

# The Ratcliffe Music Studio Policies

We're The Ratcliffe Music Studio—a husband-and-wife piano team based in Sterling, Virginia—and we are thrilled at the idea of you joining our studio.

In our lessons, we go beyond simply learning pieces. We help students understand how music works, build confidence at the piano, and grow into well-rounded musicians through performance, theory, and thoughtful repertoire building.

As a diverse studio, we're able to meet each student where they are. We tailor our teaching using a variety of teaching methodologies, so each student has a path that fits their goals and learning style.

We welcome students of all ages and levels, and strive to create a warm, encouraging environment where each student can grow and feel confident.



## **Affordability commitment**

We maintain a flexible approach to billing, cancellations, and rescheduling, and strongly believe that quality music education should remain accessible and affordable for all students. As a result, our rates are intentionally kept lower than many studios in the DMV area. While current economic conditions may not always encourage such a model, this relaxed and understanding approach reflects both our studio atmosphere and our personal philosophy as teachers.

## **Cancellations and Rescheduling**

To make rescheduling lessons easier and negate the need to cancel, we offer the following options:

- Live virtual lessons (Skype/Facetime/Zoom/Forte)
- Reschedule to an open teaching slot if available
- School year lessons must be made up during the school year
- Reschedule with another teacher- Since we are a husband and wife duo, one of us substitutes the other if available.

## **Teacher's Cancellation**

In the rare event that I have to cancel a lesson, the lesson will be made up either during the school year as an extra lesson or in the summer at the students convenience.

## School Closings/Snow Days

Lesson will be held virtually at the normal time (Skype/Facetime/Zoom/Forte)

## Practicing

Toward the goal of rapid and steady progress, all students are expected to practice a minimum of six days per week, for a length of time equal to or greater than their private lesson. Breaking up practice time into multiple 15-20 minute sessions is encouraged and usually produces superior results. Failure to maintain a regular practice schedule will

result in lack of progress and will ultimately lead toward the student quitting the instrument out of frustration.

**Exceptions-** special needs students will have their own practice schedules built for them. Students with the goal to partake in serious competitions may be expected to spend more practice time at home.

## Instrument requirement

All students are required to have an acoustic piano at home, either an upright or grand piano, as this is essential for healthy musical development and long-term success. We are always happy to help families find an instrument that fits their needs and budget.

**Insurance:** We strongly recommend all students to take out insurance policies on their instruments. Most commonly via homeowners insurance.

## Exams, Concerts and Competitions

Students are offered a variety of performance and enrichment opportunities based on their individual goals, abilities, and level of commitment. These may include ABRSM exams (in-person or online), local concerts, NVMTA and WMTA competitions and festivals, Trinity and Suzuki programs, Russian school repertoire, and more. This highly depends on each student.

