



Joy in Piano

STUDIO POLICIES

(UPDATED 07-01-2026)



PRIVATE PIANO LESSONS (ages 4 – adult)

Private one-on-one lessons offer the greatest opportunity for progress. Lessons are held weekly, and they can be 30, 45, or 60 minutes long, depending on the student's age and level. We keep in mind the individual goals of each student, as well as exposing students to different musical styles and techniques. Important skills such as note reading, technique, playing-by-ear, chords, and music theory are stressed at lessons.

Generally, students at the elementary level will be taught using age-appropriate method books. For piano students who are at the early elementary through early intermediate levels, Joy in Piano uses the Piano Adventures method book, written by Nancy Faber and Randall Faber. This method book is the best fit with the open hearts, open minds philosophy of Joy in Piano. It does an excellent job of teaching technical, reading, listening, and composing skills, while holding a student's interest with interesting and recognizable works of music. There is also a robust supplemental series which gives many options to students with an interest in a particular genre of music, such as rock, pop, jazz, or Christmas music. Students who complete the Piano Adventures series are generally well-equipped to continue their study with classical music, popular music, or both.

Intermediate and advanced students will study the works of master composers and songwriters at the discretion of the teacher. Students who are studying classical music at the intermediate and advanced levels have the option of changing the emphasis of study towards jazz, improvisation, and/ or popular music. A digital copy of Joy in Piano's curriculum is available upon request.

GROUP PIANO LESSONS (ages 4 – adult)

Group lessons are a fun way for children or adults to learn about piano in a more social setting. Group lessons can be 45 or 60 minutes long each, with two or more beginning students of the same developmental age learning together. Group lessons will cover the same topics as private lessons but will have more options for incorporating engaging group activities using supplemental rhythm instruments and movement. Students may sign up for group lessons at any point during the year.

In group lessons, so long as both students learn at approximately the same pace, they may continue to learn together. At some point, the progress of one student will out-pace the other. When the teacher feels this point has been reached, both students will need private lessons in order to continue. From past experience, this will usually occur at some point between 6 - 24 months after beginning group lessons. Please note that if an individual student misses a group lesson, neither refunds nor make-up lessons are given.

MUSIC THEORY (ages 14 – adult, open to all instrument players and vocalists)

Every student is exposed to music theory at every piano lesson. However, students who are serious about pursuing a career in music, or who are planning to study music at the university level, need to have a stronger focus on music theory. This kind of student should consider adding music theory lessons to supplement their study. Music theory lessons may be taken on their own, or in conjunction with private lessons on any instrument. Most music theory students will be taught using various textbooks. These lessons will cover music theory, ear training, music dictation, and other critical musical skills necessary for the successful study of music at a college/ university or professional level.

ENSEMBLE (ages 10 – adult, open to all instrumentalists and vocalists)

If you are a late-elementary, intermediate, or advanced piano student who enjoys making music with others, you may be interested in receiving special training in ensemble playing. In ensembles, students are taught important skills, such as critical listening, peer evaluation, and teamwork. Pianists are in high demand as accompanists, both professionally and recreationally. Interested and qualified piano students can also learn how to work with vocalists and instrumentalists, as well as with larger groups, such as choirs and bands. When appropriate, students will be given the opportunity to perform in public, and advanced students may have the chance to work with ensembles in a professional setting.

LITURGICAL MUSIC (ages 16 – adult)

Advanced piano students who are looking for performance and job opportunities should consider making liturgical music part of their lessons. Most Christian religious institutions hire pianists and organists to accompany their services, and in recent years, the demand and compensation for these jobs has greatly increased. These lessons will cover hymn playing, working with a choir and soloists, and introducing the organ. At an appropriate time, students in this course will be connected with a professional organ teacher for further study. When appropriate, students will be given the opportunity to play in services in local religious institutions.

PIANO PEDAGOGY (ages 16 – adult)

How does someone become a piano teacher? Advanced piano students who have demonstrated a serious commitment to studying the piano have an opportunity to find out. Open only by invitation, this is a structured, multi-step program, lasting approximately twelve months. Throughout the course, students are given regular reading, journal, and homework assignments. After a period of observing established piano teachers, students taking this course will teach private piano lessons to elementary piano students in a supervised, structured environment. Students who complete this course will have the musical, technical, and teaching skills necessary to teach elementary piano students of their own.

Calendar

Students may sign up for piano lessons at any point during any month of the year. The Fall/ Spring Session begins on the last week of August and goes through the second week of June, for a total of thirty-six (36) weekly lessons. During the Fall/ Spring Session, students are committed to one month at a time. **There will be NO regular lessons** offered during the weeks of Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Regular lessons **WILL** be offered on Labor Day, Veterans Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Good Friday, and Memorial Day. It is expected that students will attend all lessons during the school year, with the exception of excused absences, as explained in the next section.

For the Summer Session, students may sign up for lessons on a week-by-week basis. For beginning and intermediate students, it is highly recommended to take as many lessons during the Summer Session as possible. This is to promote steady progress and to avoid regression. For advanced students, the Summer Session is optional, but still recommended.

Students should plan to attend weekly lessons, according to the studio calendar. In order to maintain steady progress, students should avoid taking extended time off from weekly lessons. For any reason, if a student chooses to take a temporary break from piano lessons during the September - June studio calendar year, that student must pay their regular tuition fee in order to keep their current time slot. Without a tuition payment, the time slot may be forfeited, with no guarantee that another time slot will be available.

Make-up Lessons

If a student cannot attend a scheduled lesson, a minimum of twenty-four hours of notice is needed, except in the case of an emergency. Please send a text message to 978-868-5522 to report the absence. If a make-up lesson is warranted, it will be scheduled before the end of the current session.

Each private student will be allowed two make-up lessons for any reason for each Fall/ Spring Session, and one make-up lesson for each Summer Session. Lessons for group students will not be made up, unless the class is cancelled by the teacher. Once the limit of excused absences during a given period is reached, any further absences will be unexcused. **Unexcused absences will neither be made-up nor refunded.** Please keep this in mind when thinking about transportation, family vacations, sports games, dance recitals, doctor appointments, and other personal business. If the teacher needs to reschedule a lesson, the teacher will give at least one week's notice, at which time arrangements will be made for a make-up lesson. Any lessons rescheduled by the teacher, or in the event of inclement weather or religious holidays, will not count towards the make-up lesson limit.

Please note all make-up lessons must be taken in the same session. Make-up lessons may not be carried over from the Fall/ Spring Session into the Summer Session, nor vice-versa.

Performances *(optional)*

Performance is a very important part of a musician's development, so each year there will be at least one formal recital, with other performances planned throughout the year. Some students will also have the opportunity to play in ensembles with other instrumentalists and singers. There are no additional fees to participate in performances. All private and group students are encouraged to perform. Memorization is encouraged, but not required for performances. **Please note that students are not required to participate in performances.**

If, in the opinion of the teacher, a student is not adequately following directions in preparation for a performance, the teacher has the authority to remove that student from the program. This is for the student's musical and emotional well-being, but also because they are representing not only themselves, but their family, teacher, and Joy in Piano.

Tuition *(Private Lessons)*

30 minute lessons	Fall/ Spring Session	\$159 per month
	Summer Session	\$44 per lesson
45 minute lessons	Fall/ Spring Session	\$238.50 per month
	Summer Session	\$66 per lesson
60 minute lessons	Fall/ Spring Session	\$318 per month
	Summer Session	\$88 per lesson

Tuition is charged in advance for the following month. Students will receive an invoice via e-mail by the 1st of the month. To make the payment online, students will need to open a Student Portal account, follow the instructions, and enroll in autopay. For information regarding make-up lessons, please read below.

Students who join Joy in Piano after the Fall/ Spring Session begins will have their tuition for the first month prorated and will be charged the standard tuition thereafter. During the Summer Session, lessons are charged on a per-lesson basis. Students who discontinue lessons prior to the end of June in a given studio year may be subject to an adjustment fee.

Students will have between 3 – 5 lessons each month, depending on the calendar and vacation days. Therefore, the monthly tuition reflects the average number of monthly lessons. **Please note that there are no refunds under any circumstances.**

Workshops

In preparation for performances, students may be asked to participate in a workshop. A workshop is an informal gathering where a small group of students perform music for one another. Here, important issues such as dress, bowing, and stage presence will be discussed. Workshops will be held prior to a performance, giving the student enough practice time to make any necessary corrections. In certain cases, the teacher may make the workshop a mandatory requirement if the teacher feels it is necessary for a successful performance.

Performance Evaluations *(optional)*

Most students demonstrate growth and motivation from having an outside assessment of their performance ability. This program consists of playing three pieces of music by memory in front of one or more piano adjudicators, all of whom are experienced and qualified master piano teachers. During the student's performance, the adjudicator will fill-out written evaluations, which will be reviewed with the student at a later lesson. This is a non-competitive evaluation, open to all students who are ready to commit to a high level of practicing. **Please note that students are not required to participate in performance evaluations.**

Practicing, Preparation, and Expectations

Taking piano lessons is a worthwhile experience only when the student practices regularly. Students should practice 5-7 days a week, for 15 minutes – 2 hours daily, depending on the student's age, level, and goals. As a student progresses, he or she will be asked to gradually increase the amount of daily practice time in order to keep up with the difficulty of the assignments. Keep in mind that professional musicians often practice 4-5 hours daily. Students should bring all music books, assignments, and notebooks to each lesson. A pencil and a metronome will be provided. Students will be asked to record their assignments in their notebook.

Occasionally, students will be required to purchase books and other materials for use during lessons.

The teacher will provide the responsible party with a list of materials to purchase. Photocopying music to avoid purchasing it is illegal and will not be permitted at Joy in Piano.

To prevent the spread of germs, all students should make sure that their hands are clean before the lesson. Piano students should always keep their fingernails trimmed so as to allow their fingers to curve when they play.

Sometimes in the course of taking lessons, problems may arise. Please remember that we are always ready to listen and to help. In the event of a problem, the first step is for the student, (parent), and teacher to arrange a time to discuss the issue. Most problems can be resolved easily with open communication and patience.

However, if the problem is serious, or cannot be solved, a student may be dismissed from the studio, and his or her lesson slot forfeited, under the following conditions:

- 1) if the student consistently fails to follow a practice schedule prescribed by the teacher,
or consistently fails to complete assignments
- 2) if the student is absent excessively from scheduled lessons for any reason, excused or unexcused
- 3) if the student's account is overdue by more than forty-five days

Learning to play the piano should be a positive and rewarding experience, and with your help, it will be. If there are any questions concerning the policies of Joy in Piano, please let us know. We will be more than happy to discuss any issues or concerns.