastering specific skills, such as pitch or rhythm notation
- c. Genuine disinterest
- d. Anxiety about attending lessons

Restructuring and reinforcing regular practice sessions can address many of these issues. I can also make modifications to repertoire and teaching strategy to best accommodate the students' needs. It is best to keep the lines of communications open with me about the students' progress so I can help them learn the best way possible.

Dismissal from Lessons

1. **Grounds for dismissal:** Although highly unlikely, the teacher reserves the right to dismiss students from the studio for the following reasons:
 - a. Physically or verbally abusive conduct toward the teacher or another student, including swearing, hitting, yelling, or stomping, or similar problematic behaviour.
 - b. Consistently attending fewer than four lessons per month (unless the lessons have been scheduled bi-weekly).
 - c. Consistent lack of preparation for lessons over several months, (pieces remain unlearned, homework is not complete).

I believe **any** child or adult can find success and enjoyment with piano lessons. Many problems with progress and practicing can be addressed through discussion with the parent and/or student. If the teacher observes grounds for dismissal, the first step will always be a discussion with the student and parent about how to improve the situation, which may include recommendations for different practice techniques or scheduling, or a different pedagogical approach. If the problems persist after reasonable discussion, the student will be put on a 6-month probationary period during which they may work to demonstrate that they are improving. If the student fails to improve after this 6-month probationary period, the student will be dismissed from the studio.



Lesson Contract (parents)

I _____ (parent or guardian of _____) have read the studio policies and information and agree to comply with the outlined terms for lesson attendance and payment of fees. By signing this I agree to:

1. Fully pay for all scheduled lessons on or before the first lesson of every month by means of Interac e-transfer, cash, or personal check.
2. Bring my child to attend weekly lessons and support them in establishing a schedule of daily practice.
3. Monitor my student's homework book.
4. Give one week's notice if I would like to use one of two possible vacation days to miss a lesson without paying for it.
5. Give two weeks written notice if I wish to terminate this contract.

Guardian Signature

Date

Teacher Signature

Date



Lesson Contract (adult students)

I _____ have read the studio policies and information and agree to comply with the outlined terms for lesson attendance and payment of fees. By signing this I agree to:

1. Fully pay for all scheduled lessons on or before the first lesson of every month by means of Interac e-transfer, cash, or personal check.
2. Attend weekly lessons and establish a schedule of daily practice that works for me.
3. Bring my homework book to each lesson and consult it for home practice.
4. Give one week's notice if I would like to use one of two possible vacation days to miss a lesson without paying for it.
5. Give two weeks written notice if I wish to terminate this contract.

Student Signature

Date

Teacher Signature

Date