

Updated January 2002

Teaching Philosophy and Goals

I believe that God is the Creator of all things, including music, and it should therefore be used to praise and glorify Him.

“...For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” Revelation 4:11

“He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.” Psalm 40:3

It is my goal that each of your children will become a skilled musician who will use his/her talents and abilities to serve the Lord. It is important that each student receive a balanced music education that will prepare them for whatever their future in music may be. Every aspect of music works together and contributes to the overall ability of any musician. For this reason I include performance, ear training, technique, theory, composition, improvisation, and sight-reading in the music education of each student.

Even if piano is not the ultimate or only musical goal you have for your children, the basic skills and techniques learned from piano lessons will prove useful in many areas of life - musical and otherwise.

Teaching Experience

I have taken piano lessons since I was 6 years old and am grateful for the many opportunities God has given me as a result. I began giving lessons in April of 1998 at the request of several families and currently teach around 30 students. I am committed to continuing my own music education so that I may better serve each family and offer my students quality instruction. To accomplish this I will continue to study music, periodically attend seminars, local workshops, and specialized training opportunities and maintain membership in Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) as well as other local organizations.

Parental Involvement

In order for piano to be enjoyable for your child he/she must understand that it is a privilege for them to take lessons. Your child's enthusiasm will wear off over time as they realize that a lot of work and effort is required on their part. As initial enthusiasm is replaced by awareness of the discipline and commitment required to attain excellence, your encouragement and praise will be essential to your child's success.

In addition to this, please:

Set aside a scheduled practice time for your child

Supervise home practice sessions and sign practice journals, making sure your child completes all assignments

Provide feedback and suggestions for me that will increase the effectiveness of each lesson

Play quality music in your home and car

Sit in on lessons periodically

Ensure that your child arrives at their lesson at the appropriate time – (not too early, not late)

Student Responsibilities

Complete daily practice and accurately record it in practice journal

Refer to assignment book daily to ensure that nothing is overlooked

Be prepared for lesson (with all books and completed theory or other projects)

Keep fingernails trimmed short (should not extend past the end of the finger) to ensure proper hand position and good technique

Practicing

Students who establish good practice habits from the beginning will progress more rapidly and find piano practice and lessons more enjoyable. The amount of time required for good quality practice will vary depending on the student's age and playing level. More importantly, however, is that practice is done on a consistent daily basis with a clear goal in mind. During the lesson, I write on each student's assignment sheet the things I expect them to practice and prepare for their next lesson. I include specific practice instructions based on the areas of study and pieces they are working on. There are seven basic reasons that a student does not practice.

I am responsible for the first three:

1. The student does not know *how* to practice.
2. The study pieces are either boring (too easy) or frustrating (too hard).
3. The student is required to work exclusively on music that is unappealing.

Parents are responsible for the next three:

4. Practice sessions are not specifically scheduled into the day.
5. Practice is scheduled when other family members or friends are engaged in distracting activities.
6. The instrument is not in reasonable condition and/or the practice room is not comfortable.

The student is responsible for the most common reason:

7. The student must develop a character quality – discipline – in order to learn to schedule priorities and to understand that there is not always enough time in the day to do everything, but must choose wisely those activities which are most important.

In the event that regular practice is not being completed, I will work with the student (and parent, if necessary) to determine the cause and possible solutions.

The Piano

You must have a piano or full-sized keyboard (88 keys) in your home. A piano is **strongly** recommended as nothing can take the place of its touch and sound.

A piano should be tuned twice a year – spring and fall are the best times

I recommend TUNER as a piano tuner/technician – PHONE NUMBER.

To prevent excessive collecting of dirt and spreading of germs, it is recommended that users wash their hands before playing the piano. I require all students to wash their hands before each lesson.

The piano should be located in a well-lit place that allows practicing to be done with as few distractions as possible.

Fees and Missed Lessons

Please note the following guidelines that will enable me to focus more of my attention on the students and less on record keeping.

The lesson fee is \$XX a month per student regardless of the number of lessons that month. This fee includes the regular half-hour private lessons and participation in any of the elective group classes offered throughout the year.

Throughout the course of the year I will plan to teach approximately 40 weeks of lessons, leaving 12 weeks for vacations, holiday breaks, etc. 8 of these weeks are already specifically noted on the yearly studio calendar, leaving 4 extra “vacation” weeks which may (or may not) be taken off as necessary.

Please pay at the first lesson of the month. There will be a late charge of \$5 for payments made after the first lesson of the month.

If your child becomes sick or is otherwise not able to attend their lesson, please call me as soon as possible because I schedule each day based on the assumption that every student will attend. I will try to make up missed lessons due to sickness, if at all possible.

If I am ever unable to give your child a lesson due to an unforeseen circumstance or sickness, I will notify you as soon as possible.

Throughout the year there will be opportunities to participate in local programs and festivals requiring a participation fee. I will provide more detailed information as these opportunities arise.

At the Studio

Because the piano studio is located in my parents’ house, please help me keep disruptions to their day minimal. Students who remain at the house when it is not their lesson time should stay in the studio area. They may bring their own books or schoolwork or make use of music-related activities I have available. These include: music history books, flashcards, games, research project ideas, and extra credit worksheets.

Obtaining Books and Other Necessary Supplies

Piano Books – Your child will need 2-3 new books (\$7-\$10 ea.) approximately every six months, depending on their progress. They may also need to purchase supplemental books at various

intervals throughout the year. Generally, I will purchase the books and give you a receipt. I understand the expense that books can incur, and I will only choose those that I think are necessary and beneficial for the student's progress.

Metronome – As your child progresses you will eventually need to purchase a metronome (approximately \$20). I will let you know when I think one is necessary.

Practice Journal/Assignment Book – At the beginning of each year you will need to purchase a personalized Practice Journal/Assignment Book that I have put together for each student (\$10).

Awards/Incentives

At each lesson students collect "Treasure Chest Points" for demonstrating positive character qualities and completing various assignments and extra credit projects. A complete listing of "How to Collect Treasure Chest Points" is posted in the studio and is also included in each student's Practice Journal.

In addition, I try to develop fun incentive programs during the year in which the students may participate. These are designed to help motivate students to work toward specific goals as they continue to progress and advance in their music studies. Each incentive program is explained in detail in an issue of Noteworthy News prior to the starting date.

Recitals, Performance Opportunities, and Group Classes

I usually have a formal recital for my students each year at Christmas time. There are a number of other performance and competition opportunities each year that students will be made aware of as information becomes available. In addition, each spring students will be allowed to participate in Music Progressions (a local evaluation program – a participation fee is required). I also encourage (and award Treasure Chest Points for) attending recitals of other skilled musicians. Let me know if you are interested and I will give you a list of upcoming performances in the area.

Group classes are offered throughout the year as an elective in which students may choose to participate in addition to their regular private lessons. (A description of current group classes being offered may be obtained upon request.) Studio-wide group classes may be held occasionally throughout the year at my discretion as well. A few of the benefits of these classes are:

Different musical skills are incorporated that require more time than a typical individual piano lesson allows.

Your child will meet others who are striving toward similar musical goals, and they can encourage and inspire one another to pursue excellence.

The students will see how music can be interesting and fun by participating in group games and activities.

Some lessons/techniques are absorbed more easily and quickly in a group and some students are especially motivated to learn when in a group.

Students will gain valuable performance experience in a low-pressured atmosphere.

Dismissal

If any of the following situations persists after I have notified you and provided time to correct the problem, I regret that I will have to dismiss the student:

The student consistently demonstrates a lack of enthusiasm and willingness to participate during lesson time

The student consistently fails to show diligence and determination in home practice

Lack of dependability and commitment exhibited in persistent absences or chronic lateness

If you choose, for whatever reason, to discontinue lessons, please give at least one month's prior notice. I will do the same.

If You Need to Contact Me

I am available for any help you need; I am here to serve you. Please feel free to call if you ever have any questions.