

Studio Policies

DREAAM Studio Policies

Daphne Rinkus: Education, Advocacy, Art & Music

Fall 2024

Welcome to my studio and the Empowered Music family - I am so happy you are here and daring to "DREAAM" big! I am honored to have your trust as a student and thrilled that you are nurturing your love for music. I can't wait to make beautiful music and memories together.

Introduction

First and foremost, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks for choosing my studio. I'm excited to help you grow in both your musicianship and confidence! My dream has always been to turn my passions into a lifelong career, thanks to my wonderful students, I am able to.

As a partial introduction to myself, I am a queer affirming and neurodivergent friendly instructor who advocates for destigmatizing conversations around mental health, disability awareness, minority rights, and accessibility. I affirm to every student that they matter and in case no one told you today: *YOU MATTER!*

Whether you are learning voice or piano, I know your love for music and learning will go beyond my classroom. Music follows us through our whole lives - It's therapeutic, artistic, technical, and entertaining. Music unites cultures, creativity, and connection; not only assisting us in self expression, but allows us to join into a global community. In a divisive world, music helps the world to view humanity with a lens of love.

Personal Philosophy

I have a multitude of goals and philosophies I nurture while teaching. It is important to me (as an educator) to share with you (as a student or guardian) to be aware of some of the things I hold most dear:

1. Hold a safe space for every person regardless of background, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, disability (visible or invisible), or age. Everyone deserves to be met with empathy, respect and dignity.
2. Nourish our student-teacher relationship with a foundation of trust, support and understanding. I find it is important as an educator to also be a kind friend and mentor (trusted adult).

3. Build students confidence by creating an encouraging, flexible, and sensitive environment. I recognize, on a personal level, the individuality of every learning pace and journey.
4. Accommodate learning styles to best help students retain information, practice efficiently and make adjustments during lessons. I continually experiment with new teaching techniques to find what is best suited for personalized instruction.
5. Encourage student (and guardian) feedback and communication. I welcome constructive input and appreciate open conversation about how to curate the best possible experience.
6. Promote helpful professional connections and additional outside resources (if necessary and requested by student or guardian). Empowered Music has affiliations with multiple organizations that can be wonderful resources outside of our building. We are all in this together!
7. Continually educate myself as a teacher, artist, advocate, musician and person.

Lesson Preparedness

Practice is *essential* to improvement. In order to get the most out of your educational experience, it is best to apply what we learn in lessons then implement it into daily practice. The goal with practice is never perfection, only progress.

While accountability is important, I am not a rigid instructor. I encourage making a routine that works best for *you*! Life can be chaotic, sometimes not allowing us intentional time to sit down and work on material. Everyone's lives, brains and schedules work differently - the goal is to GROW and be proud of the work we put into our craft. In order to obtain more lesson material, I must be able to see progress and have indicators that it's time to take on another challenge!

Student Checklist

Please refer below to the student check-list, these are the required materials to bring each lesson. This will help us have productive and meaningful instruction time! Missing these supplies may hinder our ability to have a quality lesson.

I do my best to give the tools and organization skills for everyone to feel at the utmost preparedness for learning (and having fun). If you are having trouble obtaining anything from this list, please speak to me privately so I am able to best help.

Required Materials

- ☐ 1 - 1 ½ inch binder
- ☐ Dividers with the following sections:

Section (Label)	Contents (Provided)
Current Repertoire	Current musical projects including sheet music and lead sheets
Previous Music	Completed and well practiced songs
Sight Reading & Theory	Worksheets, Solfege, Music Theory
Resources	Visual Examples, Articles, Instructor Advice, Printed Educational Documents
Practice Notes	Questions, Practice Log, Checklists, Lined Paper

- ☐ Pencil
- ☐ Highlighter
- ☐ Water Bottle
- ☐ Open Mind & Heart

Other helpful materials (not required, encouraged)

- ☐ Recording Device
I commonly use the “Voice Memos” for audio recording on my phone. Recording warm-ups, note learning, rhythm practice, and other music practice will aid comprehension.

***Important Disclosure: Unless the student has a specific request where music would not be able to be reused for a future student, music and educational resources used will be provided.

Scheduling

I teach weekly lessons Monday - Wednesday and begin lessons, no earlier than 12pm.

Each student will have an established time slot for their lesson that we determine / agree upon. During inquiries and consultation we will establish the length of the lesson that best suits your needs: 30, 45, or 60 minutes.

Changing Lesson Time

If the student or guardian requests to have a time or day change, unfortunately, *there is no guarantee I will be able to move the designated day and time*. I will always do my best to be accommodating to schedules; however, due to high volume and demand of lessons, once our time is solidified, it can be difficult to make adjustments.

Please let me know well in advance if a student requires a time change - if we cannot find a placement immediately, please exercise patience and I will do my best to accommodate your needs.

Accepting New Students

While I would love to accept every student into my studio, it would be impossible (or a miracle) to fit everyone in my schedule. I only teach the amount of students I am fully confident I can handle, providing consistent quality instruction.

Burnout is a very real issue in today's world - I recognize an overload of work would hinder the quality of my instruction, so I take on what I can comfortably handle (for my own sake and yours)!

Cancellations & Planned Absences

Let's be real - life happens and sometimes we need a break! Cancellations and vacations are inevitable parts of life, so let's talk about what would happen in each scenario with both Instructor and Student.

Instructor

I will always provide *as much notice as possible* for a cancellation. Please understand rare exceptions such as emergencies, sudden sickness, or an unprecedented circumstance. In the event I need to cancel, I will also inform the studio owner (Dani Fiore), as a precaution if there happens to be any lapse in communication. Sudden cancellation may happen via email, but most often will be communicated over text. Oftentimes, I will send both to prevent missed messages.

In these scenarios, I offer the option to either schedule a makeup lesson or be prorated tuition the upcoming month. I will *always* ensure that either lesson time is fulfilled OR money is refunded at the choice of the student (or guardian).

For my vacations or planned time off - I will provide a months notice and a reminder of my time off. That months tuition will then be prorated.

Student

You may refer also to the Empowered Music Tuition and Scheduling Policy

Once a lesson time is agreed upon, I set aside that time for that student each week. I will be present at the studio and prepared with materials for each lesson. The student is responsible for paying for that time slot each week, even if they are unable to attend the lesson.

If I am notified of a lengthy planned absence or vacation, with a month in advance, I may be able to prorate your tuition.* If a lesson is canceled with less than a 24 hour notice, the student must forfeit the lesson and no make-up can be accommodated. If a weeks notice is provided, I will always do my best to schedule make-up on my designated teaching days from Monday - Wednesday. However, if we are unable to find a makeup time, the student remains responsible to pay for their lesson spot.

Terminating Lessons

You may refer also to the Empowered Music Discontinuing Lessons Policy

If you need to discontinue lessons or take a break of longer than two weeks, please give a minimum 30 days notice. This gives me time to plan for changes, and make your slot available to other students.

**Important: If 30 days (months) notice is not given, you may be charged for the following month's full tuition.*

I reserve the right to terminate lessons for *any* reasonable grounds. Including but not limited to: late or missing payments, underpayment, or issues related to maintaining a safe, pleasant, productive and nurturing environment.

Sickness Policy

Safety and health of both students and myself is of utmost importance to me. In the music world, sickness spreads quickly.

With private instruction, we will be in close proximity to each other, in a fairly small room, using materials all students (and myself) will come into contact with. I sanitize the studio at the end of the day to prevent any possible contamination or transfer of sickness.

For the sake of everyone's health, I ask students to refrain from attendance if they are sick or suspected ill. As an accessible and accommodating studio, we have many people with autoimmune diseases coming in and out our doors. To remain a safe environment for others, please be cautious of the following:

- Do not come into lessons if sick or suspected ill.
Singers: Do *NOT* attempt to practice while sick, this could damage your vocal cords permanently. It is dangerous and not worth potentially harming your instrument. Always communicate to me if something hurts or feels "off" with your voice.
- If you were in close contact with COVID please get tested before returning to lessons
- If I find tangible (evidential) reason or serious suspicion of a student hiding sickness, I may make a decision to not continue with lesson time. The remainder of the lesson must be forfeited.

If you are suffering from a long term illness, diagnosis or injury - Please communicate with me and we can make a plan moving forward!

Student Opportunities

Empowered offers a variety of performance and experience opportunities including (but not limited to) open mics, musical workshops, festivals, cabarets, and community events. Be sure to follow us on social media and sign up for updates on our website so you don't miss a thing!

Performance

Empowered has a variety of musical events to showcase talent and give opportunities to practice being in front of an audience. I also will provide unique studio experiences to do the same. While most events are free, depending on the experience, there may be a fee for participation. This helps the studio to run events and give meaningful experiences to students: this will help to cover quality accompanists, equipment, event space and other fees associated with organizing the event.

I will host an ***Annual Spring Recital*** for both vocal and piano studios. While this is not a requirement, it is welcomed for every student to join. We will choose from the repertoire we worked on in lessons and find music that will best highlight what objectives we covered in instruction.

Event organizational information and dates will be sent to guardians as soon as possible to give adequate time for planning.

Experience

Teaching in one-on-one instruction is a wonderful way for me to give students resources and examples of excellent musicianship. Additionally, I believe that experience outside of the classroom is equally as nourishing to a student's education.

Field trips, studio masterclasses, and other experiences (with guardian permission) will be offered over the course of the year to grow deeper understanding and create meaningful memories with other musicians.

Payment & Tuition

Tuition is due the *first week of the month*. While occasionally the student or instructor is absent the first week, it is still required to pay full tuition by the **5th** of each month. If you prefer to pay with check or cash, there is a dropbox at the front of the studio for your convenience.

In a 5 week month with five lessons, the student has an option of paying a higher tuition for the additional lesson or paying for 4 lessons and taking a week off. If there is need for an approved make-up lesson, please communicate with the instructor and you may utilize the fifth week for this purpose.

Lesson Length	4 week	5 week
30 minutes	\$145	\$180
45 minutes	\$210	\$260
60 minutes	\$280	\$350

Late Fees

If full tuition is not paid in full by the 5th of the month, a 2% daily late fee will be applied.

Agreement

I agree and accept all policies and conditions detailed above.

Written Name

_____ Date _____

Student Name (leave blank if the same)

_____ Date _____

Signature

_____ Date _____

Thank you so much for your time and intentionality of reviewing my policies as you join the Empowered Music family! I am excited to begin and look forward to our journey together!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Daphne Rinkus". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'D' and a long, sweeping underline.

Daphne Rinkus