

## **Irena Burkett's Piano Studio Policies - 2017/2018**

Thank you for choosing me as your piano teacher! I am looking forward to another year of music making! I believe that music, which is present in all important events of our life is fundamentally important to human beings. I believe Music is a Gift to us and I have the privilege of sharing it with my students, both children and adults, and teaching them the Language of Music.

In order to ensure that you get the most effective and creative teaching as possible, I have established the following Policies.

### **Teacher:**

I will be prepared and present to teach 36 weeks per school year. Students will have 28 individual lessons, four group classes, four formal Recitals and one adjudicated event (Festival). I will develop the curriculum specifically for you, to match your learning style and your goals. I provide an enthusiastic, supportive and positive environment, utilizing a variety of methods.

### **Student:**

Student agrees to arrive at each lesson on time, well-prepared and with the music books. I recommend having a special bag for all the music books. No early arrivals, please. I will open the door at the time of your lesson. Arrive hydrated and nourished, bring a water bottle; have a meal or a snack before the lesson; thirsty and hungry students have a hard time concentrating. It is the best to have a nourishing/protein snack, not sugary/caffeinated.

### **Commitment:**

When students enroll, they are reserving their place in the studio for the entire school year.

### **Home Practice:**

I want you to completely understand every assignment. Please ask questions and talk to me. Parental involvement in home practice is crucial for student success. Please, help your child establish and stick to a practice routine, and see that practice time is as free as possible from distractions.

Regular quality practice is essential for student success. Ideally, students should practice every day. Short, daily, goal-oriented practice sessions are more effective than one or two long sessions per week. As your child progresses, their daily practice time should increase. It is the quality of practice, not the quantity, which matters most. For an advancing student it's just not possible to have good quality practice if s/he is only practicing 20 minutes a day.

It's very important for students to practice right after their weekly lesson, to solidify what they have just learned. It's not a good idea to wait until the end of the week, then "cram" practice right before the next lesson!

Age 5-6 - Practice should be accompanied by a parent every day.

Age 7-10 - Practice should be accompanied by a parent about twice a week.

Age 11 and up - it shouldn't be necessary to sit with your child at this point, but still ask them to perform for you, check their weekly assignments to ensure they are doing their work.

If something is happening at home or school that is affecting you, please let me know, so I can be sensitive to your needs. A quick text on the way to your lesson can make the difference between a great lesson and a difficult one. Give me a heads up, please.

**Materials, Equipment:**

Materials and books will be provided at the beginning of each Term, or throughout the year. Pay for them when you receive them. The student needs to have an acoustic piano at home, a metronome and a foot stool, if they cannot reach the floor. Talk to me about finding a good instrument.

**Digital Disadvantages:**

The problem with digital pianos is that they can't really duplicate the tone and touch of a real piano. Even with today's technology individual notes may be quite accurately reproduced, but the tone of notes sounding together, as in an acoustic piano - with complex harmonics mixing and resonating against a flexible wooden soundboard - cannot be matched. As a result, most music sounds rather sterile played on a digital piano. Digital pianos don't feel like real pianos. "Touch Sensitivity" and "Weighted Action" is not the same thing as the sophisticated inner mechanism, or "action", of an acoustic piano. Digital pianos merely simulate the touch of pianos and don't provide the same feedback or responsiveness to your playing, so your performance range is limited. Digital pianos are counter-productive when it comes to technique and dynamic performance. These skills cannot be practiced on a digital keyboard and then applied to a real piano action. It's not the same thing.

A real acoustic piano also represents a stronger commitment to a student and calls for more respect, as opposed to a digital keyboard that may represent the same thing to a child as a computer, an electronic game-station or a CD player. Something else to consider is that an acoustic piano, that can last 100 years, will hold its value far better than a digital.

**Tuition:**

Tuition is charged by the school year, paid in 3 or 10 installments and is non-refundable. Call for pricing. Tuition covers not only the actual lesson time spent with the student, but time preparing for each student as well. Please, see "Where Does My Tuition Go?"

**If Paying by Debit/Credit Card:**

Add 2.75% transaction fee.

**If Paying by Check:**

Option A: provide 10 post-dated monthly checks for the entire school year. I will cash your monthly check on the 1st of the month, September - June.

Option B: provide post-dated checks for each Term. Fall Term = 3 checks, Winter Term = 3 checks, Spring Term = 4 checks. For a total of 10 checks. I will cash your monthly check on the 1st of the month, September - June.

**Registration Fee:**

Registration reserves a student's place in my Studio during the summer vacation, defrays costs of the maintenance and piano tunings, studio materials, use of studio music and recital hall rental costs. Registration fee is (non-refundable) and is due by July 1st. Please contact me for fee amount. All registrations after July 1st will be taken only upon availability.

**Summer Lessons, after 36 Yearly Lessons/Classes:****Missed Lessons:**

Because the specific times are reserved for specific students, a student who does not attend a lesson will simply miss the benefit of that lesson. Tuition you pay reserves an exclusive weekly time in my schedule during the school year, and remains the same no matter how many of the scheduled lessons the student uses. Please be assured that your tuition is always working for you as I spend a great deal

of time outside of lessons choosing repertoire, planning, strategizing...etc. Your tuition pays for more than your weekly lesson. There are no make-ups, refunds, reductions, or credits for student-missed lessons (sports events, field trips, school concerts, outdoor school camps, family vacation, doctor's appointments...etc.). Forgotten or no-show lessons and forgotten make-ups are forfeited.

### **Swap List:**

It will allow you to trade your time with another family, if you know in advance that you will not be able to attend a lesson for any reason. Inform me about the swap ahead of time. If 2 students will show up at the same time, I will teach the one who normally comes on that day. The swapped lessons must be the same length or shorter, but not longer. Swapping lessons is done by families. The teacher is not involved in the process. Please, let me know if you are ok with being on the Swap E-mail List.

### **Videos:**

If you can't arrange a swap, then send me a video of a student playing assigned pieces before the regularly scheduled lesson. Videos can be uploaded on YouTube: <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/57407?hl=en&rd=1>. I will use your lesson time to review your video and send my feedback with the next assignment.

### **Changing Lessons Times:**

Students may swap their weekly lesson times with another student. Inform me, please, about the change. The change needs to work with the existing schedule.

### **Extreme Emergency Cases:**

A trip to ER, car accident on the way to piano lesson, death in a family. I will do my best to find time for one make-up per Term in these cases.

### **Snow/Freezing Rain Days:**

The lessons are done via Skype, FaceTime or a phone at a regular lesson time. Any lesson that I have to cancel will be made up in a timely manner within 1 month.

### **Parking:**

Please, park on the other side of the street.

### **Cleanliness:**

This Studio is the extension of my private residence, so, please, remove your shoes.

### **Sick Child Policy:**

Students are not allowed to come to lessons if they are too ill to go to school, have flu like symptoms, i.e. cough/fever/vomiting/runny nose/eyes. I reserve the right to send a student home, if s/he arrives sick. I can teach sick students via FaceTime, a phone or a Skype at the regular time of their lesson. Some vaccinations can make one contagious for a week, so, please, let me know, if you were recently vaccinated.

### **Photo & Video Release Form:**

Photos of students as well as video and audio recordings of student performances may be posted online and used by the instructor for promotional materials and studio newsletters. If you do not wish for your child's picture to be posted online, simply write me an exclusion request.

**Tuition Increases:**

Families should expect a yearly increase in tuition appropriate to cost of living increases, expenses and services offered.

**Termination of Lessons:**

If for any reasons you must stop lessons, a one-month notice is required. At that time I will pro-rate the tuition for your final month to reflect the number of lessons that you have received based on the last lesson date. You will be required to pay this balance within 30 days.

I understand and agree to these Studio Policies.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for reading these policies. I hope that you will enjoy being actively involved in your child's exposure to the world of music! Please, feel free to contact me with any questions.

*Sincerely,*  
*Irena Burkett*  
*503-730-3218*