

Studio Policy

Payment: Tuition is paid by the school term and is non-refundable and non-negotiable. Payment is due by the first lesson of each school term by either cash, cheque or bank transfer. When student enrolls in this studio, the student is reserving weekly lesson time for the term. There are no refunds and no make-up lessons.

Cancellation/Make up: Students/parents must notify the studio for lesson that will be cancelled, but this notice does not exempt the student from payment for the lesson slot.

If the teacher is absent, a make-up will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time, or your account will be credited.

It is acceptable if students wish to exchange lesson times with each other after notifying the teacher. It is the student's and/or parents responsibility to make the changes.

Late Fees: Fees that are paid after the due date will attract a service charge of \$10 per week. This can also result in your time being forfeited.

Late Students: Due to the fact that our classes are scheduled back to back we are unable to make up time for students who arrive late for their lesson.

Course Materials and Books: For certain lessons, course materials and books may be required in order for the student to obtain the best possible learning instruction. It is the responsibility of the parent or student to purchase required course materials when applicable.

You must **have a piano or full-sized keyboard with 88-weighted keys, foot pedal and a bench at proper height in your home.** A piano is strongly recommended as nothing can take the place of its touch and sound. Your instrument should be tuned twice a year. **Maintaining your piano is important.** I can recommend a piano tuner/technician. The piano should be located in a well-lit place that allows practicing to be done with as few distractions as possible (TV and other siblings). Please keep it and the surrounding area clean. Keeping lesson books and other materials organized at home saves time during lessons.

Summer Lessons: Summer lessons are available and strongly advised, but not compulsory.

Lesson Termination:

The studio maintains a high standard of piano students and has the right to terminate lessons at any point in time if there is disrespectful behaviour, failure to complete assignments and consistent failure to prepare for lessons during the week. In such a case, a refund will be made for the remaining lessons of that term.

In the case of a student withdrawing from lessons entirely, notice must be given one term in advance. Should you wish to withdraw from classes half way through the term, the remaining lessons will not be refunded.

Participation Expectations for Parents:

While most students are initially excited to begin piano lessons, please be aware that they will face challenges and sometimes frustrations. As the initial enthusiasm is replaced by an awareness of the discipline and commitment required to attain skills, **your encouragement and praise will be essential to your child's success.**

Set aside a scheduled practice time for your child. It is important to budget time for practicing and to make it happen as a part of his or her daily routine. For example, a child could know that after their afternoon snack, they will practice for 30 minutes or that from 7-7:45pm is their designated practice time. Please **supervise home practice sessions**, making sure your child completes each assignment. Many children are not mature or disciplined enough to manage practicing without your support.

Parent/Guardian Lesson Attendance

Parents/guardians who would like to attend classes with the child are welcome to do so as I strongly encourage parents/guardians to be active in their child's musical experience, especially those doing the Beginner Level. However other guests are not accepted in the studio. It is essential that the **same** parent/guardian come to class every week, unless it is just the odd time when someone is ill or away but it is important parents do not interrupt the lessons, e.g. comments and phone calls. Parents should take notes but not to **interrupt** during lessons times, but are welcome to address their questions and concerns at the end of each lesson.

Media release

The Studio is hereby granted permission to take photographs or video of students to use in brochures, websites, posters, advertisements and other promotional materials the Studio creates. Permission is also hereby granted for the Studio to copyright such photographs in its name.

Updates

Any updates on the studio policy will be included in the newsletter or on the website.

Studio Ground Rules

- Be on time for the lessons
- Practice regularly and be well prepared
- Keep fingernails trimmed short (should **not** extend past the end of the finger) to ensure proper hand position and good technique
- Wash your hands before the lesson. (Arrive in time for restroom use before each lesson)
- No **food** or drinks during the lesson. (Please do not bring gum or candy)
- Participate in performance, workshops and recitals

I have read and understood the policy above.

Name:

Make-up Lessons from an Economist's Point of View

From: Vicky Barham, Ph. D.

I'm a parent of children enrolled in Suzuki music lessons. I'd like to explain to other parents why I feel - quite strongly, actually - that it is unreasonable of we parents to expect our teachers to make up lessons we miss, even if I know as well as they do just how expensive lessons are, and, equally importantly, how important that weekly contact is with the teacher to keeping practicing ticking along smoothly. I think that it is natural for we parents to share the point of view that students should have their missed lessons rescheduled, but if we were to 'walk a mile' in our teachers' shoes, we might change our minds about what it is reasonable for us to expect of our teachers.

Like many parents, I pay in advance for lessons each term. In my mind, what this means is that I have reserved a regular spot in the busy schedules of my sons' teachers. I understand - fully - that if I can't make it to the lesson one week (perhaps my son is sick, or we are away on holiday, or there is some other major event at school) then we will pay for the lesson, but that my teacher is under no obligation to find another spot for me that week, or to refund me for the untaught lesson. And this is the way it should be.

In my 'other life' I am an economist and teach at our local university. Students pay good money to attend classes at the university; but if they don't come to my lecture on a Monday morning, then I am not going to turn around and deliver them a private tutorial on Tuesday afternoon. When I go to the store and buy groceries, I may purchase something that doesn't get used. Days or months later, I end up throwing it out. I don't get a refund from the grocery store for the unused merchandise. If I sign my child up for swimming lessons at the local pool, and s/he refuses to return after the first lesson, I can't get my money back. So there are lots of situations in our everyday lives where we regularly pay in advance for goods or some service, and if we end up not using what we have purchased, we have to just 'swallow our losses'. On the other hand, if I purchase an item of clothing, and get home and change my mind, I can take it back and expect either a refund or a store credit.

So why do I believe that music lessons fall into the first category of 'non-returnable merchandise', rather than into the second case of 'exchange privileges unlimited' (which I think is one of the advertising slogans of an established women's clothing store!)? Speaking now as an economist, I would claim that the reason is that items like clothing are "durable goods" - meaning, they can be returned and then resold at the original price - whereas music lessons are non-durable goods - meaning, once my Monday slot at 3:30 is gone, my son's teacher can't turn around and sell it again.

The only way she would be able to give him a lesson later in the week would be if she were to give up time that she had scheduled for her own private life; and that seems pretty unreasonable - I can't think of many employees who would be thrilled if their bosses were to announce that they couldn't work from 3:30 to 4:30 this afternoon, but would they please stay until 6:30 on Thursday, because there will be work for them then!

Many teachers hesitate to refuse our request to shift lesson times (because our busy schedules **do** change), because unless they keep us parents happy, we will decide to take our child somewhere else for lessons (or to drop musical study), and they will lose part of their income. This is particularly true in areas with lower average income, where it can be particularly difficult to find students. So rather than telling us that 'well, actually, the only time when I'm not teaching and that you can bring your son for lesson is during the time I set aside each week to go for a long soul-cleansing walk, and I **can't** do that on Monday at 3:30 when you should have turned up', they agree to teach us at a time that really doesn't suit their schedule. Teachers who are 'nice' in this way often, in the long run, end up exhausted, and feeling exploited; they try to draw a line in the sand. However, too few parents ask to switch only when absolutely necessary, and too many parents want lesson times when it suits them this week, which is not the same time that suited last week. The only time that I would feel entitled to discuss shifting a lesson time is if the reason I can't make the lesson is because (i) I have to do something for the Suzuki school and the only time at which that other event can happen is during my lesson time; (ii) my teacher were to ask us to participate in some other activity (e.g., orchestra, etc.) and that other activity were to create the conflict. If the conflict arises because my child is in the School play, and they have their dress-rehearsal during his lesson time, then I feel that I must choose between the two activities, and if he attends the dress rehearsal my private lesson teacher doesn't owe me anything.

During May, my eldest son will be missing three lessons because he is going to accompany me on a trip to New Zealand to visit his great-grandparents. I do not expect my son's teacher to refund me for those missed lessons, or to reschedule them by 'doubling up' lessons in the weeks before or after our departure. Since there will be lots of advanced notice, I might ask her to consider preparing a special 'practice tape' for that period, or to answer my questions via e-mail, but if she doesn't have the time (the second half of April is going to be really busy for her, and she wouldn't be able to do the tape until more or less the week we left) and so has to refuse, then that's fine. I certainly don't expect her to credit me with three make-up lessons; there is no way for her to find a student to fill a three-week hole in her schedule during our absence. Instead, I hope that she will enjoy the extra hour of rest during those three weeks, and that we will all feel renewed enthusiasm when we return to lessons at the end of the trip.