Heather Donovan

Piano Studio Policy

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Fall 2022- Spring 2023 Semesters

Welcome to the Heather Donovan Music Studio! Here are my policies and guidelines to keep the studio running smoothly

LESSONS

Piano lessons are taught on a semester basis. The fall semester runs from the beginning of September-the end of January. The spring semester is the beginning of February-the end of June. A separate summer semester runs from July 1-August 31st. ***Once a student is enrolled for a semester, parents are responsible for paying tuition for the entire semester.* Please plan your child’s schedule accordingly; each student’s lesson time is reserved solely for him/her, and I cannot rearrange schedules mid semester to accommodate other activities**. Please plan schedules so that no other activity interferes with the lesson. Students will receive fifteen private lessons and two make-up lessons over the course a five-month long semester. The make-up lessons are given on the student’s regular lesson day and time during the last **two weeks** of the semester. No lessons are offered to a student during the make-up weeks if the student did not miss any regularly scheduled lessons. **Students are only allowed the two make-up lessons during the last two weeks of the semester**. I am unable to make exceptions to this policy. Please don’t ask to rearrange times or if I have any other openings during the week or semester. My studio runs on a full schedule each semester, and I am unable to offer additional make-up lessons. To be eligible for a make-up lesson, a minimum of 24- hour advance notice of cancellation is required before a regularly scheduled lesson. Make-up lessons are not transferable to subsequent semesters. Students who miss more than two lessons will forfeit those lessons at their expense unless they make arrangements with other students to trade lesson times. I will email out a trading list, and parents or students will be responsible for contacting other students to arrange a trade. Please note that students can only trade with someone who has the same lesson length, i.e. a 30 min. lesson can only be traded with a student who also has a 30 min. lesson. I will also need to be notified of the trade before the lesson.

**Payment of tuition in full reserves a spot in my schedule. Students who miss more than two weeks of lesson are still required to pay full tuition.**

Please see attached schedule for your assigned lesson dates. Students are only to come on the days they have been scheduled for lessons (the fifteen private lessons, and/or the two make-ups).

ATTENDANCE AND GENERAL POLICIES

Students are expected to attend and be on time for their scheduled lessons. **If a student arrives early for a lesson, the student should wait in the parent’s car until the scheduled lesson time as I may be teaching another student or have another commitment**. The studio is located in the building directly to the left of the house. Please park close to the studio not blocking the house (you may park in the roundabout near the studio). At the designated lesson time, students should walk up to the studio and let themselves in. Please do not knock on the doors or windows because it may disturb my current student’s lesson. Please walk into the studio and wash your hands. Arriving on time keeps me on schedule, but please be courteous; parents and students tend to complain if another student shows up too early. If the studio door is locked, please wait until I unlock it for your lesson. If it is locked, it is because I am busy with another commitment, and I will unlock it at the start of your lesson. Young students should be accompanied by their parent to the door, and the parent should come back to the studio to pick them up. Parents should drop off your child or wait in your car. It causes distractions having extra people in the studio and your child might not get the full benefit of the lesson. **Please wait with siblings or friends in your car to avoid disturbances to the lesson**. **Please do not wander around the property as I have neighbors and do not want to trespass on their land**. Students must also come prepared with all books and materials. Fingernails should be trimmed short to allow for proper hand position and technique.

**The studio also has a no food, drink, or gum policy. This applies to parents who are sitting in on lessons**.

TUITION

Tuition will be charged by semester. Parents can either pay for the entire semester or make five equal monthly payments. **If paying monthly,the amount due each month is one-fifth of the full semester tuition regardless of the number of lessons given that month.** It is **not** based on the number of weeks. Tuition is due by the first week of the month even if there is not a regularly scheduled lesson that week. If I have not received it by the first week of the month, a $15 late fee will be added. Cash or checks are acceptable. Any checks returned unpaid will be subjected to a $15 fee plus the $15 late fee. Payments can also be mailed to 21940 225th Pl SE, Maple Valley WA 98038. Please make checks payable to Heather Donovan.

Tuition:

30 min. $110 per month or $550 per semester

45 min. $162 per month or $810 per semester

60 min. $220 per month or $1100 per semester

The tuition does not include the cost of books, supplies, recital, piano party, festival, or Royal Academy fees. These will be billed separately. **No tuition credits,refunds, transfers or adjustments will be made for missed lessons.**

PRACTICE

Learning to play the piano is a life-long journey and a valuable skill. Just as with any skill, such as learning to read, learning a foreign language, or a sport, students need to practice on a regular basis in order to progress. In the same fashion as learning to read, you would require your child to practice and not give up because it was “too hard” or “because they didn’t want to.” Taking extended breaks from the skill or from practicing will only hinder progress. Your child may be or become resistant to practice in the beginning as no one “likes” to be told they have to do something. **It is the parents’ responsibility to get their children started on a daily practice routine**. Treat it in the same way that you treat their school homework. If your child sees it as something they do at a certain time everyday rather than a choice, there will be less struggle and arguments regarding practice. Set up a specific time of day such as morning, afternoon, or evening and try to have your child practice at that time each session. Have it become a daily routine. Please make sure that there are minimal distractions so that your child can better concentrate and make more progress. Please remember to encourage them. This way your child will develop good habits and practicing will become second nature. A reward system is also helpful for unmotivated students. Eventually you can decrease the frequency of the reward and the overall reward will be knowing how to read music and play the instrument.

Generally, if your child takes a 30 minute lesson, he/she should practice 30 minutes at least 5 days a week. However, it is more the quality of practice rather than the amount. Focusing on certain areas, ie. problem spots, and details of a piece for a half hour is much better practice than playing through the piece for an hour. Beginners may need to only practice about 10-15 minutes 5 days a week. If there are questions, please ask me.

In addition to practicing, I will be giving students theory assignments. Please make sure they are completed *before* their lesson.

The Many Reasons to Study Piano

**Studies have shown that people who study music and specifically, piano, have better test scores, more discipline, and are less likely to drop out of school**. If those aren’t reason enough to study piano, here is a detailed list:

Piano improves:

Coordination and motor skills

Concentration

Handwriting due to the increased dexterity in the fingers

Math skills, due to theory and since it is based on rhythm, and subdivisions of time into fractions

The ability to remain attentive to one task

Computer/typing skills

Exposure to foreign terms: Italian, German and French terms are often used

History, as it reflects the time of its creation

Fast coordination of hands, fingers, arms

Different use of the brain, including the ability to think more logically and rationally with attention to detail

Self-confidence

Memory skills

Eye and hand coordination

Social skills

Good overall self discipline

RECITALS

There will be two recitals per year, one in the fall and one in the spring. Recitals are typically held at the United Methodist Church in Covington. Cost of the recital is $10 per student (non- refundable) and due in the month the recital is scheduled.

PIANO FESTIVAL

The piano festival is put on by the National Federation of Music. It gives participating students the opportunity to perform from memory in front of judges and receive feedback. Students who participate year after year earn trophies for their achievements. It is open to students of all levels, but the student must be reading on the staff. Please see me as soon as possible if you are interested.

Royal Academy of Music Testing

The royal academy of music testing system is an international music certification program in which students take a comprehensive and all inclusive exam based on their level. If the student achieves a passing score, they make take the next level of exam up to the highest level. Students receive certificates of merit for each level passed. This type of exam is very strenuous and designed for the serious student. If you are interested in having your child take an exam, please see me for more details.

SUMMER LESSONS

Students need constant progression when learning a skill. That is why I strongly urge students to continue over the summer. Generally, students who don’t continue, fall behind and lose valuable skills, knowledge, and technique, and it is almost like starting from the beginning again. Summer is a great time to start in on festival music or work on new pieces as students won’t have the school/homework load to worry about. **Students who continue over the summer will get priority in my schedule for the fall. Fall spots are not guaranteed for students that don’t continue lessons over the summer. I generally start new students over the summer and my studio runs on a full schedule**.

The summer semester runs like the other two semesters only shorter. It includes six private lessons plus two make-up lessons at the end of August. The summer schedule is a little more flexible in that you can have a morning, afternoon or evening time reserved for you depending on your schedule. **If a student misses more than two weeks, the full amount of tuition is still due. Payment of tuition will reserve your spot in my schedule. No more than the two make-up lessons are given per semester, and they will be given during the designated weeks at the end of August for the summer semester. I am unable to make exceptions.**

Tuition for summer is as follows:

30 min. $110 per month or $220 per semester

45 min. $162 per month or $324 per semester

60 min. $220 per month or $440 per semester

Thank you, and I’m looking forward to a great year with all of you!

I’ve read, understand, and agree to the terms of the piano studio policies of Heather Donovan.

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Parent Signature Date