



# Natalie's Piano Studio

inspiring excellence in music!

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## Studio Policy of Natalie Weber, NCTM 2017-2018

### Why Piano Lessons?

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, techniques, and character learned from piano lessons will prove useful in many areas of life – musical and otherwise.

### What is Involved in Piano Lessons?

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, encouragement and praise will contribute greatly to the student's success.

As a parent, here are some things you can do to support your child and provide an environment that will enable them to excel in their piano studies:

#### **The Piano**

- You must have an acoustic piano or high quality 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.
- For small students, make sure that you have an adjustable bench or large books available that can be used as a booster to raise them to the correct position.

#### **The Practice Environment**

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.

- Set aside a scheduled practice time for your child (I require all students to practice 5-7 days per week).
- Familiarize yourself with the studio theme for the year so that you can help your child stay on track and reach their goals.
- Supervise home practice sessions and review Assignment Books, making sure your child completes all assignments. At *Natalie's Piano Studio*, specific practice assignments are given each week and all practicing must be recorded by the student in their Assignment Book. In the event that daily practice is not being completed, I will work with the student (and parent, if applicable) to determine the cause and possible solutions.
- Listen to music at home, and attend a variety of musical events together throughout the year.

### **The Lessons**

- Ensure that your child arrives at their lesson at the appropriate time – (not too early, not late).
- Sit in on lessons periodically.
- Provide feedback and suggestions for me that will increase the effectiveness of each lesson.
- Encourage your child to participate in studio group classes, recitals, and community festivals.
- Attend Year-End Evaluations (held the last week of the spring semester) so that we can discuss the student's progress over the past year and clarify direction and goals for their continuing music studies.

### **The Student's Responsibilities**

- Complete daily practice and accurately record it in the Assignment Book.
- 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.

### **The Group Classes**

- One of the extra perks at *Natalie's Piano Studio* is the opportunity to attend a group class the last week of each month. These are scheduled in addition to the regular private lessons, and the students who participate benefit in a variety of ways:
  - They learn new musical information and skills.
  - They develop camaraderie with other students in the studio who are striving toward similar musical goals.
  - They are inspired to pursue a higher level of excellence in their practicing and playing.
  - They are motivated to increase their musical knowledge and understanding for application in the group activities.
  - They experience the enjoyment of ensemble music-making through duets and other collaborative efforts.
  - They have tons of fun working on projects and playing games together!
  - They develop a higher level of confidence and expertise performing in front of others.

## **What do Piano Lessons Cost?**

*Natalie's Piano Studio* is committed to providing a high quality, cutting-edge music education for every student. There are many expenses involved in running a studio, but I make every effort to provide maximum value for families in an affordable, fair, and efficient manner. The following policies are designed to minimize the time and energy spent on bookkeeping and scheduling so that it can be devoted instead to working with students.

### **Studio Enrollment and Fees**

- All 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 personalized Assignment Book and will be used to offset the cost of various supplies and services offered throughout the year.
- Lesson slots not reserved by August 1 will be made available to new students.
- The lesson fee is \$100 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 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 email reminders are sent throughout the 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.
- Invoices will be sent by e-mail on the 1st day of each month. Payment may be made by check, cash, credit card, or PayPal.
- Following the initial interview, families who enroll in piano lessons will receive a welcome e-mail with studio login information and passwords. This can be used at any time to access your private account to check your balance, view past invoices, look at the studio calendar, or see additional posted notes.
- Payment is due by the 10th of the month. A late fee of \$15 will be assessed for payments not received by the 10th.

### *Obtaining Books and Other Necessary Supplies*

- Piano Books – Your child will need a core lesson curriculum (approx. \$50/year) and 2-3 supplemental books throughout the year (approx. \$10-\$12/ea.), depending on their progress. Generally, I will purchase the books and bill you so that the cost is added to your invoice for the following month. You may pay for the total invoiced amount together or separately – whichever you prefer.
- Metronome – If you do not already own one, you will need to purchase a metronome (approximately \$40) or download a metronome app (I recommend Metronome+ by Dynamic App Design as a great free app!) within the first month of lessons. The student will need to have regular access to a smart phone or tablet in order for the app to be an effective tool.
- Customized Assignment Book – In September of each year students will receive an Assignment Book that corresponds with our theme for the year. The cost of this book is included in the studio enrollment fee.

### *Missed Lessons*

- If your child becomes sick or is otherwise not able to attend their lesson, please contact 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.
- There are no refunds for missed lessons.
- In the case of extended absences (for vacations, moves, etc.), we can make arrangements for long-distance lessons via Skype or Facetime, e-mail assignment updates, or even a lesson by phone or instant messaging (yes, we've done it all!).

### *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.