

Sheer Joy Piano Studio



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STUDIO GUIDELINES & POLICY 2025-26

Goals:

- To create an environment where students can develop and retain a love of music and of piano.
- For students to experience music-making as natural expression.
- For students to develop an extensive repertoire of many different musical styles.
- For students to express themselves through music and generate their own music.
- For students to acquire a strong foundation in music theory and its practical application at the piano.
- For students to have a highly positive, self-affirming experience as they learn.

Student's Role:

- Commit to a long-term relationship with piano lessons.
- Record practice sessions in Better Practice App (this helps students track their practice and plan future practice).
- Follow teacher's instructions carefully.
- Maintain a consistent practice schedule (at least 15 min. per day, 5 days per week).

Coach's Role:

- Acquire the most inspiring instrument your budget will allow and maintain it properly. Acoustic pianos need to be tuned at least twice a year and digital pianos need to have 88 weighted keys and 3 pedals. An inspiring instrument allows imagination to take flight and is so attractive and inviting that students *want* to practice.
- Meet financial commitments through the Fons scheduling and payment website.
- Commit to weekly lesson attendance with the student (for students under the age of 18).
- Commit to a long-term relationship with piano lessons, monitor practice, and offer support and encouragement.
- Insure that other family members are not a distraction at lessons or at home during practice time.

Practice:

- The Playlist is the heart of Simply Music. It is critical to keep all of the pieces on the list alive.
- It is ideal to practice at the same time(s) each day so that piano practice becomes a routine.
- Develop the habit of practicing—even if only briefly—immediately after your lesson to reinforce what was learned.
- Review practice instructions/tutorial videos within 24 hours of your lesson.

Tuition:

- **What you pay is *tuition*.** It is not calculated as an hourly fee for services rendered because teaching is much more than the time we spend in lessons. Tuition also covers preparation and evaluation of lesson plans, consultation by phone and electronic media, creation of and access to tutorial videos, event planning & scheduling, organizing performances and seasonal activities, attending professional meetings and conferences, and my decades of education and experience.
- **Tuition is a flat monthly rate.** This rate is calculated based on payments for 46 weeks of lessons a year made in 12 equal monthly installments. All months are charged the same rate regardless of the number of weeks in a given month (*i.e., months in which vacations or sick days occur or in which there are 5 weeks are charged at the same rate*).
- Families should expect a yearly tuition increase corresponding to cost of living increases (projected 2026 COLA is 2.7%).
- **Tuition and fees are due at the first lesson of the month.** A \$10 late fee will be added after the 10th of the month.
- **The tuition year is from September 1, 2025 to August 31, 2026. Tuition is due as normal during summer months. Time slots will not be held for students who do not pay during summer months.**
- Tuition is paid through the Fons scheduling and payment website/app via bank draft or credit card.
- **Shared lessons:** \$115 mo (2 students: 45 min; 3-4 students: 1 hr)
- **Private lessons:** \$135/mo (30 min), \$202/mo (45 min), \$270/mo (1 hour)

NOTE: Shared lessons generally produce much faster and better results and are preferred, but sometimes private lessons are the only option. Every attempt will be made to place students in an appropriate-level class as early as possible, at which time, fee will be adjusted downward to shared lesson fee.

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Holidays:

- There will be four built-in vacation weeks this year: Thanksgiving (Mon 11/24/25 - Sat 11/29/25), Christmas/New Year's (Mon 12/22/25 - Wed 1/7/26), and Spring Break (Fri 3/14/26 - Tues 3/24/26). Labor Day and Memorial Day are also vacation days. These breaks allow all of us an opportunity to refresh, recharge, and return to lessons with renewed energy, enthusiasm, and focus.
- In addition to the above-specified times, there will also be two flex weeks (TBD). *Remember, you are not paying for these weeks. **The monthly flat-fee tuition you pay guarantees you will receive 46 lessons each year.***

Materials and Music:

- Simply Music Student Home Materials are purchased online by you through the Simply Music Store at a cost of \$35-\$45 per level (depending on format). Siblings may share materials. Supplemental materials (e.g. *Accompaniment*), which vary in price, may be introduced as lessons progress. New materials are needed approximately every 12 weeks or so. Non-Simply Music materials may also be required as study progresses. The annual cost is around \$150-\$200. As soon as students can read music, they will be required to purchase a subscription to SightReadingFactory.com at the cost of \$5 annually.

Registration Fee:

- A one-time annual \$10 registration fee will be assessed in the month of September each year (or later, for students joining the studio later in the year). This fee covers expenses such as printing and piano party venue rental and refreshments.

Missed Lessons:

- *Space is reserved for each student with the understanding that we have an appointment at that time each week.*
- If a student misses a lesson, he or she should check with classmates and consult the Better Practice App to find out what was covered. Remember that the Better Practice App has a library containing videos, audio recordings, music scores, and information sheets. Students have Student Home Materials (at students.simplymusic.com) to help review what was covered at the lesson. There are also extensive resources available at the SheerJoyPiano channel on YouTube.
- I am committed to attending every scheduled piano lesson. In the event that I need to cancel due to illness or travel, I will make every attempt to reschedule missed lessons. Sheer Joy Piano Studio will again be very full in 2025-26, so I cannot guarantee that make-ups will always be possible. (Remember, tuition is based on a 46-week year, so you actually get extra lessons if you attend every week.)
- ***Please do not come to your lesson if you are ill.*** I will consider offering a make-up lesson if I am notified at least 4 hours before the lesson time. We're all well-accustomed to remote lessons now, so we can use the service of your choice (FaceTime, Discord, Zoom, WhatsApp, Messenger) if you feel well enough. Make-ups will not be considered for any other reason and will be offered at my invitation only if I have an opening or cancellation in my schedule.
- ***Non-illness-related cancellations and no-shows will not be rescheduled.***
- If a permanent conflict arises with the scheduled lesson time, please contact me to make alternate arrangements.

Leave of Absence/Discontinuance:

- **If the student will be absent for more than 4 consecutive weeks (summer vacation, etc.), a deposit in the amount of one-half month's tuition for each month of absence will be required in order to reserve the lesson time.** Payment is non-refundable and is due before the leave of absence commences.
- If school classes are not held (teacher in-service days, inclement weather, etc.), you will generally still have your piano lesson. If roads are impassible, we can have lessons remotely or you can attend another class.
- If the need to discontinue piano lessons arises, please let me know as soon as possible so I can offer the space to other students. *As a courtesy, I request 30 days' notice.*

Referrals/New Students:

- It is a joy and a huge compliment to be contacted by someone who was referred by a current student! When you send new students my way, please remind them to tell me you sent them. *After they officially join Sheer Joy Piano Studio, I will express my gratitude by crediting your account \$75 toward the next month's tuition.*

I have read this studio policy, I understand it, I agree to its terms, and I will save it for future reference. [Please sign, date, and return—digital format preferred!]

Signature

Date