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LANGUAGE TEACHING POLICY AND AGREEMENT - 2022-2023

Maddie Meier
-B.M. in Vocal Performance
-B.A. in German with a minor in French

Philosophy

I provide a holistic learning experience, in which each student receives an individualized education in piano, voice, violin, or language instruction that is specific to their talents, goals, and needs. These tailor-made lessons provide students with the opportunity to receive one-on-one attention from an instructor who values them both as individuals and as budding artists. Both music instruction and language learning allow students to cultivate empathy, communication skills, higher expression, and self-awareness. These crucial developmental skills require that students are allowed to make mistakes and are encouraged to learn from them, which can only occur in a safe, non-judgmental, learning environment. I place inclusivity at the forefront of my teaching and see great importance in providing all students with equal opportunities.

Language Lessons (German and French): Learning a language, at any age, helps us in developing our empathy further through the examination and deepening of our connections to cultures outside of our own. Other cognitive benefits of language learning include:

- increased attention span
- enhancement of critical thinking skills
- improved ability to multitask
- boosts in self-confidence
- improvement of memory function
- strengthening of decision-making skills
- improvement of first-language skills
- stronger creative and flexible thinking

Language learning has also been shown to enhance student standardized test scores, reading achievement and academic performance at the college level. It opens up doors to many different opportunities when it comes to school and careers. I hope that through my language teaching, I may be able to expose my students to various new modes of thinking as they observe and interact with the world around them. I strive to expose students not only to the intricacies of the given language, but to its accompanying culture as well, as this is paramount when it comes to igniting curiosity and passion during the learning process. Depending on the level of the student, I will speak mostly or solely in the language of choice (of course if a concept needs to be explained in English, I will revert back). Some of the topics I will cover include, verb conjugations, new vocabulary, nuances within the language, common phrases, pronunciation, reading skills, writing skills, and auditory skills. Students will be assigned reading, writing, listening and speaking homework.

Here is how a typical language lesson might go: We would begin by recapping on subjects learned in the previous lesson. We would also review the week's assignment(s) (given in accordance to the student's needs and schedule outside of our lessons). What was challenging? What did the student have an easier time with? Depending on the level of the

student, this part of the lesson could all be done in the given language. After reviewing the homework we would dive more deeply into the subject areas that the student is finding challenging. After this, and depending on what the student needs, we would then move on to new material, assigned according to the student's ability. New material could include new vocabulary, new verb conjugations, new reading comprehension or listening exercises, etc. Then according to what the student has learned for the day, (a) new assignment(s) would be given for the upcoming week. The student at the end, would then be asked to recap in their own words, what new concepts they have learned in the lesson.

Scheduling

We will work with parents and students to find a regular weekly lesson time. For the 2022-2023 school year, I will teach my lessons on Thursday evenings between 4:00 PM and 9:00 PM. Parents and students should contact my manager (Garb), for scheduling inquiries. Her email is garb@garbmgmt.com and her phone number is (513) 454-6899. She will be the main contact for all concerns regarding scheduling. Parents and students are also able to book lessons through my website (maddiemeiermusic.com). There will be no lessons during the following holidays and vacation periods:

2022-2023:

- Indigenous Peoples' Day (October 10th, 2022)
- Thanksgiving Break (November 21st - 25th, 2022)
- Winter Break (December 9th, 2022- January 2nd, 2023)
- Martin Luther King Day (January, 16th, 2023)
- President's Day (February, 20th, 2023)
- Spring Break (April 7th, 2023 - April 14th, 2023)

If a student's lesson falls on a holiday, a make-up lesson date and time will be offered.

I am also unavailable to teach due to prior conflicts on the following dates. If any other conflicts arise during the school year, my manager or I will reach out to parents and stu-

dents ASAP and we will work to reschedule. If your lesson falls on any of these dates, my manager & I will work with you to reschedule a make-up lesson.

2022-2023

- October 20th, 2022
- November 15th, 2022
- November 17th, 2022
- November 29th, 2022
- January 17th, 2023
- January 19th, 2023
- February 21st, 2023
- February 23rd, 2023
- March 21st, 2023
- March 23rd, 2023
- April 18th, 2023
- April 20th, 2023
- May 23rd, 2023

Fall semester runs from September 20th, 2022 - December 9th, 2022.

Spring Semester runs from January 3rd, 2023 - June 22nd, 2023.

Limited Summer Lessons will be available in 2023 (dates TBD).

Expectations

I expect that my students come with a positive attitude and an open mind when it comes to trying out concepts and receiving new ideas. I am also open to new ideas that the student might have. :-)

Please bring the following to each language lesson:

- Any notes and assignments that the student is working on. Notes can be taken on paper (highly recommended), on a laptop, or a tablet (permitting that the student does not become distracted).
- Any language workbooks or textbooks that the student is currently working out of. They will be assigned once the student's level is assessed after the first couple of lessons.
- A pencil or pen
- A recording device (your phone is fine for this one). The recording is good to reference if the student needs to listen back and review any new concepts, and it can also be extremely helpful to the student when they learn new phrases and pronunciation.
- As a result of COVID-19, students will now be expected to have technology required for virtual lessons. In general, the microphone and camera connected to devices such as computers, phones, laptops and tablets are sufficient enough.

Practice

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.” - Helen Keller

Students are encouraged to do a little bit of practice in the language each day, as with any new acquired skill, language learning requires consistent work and goal setting. I suggest that students practice the language at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week, in order to see growth in their skills. While schedules are busy, I encourage that my stu-

dents find a consistent time to practice every day. This practicing can be very fun, and doesn't have to include just doing the assigned work. Revisiting children's books in the language, listening to music or podcasts in the given language, and watching movies in the language can also be a great use of time. You can learn so much through immersing yourself in these things! Please talk to me about setting up a language practice schedule. I can also give you great suggestions when it comes to movies, music and books that you can watch, listen to and read.

The First Lesson

For your first lesson, make sure you bring your water bottle and recording device. I also ask that you bring notes or textbooks that you may already have (if you have previous experience learning the language). I will begin the first lesson by asking you questions that cover your contact information, your previous language experience, and topics and themes that draw you to the culture and language. Why are you learning it? I will then do a short placement evaluation with you, just to see where you are at with the language. I will assess reading comprehension, auditory comprehension, speaking ability and writing ability. From there, the student and I will brainstorm possible future materials and talk about our goals with the language. This is a no pressure situation! I just want to see where you are at so I can provide you with an optimal learning experience! :-)

Attendance and Cancellation

Regular attendance is essential for the student's growth and development in their given area of study. That being said, life happens and conflicts do naturally arise. All lessons can be scheduled through the Acuity through a downloadable smartphone app or online. Here is the link to get to my scheduling site: <https://MaddieMeierMusic.as.me/>. You can also schedule through the "booking" page on my website: maddiemeiermusic.com.

Missed Lessons: Lessons cancelled with more than 24 hours notice are noted as excused absences. My manager and I will do our best to accommodate make-ups as the schedule allows, as no refunds or discounts are offered. If the make-up lesson is not scheduled within 1 month of the missed lesson, students will simply miss the benefit of that lesson and refunds or discounts to tuition will not be offered. Only two excused absences will be accepted per semester. Lessons cancelled with less than 24 hours notice are considered unexcused absences. You are required to pay the cancellation fee, which is the cost of the missed lesson. These lessons cannot be rescheduled. If a student has more than three unexcused absences in a semester, I reserve the right to release them from their studies with me.

Inclement Weather: If cancellation occurs due to inclement weather, an additional make-up lesson will be offered.

Lateness: Please let me know via text or call (+1 (732-835-2130) if you are going to be late for the lesson. All other correspondence regarding scheduling, questions or concerns should be through my manager Garb (+1 (513) 454-6899) or garb@garbmgmt.com. I will be unable to extend the lesson time past what was originally planned if the students are late.

Make-up lessons will be offered if I must cancel our lesson in advance or due to an emergency.

Tuition

Tuition is paid on a monthly basis: \$35.00 for a 30 minute lesson, \$45.00 for a 45 minute lesson, \$55.00 for a 60 minute lesson. Payment is expected by the first lesson of each month. If the monthly balance is not resolved by this deadline, a late fee of \$5 per late week will be incurred. I offer a 50% discount (you pay \$18.00 total) for an individual, thirty minute, trial lesson in any of my given areas of teaching expertise. All payments must be made through the Acuity app, which can be downloaded to any smart phone. They can

also be made through my website: maddiemeiermusic.com. Please reach out to my manager Garb, if any questions arise: garb@garbmgmt.com. I believe that students should have the opportunity to see if my teaching is fitting for their style of learning before officially signing up for a month's-worth of lessons.

	Cost per month
30-Minute Private Lessons	\$140
45-Minute Private Lessons	\$180
60-Minute Private Lessons	\$220

Discontinuing Lessons

If a parent and student should decide to discontinue lessons, please notify me in writing at least one month in advance, so plans can be made. Parents/students are required to pay the necessary, remaining amount of tuition during their last month of lessons.

Field Trips

Field Trips: Students of the given language will be able to take full-immersion, cultural field trips with one another in order to practice the language and build up camaraderie with fellow students. Some of these field trips might include visits to plays in the language, eating at authentic restaurants, visits to art museums, visits to film festivals (to see movies in the given language), visits to bookstores, etc.

Additional Cultural Opportunities: Students of language will be able to engage in enriching cultural activities, i.e. conversation tables, giving presentations to fellow students, movie nights in the given language, book clubs in the language, and many other fun ac-

tivities through which the students can speak and engage with one another in the given language.

COVID-19: In the time of COVID-19, some of these cultural activities will be replaced with virtual Zoom sessions, and some will be held with the proper safety precautions in-person. The students will still be able to meet with one another, speaking in the language and participating in the given activity, whether that be a book club, giving a presentation, or conversing about any cultural topic, in addition to deeply immersing themselves in the culture of the given language.

Communication and Parent Participation

Communication with me is best handled via email (mmeier@maddiemeiermusic.com). Texts or emails to my manager, Garb (garb@garbmgmt.com, +1 (513) 454-6899) are also welcome. Please introduce yourself if you are reaching out to my manager via text message. Parents are encouraged to be supportive and active participants in their child's study and practice sessions. Emails to me are welcome any time during the week regarding homework or study questions or concerts. I cannot guarantee a quick response on weekends, but I will get back ASAP. Outside of this, all scheduling inquiries and concerns should be directed to my manager. Because of my schedule this year, this ensures that you receive a timely and more reliable response. Please only text or call me if you need something right away. Examples can be early arrival to a lesson or lateness to a lesson. My goal is that these lessons can be the best experience for students and in order to guarantee this, I have implemented this new system of communication.

COVID-19

Due to the unprecedented circumstances that we are currently living through, lessons are currently being offered online via Zoom or with necessary safety precautions in-person. In-person lessons are held at my private studio, in Plainsboro, NJ. Masks are currently

optional, although strongly recommended in the studio. All persons present at the in-person lesson will be required to fill out a COVID Screening Questionnaire 24 hours in advance of their visit to my studio. This will be sent to you in an email confirming your lesson. Before starting in-person lessons, students/parents of students are required to sign a release and liability waiver.

While it is still preferable to meet in-person for more specific instruction, virtual lessons have also still proven effective in advancing technique and musical understanding, while still providing the student with a holistic learning experience. Students will also be able to record their Zoom sessions, so that they can hear and see themselves on camera. Students will be required to have the technology required for these lessons (webcam, microphone, computer set-up, mobile device set-up, or tablet set-up). I suggest that students start the lesson set-up at least 15 minutes in advance, just in case there are technical difficulties, so as not to waste time. I know these are challenging times, but we will get through them and emerge, stronger, kinder, better and wiser. :-)

Signatures

The undersigned further expressly agrees that this agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by the laws of the state and that if any portion thereof is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect. By signing below, the student and his/her guardian state that they have read and fully understand and agree to the policies outlined in this document. Furthermore, the student and his/her guardian agree to abide by all policies, including those specifically related to payment and cancellation. I represent and warrant that I am full of age, competent to sign this release and have the right to enter into this agreement on behalf of the minor student(s), for whom I am a legal guardian, and myself. You MUST be the Parent or Legal Guardian to sign for a minor (under age 18).

Student Signature (if applicable)

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Madeline Meier

Date

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Contact Information

Email

Phone number