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Student Handbook

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Our Vision

Two Rivers Performing Arts School exists to develop young artists and elevate the Performing Arts in Jamestown, ND and the surrounding region.

Our Mission

Two Rivers Performing Arts School will provide excellent private and group instruction to individuals pursuing the performing arts, including (but not limited to) piano, voice, instrumental (guitar, strings, woodwinds and percussion), music theory and technology.

Welcome - A Word to Students

Welcome to Two Rivers Performing Arts School! You've begun a wonderful journey into musicianship and artistry that has the potential to deeply impact your life! There is little else that brings the kind of joy and fulfillment as does the ability to play a musical instrument, and we have devoted ourselves to help you get there! Research has shown that the music-making process, and the training that goes into it, has a profoundly positive affect on our thoughts, intellect and emotions. In fact, most highly successful individuals have music-making in common!

A word of warning, however! Developing musical skill does not come easily for most people. Sure, some people make it *look* easy, but that's what hundreds or even thousands of hours of practice will accomplish. And that's how much time some of our more advanced students at Two Rivers Performing Arts School have actually invested (5-8 hours of practice x 52 weeks x 5+ years)! Over the years we've learned that many students love the *idea* of playing an instrument, but are dismayed and discouraged when they discover how much *work* it is to actually gain a musical skill.

Practice makes the difference. Not just spending time "noodling around" on your instrument, but a disciplined, diligent effort to follow your teacher's instructions as closely as possible. In fact, the old saying, "practice makes perfect" simply isn't true. *Perfect* practice makes perfect. If you don't make the effort to practice the way your instructor directs, you probably won't make a whole lot of progress and will end up wasting a bunch of your time and (your parent's) money. So, practice *perfectly* - that's the secret our most successful students have discovered!

When you practice:

- ***Set goals for yourself.*** Don't try to master the whole assignment in a single practice session!
- ***Set aside a regular time, if at all possible.*** Following a consistent practice pattern will help you succeed at your goals.
- ***Find a good practice environment.*** A noisy room full of activity isn't the best place to try to practice. If you have a digital piano, headphones can help with this!
- ***Avoid distractions.*** Mastering an instrument requires a lot of work. Just accept this. Don't allow yourself to become distracted by things that will eat up your practice time.
- ***Remember: "Perfect Practice Makes Perfect!"*** Don't spend your practice time noodling around on your instrument, or practicing what you *can* play. *Practice what you can't play!*

Welcome - A Word to Parents

A common misconception is that parents have no part in their child's musical training - well, at least not aside from paying the bill. The truth is *you are your child's biggest cheerleader!* When they are at home practicing away, you can be a huge encouragement by heaping praise on their most meager efforts. When they are experiencing teary moments of discouragement (and they will), that's the perfect opportunity to give them a hug and perhaps even allow them to take a break. This means being aware of what their practice sounds like - the difference between "perfect practice" and "noodling" is fairly obvious. A parent's commitment to the learning process is just as important as the student's! Here are some things you can do to help:

- Sit in on a lesson. This is the greatest form of affirmation (and it's ok to use a device while you're there - chances are they won't even notice).
- Keep up with the weekly assignments. Students will inevitably spend practice time on songs or passages they have learned to play. While this is OK, it's far more important for them to practice *what they can't play*, so they continue to progress.
- Create the proper practice space in your home. Noisy siblings and technology seriously impede the learning process. Ideally, a student's practice space should be as silent as a library.
- Be sensitive to your student's frustration. A parent's demand that a child learn an instrument is rarely successful. If your child regularly resists practice and/or wastes their practice time, it's unlikely they will really learn - such motivation must come from within. In extreme cases we counsel parents to take a break from lessons, lest they risk teaching their child to hate the instrument (this is especially true with younger children). Many of our clients take seasonal breaks from instruction.
- Finally, *recognize the investment*. Music instruction isn't cheap. However, compared to many sports programs it's a bargain - and when sports end in the adult years, the artistry, musicianship, and self-discipline your child gains through private instruction will continue through a lifetime!

Two Rivers Performing Arts School Policies

Our policies exist to ensure that our students gain the best experience possible! Please make sure to familiarize yourself with these.

1. **Expectations** - We expect our students and parents to be devoted to the learning process. Private music instruction is not something that should be entered into lightly. Please make sure you understand the commitment involved. Otherwise it could prove to be a costly, fruitless (and perhaps even negative) experience. Before instruction begins, please make sure your student obtains a quality instrument to work with. As your instructor or director for help!
2. **Attendance** - We recognize absences are sometimes unavoidable! For this reason, students will be allowed three (3) excused absences during Winter-Spring trimester (January-May), three (3) excused absences during the Summer trimester (June-August), and three (3) excused absences during the Fall trimester. An excused absence is one in which the *instructor* (not the school) is notified of the absence by 12:00pm on the day of the lesson. An excused absence can be made-up, or credited towards the next month's tuition (make-up lessons are contingent on the instructor's availability and are not guaranteed). An unexcused absence is any absence beyond the number of allowed excused absences per semester or a "no-show" (when a student misses a lesson and the instructor is not notified). All unexcused absences will incur normal tuition charges.
3. **Time Off** - It is normal for students to take time off for vacations, seasonal sports, or simply to take a learning break. In such cases we ask that the school be given at least 30 days notice, if at all possible, in order to revise our studio schedule.
4. **Payment** - Tuition is \$30; for a 30-minute lesson, \$55 for a 60-minute lesson. Tuition and fees are due at the beginning of the month. Invoices are emailed at the beginning of the month and payment can be made by check, cash or by using the online option through Jackrabbit Music. *Accounts that are not paid in full by the 15th of the month will be charged an additional \$30 late fee.* A \$5 discount per lesson is applied for for an additional sibling, or an additional course of instruction. Only one type of discount per family may apply. Accounts that are not paid in full by the 30th of the month will not be eligible for any type of discount until the account is paid in full.
5. **Additional Considerations** -
 - a. Method books are purchased from Two Rivers Performing Arts School, and are an additional expense that will be charged to your account. You will be notified by the instructor when a purchase becomes necessary.
 - b. Make sure your child has a good, functional instrument to work with. It isn't necessary to spend thousands of dollars on a brand new, professional-level instrument. (In fact, it's probably better *not* to make such an investment until your child's progress is proven.) It is fairly easy to find quality used instruments for sale. However, you should include your instructor or the director to help guide the purchase process.
 - c. Two Rivers Performing Arts School is closed on Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Good Friday, Easter, and for two weeks over Christmas and New Years.. Inclement weather closings are communicated through email. Our calendar is based on a trimester system: Winter/Spring (January-May), Summer (June-August) and Fall (September-December).

Recitals

Recitals take place in March, June, October and December on Sundays at 3pm at the Jamestown Arts Center. All students enrolled at Two Rivers Performing Arts School are encouraged to participate in at least two recitals each calendar year, at the discretion of the instructor. Family and friends are encouraged to attend! Recitals usually last between 60-75 minutes and feature between 30-35 performers. While it is a friendly, encouraging environment, it is also formal and should be taken seriously. Recital attire should be semi-formal. Please avoid jeans, sneakers, T-shirts, and sports attire. It is common for girls to wear dresses and boys to wear dress slacks, button-down shirts and/or sweaters, and perhaps even a tie. Photography is allowed, but please be sensitive to the performers and the audience. Students should be adequately prepared for recital performances. While a mistake or two is not uncommon, we strive for excellence! Students performing at recitals must report by 2:45pm appropriately attired, and plan to attend the whole recital.

Overcoming Challenges

Our staff is here to help you overcome any challenges which may occasionally arise, be they practice issues, scheduling conflicts, or financial considerations. Please make it a point to communicate with us if you encounter a difficulty! We are here to help make your experience a positive one!

Miscellaneous

1. Performance Opportunities - Encourage your student to perform at church, school or family events. Sometimes our students are asked to play at local nursing homes or special community events. The more your child uses their skill, the more confidence they will gain!
2. Communication - Occasionally you will receive an email communication beyond the monthly invoice. Please make sure to read all email correspondence carefully, as it usually contains policy information or inclement weather notification.
3. Discipline Issues - Our instructors are expected to teach, not discipline, their students. If a student becomes unruly, uncooperative, or disrespectful the instructor may terminate the lesson immediately and notify the parent. Recurring or uncorrected behavioral issues will be reported to the director, who may request a conference with the parent, student and instructor.
4. Artistry - Our goal at Two Rivers Performing Arts School to help our students develop technical and artistic excellence, which only comes through an approach of systematic, consistent learning. Through their performance a true artist is able to capture the heart of the listener, which is what we want our students to accomplish as they gain knowledge and experience.
5. Personal Growth - Studies have repeatedly shown that music education is essential to a child's education, which is why the Classical education models which are becoming increasingly popular in the United States include music as part of its core curriculum. When you or your child are tempted to give up, please remember this long-term benefit!

Acknowledgement

“I (we) have read the Student Handbook and understand its contents.”

Parent/Guardian Signature(if applicable):

Signed: _____ Printed: _____

Signed: _____ Printed: _____

Student(s) Signature:

Signed: _____ Printed: _____

Signed: _____ Printed: _____

Signed: _____ Printed: _____

Today's Date: _____

(Please return this signed acknowledgement form to your instructor.)