



Studio Policy 2016-2017

Welcome to the Melody Payne Piano Studio! I'm looking forward to the opportunity to teach your child(ren) this year and to help them reach their individual musical goals. To ensure the musical progress of your child, please read the following information carefully.

PRIVATE PIANO LESSONS

- Students age 6 and above may enroll in piano lessons.
- Lessons are 30, 45, or 60 minutes in length.
- Lessons meet once per week during the school year. We will have 32 private lessons and 2 group lessons from August 2016-July 2017.

ENROLLMENT

- Enrollment will be considered after a personal audition of the student and meeting the parents. During the interview, I assess whether the child is compatible with my teaching style and emphasis and answer any questions you may have about my studio and teaching philosophy.
- Enrollment is understood to apply for the entire studio calendar year of 34 weeks (August through July).
- New students may enroll at any time during the year, and tuition will be prorated to reflect the number of lessons the student will receive.

REGISTRATION

- Parents and students are asked to complete and digitally sign an online enrollment form when enrolling for lessons.
- Enrollment is complete when the form is submitted online and your payment of the \$100 enrollment fee has been received in my office.
- Submission of the enrollment form and fee by July 15 reserves your child's place in my studio for the upcoming year.
- This nonrefundable fee will cover books and most materials for the year, with the exception of a book bag, a metronome, and any music apps you might purchase. The enrollment fee also covers entry fees associated with recitals and other festivals, group lessons offered throughout the year, studio supplies needed for lessons, and more!
- Students who enroll during the spring semester of each year (January through April) pay a reduced enrollment fee of \$75.
- Participation in my studio by submitting your online enrollment form and tuition indicates your acceptance of all studio policies and reserves your lesson time and tuition payments for the entire year from August through July.

TUITION AND BILLING

- Tuition is billed per studio year and is divided into 10 monthly payments or two semester payments. The student who enrolls at the beginning of the year (August) is guaranteed that I will be prepared and present to teach 34 weeks per year (32 private lessons and 2 group lessons). Please [contact me](#) for the current yearly tuition rate.
- Invoices will be emailed approximately one week prior to the due date of tuition payments.
- Tuition payment in the form of cash (exact change), check, and via the Square Cash App is accepted.
- When you pay your tuition, please remember that you are not paying to receive four lessons each month. You are paying to reserve your specific lesson time each week for that school year.
- Tuition may be paid in one of the following ways:
 - By the semester, with tuition due August 1st for the fall semester and January 1st for the spring semester (summer tuition is bundled into the monthly and semester tuition payments)
 - Monthly, with tuition due on the 1st of each month (August through May)
- Late payments: Of course I understand if a parent accidentally forgets a tuition check; however, **because this is my job and income, please understand that a \$5.00 late fee will be added for each day the payment is received after the 3rd of the month.** Non-payment or consistent late payment is cause for immediate termination.
- A \$50 charge, plus any additional associated fees, will be assessed for all checks returned by the bank. These fees, plus tuition payments for the duration of the child's enrollment in my studio, must be paid in cash, credit card, or via the Square Cash App.
- Tuition rates are raised annually and take effect July 1 of each year.
- Tuition includes much more than the lesson time I spend with each student. Tuition includes time spent preparing for each lesson, purchasing books, creating and making worksheets and games, planning and preparing for recitals, camps, group lessons, and parties, my professional experience and continuing education; as well as piano, studio, equipment, and website maintenance, membership in professional organizations that provide performance opportunities for students, sight-reading and lending library materials that students borrow each week, administrative duties, and much more!
- Click to view a wonderful brochure that describes [how tuition benefits each student](#).

CALENDAR

- By submitting the online enrollment form found on the studio website, a parent/student is contracting with Melody Payne for a full year of lessons and tuition payments (August through July).
- The yearly calendar includes 32 weekly private lessons and 2 group lessons for a total of 34 lesson weeks during the 2016-2017 year.

- The studio calendar is posted on the studio website.
- The studio calendar includes 4 weeks of lessons that are scheduled at your convenience during June and July. These lessons will help students retain and review concepts learned during the school year so that we can avoid spending the fall months reviewing.
- Lessons during June and July need not occur in consecutive weeks to allow for vacations, camps, etc.

YOUR PIANO AT HOME

All students need an acoustic piano that is tuned at least once per year, or an appropriate digital piano. An acoustic piano is highly preferred because the sound and touch cannot be replicated by a digital instrument, but a digital piano is acceptable if it meets the following minimum requirements:

- 88 keys
- Touch sensitive
- Weighted keys
- Sustain/damper pedal
- Bench of an appropriate height
- Entirely self-contained or on a keyboard stand (not a table or desk)
- Located in an area of the home that is free of distractions (away from the television)
- The Yamaha P105 Digital Piano Bundle with Furniture-Style Bench, Stand, and Pedal is an excellent option.

Please be certain that your piano is tuned and in good condition. It is very discouraging to play on an out-of-tune instrument. I am happy to recommend an excellent piano technician whose rates are very reasonable.

CURRICULUM

Lessons are taught in an encouraging environment and are tailored specifically to each student's individual needs and goals. These personalized lessons include a variety of musical styles and activities, including:

- Learning to read music
- Learning to paint pictures with sound and communicate ideas and stories through music
- Learning to read and perform from lead sheets/chord charts/"fake" books
- Playing music from different styles, including classical, sacred, pop, country, praise and worship, jazz, and many more!
- Understanding music theory, sight-reading, ear training, harmonization
- Learning to compose music and using music notation software programs to print a professional-looking copy
- Using technology to enhance lessons and practice time (iPhone/iPod/iPad apps, iTunes, YouTube, music websites, etc.)
- Learning and reviewing through games and other activities
- Learning to practice efficiently so students can become independent musicians
- Most of all, lessons are structured to encourage all students to have FUN making music!

PRACTICING

- Students are required to complete their assignments each week.
- A regular time should be set aside each day for practice in order to establish a routine that will become a daily habit. Daily practice is important for reinforcement of concepts and to avoid cramming just before the lesson, which is never successful.
- Parents, please treat practicing like other homework and expect it to be done each day. **Unprepared lessons cost the same as prepared ones, but their value is substantially compromised.**
- If your child practices the day of the lesson (immediately after the lesson) and the day following the lesson, s/he will retain the most information from the lesson.
- Sometime during the course of taking piano lessons, your child may say something like, "I don't want to practice" or "I'm too tired to go to piano lessons" or "I don't want to go" or "I want to quit", etc. Please be aware that your child's interest in piano lessons will probably not be 100% consistent; but to be successful, you will need to be consistent in your encouragement and commitment to music instruction. In most cases, simply acknowledge your child's comments, but then go on with your normal routine just as you would if you heard the comment "I don't want to brush my teeth" or "I don't want to go to bed".
- In my studio, I stress quality practice over quantity, but the following recommendations should serve as a guide to achieve satisfactory results based on your child's age. Of course, to achieve excellent results, students should expect to practice 1.5 to 2 times as much as listed below.
 - 5-6 years old: 15-20 minutes / at least 5 days a week
 - 7-8 years old: 20-25 minutes / at least 5 days a week
 - 9-11 years old: 25-30 minutes / at least 5 days a week
 - 12-14 years old: 35-40 minutes / at least 5 days a week
 - 15 and older: 45-60 minutes / at least 5 days a week

ATTENDANCE

- Because specific times are set aside for specific students, a student who does not attend a lesson will simply miss the benefit of that lesson. I will then use that time or other times to plan for the student's progress, work on additional assignments for that student, etc.

- There are no refunds, discounts, or makeups given unless I am unable to teach the set number of lessons offered throughout the year. However, feel free to take advantage of the “Lesson Swap” opportunity which is explained below.
- Remember that your tuition pays for more than your weekly lesson. See [“Where Does My Tuition Go?”](#)
- For more information, please read this excellent article: [Make-up Lessons from an Economist's Point of View.](#)

LESSON SWAP LIST RULES

- I must be asked about a swap before arranging it. I must be informed about the swap within 24 hours after arranging it.
- The parent who arranges the swap must email me with the details of the swap and cc the parent with whom they are making the swap.
- No make-up lessons will be given if any confusion from a swap arises.
- Should 2 people arrive at once, I will teach the one whose lesson is normally at that time.
- Exchanges are not obligatory, they are reciprocal. If someone says NO to a swap request, please respect that. If someone exchanges with you, however, be kind and return the favor when possible.
- The swap list is NEVER to be used to solicit funds for schools or any other organization for any purpose including any kind of SPAM. Those who do so will be removed from the exchange list. Please respect each other’s privacy.
- Please inform me if you do not wish to have your name, number, and email included on the swap list.
- Don’t forget that Skype™ or FaceTime™ lessons during the student’s regular lesson time are also an option if you cannot make it to a lesson.

ILLNESS

- Students who are ill should not come to piano lessons. The group classes offered can be considered makeups for absences due to illness. I reserve the right to send a student home if s/he is sick. If students are only mildly ill, please contact me and we will do a Skype™ or FaceTime™ lesson.

SKYPE™ AND FACETIME™

- Skype™ and FaceTime™ are very useful tools for teaching students who cannot make it to lessons due to illness, inclement weather, etc.
- If you have a computer with a camera close to your piano or a laptop that you can move close to the piano, please create a free Skype™ account and add my name to your contacts (or add me to your FaceTime™). This will allow me to call you and have a lesson with you over the internet if need be.
- Lessons do meet during inclement weather, except in rare circumstances. If you feel uncomfortable driving to my studio, we will meet for your lesson via Skype™ or FaceTime™.

FLEX WEEKS

- Flex weeks are weeks of unscheduled time off that I may choose to use in the event of an emergency or illness in my household.
- These flex weeks are days off that you are not and will not pay for as I will make sure that I am scheduled to teach 34 weeks during the year.
- In the event that I need to use a flex week, I will inform you via email or text.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

- If you arrive more than five minutes before your scheduled lesson time, please wait outside or in your vehicle before entering the studio. Dropping off and picking up your child on time shows respect for the time that I make for myself, my family, and my other students. If you drop off your child too early or you are unable to pick up your child on time, **a \$5 charge will be added to the monthly tuition fee for every 5 minutes that you arrive too early or too late.**
- If you arrive late for your scheduled lesson time, you will receive the remainder of the lesson and should be picked up according to the normal schedule.
- If you are late picking your children up, I reserve the right to transport your children wherever I need to go at the time.
- Please park in the driveway or along the fence, but do not block the driveway.

LENDING LIBRARY

- I am happy to lend additional materials (repertoire and sight-reading books, sheet music, etc.) to my students to supplement their regular lesson materials.
- The cost of borrowing these books is included in the enrollment fee.
- You will be assessed a full replacement fee for materials that are lost, not returned, or returned in damaged condition (bent book covers, torn pages, broken CD cases, food or liquid damage, etc.).

RECITALS

- All students in grades 1-12 are required to perform in at least two yearly recitals.
- Prior to the recitals, students may have the opportunity to perform at piano parties or performance classes in the studio.
- Students may also have opportunities to perform in venues such as churches and nursing homes.
- See the [Studio Calendar](#) for specific dates of all opportunities.

- **Recital Dress Code for Girls:** dress or skirt that comes at least to the knee when standing and sitting down (modesty is extremely important!!), hair pulled back away from the face so the performers can be seen from the side as they perform, dress shoes, nice top if wearing skirt, tights or hose are optional but look very nice.
- **Recital Dress Code for Guys:** khakis or slacks, dress socks and shoes, dress shirt, sweater, or polo shirt, jacket and tie are optional but look very nice.
- Clothing that is NOT acceptable includes sweatshirts, sneakers, athletic shoes of any kind, white athletic socks, flip flops, denim, hoodies, T-shirts, shorts, short dresses, short skirts, strapless clothing, spaghetti straps, low cut tops, and any other similar articles of clothing.
- Parents and other guests should dress in business casual clothing.

MEDIA POLICY

- During student and group gatherings, recitals and other performances the teacher reserves the right to use video recording or to take photographs of students for use in the studio newsletter, advertising materials, lesson demonstration, YouTube and/or Vimeo, and studio owned websites.
- Photos taken by the teacher OR that are shared with the teacher by other parents or students of gatherings or performances become the property of the studio and can be used at the discretion of the teacher in regards to the studio. The studio follows online safety rules in this matter.

TECHNOLOGY

- Parents should have a valid and functional email account that they check several times a week. I send all studio information (policy updates, announcements, etc.) via email.
- Please check your email, text messages, the studio website, and [Facebook](#) to stay up-to-date on the latest studio information. If your email address changes, remember to let me know!
- Email or text is the best and preferred way to reach me. If you need to cancel a lesson at the last minute, please text because I do not check email or voicemail during teaching hours.
- Students will need daily access to a computer and printer. All customized assignment sheets will be emailed to you within 24 hours of the lesson. Students should print the assignment sheet and place it in their piano binder to reference during daily practice sessions. Students should write down their practice time in the chart on the assignment sheet and bring the sheet with them to the next week's lesson.
- Cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices must be silenced during lessons so they do not interrupt the lesson.
- If parents must have a cell phone turned on for business purposes, please leave the studio to make or receive a call.
- My piano teaching blog, [The Plucky Pianista](#), and my online store at [Teachers Pay Teachers](#) contain the teaching resources I have created to use during weekly lessons. Your child has the benefit of using these resources for free. Check it out!

DISCONTINUING LESSONS

- Enrolling for lessons reserves your specific lesson time and tuition payments for the entire year from August through July.
- However, I do understand that everyone stops taking lessons at some point. The decision to end lessons should be made with careful consideration, with discussion between parent, student, and teacher so that lessons can end positively.
- For this reason, I require 30 days' written and paid notice prior to withdrawing from lessons. To discontinue lessons, a notification must be sent via e-mail to MelodyPaynePiano@gmail.com by the 1st of the month to stop enrollment for the following month.
- No refunds are given for lessons that are not taken.
- At the discretion of the teacher, a student will be dismissed from my studio for any of the following reasons, including, but not limited to: consistent late payments, practice habits that are not in line with studio requirements, lack of motivation and progress, persistent absences or tardiness, failure to abide by studio policies, consistently not bringing materials to lessons, refusing to follow the weekly assignment, inappropriate or disrespectful behavior towards myself, my family, or my home, or theft.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Parents should observe all lessons of children ages 8 and under so that you can assist them with their home practice.
- Be sure your child comes to lessons with clean hands and fingernails trimmed flush with the end of the fingertip or shorter.
- My studio includes a private restroom and a parent waiting area. If younger siblings attend the lesson with the parent and student, the younger children should remain quiet during lessons.
- No gum, food, or drinks are allowed in the studio. Please dispose of any snacks or gum prior to entering the studio.
- Shoes are not allowed in the studio. When you enter the studio, place your shoes in the designated area. You are welcome to bring slippers or socks to wear while in the studio.
- I am always happy to talk with my students and their parents. Please feel free to contact me about anything regarding piano lessons. Text and email are the easiest ways to reach me, and you're also welcome to contact me via phone or Facebook.