



Teacher Handbook

Southern Oregon School of Music is dedicated to fostering a community of teachers and students where all work together, support one another, and enjoy the musician's journey.

This handbook outlines guidelines and current practices reflecting our desire to uphold a high standard in all we do.

Please review and sign the Acknowledgment on the last page. By signing, you confirm that you have read and agree to abide by the policies in this manual.

It is the supreme art of the
teacher to awaken joy in
creative expression and
knowledge.

~ Einstein

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Our Core Values

Teachers and staff at Southern Oregon School of Music have worked together to identify these core values that guide all our decisions, activities, and interpersonal relationships:

Warm, Welcoming, Caring Community. We are a warm and caring community that likes to have fun, to celebrate successes, and collaborate together as we experience the joy of shared music making and learning.

Highest Levels of Character. We strive for personal excellence, being committed to continued personal improvement, professionalism, honesty, integrity and mutual respect for one another, our students, and their families.

Consistent, Prompt Communication. We commit to quickly respond to communication from each other, our students, and their families with accurate information, kindness, and encouragement.

Personalized, Structured, Classical Musical Foundation. We provide a structured, personalized music education with a classical foundation. As their musical skills mature, we help each student to build upon this foundation, equipping each one to excel at playing their chosen musical style(s).

Consistent and Effective Curriculum. We work together as teachers to curate, develop, and agree upon an effective, consistent curriculum for every instrument that includes weekly focus on foundational skills and music theory and progressive mastery of the instrument through method books and supplemental music of interest to the student.

Positive and Uplifting Music. We vet all the music that we use in our curricula and lessons to make sure the lyrics and the emotional impact of the music is age appropriate, positive, and uplifting. We are aware that the music students learn in our lessons becomes part of their personal mental playlist. We only teach music that we would want our students to be singing in their heads for life.

Teaching at Southern Oregon School of Music

Thoughtful, Intentional Communication

Maintaining a Positive Learning Environment

When speaking with other staff **always remain aware of students and their families within earshot and do not discuss challenging teaching situations, issues with other staff, issues with other families, or anything that would put anyone in a bad light.**

Always remain aware that we are creating a positive, encouraging atmosphere for everyone.

When talking with parents use positive language always. For example, instead of saying. "We were supposed to accomplish three music games today and couldn't because of the students' behavior." you could say "We got through two of our three music games and are continuing to work on our listening skills in class. Thank you for your encouragement at home!"

Parent Communication at Arrival and Dismissal

Pick-up and drop-off times may feel rushed, but they are valuable opportunities to interact with parents and share important information. For parents who regularly come in to pick up their child, **end your lesson five minutes early** so that you can **share a friendly greeting and talk briefly with the parent** about what their child is doing. If you have something important to discuss with the parent who doesn't come to your room to pick up their child, end the lesson five minutes early and **go to the car with your student to talk to the parent.**

Special Considerations When Interacting With Young Children

When talking with young children, **kneel down and get to their eye level.** This helps the child feel comfortable and connected with you as their teacher.

When families are leaving a Kindermusik class, **stand at the gate at the top of the stairs** and open it for each family, saying goodbye to children and adults by name.

When talking with other adults, **be aware when young children are present and avoid discussing adult topics in front of them.** Be thoughtful and intentional about discussing behavior issues in front of the student. Only do so if it is for the purpose of the student hearing it and learning from it.

Communicating With Parents Between Lessons

- It is very important that you **communicate with parents exclusively through Opus1.io** in the Student's Profile Client Comments. Do not exchange personal contact details, including social profiles, with parents or students.
- Refrain from making any scheduling or billing commitments or promises. **Refer any scheduling or billing inquiries to the office.**

Teaching Guidelines

- Using curricula chosen in cooperation with the Director, develop lesson plans and instructional materials for music lessons and classes. This must include:
 - **systematic development of technical skills** including scales, chords, arpeggios, and chord progressions
 - **fundamentals of music theory**, including reading music (notation, tab, and chord charts) rhythm, harmony, scales, and chord theory.
 - **graded repertoire** (method books for beginners; curated repertoire for intermediate and advancing students)
- Create a positive and engaging learning environment that encourages students' musical growth and promotes their love for music.
- Instruct students in how to sing or play the musical instrument(s) you teach through listening and observation.
- Use positive comments and encouragement to guide them. **Always point out what they did well before offering a way to improve.** Keep the suggestions for improvement down to **one or two things each time.**
- Within 24 hours of the lesson, **send lesson notes/practice assignments through Opus client messages.**
- **Ensure that students make consistent progress** through the curriculum – they should have at least one or two new pieces to work on each week. More advanced students working on a long-term piece should be given one or two specific sections or techniques to focus on each week. Include these in the lesson/practice notes.
- **Prepare students for musical performances**, examinations, or auditions.

- **Participate in all concerts and performances (5 per year) to assist and support your students.** (If you have no students performing it is still helpful and greatly appreciated for you to be there to support our students and your fellow teachers, but it is not strictly required.) Teachers are asked to arrive 60 minutes before the concert and stay to help clean up. Teachers are paid extra duty rate - log in when you arrive and log out when the Director says we are officially done.
- **Attend monthly team meetings** to remain aware of all the activities of Southern Oregon School of Music, to collaborate with your colleagues, and to provide important thoughts and perspective on the operation of our music school. Teachers are paid extra duty rate – log in when you arrive and log out when the Director says we are officially done.

What a Strong Lesson or Class Looks Like

- Take attendance in Opus1.
- Greet the student and take a moment to connect with them on a personal level.
- For elementary age students, check their practice chart. If they have not filled it out, help them to do so. Go to the practice chart in the hallway and give them their sticker.
- Review theory book assignment
- Listen to technique assignment (scales, chords, etc.)
- Listen to assigned repertoire and focus on only one or two skills or concepts that need to be addressed
- Adjust depth and pacing based on student level and readiness
- Assign new theory, technique and repertoire, promoting visible progress each week.
- Record the lesson assignment and notes in Client Comments in Opus1 and send to the student/parent.

Adapting Lessons to Student Needs

- Adapt lessons and classes based on student energy, preparation, and learning style
- Slow down to reinforce fundamentals when needed – find additional repertoire or a different method book covering the same concepts or skills. Ask the Curriculum Director if you need help with this.
- When the student has progressed to the point where they would be successful at a song in the style they enjoy, include this style of music in repertoire they play.
- Maintain overall curriculum direction while remaining responsive to student interests

New Student Materials and Welcome Procedures

- **Welcome Pack – Hand Out at First Paid Lesson**
(items are located in hallway drawers outside of studio 6):
 - Southern Oregon School of **Music Tote Bag**
 - **Blue binder with page protectors** for loose music, Southern Oregon School of Music pencil, Southern Oregon School of Music Door Hanger.
 - **Practice Plan.** Explain goals and practice awards available to students who meet them.
 - **Current Practice Record** (Practice Bingo in the summer).
 - Southern Oregon School of Music **Calendar**
 - **Practice Tips**
 - **Membership Information**

Take the time to go over them with the student and, if applicable, the parent:

- **Explain the practice plan** on the back of the practice record.
- Show student and parent **how to use the practice record.**
- **Point out the concerts on the calendar** and let them know that you will discuss performing in a concert when you feel the student is ready. Reassure them that performing in concerts is encouraged but not required.

- Point out the Membership Information and highlight the sections in the membership information about **how to cancel their attendance online** – this notifies the teacher and gives them a makeup credit.

Daily Preparation for Lessons and Classes

- **CHECK YOUR SCHEDULE every day** for any changes or important updates. Things may have changed without your knowledge or you may forget a change that you did know about.
- **Plan/prepare lessons in advance.** This includes sourcing games, materials & repertoire for each student.
- **Arrive at least 10 minutes prior to your lesson/class start time** to ensure you and your space are fully prepared.

During and After Lessons and Classes

- **Greet your student at the door of your classroom or in the waiting area** unless you are finishing a lesson with another student.
- **Take attendance** for each lesson/class in Opus 1
- **Share promotions & events** with students and parents, including handouts when requested
- **Maintain a clean & organized studio.**
- **In shared studios,** return materials to original locations and clear whiteboards if used. Reset bench, chairs, and teaching area after your lessons .
- **Send lesson reports within 24 hours** to share student(s) progress and other information in a constructive & positive manner.

Supporting Home Practice and Student Progress

Help students and parents understand the importance of playing at home. For elementary students, this will include our **practice awards program** (optional for teens and adult):

1. At the first paid lesson, **ask students and parent to complete the Practice Plan**, sign it, and bring it back next week, and to **choose a weekly goal** and fill it in on the Practice Chart on the return side.
2. Explain that students mark their practice daily on the Practice Chart.
3. At the next lesson, **Staple the Practice Chart** into the back of one of the books they use weekly.
4. **At the beginning of each lesson, check to see if they have met their goal.** If they have not completed the Practice Chart, **help them fill it in.**
5. If the student met their goal that week, have them put a sticker in the current dated column on the Practice Wall Chart.

Never say to the parents that the student is not practicing enough. Do your best to **make the lessons fun and engaging and explain the assignments thoroughly** so that the student wants to play at home and is able to do what is assigned.

If a student does not practice much, **find supplemental books that interest the student at the level the student can play** until they are able to progress more quickly. Remain encouraging and positive.

What students experience and gain from the lesson and the relationship they develop with you is the key that will help them eventually connect with the music so that they want to practice.

Communication Policies and Boundaries

- **Do not share your personal contact information with students and families**, including personal phone numbers, email addresses, social media profiles, or physical addresses. Similarly, we are committed to safeguarding your personal information and will not share it with any students or their families.
- **All communication between teachers and student families must be done through the “Client Comments” section of the student’s Opus1 portal.** Even if you know the student personally, please use Client Comments to communicate about anything related to the student’s lessons at Southern Oregon School of Music.

- You can discuss schedule changes with your students and families, but **all schedule changes must be confirmed and made by our office staff.**
- Do not negotiate tuition, refunds, credits, or scheduling matters with families. **Refer all scheduling, financial, or policy questions to the administrative team.**

Using Opus for Scheduling, Notes, and Communication

What is Opus1.io

Opus serves as our Music Studio Management Software, offering a comprehensive solution for scheduling, billing, and communication. It handles staff schedules, availabilities, locations, room assignments, time-off requests, and more all in one place. It also serves as an online "classroom" for students.

How Teachers Use Opus1

- View your lesson schedule daily
- Take attendance for each student in classes/lessons
- Write lesson notes for all students and classes in the client comments section of the student profile in Opus1
- Easily share files, videos, etc. uploaded directly for each student/class
- Parents are able to message teacher directly
- Request time off
- Confirm your availability in your profile and request any updates by email to .

Requesting and Using School Email

If you would like a SOSM email to keep Opus1 notification separate from your personal email, let the Office Manager know. If you have one, your Southern Oregon School of Music email is only to be used for communication with other SOSM staff. **To communicate with parents and students, ALWAYS use the client communication feature of Opus1.**

All messages sent via Southern Oregon School of Music' email domain, including personal emails, are deemed the property of the organization. Please be aware that there is no expectation of privacy concerning any content you create, save, send, or receive using

Southern Oregon School of Music' email domain. Monitoring of emails may take place without prior notification if deemed essential.

Professional Conduct and Workplace Expectations

Interaction with Students – Professional Boundaries and Supervision

- **Do not publicly share photos of students on social media or in any other way.** Some students' parents have asked that photos not be taken/posted. Our Marketing Specialist takes official photos and shares them on our social media pages. You are welcome to share those official photos posted on SOSM social media on your own social media pages and groups. If you want specific photos or videos of your students, please contact our Marketing Specialist to do the photography.
- **Maintain appropriate supervision of students at all times.** This includes remaining attentive and present during lessons, and releasing students under the age of 10 directly to their parents. Students should never be left unattended or allowed to roam the halls before or after lessons.
- **Teachers may not transport students in personal vehicles.**
- **Personal gifts from a student with an estimated value over \$25 are not to be accepted.** This guideline helps maintain clear professional boundaries and ensures that no gift creates a sense of obligation, favoritism, or inequity among students.

Personal Properties and Instruments at SOSM

Southern Oregon School of Music **cannot be held accountable for any loss or theft of personal belongings of our teachers as they are not covered by our insurance policy.** You are advised against bringing valuable items to the workplace unless absolutely necessary. You are never required to bring personal items to use for teaching. **If you feel you need additional instruments or equipment for your teaching, please let us know** so that we can evaluate the need and purchase it for you if necessary.

If you do keep instruments in your studio at Southern Oregon School of Music to use for your teaching, you must provide a written description of the instrument(s) including the brand, model # and serial # so that we can add it to our inventory under your name as a personally owned item. This allows us to keep track of the ownership of every item in the school.

Professional Appearance and Hygiene

In addition to our general employment guidelines for dress (see the employment handbook), in the small areas of our lesson rooms it is important to pay special attention to personal grooming and hygiene. Many people are allergic to colognes and perfumes. Please be mindful of strong body odors, colognes, and perfumes/lotions used prior to your class or lesson time.

Use of Personal Devices and Technology

- Personal calls, texting, or device use should not occur during lessons except in true emergencies.
- School computers and technology systems are to be used for school-related work only unless specifically authorized.
- Social Media and Public Platforms: **Staff are strictly prohibited from connecting with students who are minors on social media or any other social forum.** In addition, teachers are responsible to always uphold the reputation of Southern Oregon School of Music. Please use only appropriate language and text in any public forum, including your personal social media profiles.

Handling Student Absences and Makeups

If a student or parent contacts you to tell you that they will be absent, please let them know that to receive a makeup credit, they need to cancel their attendance online. Do not offer to do this for them. If they have difficulties, ask them to call the office at 541-226-2300 and we can walk them through it or do it for them if they have difficulties getting online.

If YOU cancel the lesson, it is your responsibility to schedule the makeup as soon as possible.

If the student canceled the lesson, it is their responsibility to initiate discussion with you about makeups for absences. If they do not speak to you about it, you are not responsible for initiating the makeup lesson. When they ask about a makeup lesson, look in their profile to see if they have a makeup credit. If they do, make every effort to find a time for a makeup. This may include adding 15 minutes to the beginning or end of a private lesson or arranging a time that is not on a day you normally teach. In this case, before you confirm a makeup time with a student, check with the office manager to see if there is a room available for the lesson.

Inclement Weather Closures and Cancellations

Southern Oregon School of Music generally remains open even if school districts are canceling classes. **If any teachers are unable to travel to Southern Oregon School of Music due to inclement weather, we will cancel that teacher's classes and lessons and will notify their students by email and/or text.** In this case, a makeup credit will be added to the student's account. If no teachers are able to get to their studio, we may at that time close completely.

Scheduling and Pay - Overview

(See Employee Manual for details)

- Teachers (with assistance from the Office Manager) are responsible for building required rest and meal breaks into their teaching schedules in accordance with Oregon law and school expectations.
- Teachers are paid for all scheduled lessons whether or not attended by the student. Makeup lessons are already compensated within scheduled teaching time and are not paid a second time.
- Teaching hours are recorded through Opus1 and form the basis for payroll reporting.

Requesting Time Off

We accommodate teacher time-off requests while also working to ensure that our students' lessons are consistent and uninterrupted as much as possible.

The best time to schedule activities and vacations is during school closures, included in the annual calendar.

"Blackout" Days Please check our annual calendar now and save the dates for Southern Oregon School of Music performances and events so that you do not request time off for these times.

Emergency Time Off If you must be absent due to illness or family emergency, communicate this **by submitting a time-off request in Opus and also putting a message in the Front Desk channel in Slack.** Let us know as soon as possible, preferably no later than 4 hours before your first lesson of the day.

To ensure that we do not get trial lessons booked during your absence, **look on your profile to see what your availability is and include all those available times on your time-off request, even if no lesson is scheduled at those times.** For example, if you currently only have lessons and classes scheduled from 2:15 p.m. – 4:30 pm., but your

availability is 1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. then you would need to request the hours of 1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

All time-off requests must be submitted through Opus1.io with ample notice, preferably 30 days and no less than 14 days in advance. Requests will be approved on a first-come, first-served basis.

In the notes with your time off request, you must **include an explanation of how your student's lessons will be covered during your time off**. This may include makeup lessons scheduled in advance of the absence or arrangements you have made with another teacher to serve as a substitute. *Note: if a student cancels a lesson with a substitute, any makeup lesson must also be scheduled with that substitute.*

- Makeup lessons must be scheduled to take place at SOSM and entered into Opus. Teachers may not make lesson arrangements with currently enrolled students outside the school.

Your time off request is not completely processed until these arrangements have been completed and put on the Opus1 calendar. It is the teacher's responsibility to be sure all lessons during your time off have been rescheduled by the week BEFORE you leave. **Double check your schedule the day before your absence to be sure you have no lessons scheduled while you are gone.**

- **Teachers must leave notes for their final lesson before their absence in Opus1 (which should be done anyway).** All substitute teachers must use these lesson notes to inform the makeup lesson and follow Southern Oregon School of Music curriculum and policies. Substitute teachers must leave detailed lesson notes in Opus1, and regular teachers should review substitute lesson notes and follow up the following teaching week.

Safety, Injuries, and Incident Reporting

Notify the Director or administrative staff immediately if a student is injured, becomes ill, or if any behavioral or safety concern arises. The office will provide guidance if documentation is needed for parent or administrative follow-up. Submit any requested written account to the administrative team as soon as possible.

As mandatory reporters, teachers follow the Recognize, Record, and Report process when concerns about Child Abuse arise (see Employment Manual). Provide any relevant written notes or records regarding a reportable concern to the Director for placement in a confidential administrative file.

Annual Review and Professional Development Meetings

Each teacher meets one-on-one with the Director once a year, usually during winter break in December. These meetings serve as an opportunity to connect one-on-one and to support your ongoing personal and professional development. We will discuss student progress and challenges, teaching methods, and ways in which we can support you in your teaching. This is also an opportunity for you to bring up any concerns you have or any suggestions you have for improvement in our music school.

Together we will discuss and evaluate your success as well as the challenges you experience and explore strategies for addressing concerns that arise.

Components of Teacher Success:

- Reliability and punctuality.
- Starting and ending classes and lessons on time.
- Warm, welcoming interactions with students and families.
- Team-oriented mindset and openness to feedback.
- Consistent communication and timely lesson notes in Opus1.
- Trial Lesson Conversion - Conversion from trial lessons to ongoing enrollment is one indicator of teaching effectiveness and connection with families.

70–80% conversion is considered strong; 60% or higher is considered healthy and acceptable. Rates may be lower for newer teachers and higher for more established teachers.

Trial Conversion is reviewed over time and is used as one of several indicators of teaching success to support professional growth and program excellence, not as a strict quota.

- Student Retention - Student retention is an important indicator of teaching effectiveness and the overall student experience.

85-90% annual retention is considered strong; 75-80% is considered healthy and acceptable. Rates may be lower for newer teachers and higher for more established

teachers. Rates may be lower for newer teachers who are building their studios and higher for more established teachers.

Retention is reviewed over time and considered alongside factors that are often beyond a teacher's control, such as family scheduling changes, student activity commitments, or other personal circumstances. It is used as one of several indicators of teaching success to support professional growth and program excellence, not as a strict quota.

- Evidence of Student Progression - Student progression should be visible through recital and performance readiness, advancement in repertoire level, confident participation in group classes or ensembles, and overall musical independence demonstrated in lessons and performances. Over time, most students should show clear growth in skill, confidence, and preparedness appropriate to their age, level, and consistency of practice. The Director may review lesson notes to see that progress is made through the curriculum.
- Regular completion of duties such as lesson notes, attending meetings, extra rehearsals for group performances, supporting students at performance and events, etc.
- Positive feedback from students and parents.

The ultimate purpose of these meetings is for us to work together to ensure that all of your students are progressing successfully and experiencing a learning environment that is consistent with Southern Oregon School of Music core values.

Southern Oregon School of Music Teacher Handbook

Acknowledgement of Receipt and Review

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to review the Southern Oregon School of Music Employee Handbook.

I understand that the handbook is available electronically through the School's team intranet at <https://soschoolofmusic.com/team>, and that I may request a paper copy at any time.

I acknowledge that I have read the handbook, understand its contents, and agree to comply with the policies and guidelines described in it.

I acknowledge that the Teacher Handbook is not a contract of employment and may undergo revisions. I commit to adhering to the guidelines outlined in this handbook, including any future updates or modifications.

Name (please print)_____

Signature_____

Date_____

Appendix 1

Practice Notes

Always include the name and level of the book when listing assignments.

Template

XX/XX/XXXX Lesson and Practice Notes

Focus this week: List one or two concepts to focus on

Scales/Warmups:

Playing Assignment: (include name and level of books)

Written Assignment: (include name and level of books)

Encouraging comment (change it up week to week)

Example

9/24/24 Lesson and Practice Notes

Focus for the Week:

Keep your fingers curved

Keep your eyes on the music

Playing Assignment:

Scales Skills Level 1 – p. 21 Finger Exercises

Piano Pronto Mvt 1 - #6 hands separately

Concert Song – Interstellar – Work on marked sections

End with a favorite piece

Written Work: Piano Theory p. 26-27

Great playing this week!

WEEKLY PRACTICE PLAN

Name: _____ Date: _____

Practice Goal: _____ minutes for _____ days each week.

1. Decide which days you will practice each week.
2. Decide what time you will practice on each of those days.
 - Practicing at the same time each day works best because that is easiest to remember!
 - Associating practice time with something that is already consistent in your family schedule like “Right after Dinner” also will help you remember.
3. Write in the times below – you can use the exact time (6:00 pm) or a description (“Right after Dinner”).

| | |
|-----------|-------------|
| Sunday | Time: _____ |
| Monday | Time: _____ |
| Tuesday | Time: _____ |
| Wednesday | Time: _____ |
| Thursday | Time: _____ |
| Friday | Time: _____ |
| Saturday | Time: _____ |

Be sure your schedule matches your practice goal above!

Student Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____

If you need to adjust your plan, ask your teacher for a new blank practice plan to complete.



**Southern Oregon
School of Music**

2025-26

PRACTICE RECORD

Practice Goal: ___ minutes for ___ days each week.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| September | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| October | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| November | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| December | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| January | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| February | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| March | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| April | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| May | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| June | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Great changes come from
small CONSISTENT Actions
over time...



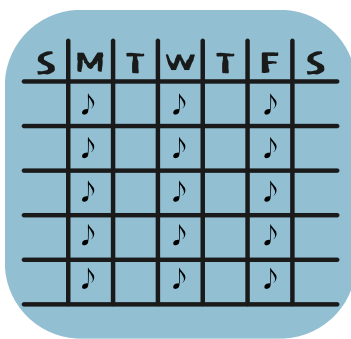
How long can you go without missing a single day of practice? Mark the days you practice & see how long you can go!

My longest practice streak this year: ___ days



**Southern Oregon
School of Music**

TIPS FOR AWESOME PRACTICING



| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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Practice Regularly

Consistency is KEY! By setting aside 15 or more minutes daily or even 3-4 times a week, you are bound to see great results. The more you practice, the faster you will progress!

Warm Up When You Begin

Like athletes, musicians need to warm up their muscles first. No one wants to jump in cold!

Work In Chunks

Breaking up challenging sections into more manageable chunks is a great way to learn pieces easier and with less anger and frustration.



Make Goals

Define clear, achievable goals every time you practice. Master a section, memorize a new scale, focus on correct technique. Setting goals gives your practice a direction and purpose, which aids in motivation.



Record Yourself

Taking a video of yourself practicing is a great method of self reflection and it's a great way to track your progress overtime.



Practice Mindfully

Try to avoid mindless repetition and instead focus on each note, rhythm and expression as you practice.



HELP Ask Your Teacher

Don't be afraid to ask your lessons teacher questions (that's what we're here for.)

Stay Patient

Be Positive

Don't get discouraged if you don't get something the first time. That's why we practice! Celebrate your successes and be patient with your troubles.



Repeat,
Repeat,
Repeat

Repetition is the best way to really nail a piece Don't just play it over and over though. Instead try to take it at different speeds (maybe with metronome), playing loudly/quietly, or legato/staccato to reduce monotony.

SUMMER PRACTICE CHALLENGE!

For each row completed over the Summer, you will receive a Bonus Sticker! Rows can be across, down or diagonal. 1st, 2nd & 3rd prizes will be awarded to those with the most squares completed!

B I N G O

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| Practice naming notes using flashcards or an app | Practice 3 days in a row (<i>minimum 15 minutes per day</i>) | Play a song on a public piano (<i>think music store, a Costco keyboard display, etc</i>) | Learn the melody line of a song by ear (<i>a favorite song, a movie theme, Happy Birthday, etc</i>) | Complete 1 entire Technique Unit (or memorize 2 Hanon exercises) |
| Listen to 3 pieces by Chopin <i>write the song titles on the back of this sheet</i> | Write a poem & compose a song to match the words <i>text or email it to me</i> | Teach a 15-30 minute piano lesson to a friend or family member | Complete 1 entire Theory Unit | Perform your last Recital piece by memory for a friend |
| Video yourself playing a song <i>text or email it to me</i> | Memorize 3 songs <i>write the song titles on the back of this sheet</i> | FREE SPACE | Practice 8 days in a row without missing a day (<i>minimum 15 minutes per day</i>) | Learn your favorite Disney or movie Song <i>write the title below:</i> |
| Record a composition you have created <i>text or email it to me</i> | Play a duet with a family member or friend | Listen to your favorite song on YouTube or Vimeo as a piano solo <i>write the title below:</i> | Play the first 10 songs in your first level of books | Perform at least 4 songs as a mini-Recital for your family and/or friends <i>write the song titles on the back of this sheet</i> |
| Play the most difficult 4-measure phrase in your current song 5 times without a mistake | Attend a live Concert outdoors (or on Zoom), or watch at least 30 min of a Symphony performance on YouTube | Find 5 music terms in your books that you don't know & look up what they mean <i>write the 5 terms on the back of this sheet</i> | Record a duet (either playing along with a recording of yourself, or a family member, or a friend) <i>text or email it to me</i> | Listen to 3 pieces by Beethoven <i>write the song titles on the back of this sheet</i> |

SUMMER PRACTICE CHALLENGE

For each row completed summer, you will receive a sticker on the wall chart! Rows can be across, down or diagonal. 1st, 2nd & 3rd prizes will be awarded at the end of summer to those with the most bingo stickers.

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| Play a scale three times | Record yourself playing | Practice 3+ days before your next lesson (minimum 15 minutes per day) | <i>Practice nonstop for ten minutes</i> | Practice a piece with a metronome |
| Sight-read a new piece | Practice 3+ days before your next lesson (minimum 15 minutes per day) | Watch a solo performer online. | Play a piece for a family member | Teach someone a song on your instrument. |
| Attend a live concert! | Clap the rhythms to your songs | FREE SPACE | Practice for three days in a row for at least 15 minutes each day | Play a challenging piece 5 times slowly |
| Practice 3+ days before your next lesson (minimum 15 minutes per day) | Practice a piece with expression & dynamics | Play a song that is an old favorite | Play two major scales. | Practice a new piece for 10 minutes |
| Improvise a piece of music | Play a duet with a friend or family member | Play a piece with your eyes closed | Practice a piece slowly | Play a piece for a friend |

Practice Tips Annual Schedule

For the newsletter and posting by the practice charts in the hallway!

January Practice Focus: Establish Your Practice Goal Fill Out Your SOSM Practice Planner to set your goal and practice schedule (it is on the back of your practice record chart).

- Set a realistic goal that you can meet – at least three days per week if possible. As a guideline, beginners should start with 20 minutes and add 10 minutes every time you advance to the next level book.
- Practice at the same time each day and attach it to a routine, like as soon as you get home or right after dinner.
- Put an alarm in your phone for each day of your (or your child's) practice plan.
- Consider requiring practice to be done before screen time or other favorite activity.
- Commit to requiring practice with no exceptions (for children or for yourself if you are the student). This may be challenging at first, but after a few faithful weeks with no exceptions, it will become a habit and will be much easier!

February Practice Focus: Daily Practice Routine

- Mark the day on your **Practice Record Chart**.
- **Print out & review the lesson notes** from your teacher (emailed to you each week).
- Complete some of your **written work** each day that you practice until it is finished.
- **Warm up** with scales or etudes if assigned or with a song that you know well.
- Play your **assigned songs**:
 - Be sure to highlight the fingerings and any other markings.
 - Play the entire piece slowly.
 - Play the most challenging 2-4 measures SLOWLY until you can play them correctly 4 times in a row.
 - Always end by playing the entire song slowly again all the way through without stopping.
- End by playing one of your **favorite pieces**.

March Practice Focus: Essential Equipment

- **Print Out Your Weekly Practice Assignment.** Place it where you can see it when you play. Complete everything in the assignment each time you practice.
- **Pencil and highlighter.** Think of musical scores as workbooks - write in fingerings, add sharps & flats, and highlight notes often played incorrectly.
- **Music dictionary.** Look up any words you don't understand.
- **Metronome.** Keep it sitting out on your piano. Set it slow enough that you can play your piece without any mistakes. Increase the speed just a little at a time. Keep it at that speed until you are making no mistakes and then increase it again. Do this until you reach the goal indicated on the music or set by your teacher. We recommend the Wittner MT50 Quartz metronome.

April Practice Focus: Shout it Out From the Kitchen! Parents, you can help your child practice by asking questions like these:

- Can I hear that again, but just with your right hand?
- What do you think you need to work on in that piece?
- That sounded difficult! Maybe start partway through and playing it slowly?
- Can I hear your very favorite piece?
- That middle section was beautiful! Can you play that again for me?

May Practice Focus: Family Concert Time! Create a family mini concert at home.

- Choose 3 or 4 of your favorite songs to play.
- If you are planning to play in our June SOSM concert, schedule your home concert for the last week in May and be sure to include your concert song.
- Invite grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends – anyone you would like to play for and that you have space for.
- Choose a theme and decorate the room.
- Dress up so that you feel special.
- Set up chairs for your family to sit like an audience.
- Plan a special dessert treat for after the concert.
- Have someone take pictures or video the concert and share it with your teacher!
- If you feel comfortable doing so, send them to email@soschoolofmusic so we can share them on our Facebook page!

June Practice Focus: Play for Fun! After the June concert, choose songs that are easy for you and just enjoy playing them. If you need a new book of easy songs that you like, check with your teacher for recommendations.

July: Create or Refresh a Special Practice Space

- Choose a space out of the main traffic flow, but open enough so the student doesn't feel alone.
- Decorate with the student's favorite theme.
- Invite the student to help move their instrument to the room and gather and organize everything they will need (more on this next month!)
- For more ideas on how to create a great practice space, visit [Creating a Practice Nest](#) online.

August Practice Focus: Essential Equipment

- **Printer to print out the Your Weekly Practice Notes from Your Teacher.** (They are sent to you by email.) Have a place to put it each week it where you can see it when you play.
- **Pencil and highlighter** to mark your music. Think of musical scores as workbooks - write in fingerings, add sharps & flats, and highlight notes often played incorrectly.
- **Music dictionary** for looking up any words you don't understand.
- **Metronome.** Keep it sitting out on your piano. We recommend the Wittner MT50 Quartz metronome. When you use it, set it slow enough that you can play your piece without any mistakes. Increase the speed just a little at a time. Keep it at that speed until you are making no mistakes and then increase it again. Do this until you reach the goal indicated on the music or set by your teacher.

September Practice Focus: Establish Your Practice Goal Fill Out Your SOSM Practice Planner to set your goal and practice schedule (it is on the back of your practice record chart).

- Set a realistic goal that you can meet – at least three days per week if possible. As a guideline, beginners should start with 20 minutes and add 10 minutes every time you advance to the next level book.
- Practice at the same time each day and attach it to a routine, like as soon as you get home or right after dinner.
- Put an alarm in your phone for each day of your (or your child's) practice plan.
- Consider requiring practice to be done before screen time or other favorite activity.
- Commit to requiring practice with no exceptions (for children or for yourself if you are the student). This may be challenging at first, but after a few faithful weeks with no exceptions, it will become a habit and will be much easier!

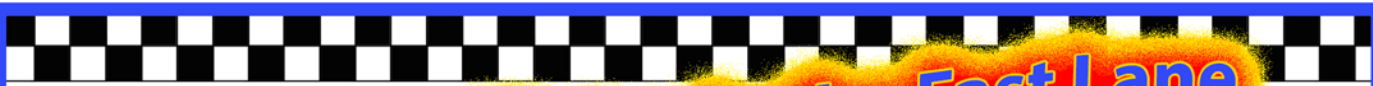
October Practice Focus: Daily Practice Routine

- Mark the day off on your **Practice Record Chart**.
- **Print out & review the lesson notes** from your teacher (emailed to you each week).
- Complete some of your **written work** each day that you practice until it is finished.
- **Warm up** with scales or etudes if assigned or with a song that you know well.
- Play your **assigned songs**:
 - Be sure to highlight the fingerings and any other markings.
 - Play the entire piece slowly.
 - Play the most challenging 2-4 measures SLOWLY until you can play them correctly 4 times in a row.
 - Always end by playing the entire song slowly again all the way through without stopping.
- End by playing one of your **favorite pieces**.

November Practice Focus: Shout it Out From the Kitchen! Parents, you can help your child practice by asking questions like these:

- Can I hear that again, but just with your right hand?
- What do you think you need to work on in that piece?
- That sounded difficult! Maybe start partway through and playing it slowly?
- Can I hear your very favorite piece?
- That middle section was beautiful! Can you play that again for me?

December Focus: Play for Fun! After the December concert, choose holiday songs that are easy for you and just enjoy playing them. If you need a new book of easy holiday songs that you like, check with your teacher for recommendations.



Notes in the Fast Lane



Name _____

Time _____ Score _____

Level 12

The first system of music consists of two staves. The treble clef staff contains a whole note on G4, a whole note on B4, and a whole note on D5. The bass clef staff contains a whole note on G3, a whole note on B3, and a whole note on D4.

The second system of music consists of two staves. The treble clef staff contains a whole note on B4, a whole note on D5, and a whole note on F5. The bass clef staff contains a whole note on B3, a whole note on D4, and a whole note on F4.

The third system of music consists of two staves. The treble clef staff contains a whole note on D5, a whole note on F5, and a whole note on A5. The bass clef staff contains a whole note on D4, a whole note on F4, and a whole note on A4.

The fourth system of music consists of two staves. The treble clef staff contains a whole note on F5, a whole note on A5, and a whole note on C6. The bass clef staff contains a whole note on F4, a whole note on A4, and a whole note on C5.