

# Migraine-free Management

Operating an Independent Music Studio with LESS STRESS!



**Clinton Pratt, BM, MM, NCTM**

We missed last week  
so I subtracted the  
lesson from the tuition

I forgot my  
books

We didn't know  
there was a  
lesson today



What!?! There's a  
recital this  
weekend?!

We're taking  
the summer off

Can I pay you  
next week?

Chris has  
soccer, can we  
reschedule?

**Headache, anyone?**

# Stressors

**Attendance/Cancellations/Rescheduling**

**Tuition/Billing**

**Calendar**

**Summer Enrollment**

**Students “Forgetting” Materials**

**Students quit with no notice**

**Communication**

# Rescheduling

## Common Policies

24-hour notice

Emergency

2 per term

Makeup week

Group makeup class

Give credit if can't reschedule

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# Attendance Solution:

Come when you can

If you don't, you don't

It doesn't matter if you're sick, you're out of town, you have a football game, or you just forgot!

No make-ups, no reschedule days,  
no refunds, no credits.

# Attendance Solution:

“Regular attendance is expected and encouraged in order to gain maximum benefit from music instruction. Missed lessons are inevitable and, therefore, have been taken into account in the overall cost of tuition.

No credits or refunds are given for missed lessons. Tuition remains consistent regardless of the number of lessons attended.”

# Attendance Solution:

“Please also note that the instructor may cancel lessons from time to time for various reasons including (but not limited to) personal illness, inclement weather, and professional travel.

Although planning and scheduling is done ahead of time (see calendar), an exact number of lessons cannot be guaranteed. However, the inevitability of missed or cancelled lessons have already been considered in the formulation of the tuition.”





# Tuition

## Common Policies

Pay per lesson

Pay per month based on number of lessons

Pay per term, but credits for missed lessons

Pay flat fee per month, but will adjust for certain circumstances



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# Tuition Solution:

**Flat Monthly Fee**

**Same amount every month**

**Same amount all year around**

**Doesn't change**

**No adjustments or credits**

**Period.**



# Calendar

## Common Problems

Different number of lessons/month = different fee

What about Monday lessons? More Holidays!

Summer = students want to take “off”

Teacher wants to go to conference



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# Calendar Solutions:

- Block out Holidays, vacations, teacher conferences, etc.
- Figure out the same # of M/T/W/Th/F/S/S for the school year
- Summer: offer a set # of lessons, but with FLEXIBLE scheduling



## 2018-2019 Calendar

August/September 2018							December 2018							March 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		27	28	29	30	31							1						1	2
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
30							30	31						31						

October 2018							January 2019							April 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6			1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31				27	28	29	30	31			28	29	30				

November 2018							February 2019							May 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3						1	2				1	2	3	4
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
25	26	27	28	29	30		24	25	26	27	28									

	No lessons
	Group week: no regularly schedule private lessons during these weeks. Instead, students will have a group class according to their age and skill level.
	Events

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
9/29	Music Alive!	Parkside Christian Church
10/28	Masquerade Musicale	Barnes & Noble (Newport)
11/17	Queen City Music Fest	Various locations
1/27	Winter Musicale	Willis Music (Kenwood)
3/24	Auditions Festival	Univ of Cincinnati CCM
4/27	Queen City Music Fest	Various locations
5/19	Spring Musicale	Willis Music (Kenwood)

**Summer Season:** June 1 — August 25

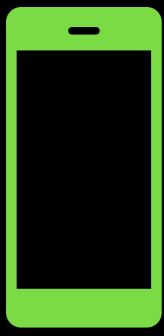
Summer scheduling is flexible, but students are guaranteed 6 lessons during this time. Please see Policies and Procedures for more information. 2019-2020 term begins August 26.

# Missed lessons, tuition, calendar

Number of lessons during school year	<b>33</b>
Summer lessons	<b>6</b>
Total	<b>39</b>
Inevitable missed lessons	<b>-4</b>
Actual # lessons	<b>35</b>
35 X \$50 rate	<b>\$1750</b>
+ \$50 materials etc.	<b>\$1800</b>
Divide by 12 months	<b>\$150/mo</b>

\* Lesson rates are examples only





# Actual Conversations

## Student cancellations . . .

**Parent 1:** "We are going to be out town next Monday, we will see you the following week!"

**Me:** "Thanks for letting me know, have a great time!"

**Parent 2:** "Sorry we missed today's lesson, (excuse, excuse, excuse). . ."

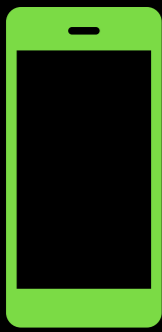
**Me:** "That's okay, it happens. See you next week!"

**Parent 3:** "Something came up and Philip has to miss his lesson."

**Me:** "I actually have an opening at 2:30 on Friday if you want to take that."

**Parent:** "Great, we'll see you then, thanks!"

No one ever brings up the fact that they need a refund or a credit, or that they deserve a rescheduled lesson. Sometimes they ask and sometimes I can, but it's not expected and I'm not obligated to do so.



# Actual Conversations

Wed, Jan 17, 11:58 AM

I'm so sorry but I'm home sick today. No piano. Please confirm you got the message.

Got the message. Hope you feel better soon!

Thu, Jan 18, 2:45 PM

I'm so sorry but I'm home sick today. No piano. Please confirm you got the message.

Ok, hope you feel better soon. Take care.

Thank you

Thu, Jan 18, 2:45 PM

I'm so sorry but I'm home sick today. No piano. Please confirm you got the message.

Got it. I hope you feel better soon.

Thank you



# Billing

## Common Problems

Tuition is due by \_\_\_ LESSON

Tuition due by 1st, late fee after the 8th

Tuition is due, but I'll keep teaching you even though you're 5 months behind in payments



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# Billing Solutions

## Strictly Enforced Late Fee

“Payments are due by the 1st of each month. There is a \$30 late fee if tuition is not received by the 1st.

If tuition is still not received by the 8th, lessons are suspended until the account is settled.

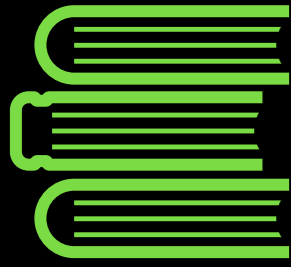
After 30 days, student is dismissed from studio and will lose their exclusive spot in the scheduled and will have to re-enroll.”



# Billing Solutions

## Automatic payments

- Bank bill-pay (free!)
- Credit Card
- ACH

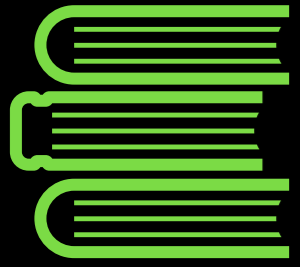


# Students who “forget” their books

- Sight reading!
- Theory!
- Improv!
- Games!
- Have duplicate copies

Becoming a problem?

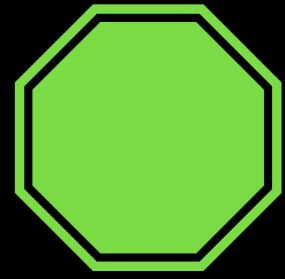
- Warn parents
- Policy for no materials



## Students who “forget” their books

“If a student does not bring his/her materials, an ideal lesson experience cannot be guaranteed; however, every effort will be made to provide an effective learning environment. Instructor reserves the right to refuse to give a lesson if student does not bring materials. No refunds will be given.”





# Students who quit with no notice

- 30-day notice to withdraw from lessons
- But how to enforce it?



**Require first AND last month's tuition up front**

# Communication



- Have information on website
- Email reminders
- “I’m sorry, the policy is . . . .”
- Winning combo: SYMPATHETIC & STRICT
- Be firm, but smile!

# Migraine-free!

It's so much easier!

- easier for you
- easier for parents
- easier on students

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