Studio Policy

Lessons:

- Students are expected to treat studio equipment respectfully. If items are damaged, full replacement costs will be charged. Normal wear and tear is expected.
- Studio workshops are given approximately every 6 weeks in place of regular lessons. Studio workshops are 60 minutes in length. Check the calendar for studio workshop details.
- Lessons are not extended due to late arrival. (If your lesson is from 4:00pm-5:15pm and you come at 4:45, the lesson will still end at 5:15pm.) This ensures that no lessons run behind. Please be prompt in arriving to lessons and in picking up your child at the scheduled time.
- Students are encouraged to take summer lessons. Students who do not take lessons over the summer usually require a significant amount of review when fall starts. The focus of summer lessons is varied from that of the school year to engage students' interest. Various lesson/workshop options are available.

Tuition:

- Tuition is based on a semester schedule and divided into equal monthly payments. The studio runs much like a private school; tuition remains the same each month and is based on enrollment, not attendance. Tuition reserves your child's spot in the schedule throughout the piano year, whether he/she attends lessons or not.
- TUITION INCLUDES ALL CORE MUSIC.
- Tuition is paid on the first day of each month, automatically charged through the website with ACH transfer from your bank (no fee!) or with a credit card (3% fee). You will receive an emailed statement with payment verification on the first day of each month.
- Additional event fees may be required for optional festivals, competitions, and other events that are not sponsored by the studio.

Attendance:

- Your tuition reserves you a weekly time slot and benefits within the studio. If your student cannot attend their regular lesson, consider these options:
    - Your student will be able to see videos and assignments from the lesson on Tonara and complete the assignments
    - A student can potentially attend another group lesson that week. Check with the instructor to find availabilities.
    - Please also keep in mind that there are 2 bonus lessons scheduled throughout the year, so by attending all the lessons, you will have received 2 bonus lessons.
- Private lesson option: video lesson. If the student is unable to attend a lesson, they may request a video lesson. During their normal piano lesson time, I will record a video giving practice tips on the student's current pieces and some additional learning activities. This video would then be

uploaded to Youtube and would be available via private link for your student to view at your convenience.
- If you cannot attend your lesson, please call or text, or I will worry. If I must miss a lesson, I will call and reschedule with you.

Communication:

- Binder: your pianist will have a studio calendar on the back of their binder.
- Tonara: videos and assignment information will be posted here. I always welcome messages or recordings from students in between lessons through Tonara if they have questions regarding their assignments.
- Studio newsletter: upon signing up for lessons, your email will be added to the email list to receive e-newsletters (approximately 2 per semester).
- Studio website: visit www.merrellmusic.com to find the studio calendar and more. Log in to see calendar, sign up for studio workshops, pay tuition, and more!
- Facebook Page: "Liking" the studio's Facebook page will allow you to see occasional announcements, photos, videos, quotes, and more.
- The best way to contact me is via email or text.

Practicing:

- Students retain instructions given at the lesson MUCH BETTER if they practice that same evening after returning home from the lesson, or the next day, at the latest. Please make this a priority!
- For at least the first year of piano study, parents are requested to sit with their children during a minimum of three of their weekly practice sessions. This will help ensure your student is practicing WHAT the teacher has asked and HOW the teacher has asked it to be practiced (Hint: it's rarely playing a piece straight through!).
- Students are required to complete their assignments each week. Daily practice is vital to musical progress. If you treat piano lessons like an academic subject, students will progress and grow and enjoy it more in the long run. Students are encouraged to keep a practice record, and to work toward musical goals rather than simply counting minutes. The study of music is rewarding and enjoyable, but it is also work! To help with practicing, I also give some fun ideas that help with quality practicing through "practice games." Encourage your child to use the practice games. Remember "You get out of it what you put into it." Unprepared lessons cost the same as prepared ones but their value is substantially compromised.
- Important note: 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- I want to play with my friends," "I want to quit," etc… Be aware that your child's interest will probably not be 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, and 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."

Withdrawal/Cancelation:

- Every student stops taking lessons at some point. Please make this decision thoughtfully with plenty of discussion between the teacher, parent, and student so that lessons can conclude with a positive sense of closure. Accordingly, the studio requests a one-month notice before discontinuing lessons. The student must finish the remainder of the month paid in full or forego any unused lessons, as there is no refund given.
- Tuition refunds are not given for withdrawal mid-month.

Miscellaneous:

- 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. I let the voicemail take calls during lessons.
- Any borrowed music from the music library that is not returned or is returned damaged will be charged to the student at its replacement cost.
- Be certain your piano is tuned and in good condition. It is very discouraging to play on an out-of-tune instrument. Putting off tuning is not cost effective; a piano which is very out of tune will most likely require several tunings over a period of weeks or months to bring it back to pitch. I can recommend tuners/technicians. If your child is starting on a keyboard, you will want a digital piano with weighted keys to get the full benefit of piano lessons. I am happy to assist in the process of locating an appropriate instrument and can advise on the quality of different brands.
- Students will wash their hands thoroughly when they get here. Long fingernails preclude the development of good piano technique, so please be sure they are trimmed short---no longer than the end of the finger. This is necessary preparation for every lesson. If they are too long, we may use the lesson time to study theory. (A basketball player wouldn't play in high heels!)
- Merrell Music and Valerie Merrell are released from any liabilities, accidents or injuries that may incur from the enrolled student with the participation of piano lessons, group classes, or piano events.

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Student Name(s) Parent Signature Date

<u>Photo & Video Release</u>

- Does the instructor have permission to feature photos and/or videos of this student (never using full last name) in the studio scrapbook, advertising materials, lesson demonstration, studio owned websites, and studio Facebook page?

☐ Yes
☐ Please ask on a case-by-case basis
☐ No

- Does the instructor have permission to tag featured photos and/or videos of this student (never using full last name) with the parents' Facebook account(s)?

☐ Yes
☐ No

_____ _____

Parent Signature Date