



BENJAMIN ROLLINGS, D.M.
Pianist | Organist | Photographer

MUSIC STUDIO POLICY

Please read this policy carefully before signing

Trial lesson

- For prospective piano/organ students and parents, I offer a free trial lesson. Students who already have some background in piano and/or organ performance should bring current materials to the interview.

Age of students

- Students age six and up and adults are welcome to enroll.
- Piano students are welcome to start piano lessons at any proficiency level.
- Students must demonstrate at least an intermediate piano ability before enrolling in organ lessons.

Teaching Calendar

- Piano lessons held in-person in Fairhope and Gulf Shores or are conducted online
- Organ lessons are only held in-person in Fairhope and Gulf Shores.
- In-person music lessons in Fairhope take place on Sunday afternoons, Tuesdays and Thursdays at St. Francis at the Point Anglican Church in Fairhope.
- In-person music lessons in Gulf Shores on Wednesdays and Fridays at St. Jude's by the Sea Lutheran Church in Gulf Shores
- My time is limited due to church job responsibilities, accompanying at schools, and other work. My schedule may change from time to time. As of August 2021, No lessons will occur during the following times:
 - August 30-September 10, 2021
 - November 24-25, 2021 (Thanksgiving)
 - December 5, 2021
 - Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
 - New Year's Eve and New Year's Day
 - January 17, 2022 (MLK Day)
 - Holy Week and Easter (April 10 – 16, 2022)

Tuition

- Four 30-minute lessons: \$120 (= \$30 per 30-minute lesson)
- Four 60-minute lessons: \$200 (= \$50 per 60-minute lesson)
- Payments are made in advance on a monthly basis and are due the first lesson of every month
 - Please make the tuition check payable to "Benjamin Rollings."
 - All payments are non-refundable.
 - A \$15 late fee will be assessed for every lesson a payment is missed.
 - There is a \$35 fee for bounced checks.

Attendance/Participation

- Your tuition reserves a weekly time slot for you.
- If a student is late for a lesson, the lesson will still end at the normal time.
- Missed lessons without prior notification will not be made up. No exceptions.
- If a student needs to cancel a lesson due to illness or an emergency, the lesson time can be rescheduled or swapped out with another student. Unless the illness or emergency situation is ongoing, the rescheduled lesson must occur during that week or the lesson will be forfeited without a refund.
- Lessons cancelled by the teacher will be either made-up or refunded during the next payment period.
- Any student who fails to bring required materials to a lesson will be assessed a \$5 rental fee for borrowing the teacher's materials. All subsequent violations may result in dismissal (see below).

Swap list

- Parents of students and adult students can choose to participate in a swap list, permitting their contact information to be shared with other people enrolled in the studio. If there is a scheduling conflict, the swap list allows parents to contact other parents in order to swap lesson times. The teacher must be notified of all rescheduling.

Curriculum and Scores

- Please do not purchase a method book before the interview. I will recommend which method book to purchase after the interview process.
- Although I have used various method books over the years with success, for young beginning piano students, I recommend Frances Clark's *The Music Tree* curriculum because it uses real music notation from the beginning and it allows students to learn good piano technique and read music notation in a careful, incremental manner. However, each student is different and I may recommend a different method book based on the student's needs.
- Students should have their own method book in hand by their third lesson.
- For beginning organ students, I use Harold Gleason's *Method of Organ Playing*.

Instrument policy

- All piano students should have access to a piano on a daily basis. While it would be great if every student could their own Steinway studio grand, I realize that purchasing an \$101,700 instrument is not an option for most people. Fortunately, there are other options available. Used pianos can be purchased at reasonable prices from various sources. Some local piano dealers offer rental programs for students. If you are unsure about investing in an acoustic piano, another acceptable option is to acquire an electric keyboard. However, keyboards must meet certain qualifications. In order to learn the basics of piano playing, it is essential to have an instrument with 88 keys. In addition, the keys should be weighted and the sustaining pedal must be sensitive enough to allow "half pedaling". Expect to pay about \$500 for a brand new keyboard that meets these requirements, or about \$50 a month to rent one.
- All organ students should have access to an organ on at least a semi-regular basis (4-7 days a week). In most cases, this would be at a local church.

Practice Policy

- Students are required to keep a daily log of their practice. This log will be presented to the teacher at the beginning of every lesson.
- It is highly recommended that beginners practice at least 30 minutes a day. Intermediate and more advanced students can expect to practice at least 1 hour a day. The important thing, though, is for the student to practice wisely. It is better to spend five minutes practicing intently, than three hours practicing mindlessly.

Recital

- Students are also encouraged to arrive five or ten minutes before each lesson. This will provide opportunities for students to perform for each other, which is the best way to gain confidence for a recital.
- Unless circumstances prevent it, there will be a student recital at the end of each semester. While students are by no means required to play in the recital, they are highly encouraged to do so!
- A recital fee, which takes care of the cost of piano tuning and printing programs, is included in the tuition.
- The Baldwin County chapter of Music Teachers National Association also usually hosts recitals for students of all levels as well. Opportunities will be passed on when they become available.

Parents/guardians

- At least one parent or guardian is required to attend every lesson for minors less than 18 years of age.
- Parental participation is essential for young students. It would be impractical for a piano teacher to be available for students everyday of the week to help them practice. That is where parents come in. Your role is to be a source of accountability. Behind every great performer and composer were people who encouraged, supported, and motivated him or her. How satisfying it is when parents fulfill this role for their own children and do not leave the job to someone else!

Sanitation

- A minimum distance of 6 feet is to be maintained between teacher and student in accordance with Alabama public health guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Depending on the circumstances, masks may be required or the student may be asked to take lessons online for a limited time.
- All students are kindly asked to disinfect their hands before and after each lesson. The piano keyboard is the perfect place to leave bacteria and viruses that can spread to other people. No one needs to get sick!
- If you are sick, please notify me and cancel/reschedule the lesson. There is no point in coming to a lesson feeling miserable and spreading your sickness. Please be considerate of yourself and others.

Miscellaneous

- No food or drink is allowed in the church sanctuary where lessons are held. Food items and beverages may be left in the kitchen area.
- Long fingernails are an impediment to good piano technique. All students are requested to have their fingernails cut short. Sorry girls, you will live!

Concert Outings

- Despite modern-day recording technology, there is nothing like experiencing music live. For those that are interested, there will be occasional group outings to local symphony, chamber, and solo concerts. Information about concert opportunities will be posted in advance.

Dismissal and Termination

- If any of the following situations occur after written notification has been made, the student will be dismissed
 - Failure to honor studio policies
 - Failure to maintain practice standards
 - Persistent unexcused absences or tardiness
 - Inappropriate or disrespectful behavior
 - Illegal activity

Withdrawal

- If a student decides to withdraw from piano lessons, the teacher must be notified at least two weeks in advance.
- If a student withdraws in the middle of the monthly period, tuition for that period will not be refunded.

Legal Statement

- Benjamin Rollings, St. Francis at the Point Anglican Church, and St. Jude's By The Sea Lutheran Church is released from any liabilities, accidents or injuries that may incur by the enrolled student with the participation of piano lessons, group classes, piano recitals, and other events.
- At times, it may be necessary for the instructor to touch the student's hand, arm, or shoulder lightly in order to demonstrate proper technique. This is a normal occurrence in music instruction and by signing below you are giving the instructor permission to do this.
- The teacher reserves the right to record video and audio and take still pictures during lessons for the benefit of the student. These videos will not be posted publically on the internet or elsewhere without the written consent of the student or parent.
- The Studio Policy may be revised periodically. The student and parent will be given a written notice at least two weeks in advance before any changes take effect. If lessons continue without any feedback, it will be assumed that the student and parent have accepted the changes.

Teacher's Mailing Address:

Benjamin Rollings, D. M.
PO Box 791
Gulf Shores, AL 36547
251-550-7443

Studio Addresses (physical address only; NOT for mailing forms or checks):

St. Francis at the Point Anglican Church
17280 Scenic Highway 98
Fairhope, Alabama 36532

St. Jude's By The Sea Lutheran Church
312 E 16th Ave
Gulf Shores, AL 36542

Useful Links

- baldwincountymusicteachers.com – official website of the Baldwin County Music Teachers Association
- steinwayes.com – Steinway piano dealer in Spanish Fort
- bluesangelmusic.com – Music store in Pensacola
- andysmusic.com – Music store in Mobile
- composecreate.com – Games and other resources for music teachers and students
- musictheory.net – An extremely valuable online recourse for learning music theory
- metronomer.com - Metronome online
- ptg.org – The piano technician guild, find tuners, learn about the piano, has games
- mobilesymphony.org – Official website of the Mobile Symphony Orchestra
- pensacolasymphony.org– Official website of the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra

REGISTRATION FORM

Student name _____

Date of birth (if a minor) _____

Grade in 2021-22 _____ School _____

Previous piano experience (if applicable) _____

Other instruments _____

Favorite music _____

Parent name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone number(s) _____

Parent(s) email _____

Student's email (if over 18 years old) _____

Would you like to be included on the Swap List?

Yes No

I have read, understand, and agree to the terms of the Studio Policy

x _____
Signature of Parent/Guardian

x _____
Signature of Student

Date