

Piano 2 Go Student and Family Handbook (updated 4/6/2018)

Lessons & Performance - 2 GO!

PO Box 606, Purcellville, VA 20134
www.piano2go.com

E-Mail: jennifer@piano2go.com
Phone/ Text: 571-439-0136
(Preferred method of contact is e-mail or text.)

Congratulations on beginning your piano adventure with Piano 2 Go! I hope your piano studies will add an enriching layer to your life experiences. Playing the piano is not only an emotional outlet, but it also sharpens our minds, math skills, and motor skills. Pursuing piano at any age is an excellent investment in your mental health, cerebral faculties, and simply put – it’s fun! To help you succeed with piano, please read over this handbook.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Daily Practice

Piano study is not a once-a-week activity. Quite the contrary, the study of a musical instrument requires DAILY and CONSISTENT effort in order to train the mind and body in the art of proficient music-making. (I recommend aiming for at least 4 – 5 days per week, minimum). As the teacher, it is my goal to motivate through inspiration; to find the student’s “sweet spot” of musical gifting so that practice is not a chore, but a joyful activity that requires little in terms of practice reminders. For the young child, however, the practice routine may require some enforcement from parents. Please try to make sure your child is practicing every day. I recommend establishing a routine so that children know to expect practice time at a certain time of day. Express interest in hearing their pieces. Be involved in their practice and read over their assignments when they are very young, assisting as you are able.

How Much Practice?

Daily practice time should equal the length of the student's lesson, though beginners can fare with less time. I will let you know how much practice I expect from your child. Practice times should be recorded on their practice sheet.

What Should Students Be Practicing?

You will receive a new practice sheet each week updating the student’s assignments. Please refer to this sheet for a list of assignments and record your practice times each day (number of minutes practiced). Many families utilize a timer. Check-boxes are provided to the left of each assignment so students can ensure that all assignments have been prepared before the lesson. Generally speaking, students can expect:

- Written homework: 1 – 2 pages per week (about 10 – 20 min. per week). *Please have this complete when I arrive at your lesson.*
- Warm-up routine (about 5-10 minutes per day): This is a combination of critical exercises/scales/chords/arpeggios that I want students to do daily as a warm-up. These exercises are valuable to developing strong technique and also teach music theory.
- Review songs: typically 2 review songs per week that are still being mastered. *Please read the “details” box to see what Ms. Jennifer wants you to focus on this week and make sure you have addressed the problem areas!*
- New songs: typically 1 new song per week, but new songs will be less frequent as students advance. *Please read the “details” box to see what Ms. Jennifer wants you to focus on this week and make sure you have addressed the problem areas!*
- Memory songs: I ask students to maintain a memorized repertoire, unless memory is a challenge for the student. These are to be practiced two days per week, minimum.
- Creative assignments: Many of my students compose or improvise (they see me doing it often). So I often assign creative assignments with certain parameters.

When practicing songs, many “reps” (repetition) are expected, utilizing Ms. Jennifer’s suggested practice techniques. If you are just hearing the student race through the song one time, that’s not enough!

Materials

Students should obtain the following before starting instruction. When I first visit your home, I will assess your home piano situation and make recommendations on any repairs or items that need to be purchased. Here is what you will need to start in-home lessons:

- **A PIANO IN YOUR HOME.** You will need a teacher-approved **acoustic piano (non-electric) or good-quality digital piano (electric)**. If you are not sure if your piano will be adequate, e-mail a photo with make, model and year to jennifer@piano2go.com. Acoustic pianos are the best to practice on since they provide greater resistance and therefore build stronger fingers. They also provide the best tone and as I often say – they have soul. But good quality digital pianos today are extremely close to the touch and feel of a real piano, and they have many benefits: 1) Headphone jack to practice quietly. 2) An array of instrument sounds. 3) Fun beats to play along with. 4) The ability to record and playback your performance. There are inferior, cheap keyboards that I don’t want students to practice on, though. So if you go digital, make sure you get the best digital piano you can afford. Your piano is a family heirloom and an investment for years to come, much like your home is.
- **A PIANO BENCH.** Don’t forget the bench! You will need a piano bench or seating at the appropriate height. Seating too low or too high can be detrimental to a student’s posture and technique, so I can help you assess your seating when I visit your home.
- **A CHAIR FOR THE TEACHER TO SIT NEXT TO YOU.** I do need to sit near the piano. Please have a chair for me to sit on during lessons.

- **A MUSIC STAND.** A music stand on your keyboard or piano to hold up sheet music and books (this is probably built-in to your instrument, but if you are playing with a keyboard, you may have to buy a music stand at a music store).
- **A METRONOME.** A metronome or metronome app downloaded to student's device of choice (metronomes may also be purchased at your local music store or online)
- **A PENCIL JAR.** A pencil jar filled with an assortment of highlighters or colored markers and sharpened pencils. You will keep this on or very near your piano.
- **LIGHTING:** a clip-on orchestra stand light for baby-grands/ grand pianos or a brass piano lamp for upright pianos. (available from Amazon or other online suppliers)
- **A 1.5-INCH 3-RING NOTEBOOK WITH 3 DIVIDER TABS.** Please get a sturdy binder, not a flimsy one. We will need 3 divider tabs as well.

Books

Once a fair assessment of the student's skill level and musical taste has been made, we will purchase some music books/sheet music for the student. Sometimes I supply the music books and bill you afterward. Book fees are minimal and are not included in your tuition. Other times, I will ask the client to order some books from Amazon or Sheetmusicplus.com. Please order your materials promptly so that we can continue along at a steady rate of progress.

Reading Music on iPad/ Tablet

Intermediate to advanced students with an iPad or tablet may want to download the musicnotes.com app to your iPad/tablet. You can read your music on this. I prefer a hard copy to mark up with highlighters/ pencil for your lessons, though.

Parent Witness

Parents need to sign off the parent-witness portion of the student's practice sheet each week, prior to the next lesson. Your signature acknowledges that you agree with the student's recorded practice times this week.

Preparation for the Weekly Lesson

Students should be ready with all lesson materials (3-ring notebook, music books, metronome, and writing utensils) when the teacher arrives. Students should have washed hands and trimmed nails. Short nails are critical to enforcing the proper hand shape/finger curvature and to developing strong technique. The lesson room should be free of distractions and quiet. Others in the house at the time of the lesson should help maintain a peaceful atmosphere during lessons.

Piano Maintenance

Just as a car must be maintained, the student's piano should be tuned and checked for mechanical problems every six months. An in-tune piano is much more pleasurable to play and to listen to,

and will inspire more practice when it is kept in tune. If your digital piano is not working, you will need a digital piano repair person to fix it so we can continue lessons. For a referral to a piano repair person/ tuner, please ask for a referral.

Recitals

Students are expected to participate in one to two recitals per year. Recitals are important in terms of setting goals and motivating students to do their best work. Even the bashful student can participate in his/her first recital with a teacher-student duet, by playing percussion, or by handing out programs. Students who have trouble memorizing can read music if needed. I want everyone to be a part of this fun experience.

Recitals will be announced two to three months in advance. Recitals are free. The recital requirement is waived for adult students, but adults are welcome to perform.

Attendance

Given that lessons are only once per week, I don't have much time with students as it is. When you are cancelling more than one lesson per month on a regular basis, you are seriously impeding your rate of progress and advancement. Therefore, as an advantage to you, please prioritize your lesson time with me, as I will with you. This means 1) Keeping cancellations to a minimum. 2) Making sure your other appointments (doctor/dentist/tutoring/counseling, etc) are scheduled on other days/times. 3) Asking for permanent time changes infrequently (no more than twice a year is ideal). 4) Giving consideration to your music lesson time before signing up for conflicting events.

Student Illness

Please cancel if you are too sick to go to school or work. I will do the same, as a courtesy to you. (Make-up and refund policies below.)

Student Cancellations (Cancelling Your Weekly Lesson)

Acceptable reasons for cancelling are illness, death in the family, or medical emergency.

Unacceptable reasons: Student didn't practice this week, we forgot, student has a conflicting sports practice, we are too busy this week, doctor's appointment, etc. Please notify your teacher in writing (e-mail or text is sufficient) of all cancellations/ time change requests. The following make-up/ refund procedures will be observed:

- **No-Shows:** Still charged; no make-up.
- **Student cancels with less than 24-hours' notice:** Still charged, no make-up. Last-minute emergencies considered on a case-by-case basis.
- **Student cancels with 24 hours to 6 days' notice:** Eligible for a make-up lesson (no refund), subject to teacher availability. (This may take the form of going in a cancelled spot, doubling the length of the next week's lesson, giving the absent student's lesson

time to another family member, or having a Skype lesson. Teacher will try to consolidate her make-up lessons for students in your area at the same time/ day).

- **Student cancels with one week (7 days') or greater notice**: no charge (limit 1 per month). I issue qualifying refunds once a month via PayPal.

Teacher Cancellations

- Teacher cancellations are generally rare. If I cancel for illness or other reason, I will offer to reschedule or refund your lesson or service. Refunds for cancellations the teacher did not reschedule will be issued once a month via PayPal.

Snow/ Inclement Weather Cancellations

- I do not follow the school and government cancellations. The afternoon road conditions are often much better than the morning road conditions, so I often teach on days when the schools have cancelled. However, if road conditions are too hazardous to drive in, I will cancel lessons and offer a make-up or refund. You will be notified by text for same-day cancellations.

Withdrawal from Lessons (does not apply to Summer Trial)

1. One Month's Notice of Termination

It is my hope that you will continue your lessons for years, as many of my families do. But I understand that piano is not for everyone, and circumstances change. In the event that you wish to withdraw from lessons at any time of year, please provide at least one month's written notice of withdrawal (please notify me one month before the date that your next payment will be processed). Your one month's notice will prevent future charges.

2. Refund Procedures

Provided that one month's written notice of withdrawal is provided, the following refund procedures will be observed:

- Monthly Payment Plan: *No refund for missed lessons already paid for, but unused balance may be transferred to another family member if used immediately.*
- Quarterly Payment Plan: *50% refund if you withdraw within 1 month. No refund if you withdraw after 1 month but unused balance may be transferred to another family member if used immediately.*
- Semester Payment Plan: *50% Refund if you withdraw within 2 months. No refund if you withdraw after 2 months but unused balance may be transferred to another family member if used immediately.*

Communication Policy

- **E-Mail:** I check e-mail once a day, usually around lunch-time. I do not get e-mail notifications on my phone. I have found this to be the best policy for our family and it is also the most efficient practice. Please allow 24 hours for a response when e-mailing me, and slightly longer if you are e-mailing on my day off, or on holidays/ breaks.
- **Text Messages/ Phone Calls:** My cell phone is also my business phone. For time-sensitive matters (like cancelling today's lesson), please text or call me, but keep the following in mind:
 - **8pm to 9am:** To prioritize my family and sleep, my cell phone is turned off during this timeframe. If you text or call me at night-time, I will reply when I turn my phone back on.
 - **Text-Prohibitive Hours:** My phone is on silent during lessons and while driving, but I do check my texts and voice-mails on breaks. Rest assured that I will reply on my next break.

Rates

My rates are updated regularly on the rate page of my website. Rates will be periodically reviewed and are subject to change with one-month's written notice.

- **Explanation of Tuition:** Tuition will be based on 46 scheduled lessons per year (SEE CALENDAR BELOW), and may be paid in monthly installments, quarterly installments (discounted) or semester installments (best value). The more months you pay ahead, the lower your per-lesson rate is (SEE RATES BELOW).
- **Travel Fees:** (\$28 per household per month, unless one of the following conditions is met):
 - More than one full-time student per household is enrolled.
 - More than one household per neighborhood is enrolled on a back-to-back basis.
 - You are less than five miles from my house.
- **Book & Guild Fees:** I will periodically request reimbursement for books, sheet music, and Piano Guild fees that I incur. These are not included in your tuition and will be invoiced separately. Budget around \$60 per year for these items, although this amount is typically lower.

Lesson Payment Plans (not applicable with 6-Lesson Summer Trial)

The following installment plans are based on the pre-planned studio calendar of 46 lessons in 2018 (see Calendar below). The total price for 46 lessons is then divided into equal installments in the various plans.

Monthly Payment Plan (Budget)

No refund for missed lessons already paid for. Unused balance may be transferred to another family member if used immediately.

| Rates are PER STUDENT/ PER MONTH | | | | Price Per Lesson Comparison | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|--------------|
| <i>length of lesson...</i> | With 1 family member enrolled | With 2 family members enrolled | With 3 family members enrolled | 1 enrolled | 2 enrolled | 3 + enrolled |
| 30 min. | \$146 | \$138 | \$130 | \$38 | \$36 | \$34 |
| 45 min. | \$207 | \$199 | \$192 | \$54 | \$52 | \$50 |
| 60 min. | \$276 | \$268 | \$261 | \$72 | \$70 | \$68 |

Quarterly Payment Plan (Discounted)

50% refund if you withdraw within 1 month. No refund if you withdraw after 1 month but unused balance may be transferred to another family member if used immediately.

| Rates are PER STUDENT/ PER QUARTER (3 MONTHS) | | | | Price Per Lesson Comparison | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|--------------|
| <i>length of lesson...</i> | With 1 family member enrolled | With 2 family members enrolled | With 3 family members enrolled | 1 enrolled | 2 enrolled | 3 + enrolled |
| 30 min. | \$414 | \$391 | \$368 | \$36 | \$34 | \$32 |
| 45 min. | \$598 | \$575 | \$552 | \$52 | \$50 | \$48 |
| 60 min. | \$805 | \$782 | \$759 | \$70 | \$68 | \$66 |

Semester Payment Plan (Best Value)

50% Refund if you withdraw within 2 months. No refund if you withdraw after 2 months but unused balance may be transferred to another family member if used immediately.

| Rates are PER STUDENT/ PER SEMESTER (6 MONTHS) | | | | Price Per Lesson Comparison | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|--------------|
| <i>length of lesson...</i> | With 1 family member enrolled | With 2 family members enrolled | With 3 family members enrolled | 1 enrolled | 2 enrolled | 3 + enrolled |
| 30 min. | \$782 | \$736 | \$690 | \$34 | \$32 | \$30 |
| 45 min. | \$1,150 | \$1,104 | \$1,058 | \$50 | \$48 | \$46 |
| 60 min. | \$1,564 | \$1,518 | \$1,472 | \$68 | \$66 | \$64 |

Travel Fees

You pay a travel fee unless you meet one of the following conditions:

- More than one full-time student per household is enrolled.
- More than one household per neighborhood is enrolled on a back-to-back basis.
- Less than five miles from my house.

Travel Fees: \$28 per household per month (not applicable to 6-lesson summer trial)

Other Fees: I occasionally will ask for reimbursement for music books I purchase for the student, or Guild audition fees.

Calendar

The 2018 calendar has been carefully planned to ensure that each student, regardless of day attended, has 46 scheduled lessons. The days you will not have lessons are as follows:

Sunday Students:

1. April 1 (Easter Sunday)
2. May 27 (Memorial Weekend)
3. June 17 (Teacher Vacation)
4. September 2 (Labor Day Weekend)
5. December 23 (Winter Break)
6. December 30 (Winter Break)

Monday Students:

1. January 1 (New Year's Day)
2. May 28 (Memorial Weekend)
3. June 18 (Teacher Vacation)
4. July 2 (Teacher Off)
5. September 3 (Labor Day)
6. December 24 (Winter Break)
7. December 31 (Winter Break)

Tuesday Students:

1. Jan 2 (Closed)
2. June 19 (Teacher Vacation)
3. July 3 (Teacher Off)
4. September 4 (Teacher Off)

5. November 20 (Thanksgiving Vacation)
6. Dec 25 (Christmas)

Wednesday Students:

1. Jan 3 (Closed)
2. June 13 (Last Day of School)
3. June 20 (Teacher Vacation)
4. July 4 (Holiday)
5. November 21 (Thanksgiving Vacation)
6. December 26 (Winter Break)

Thursday Students:

1. June 14 (Teacher Vacation)
2. June 21 (Teacher Vacation)
3. August 23 (First Day of School for LCPS)
4. Nov 22 (Thanksgiving)
5. Dec 20 (Winter Break)
6. Dec 27 (Winter Break)

Friday Students:

1. June 15 (Teacher Vacation)
2. June 22 (Teacher Vacation)
3. Aug 31 (Labor Day Weekend)
4. Nov 23 (Thanksgiving Vacation)
5. Dec 21 (Winter Break)
6. Dec 28 (Winter Break)

Saturday Students:

1. May 26 (Memorial Weekend)
2. June 16 (Teacher Vacation)
3. June 23 (Teacher Vacation)
4. Sept 1 (Labor Day Weekend)
5. Dec 22 (Winter Break)
6. Dec 29 (Winter Break)

Pay-Ahead System: Clients pay for the upcoming month or term in advance.

Payment Plans: Monthly, quarterly, and semester payment plans are available. The more you pay ahead, the greater the savings.

Summer Trial: Every year, I offer a 6-lesson summer trial for new students who have never taken lessons with me. Prices will be announced in the spring. Students participating in the trial are automatically eligible for the fall wait list. Though fall placement is usually not a problem, fall placement in a full-time, regular, weekly slot is not guaranteed. Students wishing to continue in the fall may have to start with part-time attendance during cancelled slots or accept a weekend time slot at first.

Family Discount: The greater the number of household/ family members enrolled, the greater the savings.

Automated Billing Through PayPal Subscriptions

Clients pay for lessons by signing up for monthly, quarterly, or semester payment subscriptions. Payments are processed automatically and securely through PayPal Subscriptions (I do not see your card data). You may cease your automated payments by providing one month's written notice of withdrawal (notify me at least one month before your next payment will be processed).

Payment Due Dates

- Monthly Payment Plan: The first week of the month (no later than the 7th).
- Quarterly Payment Plan: 1/1, 4/1, 7/1, 10/1 (no later than the 7th).
- Semester (6 month) Payment Plan: 1/1, 7/1 (no later than the 7th) .

Payment Failure

If your automated payment fails to go through, I will notify you. If your payment does not go through after three attempts, I will suspend your lessons until your account is brought current.

Inclement Weather

I do not follow school cancellations (afternoon road conditions are often much better), but I will cancel if the road conditions are hazardous. A credit or make-up will be offered in this scenario.

Summer Lessons Continue for School Year Students

Yes, Piano 2 Go is a year-round lesson provider and is open through the summer! I understand that some may choose to withdraw for the summer, and this is fine, as long as you give me one month's written notice, per my withdrawal policy. Just understand that I cannot guarantee fall placement if you withdraw for the entire summer. But I always do my very best to try!

- **Why summer lessons?**
Piano and the study of any instrument is a year-round lifestyle and discipline. In the absence of school year commitments, summer presents an optimal environment for progress in piano, and an opportunity to explore enrichment projects such as pop music,

jazz and blues, family duets, creative lead sheet arranging, songwriting, and composing (if desired). Your summer enrollment also keeps your spot on the fall schedule.

- **What will my summer lesson time be?**
I may adjust the summer lesson schedule to consolidate my students into fewer days. (You may switch to a weekday morning time, for instance).
- **What time will my lesson be in the fall?** If you stay enrolled over the summer, you can return to your current lesson time in the fall (whatever your spring 2018 lesson time is). If you withdraw for the summer, I may or may not have a time for you in the fall, or you may have to settle for a weekend time.
- **What if we need to miss lessons for vacations or camps?**
Provided that you give me a week's written notice, you may miss up to 3 of your weekly summer lessons and receive a refund for those lessons (anytime over the schools' summer break). ***This policy does not apply to the 6-Lesson Summer Trial.*** Please remember that summer camps don't necessarily interfere with piano because I can often reschedule to a different time of day for the affected weeks. The summer schedule is much more uncluttered so that I can do so.

Hiatus (Without Paying)

You may take a hiatus at any time of year for travel or other reason, but you must give me one month's written notice (notify me one month before your last lesson) to avoid any additional charges. A hiatus without payment is considered to be withdrawal/ unenrollment, so I am not under obligation to hold your spot for you while you are gone. However, I will do my best to work with your schedule when you when you return!

Hiatus (With Continuing Payments)

If you take a break from lessons but wish to reserve your time slot and guaranteed placement when you return, you must continue paying for 75% of your monthly lesson charges.

Termination of Lessons by the Teacher

This has only (fortunately) happened a handful of times in all my years of teaching, but it I do reserve the right to terminate your lessons for any reason. This situation can be entirely prevented by keeping your account in good standing and putting a good effort into your lessons and practice. And I understand occasional bad practice weeks, the occasional late payment, illness, and busy schedules. So it is my hope each year to avoid this situation with all of my valued families! However, I cannot be infinitely tolerant of ongoing attendance issues, excessive cancellations, consistent lack of effort/ practice, poor attitude at the lesson, and clients who have consistent payment issues.

I, (printed name) _____, have reviewed the

Piano 2 Go Student Policies and Expectations, and I agree to the terms set forth in this document.

Signature: _____ Date: ___/ ___/ _____