

STUDIO POLICY OF TEACHER, NCTM – Revised August, 2007

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 student 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 began taking piano lessons at the age of 6 and currently study with Dr. Sylvia Coats, a professor at WSU. I began giving lessons in April of 1998 at the request of several families and currently teach around 35 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, workshops and specialized training opportunities.

I am a member of Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) and Kansas Music Teachers Association (KMTA), and am actively involved in several local music teachers associations.

In March, 2006, after many hours of study and work, I became a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music (NCTM) through MTNA.

Parental Involvement

While most students are initially excited to begin piano lessons, please be aware that they will face challenges and sometimes frustrations. 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)

Year-End Evaluations are held at the last lesson of the spring semester. Please plan to attend this Year-End Evaluation with your child. You will be given a questionnaire to fill out ahead of time so that we can discuss the student's progress over the past year and clarify direction and goals for their continuing music studies.

Student Responsibilities

Complete daily practice and accurately record it in practice journal
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
Wash hands before each lesson

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. Specific practice assignments are given each week and all practicing must be recorded by the student in their Practice Journal and signed by a parent.

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

Studio Enrollment and Fees

Returning students must turn in completed enrollment forms by August 1, along with their non-refundable \$50 enrollment fee, to reserve their spot in the studio for the following year. This fee will cover the cost of the Assignment Book/Practice Journal and will be used to purchase music books for that student.

Lesson slots not reserved by August 1 will be made available to new students.

The lesson fee is \$ a month per student regardless of the number of lessons that month. This fee includes weekly 45-minute private lessons and participation in any of the elective group classes and studio recitals offered throughout the year.

The schedule for each semester, including weeks that there will be no lessons, is posted on the website and included in the September newsletter mailing each year.

The schedule is structured to allow for one additional week of no lessons each semester. This may be scheduled at Natalie's discretion. In the event that such a week is not scheduled, the student will benefit from an extra lesson that semester.

Payment is due by the 10th of the month. A late fee of \$15 will be assessed for payments not received by the 10th.

Missed Lessons

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. Cancelled lesson spots in a given week will be made available to other students for make-up lessons.

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.

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 supplemental books at various intervals throughout the year. Generally, I will purchase the books and deduct the amount from the Studio Enrollment Fee. In the event that the cost of books exceed the amount in the student's account, you will be billed for any additional books.

Metronome - If you do not already own one, you will need to purchase a metronome (approximately \$40) within the first month of lessons.

Practice Journal/Assignment Book - In September of each year students will receive a Practice Journal/Assignment Book that corresponds with our theme for the year. The cost of this book is included in the studio enrollment fee.

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 at least once a year. I recommend Joe Wisner as a piano tuner/technician. Let me know if you are interested and I will give you contact information for him.

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

At the Studio

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.

Group Classes

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.) 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.

Recitals and Performance Opportunities

I usually have a formal recital for my students each year at Christmas time. There are many other opportunities each year in which the students may participate. Information regarding registration and fees for each event will be given to students as it becomes available. Listed below are some of the events:

Clavinova Festival - each student prepares a piece, incorporating the music technology of a Yamaha Clavinova, and plays at an area-wide festival.

WSU Festivals - elementary, middle and high school divisions in which students play a piece for a judge and receive a written critique and rating.

Music Progressions - a program that evaluates students in the areas of performance, understanding and vocabulary, theory, listening, and sight-reading. Each student receives a written critique from the facilitator and grades from their written tests.

Studio Festival - a collaborative effort among teachers in SCKMTA. Students may sign up for a mini-lesson with another teacher and will receive verbal instruction and a written critique sheet.

Fall Auditions - an individual competition in which students are judged and receive a rating. Winners at the district level proceed to state.

Concerto Competition - Students perform a concerto and are judged against other students in their division. The senior division winner is awarded a performance with a local symphony orchestra.

Senseney-Schneider Piano Auditions - each student prepares two memorized solos and is judged against other students in their division. Winners receive cash prizes.

Dismissal

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

The student 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.

A Final Note

Thank you for considering me as a piano teacher for your child. My goal is to serve you and to strive to recognize and meet the individual needs of each student. Please feel free to communicate openly with me if you ever have any questions, concerns or comments.