

# **Piano Lessons with Deanna Didriksen Gwynne School Program Letter 2020-21**

**Hello prospective students and returning students:**

August 2020

*I've found these guidelines helpful when teaching/taking piano lessons. Hopefully they answer any questions you may have.*

2020-21 Piano lessons are offered at Gwynne School on two days of the week this year. Interested students/parents for students are asked to fill out a registration form and submit their registration/first lesson fee of \$20 by September 4. The first week of lessons is to begin September 15. There are limited slots available for lessons, so please get your form in right away!

Please keep in mind that lessons with me are considered private piano lessons. The school can't freely pass on information about students to me without your permission.

*Communication can be directly with me- written in our "lesson book", in person, by phone, or email.*

*The office will pass on messages, if asked.*

## **First, a comment on COVID and our lesson space:**

At this time we find ourselves constantly reading about procedures for clean spaces so that we can minimize the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses. In our piano lesson space, there is room for the student and I to be 2m apart, but as I am giving one-on-one instruction, there are times I may be closer. To follow policy, I will be wearing a mask during piano lessons. Students will be required to wash their hands before lessons, and using hand sanitizer during lesson time if they touch their faces or sneeze/cough/blow their nose. I will be disinfecting the piano between students and washing my hands multiple times during each lesson. Keyboard demonstrations to students will be done on a separate keyboard that I will set up next to my piano, to reduce contact/close-distance instances. With these practices in mind, the piano lessons will run as hygienically as possible.

## **Piano Lessons**

Piano lessons at the school will be **½ an hour long and are \$20 per in-person lesson.** In our lessons we will study

- Technique
- Musicianship
- History
- Terms
- Theory
- Creative expression
- Rhythmic Dictation
- Ear Training

using music, worksheets and activities. Most weeks there will be a theory element to complete at home.

## **A Note about Pianos**

**Regular practice on a piano is required when taking piano lessons. An electric keyboard with weighted keys is permissible in the first two years of lessons. Please do not sign up for piano lessons unless you have one of those two options available to you in your home. You will be asked if you have an instrument – lessons will not be offered if the answer is “no”.**

Consider borrowing a piano or keyboard from a family member or friend, if you would like to take lessons, but are unsure of the investment of a piano at this time.

I have a separate sheet on piano purchasing tips and information, and will pass it on, if asked.

## **Practicing**

**\*\*Regular piano practicing is a must.** You will not remember what was learned at your piano lesson unless you re-visit the lesson notes and apply the directions to your songs over and over. It is sometimes difficult to find the time to practice. Most students can start at 15-20 min. per day (for K/Gr.1 beginners), and it doesn't have to be done all at once. 10 minutes here and then later, 10 min. there.

A good time to practice is one that is at the same time everyday. Maybe after you have brushed your teeth in the morning or right after a snack after school. If you find yourself watching T.V. and looking for a show, ask yourself: "Have I practiced today?"

I have many ways to track/keep record of students' practicing, that we will be applying this year to our lessons. Regular practice can't be stressed enough.

If it has been determined that you have not been practicing and are not making progress, a meeting will take place with parent, student and teacher (me) to discuss what options you have.

The reward for practicing is that you can move through songs at a quicker pace and in your lessons we can find out which type of music you like to play and figure out what skills need to be improved. It is not possible to do that if you are stuck on the same song lesson after lesson.

## **Payment of Lessons**

The payment schedule will be sent home with your child after their first lesson in September. Your registration fee will be figured into the schedule. **There will be 31 lessons taught, so the yearly fee for one student is \$620.** \*Additional arrangements will be made for students taking exams.

Payment shall be made in one of two ways (no exceptions):

1. Post-dated cheques dated the first lesson of each month (registration/1<sup>st</sup> lesson fee and 9 monthly cheques). Lesson fees will be broken down on a sheet sent home/e-mailed after the first lesson. You will be given a receipt each month.  
Please make cheques payable to: Deanna Didriksen.
2. Payment in full at the beginning of the year. Upon receiving the payment schedule, remit the total amount to Deanna Didriksen by the next weekly lesson.

Either method of payment is due to me seven (7) days after our first lesson. Past the seven days, lessons will be suspended until your payment method is received (ie: all post-dated cheques for the year).

## **The Piano Year**

Our piano year runs from *September to the end of May*. This is in ideal conditions. I would prefer our lesson year to remain the same, but we will need to keep open communication- if there is a situation that comes up health-wise, where we may have to switch to remote lessons or discontinue lessons.

## **Missed Lessons**

If you are sick/isolating, the school is closed due to bad roads/weather or there is a family emergency, we will make up the lesson in the same week via Zoom, Messenger video call or FaceTime as a remote 20-minute lesson. The time is reduced due to results from lessons that occurred in the spring. 20 minutes is enough time to display your understanding of what we are learning and for me to get information across in an online lesson. Remote lessons also require more post-lesson work on my end, compared to in person lessons.

There will be no refunds issued for lessons missed due to vacations, scheduled appointments, etc. Your lesson time is your time, so please try to schedule around it!

**\*Communication for this is very important!**

**Please e-mail me/phone or let the school know to advise me of any changes so that we can make arrangements, if necessary.**

## **Piano Books**

I will pick up piano books so the student has the correct ones to start off the year. If you have had previous lessons, make a note on your registration form and bring your books to our first lesson. Books will be charged *separately* on the lesson schedule and usually are \$20 for the lesson book and theory (combined).

If we make good progress through the year, I may ask you to pick up the next level yourself (using the completed book as a guide) and to bring it to the next lesson.

## **A Note on Exams**

I do not require students to take exams but once they are beyond preliminary levels, we follow the syllabus as a guide to know what level they are at. When the requirements are satisfied and demonstrated for one grade, we move on to the next. Parents who request an exam for their child can contact me.

## **Performing Opportunities**

I will attempt to make opportunities for students to perform throughout the year; the shape that they take this year will vary from previous years. Having a goal to practice toward is helpful in our lessons, so I will strive to have at least 2 performances throughout the year.

There is a lot of information in this letter – if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. I am looking forward to the upcoming year of lessons and making music!

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