

# Establishing an Effective Studio Policy

LMTA Convention IMTF Session, Patti Misita, NCTM

An effective policy should contain all the rules and regulations that pertain to your business. It should clearly state your teaching philosophy and what is important about learning in your studio. Outline what you expect of students, what you expect of parents and what they can expect from you. Include clear statements regarding tuition, attendance and other matters. A good policy is the foundation of your business and should be communicated and signed annually.

## Reflection of professional image

- Keep it simple and brief, well spaced.
- Choose an appropriate logo and spend time on formatting.
- Print on light colored, heavyweight paper.

## Core structure and integrity

- Keep your policy current and consistent.
- Include specifics regarding financial arrangements and operating procedures.

## Reflection of teaching philosophy

- Mission statements should include broader statements about your goals as a teacher.
- Philosophy statements should include more specific goals of your studio.

## Communication and enforcement

- Revise and send a copy of your policy at registration every year. Be sure parents acknowledge receipt of the policy by signature. Keep a current policy posted in the studio or on your website.
- When questions arise, clarify, do not apologize or justify.
- It is strongly suggested that you make few or no exceptions to your policy. When there are circumstances that warrant an approach that is not in accordance with your policy, be aware that exceptions will diminish the effectiveness of your policy both from a standpoint of fairness to all families and legally.

## Essential elements are the Terms and conditions of business

- Tuition and other financial arrangements (state number of lessons in term, how payment is to be made, studio fees, late fees, music billing, entry fees)
- Required materials
- Lesson length, type and duration
- Attendance policies, including make-ups, refunds, credits, cancellations

- Termination of lessons

### Optional elements include

- Participation in recitals, performance opportunities and studio events
- Conduct in the studio outside lesson time
- Parental involvement in the lesson and practice expectations
- Communication, logistical issues such as waiting area, parking, late pick-up
- Mission statement, curriculum, teaching philosophy, learning goals

### RESOURCE LIST

#### Articles

Thickstun, Karen. "A Matter of Policy," AMT Aug/Sept 2008

BooksBaker Jordan, Martha. Practical Piano Pedagogy. Warner Bros. Publications 2004

Websites [www.pianoeducation.org](http://www.pianoeducation.org) - Zeigler, John. "Preparing an Effective Studio Policy", "Piano Teaching Philosophies", "Dealing with Missed lessons" [www.serve.com/marbeth/business.html](http://www.serve.com/marbeth/business.html) - Martha Beth Lewis. business practices [www.toddfamily.com/policies/](http://www.toddfamily.com/policies/) - Sample Studio Policies [www.mtna.org](http://www.mtna.org) – Publications. Making the Connection, A Guide for Talking with Students and parents