



STUDIO POLICIES

2021/2022

WELCOME TO DESERT HOME MUSIC SCHOOL!

Welcome to music lessons! Desert Home's teachers are truly looking forward to your lessons, and we hope you are too! Please read this information carefully and make sure you talk to your teacher about any questions or concerns you may have about anything outlined here. We're always willing to discuss any of the content with you further just to make sure we're "on the same page." This all may sound pretty serious, but it's basically just a guideline to help things run more smoothly.

2021 – Slowly Getting Back to “Normal”

Last year was definitely one of those “watershed” moments in all our lives. Everything seemed to have changed, and we as educators had to change to react.

We moved all of our lessons have moved online, and I was so grateful for our distance students who trained me over the years in how to make online music lessons work, but boy, are we excited and anxious to get back to in-person lessons for our local students! We are now fully vaccinated and ready to start accepting in-studio lessons again (with masking and hand-washing and so on, but we certainly understand any of our students and their families preferring to stay online a little longer. Any time you wish to switch to or from online lessons, feel free to consult with your teacher, and we'll make it work!

Desert Home's Online Portal

After your first lesson (or even before), your teacher will send you a link to our student portal. You can access it through Desert Home's website: www.deserthomemusic.com. We have found that the online portal works best with the Chrome Browser, although other browsers will work as well.

- If you have difficulty logging in, the most likely reason is that your browser is blocking popups. If you think you've successfully logged in but the portal is not opening, try entering your information directly onto www.mymusicstaff.com.
- Once you have signed in, you will have access to notes from your teacher, supplemental learning materials (including copies of any individual pieces of music your teacher has given you, extra binder sheets, etc. You can also track your practice, pay your invoice, keep notes, and make changes to your schedule directly through the student portal.
- If you do not receive your login email within 24 hrs of your first lesson, double check first that your spam filter didn't “catch” our email – it happens sometimes! If it's not there, contact your teacher to remind them to send it!

Missed Lessons

Regular attendance is necessary to make good progress. When you schedule your lesson time, you are essentially “renting the studio” at that particular time, whether you actually choose to be there or not. **If you are unable to schedule a regular lesson time, you may purchase our “a la Carte” Lesson Package for optimum flexibility.**

If you have purchased the Introductory Package or our convenient Monthly Tuition package and you need to **miss one of your regularly scheduled lessons**, you may qualify for a makeup credit, provided that you have provided your teacher a minimum of **24 hours advance notice** of the lesson the student will not be attending. (Exceptions may be made for serious illness or family emergency.)

Occasionally, since our instructors are working professional musicians, our teachers will have to cancel a lesson. **If your teacher cancels a lesson**, that lesson will be made up at a mutually acceptable time or a credit issued.

Make Up Lessons

Desert Home Music will provide access to **make up lesson slots**. You will be able to log into our scheduling portal and choose any of the open slots that are available. Choose a slot and register yourself into it, using your makeup credits. We may also offer supplementary workshops which you may also use makeup credits to attend, if you have them.

- Makeup credits are **not interchangeable with regular lessons**, and cannot be “cashed in” for a lesson at your scheduled time. The best option is to find another lesson time in the week of the missed lesson.
- Missed makeup lessons **will not be rescheduled**.
- Of course, you may still phone us to reschedule your lesson for you, if you’re uncomfortable using the online portal.

Lateness

Desert Home Music School is getting busier, and our instructors’ schedules are quite full! Your lesson time is scheduled (or confirmed) during the registration process, and there is often a student booked to start their lesson immediately after yours. As such, if you are late for your lesson, that time may not be made up. Further, if a student is late by more than half of the scheduled lesson time, (eg: 30 min. late for an hour lesson) it will be considered to be a missed lesson, the missed time will not be made up, and the teacher may leave the studio. **If you are running late**, please try to contact your teacher to make sure he/she knows you’re still coming.

If your teacher is late for any reason, the time will be made up either at that lesson or by extending another lesson.

Sickness

Especially now, we must insist that **if you are (or your child is) ill, please stay home and get better**. You can, for any reason including illness, **switch to an online lesson** (just let us know) and still attend at your regular time, just as you’ve been doing during quarantine. If you don’t think you’re well enough for that week’s lesson, and you **give us 24 hours’ notice**, then of course you will get a makeup credit. **If you suddenly feel ill** with less than 24 hours’ notice, please contact us and a makeup credit may be offered (at your teacher’s discretion).

If your teacher is ill, they may offer an online lesson, an individual makeup, or extending other lessons to make up the time.

School Holidays & Weather Closures

We have tried to keep our calendar in sync with most of the local school districts, but please **double check your calendar to see if we're teaching on a school holiday.**

If you are unable to attend a lesson due to extreme weather, give your teacher as much notice as possible and in most circumstances, the lesson will be made up. If the student or parent does not give prior notice, the missed lesson will count as an absence and will not be made up.

Exception: If there is a prolonged severe weather event causing multiple day cancellations, the teacher cannot guarantee make-ups for all missed lessons or offer refunds.

Changing Your Lesson Day/Time Permanently

We know that sometimes schedules change, and **we will do our best to accommodate your request for a change of your lesson time/day.** However, our schedules are quite full and your time was reserved for you when you booked your lessons, just the same as all our other students. A consistent schedule is essential to progress, and placing value on your lessons by considering them as important as any other activity, instead of something that can "always be rescheduled if things change."

While we will try to work with you to find a new lesson time or day so that you or your child will be able to continue taking lessons, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to move your lesson to any time or day you choose, and if you are unable to attend the lessons you committed to, we are not responsible to offer refunds or makeups. **If we are not able to find an appropriate lesson time, we will begin the withdrawal procedure, until such time as we can find another option.**

Additional Lessons or Coachings

Auditions, school concerts or other performances, and exams often require extra work, and many students wish to take an extra lesson or two, so that they feel ready for the next challenge. Any student can log into our student or parent portal to access their schedule, and see any available lesson times that are coming up.

- You may use a make up lesson credit towards these extra lessons, if you have one.
- If you have purchased a package of lessons, your extra lesson will count as one of them.
- If you are paying monthly, your additional lessons will be billed at \$30/30min, \$35/45min, and \$40/60min. That additional charge will appear on your next monthly statement.

Withdrawing from Lessons

Of course we hope that no one will want to discontinue lessons, but we understand that priorities sometimes change and you may need to withdraw from lessons.

- If you have purchased one of our lesson packages, all you have to do is not purchase another one. We will endeavor to schedule the remainder of your lessons before your withdrawal date.
- If you are on a monthly payment schedule, **we require a month's notice of your intent to discontinue lessons.**
 - Please note that if we do not receive one full month's notice for discontinuation, we will require that month's lesson fees in lieu of notice.

Fees and Payment Schedule

Desert Home Music advocates weekly lessons for our students. In addition to providing the best chance for continuous progress, weekly lessons encourage a level of accountability and responsibility that is important not just for the developing musician, but for all of us. On rare occasions, and under special circumstances, we may accept an “every other week” student. If you intend to take lessons every other week, please inform us as soon as possible.

When we set up your lessons, we will discuss how long a lesson you should take – for example, the very youngest students may be best served in a 30 minute lesson, while older students with more repertoire will probably require a longer lesson.

We do not charge any registration fees or taxes, so your only other expense regarding lessons will be books/sheet music.

Payment Options:

Monthly Payments:

Monthly payments have two major advantages for our students. The first, of course, is convenience, and the second is that the hourly rate is the lowest we offer.

We have organized our calendar such that every student has at least 44 scheduled lesson days a year, paid in monthly installments year-round. **The amount you pay per month is the same regardless of the number of scheduled lessons that month.**

We accept payment in the form of postdated checks made out in your teacher’s name, or scheduled (recurring) Square, Stripe, or PayPal payments. The easiest and most secure way to do this is to register your credit or debit card on our Online Portal and authorize automatic payments. The website is secure and your payment information is safe!

Our monthly fees are:

- Weekly 30 minute lessons: \$120/mo
- Weekly 45 minute lessons: \$140/mo
- Weekly 60 minute lessons: \$160/mo

Lesson Packages:

Desert Home Music offers Lesson Packages for as few as 5 lessons at a time. We will provide you with an invoice for your package when we schedule your lessons and payment must be made on or before the first lesson of the package. *(Cash, Check, PayPal or Debit/Credit)*

Lesson packages are not refundable in the case of withdrawal – we will make every effort to complete the lessons in your package if you need to withdraw.

Materials:

Instrumental Students:

- Desert Home Music will provide a folder or binder with practice sheets, as well as stickers, worksheets, and other materials
- We will also give you a list of books and other materials you will require for your lessons, which you can purchase at a local music store or online.
- If you would rather not purchase these materials yourself, we will buy them and bill you for them separately. Payment for these materials must be received before use.

Vocal Students:

- Desert Home Music will provide a folder or binder with practice sheets, as well as stickers, worksheets, warm ups, and other materials.
- You are responsible to provide sheet music for all songs you want to work on. **Lyric/Chord sheets are not acceptable – you must provide actual sheet music.** You can purchase books at local music stores or online, and there are many online resources to purchase individual songs. (These resources include: onlinesheetmusic.com, sheetmusicdirect.com, and musicnotes.com.)
- Many voice students choose to have their teacher supply the sheet music instead.
 - We can buy them and bill you for them one at a time (usually about \$5/song)
 - We can add a \$25 charge to your first invoice, which we will use to purchase music for you. We keep track of the running total and if there is money remaining at the end of your agreement, we will either refund the money or roll it forward to the next term.

At Every Lesson

All students are responsible to **bring their folder/binder, all their music, books and worksheets to every lesson, as well as a pencil with an eraser.**

We try to keep extra copies of many of the songs and books we use, but generally speaking, if a student doesn't have their music with them, we will have to work on different material and the student's progress won't be as quick.

Communication:

We at Desert Home Music School are aware that we are in an age where communication is expected to be instantaneous, 24/7/365. However, our teachers are very busy teaching, performing, and improving their own art, and as such are not always available to communicate with their students (or their students' parents). We request your patience and respect for our teachers' time and privacy in the same way we respect yours.

- The **best time** to communicate with your teacher is during your lesson time. This is the time when the teacher is completely dedicated to you and your needs.
- **Emails** are the next best way to contact your teacher. If you have a complex request, put it in an email and your teacher will be able to respond at a convenient time for them to give your request their full attention.
- **Text Messages and phone calls** should only be used for urgent messages (you're running late, you have to cancel today's lesson due to an emergency, etc). Our teachers try to respond to these messages quickly, although their devices are usually turned off or muted during lessons.

Communication, continued**Your Teacher's Contact Information:**

Name: _____ Julia Pinckney Jones _____

Email: _____ jazzjpjq@gmail.com _____

Phone: _____ 503-841-9693 _____

A Word on Practice:

Practice is a very important part of your music education. As we usually only have one lesson per week to spend time together, most of the work has to be done on your own, at home, for progress to take place.

For children, just like schoolwork, parents are very much encouraged to take an active role in their child's learning: asking questions about what the student is doing in lessons, monitoring their practice (in an encouraging and nurturing way), and educating themselves so they can assist with practice time.

Please make sure practice areas are private and free of distractions (toys, tv, family members walking in and out), and it is important to establish a routine in regards to when and for how long these practice sessions are to take place. In fact, establishing the routine is much more important than the total number of minutes or hours a week spent in practicing. For kids, I usually recommend that practice time should be about 2x the child's age, every day (so a 7 year old would practice 14min/day) In addition, short practice sessions every day are better than the equivalent time all in one or two sessions. In the final analysis, though when I'm asked "how much time should I/my child spend practicing?" – I recently heard the very best answer ever.

"More than none."

Welcome to Desert Home Music!

Julia Pinckney Jones

Julia Pinckney Jones

Director and Instructor

Desert Home Music

Desert Home Music Studio Policies

Please fill this out and return it to your instructor at your first/next lesson.

DESERT HOME MUSIC POLICIES CONTRACT

2020/2021

I, _____, have read and understand all the above studio policies. I understand that I need to provide at least 24 hours' notice of a missed lesson in order to qualify for a makeup lesson.

I understand that I will be required to provide all music and books for my/my child's lessons: (check the option you prefer)

Directly (the teacher will provide a list and I will purchase the materials)

Through a \$25 book fee added to my first invoice

By reimbursing each individual purchase (the teacher will provide an invoice)

I also understand (check the option which applies):

I need to give one full month's notice in the event that I want to discontinue lessons, and that if I do not do this, I will be required to pay for one extra month in lieu of notice. (For monthly payment option.)

If I choose to discontinue lessons before the end of my paid package, the remainder of the package is not refundable, and every reasonable effort will be made to complete the lessons in the package before I withdraw. (For package payment option.)

Student (or Parent) Signature

Date