

Piano Tuition Policy – Updated December 2021

Welcome to *Karen Harms Piano*. I look forward to sharing a fulfilling and enjoyable time with you at our music sessions. Kindly read the following carefully for some clarity on a few things so you know what is expected of you as one of my students. Young students – ask Mum or Dad to help you understand the important things written here. I hate to resort to putting things in writing, but I've learned that it is best to have things written down so that everything is clear, and possible misunderstandings or bad feelings are then most often avoided.

Mission Statement

As a tutor of piano it is my mission to keep all students motivated and excited about taking piano lessons. As such, I will do my best to encourage and challenge your abilities. The music that each student studies is tailored as much as is possible to the student's musical development needs, tastes and interests. Playing the piano can be great fun, but also involves work. Both work and play happen in every lesson. It is my goal that all students will truly enjoy playing the piano and will look forward to each lesson and each new learning experience. Students are expected to come to their lessons with a positive attitude, ready to learn.

I have one main hope and wish, which I instil right from the 6-year-old beginner through to the advanced students. It is quite simply this. YOU MUST TRY TO PLAY THE PIANO EVERY DAY. Try to have no days off. Only if the student is away, or terribly sick do I accept that they had no opportunity to play the piano. A block of ten minutes can be found – if you choose to look for it. A minimum of 4 sessions will ensure progress – but it will be much slower.

Music Library

My Music Library offers the students a chance to sometimes play from a variety of books without having to purchase them. A fee of \$25 will be charged for any borrowed music that is not returned or is returned damaged. (Much of my music library is music in books, not individual sheet music, so to replace just one song requires the purchase of an entire book) Photocopies are only used to assist with page turns and while music is on order. The student MUST own original music of every piece performed.

Practice

We are all (even children) burdened with many responsibilities these days!

For parents of students –

Between homework during the school year and daily household chores, kids are learning a great deal about responsibility and commitment. Homework and chores are duties that I fully support, but I'm also a firm believer in the maxim regarding "all work and no play." While work is important, we all know that play is of equal importance so I request that parents allow and even encourage their children to have time each day devoted to playing the piano. Beginning students are given short assignments, and more advanced students are expected to devote more time to playing the piano, so their assignments are longer. This daily break from school obligations and other responsibilities will be an opportunity for the student to enjoy some fun and stimulating time at the piano, playing their pieces, scales and technique "tricks," and improving their skills. Perhaps this daily playtime can be given as a "reward" for completing other daily responsibilities or chores. Unlike other fun activities such as computer/video/tablet/phone games and TV that can provide this much-needed "break" from schoolwork/chores, playing the piano daily will result in a skill that will most certainly enrich their lives through adulthood.

For all students -

Successful and rewarding music study depends on consistent daily practice. You will be given practice assignments (applicable to your level) that you are expected to complete. Students should come to each lesson prepared to demonstrate noticeable improvement in each of the pieces which have been assigned. If a student comes to lessons unprepared, then lesson time must be used to practice and review rather than to teach new concepts, skills and repertoire pieces. Students who don't complete their theory assignments may need to do the work at the lesson, missing out on playing time. Students who frequently miss lessons and/or habitually neglect to practice and do their assignments progress at a *much slower* rate than those students who have good attendance records and come to lessons prepared. The rate at which students progress depends, to a very large degree, on the amount of effort that they put towards their piano studies.

ASSURING YOUR (OR YOUR CHILD'S) SUCCESS IN PIANO LESSONS

It is the parent's responsibility to see that their child has enough time daily to practice and that they are practicing what they are supposed to each day. Successful, satisfying piano study is dependent upon correct and consistent practice habits. The following are my recommendations:

- Arrange a set time every day for your child to practice and insist on it being kept.
- Provide a practice setting free from distraction (computer, gadgets and devices, phones, siblings, TV, etc.)
- Check on your child's practice progress during the week, (Very important for students under 10).
- Make sure your child brings all of the correct music and materials to the lessons in a music case or tote bag.
- Check the music notebook regularly for communication from me and help your child follow the directions.
- On a night/day before a lesson the child should play for you what is expected for the next lesson
- Make sure your child finishes all written assignments and is prepared for each lesson.
- Arrive on time on your appointed day for all lessons.
- Resist the temptation to swap lesson times unless it is really not possible to attend (eg school camp/concert)
- Keep your child's nails clipped short. Fingernails which are too long do not allow development of proper piano technique. Please be certain they are trimmed very short. I also insist on clean hands.
- Each student would benefit from playing for others as often as he/she can and the more of it the better.

Fees

As a general rule I teach concurrently with public school terms with an extended break between Term 2 and Term 3, so fees are payable a term in advance within the first two weeks of the term. (In line with swim/dance lessons etc.) If you choose to take family holidays during term time (or attend another event at that time on that day) you are choosing not to be at your paid lesson time. My schedule does not permit make-up lesson time outside of the allocated lesson sessions.

I have set aside your lesson time for you and have prepared (programmed, outlined, printed, researched) for you to attend at that time on that day for that term, I cannot use that time for anything or anyone else. Most of my students inform me well in advance if they are not going to be at a lesson. (Serious or Sudden illness excepted). In the interests of progressing at a reasonable pace I try to make up one missed lesson in any given term on an alternative date within the same term, or where practical, extending a subsequent lesson as a preference over entirely missing the week's progress – This is only for **unavoidable clashes** such as school camps, school concerts and parent/teacher interviews. Continuity and consistency of lesson input is very important.

Additional costs

Materials fee (levy)

I am a paid member of several musical organisations which offer studio licensed music. Each student will be assigned various themed books and solos, and theory books over the course of their tuition plus manuscript, Display Books, scrap books and a notebook as part of this additional term fee.

Music purchases

Expect to purchase at least one book per half year – a lesson book or repertoire, and a technical/technique book. Books range from around \$15 - \$30 - and beyond \$40 for large volumes. These build a library for each student to play from. If you wish to build more into your music collection ask me for some suggestions as to what may be useful as I usually find there are many supplementary pieces and books to suit each student. Holidays are great times to experiment with a new book.

Expectations

Students are expected to show commitment, follow instructions, practise and be respectful, and parents are expected to display respect for my professional qualifications, experience and recommendations. If I decide I need to discontinue tuition I will advise and refund all fees paid for remaining lessons.

Please thoroughly read the enrolment form and studio policies before enrolling. Signing and returning the form signifies your agreement to all points set out. All policy stems from necessity and draws on professional standards and collegial support.'

Occasional workshops (optional, but useful)

From time to time it is practical to offer a group session to study a wider topic of music – sometimes duets, sometimes an opportunity to listen to some different styles of music, a chance to listen to other students play favourite pieces, or a fun way to look at some theory concepts. Workshops are offered at a lesser cost than lessons and advised in advance when the appropriate number of students are at a suitable stage of their studies.

I have read the above and accept tuition on these terms.

_____ /_____/_____ _____
 Student name Student signature Date Teacher
 (parent or guardian if under 18 years of age)