

LESSON POLICIES

Hi. My name is Erny. It's not Mister Something. First names only. I give piano and guitar lessons in my home at 413 College Park Dr. Park in the driveway and head for the front door. Arrive 5 minutes or so before your scheduled lesson time. I go by the clock. If you are late, your lesson is short.

Walk in. DO NOT KNOCK. When I give lessons, I ignore the front door and the telephone.

You will more than likely be greeted by the mini-dachshund, Sam. He will be very excited and will want to lick you. Do not make sudden motions toward him. Leave him alone if he has something in his mouth. If he barks ferociously at you (rarely happens), just stop in your tracks. I'll be out immediately. Sam will be constantly underfoot. Walk slowly. Make sure you don't step on him.

Head for the room in the far corner of the house (through the living room, just past the kitchen) through the hallway - last door on the right. Walk in, even if someone is playing. DO NOT KNOCK. Have a seat. This is what everyone does. Parents are invited to stay during the lessons (there are magazines). If it is easier to drop off the student, that's fine. Most people do that.

Read this: daily practice time = length of your weekly lesson (somewhat less for young beginners). Sounds clear to me. Here's something else that's important and often overlooked: Practice time is the time to work especially on difficult parts of a song. Counting is as important as playing the correct notes. Always playing the song from start to finish (ignoring trouble spots) is not practice. This is performance. I will teach the art of practicing as part of the lesson. Assignments will be written into a notebook (I'll provide). If I am giving you too much to do (or too little), tell me!! I'll ask occasionally.

I will e-mail a bill to you at the end of the month for the next month. Please pay for the entire month (checks preferred but I do take cash) by the second lesson of the month.

I will provide piano books for piano students. The student will normally work from a song book (practical concepts), a theory workbook and a Fingerpower exercise book. Figure \$6.50 each, added to your bill. A scale book will be added after a year. Siblings can share all but the theory book.

If you cannot make it to a lesson for whatever reason at all, e-mail me or call at least the day before whenever possible. Missed lessons are rescheduled whenever possible (before or after the missed lesson) via the attendance policy below.

Read this: RECITALS ARE MANDATORY. That means you have to do them. Exceptions only for adult students and for the very young (ages 4/5). I'll give you a recital piece in September/October for the February/March recital. The cost of the recital piece (usually <\$3) will be added to your bill. Performance is an important part of the learning process.

Summer lessons are optional (but encouraged). You decide. I expect more dedication during the summer. If you take the summer off, you pick from any remaining available time slots in the fall if there are any. Students taking the summer off also lose two sick days (See Attendance Policy).

My purpose in giving piano lessons is to train you well enough so that you can use the piano to relax and to unwind. There are many times in life when nothing goes quite right, and sitting down at the piano works wonders. After 6-7 years of lessons (and respectable progress), this goal can be achieved. I do not give piano lessons to create the next virtuoso. If you are seriously interested in studying piano at the college level, please tell me when you are in 9th/10th grade. I will intensify your lessons to properly prepare you for college-level study.

Hope I didn't scare you away, but I like to lay everything out front. At the lesson, I am very informal, understanding and encouraging. My feedback is positive. I will discuss any persistent problems with your parents (rarely happens). I'll do my best to make your piano/guitar experience enjoyable!

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The attendance policy works entirely on the concept of restorable sick days. This policy puts the burden of notification and rescheduling on the student and his/her family. Good communication is essential in making this policy work. If you communicate by e-mail, check your e-mail at least once per day.

FOUR SICK DAYS PER YEAR. At the beginning of each year, a student will receive four sick days for the entire year to be used as the students/parents see fit. While primarily intended to be used for illness, they can also be used for school activities, sports, vacation and, my favorite, "Oops, I forgot." When a sick day is used, a credit will be issued toward the following month's bill. Once the four sick days are consumed, no credits will be issued for the remainder of the year for any reason. Use your sick days wisely! Note that sick days are not transferable between siblings. Unused sick days do not roll over to the following year.

MAKE-UP LESSONS. Used sick days are easily restored by make-up lessons, preferably within a week (before or after) of the student's lesson. This gives you the ability to always maintain sick days!

SUMMER OFF or PART-TIME=TWO SICK DAYS PER YEAR. If a student takes the summer off, he/she has only TWO sick days to work with. Likewise, if a student is scheduled for an every-other week lesson, he/she gets only TWO sick days per year.

NOTIFICATION. If a student cannot come to lesson for any reason, it is the student's/parent's responsibility to e-mail me (espsongs@windstream.net) or call me (if you do not have e-mail) at home 724-327-8814 or on the cell phone at 412-445-9511. That way, I can offer your time slot to others for make-ups. When you notify me, indicate when you can make-up the lesson. For instance, "Johnny will not be at his lesson on Tuesday due to his tennis match. He can make-up the lesson on Monday 5:00-7:00 or on Thursday 7:00-9:00." Give me as much information as possible. Note that you must notify me in advance if one sibling is not coming. And check your e-mail at least once daily!

HOLIDAYS. I will not schedule lessons on these major holidays: New Year's (Eve&Day), Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Halloween evening, Thanksgiving (Thurs/Fri) and Christmas (Eve/Day). I do not honor other holidays or school vacations. Just because you have the day off from school does not mean that the piano lesson is cancelled. Remember that you can easily reschedule your lesson.