

Jessica Olson Piano Studio

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Studio Policy

Thank you for choosing to study with me! I feel honored by the opportunity to share my love of the piano with you and your family. Below you will find important information about my studio operations and policies.

Weekly Lessons:

Weekly private lessons are held from the second full week in September until the last full week in May. A calendar of lessons and events is provided prior to the beginning of each school year. Thirty-minute lessons are available for young beginners, and 45-minute lessons are strongly recommended for students in their second year of study and beyond as scheduling allows. Sixty-minute lessons may be recommended as students advance based on their personal goals.

Summer Flex Months:

The summer lesson calendar is typically sent out in late May. Weekly lessons are offered, along with flexible lesson bundles that can be scheduled around camps and vacations. Students who enroll for the *full summer semester* have the opportunity to float these flexible summer lesson bundles for use during two consecutive months of the following school year when sports schedules may be intense.

Field Trips and Piano Parties:

Because broader engagement with the arts is vital for developing musicians, I hold several piano parties, masterclasses, field trips, and family excursions each year. Although the dates and times of these events can't always be firmly set at the beginning of the year, I strive to provide as much notice as possible. With the exception of large ensemble excursions, these fun events are included in tuition fees. *Many of these events require strong attendance to remain available, so please prioritize them whenever possible.*

Tuition Policy:

Tuition for the 2023-2024 school year includes all private lessons, piano parties, field trips, studio recitals, and studio-sponsored master classes. Students may choose to finance the total cost of the annual tuition fee into two semester payments due in September and January, or nine monthly payments due at the first lesson of every

month. *Because semester and monthly tuition payments are considered a financing option, payments are equal regardless of the number of lessons held during the month.*

The following forms of payment are accepted:

- Check (payable to Jessica Olson)
- Paypal, via the link embedded in emailed studio invoices (a 3.5% credit card fee is automatically applied)
- ACH automatic debit. Debits are withdrawn on the 10th of each month from September to May with no additional fees. Automatic debits may also be arranged for summer tuition payments and re-enrollment deposits. ACH paperwork is available on request; students may opt in or out at any time.

Invoices are typically emailed out after the 10th of the month if no payment has been received. *No refunds for tuition or deposit payments are offered, so please only pre-pay for lessons you know you will use.*

Breaks in Study:

Consistent attendance is one of the most important parts of successful piano study. Except under special circumstances, students who wish to take a break in study will be required to pay their usual tuition fee during the break if they wish to hold their place. If you choose to make your slot available to another student from my waiting list during your break, you will be placed back on my waitlist for the next available studio opening. Students who have intense sports schedules for several months of the fall or spring semesters may wish to take advantage of summer flex months.

Absence Policy:

If students are actively ill or may be contagious with any illness, please refrain from attending lessons. Because occasional illness is inevitable, several free lessons have been built into the tuition schedule. As a result, no credits or make-up lessons will be offered.

If an unavoidable absence occurs right before an important performance, I may request that the student schedule a make-up lesson to prepare at my discretion. While I do my best to be as flexible as possible in scheduling, my lesson calendar is very full. I ask that families plan ahead when setting up their lesson time for the school year since time changes can sometimes be difficult.

Teacher illness is rare, but it does occasionally occur. I believe everyone is entitled to a reasonable amount of sick leave, so no make-up lessons will typically be offered. If I have an unforeseen need to cancel a lesson, I always work with students to schedule a make-up lesson or offer an account credit.

Music at Home:

Piano lessons are different from sports and other extracurricular activities in that a significant part of a student's musical growth occurs outside of lesson time. For this reason, *piano playing at home is essential for progress and will be expected.*

Practice time varies by student, but the minimum daily practice time expected for most students will be equivalent to their weekly lesson time. I wish to support students in becoming well-rounded musicians, so I regularly assign music theory work, listening challenges, and composing activities in addition to the repertoire we're learning. A significant part of our weekly lesson will be devoted to showing students how and what to rehearse at home, and detailed instructions are emailed out after each lesson. Student feedback about styles and genres of music they enjoy playing is always encouraged!

Parents can support successful piano study by encouraging regular practice, assuring consistent lesson attendance, and exposing students to as many musical experiences as possible. You are their best cheerleader and most valuable fan!

Materials and Fees:

Prior to starting lessons, each family will need the following items: 1) Reliable access to email for receiving lesson notes; 2) A spiral notebook; 3) A 3-ring binder; 4) A pencil pouch containing a highlighter, pencil, and pen (the kind that clips into your binder is best); 5) A tote bag for transporting books and materials; 6) A home instrument in good repair; and 7) Reliable online access for completing listening and other assignments in Google classroom.

Please bring all music and theory books, your notebook, and your binder to each lesson.

All students will need a piano for home practice. Home instruments should be well-tuned with weighted keys, full keyboard size (88 keys), and functional, built-in pedals. Digital pianos can work for beginners, as long as they mimic the touch of a quality acoustic piano. Serious students who have advanced to the intermediate level will likely wish to invest in a quality acoustic instrument.

Each family is required to pay a non-refundable material deposit of \$60.00 per individual student (or \$80.00 per family) at enrollment which will be used to cover the cost of sheet music, materials, and any applicable festival or competition entry fees. At the end of each school year, renewing the deposit to the \$60.00 (or \$80.00) level will serve as confirmation of re-enrollment for the following year.

Performances:

Sharing music is one of the most rewarding parts of learning to play an instrument! Students in my studio have many opportunities to perform at school functions, group classes, recitals, fundraisers, festivals, and on our studio YouTube channel.

Students will be encouraged to perform in piano festivals or master classes, piano parties, and at least one formal recital each year. Piano party dress is typically casual, and modest, dressy attire is usually required for master classes, festivals, and recitals. With parental consent, I regularly record polished pieces for our studio YouTube channel, which serves as a fun video scrapbook to celebrate growth and success! Well-prepared students may receive the honor of being selected to perform in Southwest Montana Music Teachers Association recitals, master classes, and festivals, the Montana State Music Teachers Association Fall Festival, MSMTA master classes, or the highly-competitive MTNA Competitions.

Performing is rewarding, but I understand that it can be overwhelming for some students. Although performances can be great challenges for overcoming personal limitations and developing courage, discretion will always be used in requiring student participation in public performances – especially high-pressure ones.

My highest aim is that every student leaves my studio with a love for the piano, a well-rounded and comprehensive music education, an appreciation for the wider world of music and the arts, and the ability to express themselves through music. You are giving your child the greatest imaginable gift!

Thanks so much for choosing to be part of my studio family! Open communication is important to me, and I want to meet the needs of each young musician I teach. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time.

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