

# Perry Music Studio

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## A-B-C Back to *Business* Basics Hand Out

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## Congratulations—You're an Entrepreneur !

The skills necessary to operate a business include:

- Accounting
- Advertising
- Billing
- Communication, possibly in a second language
- Filing
- Promotion
- Social (People) Skills
- Technology

### Communication

In all communication from you, make sure your chosen language is absolutely grammatically correct. If in doubt, ask a colleague look over your work or submit it to an AI engine.

### Written Policies

Of all the documents a music studio should have, the Studio Policy is the most important. It will outline:

- mission statement and your core values regarding music lessons,
- your expectations of students and families
- your fee and payment structure, including missed lessons, cancelation, vacations, etc.

The BCRMTA Website has a useful checklist for what to include in your Studio Policy:

<https://bcrmta.bc.ca/professional-conduct-guidelines/>

This site from Musician and Company has some resources for studio policies:

<https://musicianandcompany.com/resources/p/studio-policies>

As well, you can check out Rebekah Maxner's website which is full of hints for piano teachers:

<https://rebekah.maxner.ca/printables/#administration>

Finally, the U.K. Musician's Union has a great contract template:

<https://musiciansunion.org.uk/working-performing/music-teaching/teaching-contracts>



## Email etiquette

As a businessperson, you will be required to write emails. Emails are letters: not only should they be well written according to business standards, but they should be read by you when they come in. The rule for email turnaround is two business days. Things to remember:

- Use an appropriate your subject line.
- Use a salutation.
- Sign your name at the end.
- Write separate emails per subject or issue.
- Try to avoid requiring your recipient to open attachments.
- Consider accessibility when choosing font style and size.
- Standard etiquette suggests the turnaround time for email communications should be no longer than two days.
- Acknowledge receipt of the email.
- If your recipient isn't used to email but usually texts, consider sending them a text message letting them know you have sent them an email that needs attention.



For more information on email etiquette, go to: <https://www.mailmodo.com/guides/email-etiquette/>

## Text etiquette

- Identify yourself.
- Keep it short.
- Use for casual information exchange.

For more information on response time expectations, go to:

<https://blog.htc.ca/2022/05/18/response-time-expectations-in-the-internet-age-how-long-is-too-long/>

## Phone etiquette

- Remember that phone calls are an imposition.
- Keep calls short and to the point.
- Consider texting before calling to make sure you are calling at a good time.
- Always identify yourself.
- Answer a call professionally
- Outgoing automatic messages should be short and professional
- It doesn't make our studio sound professional to have your children answering your studio phone calls



## Social media etiquette

- Posts on your professional site should be all about your music teaching/studio business
- Keep your site up to date
- Stay up to date on policies pertaining to your social media platform.
- IMPORTANT: Don't use your personal account as a professional or business account.

## Fees

- Contact your peers
- Visit other music teacher websites for their rates
- Visit music stores and/or commercial studios and inquire about fees

## Payment Schedule

- Monthly per month.
- Monthly pro-rated.

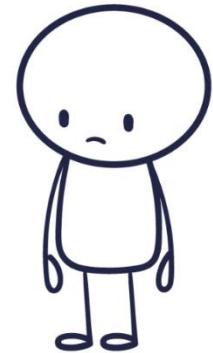
Lessons per year	Fee per lesson	Total for Year	Total per month
36	\$65	\$2340	\$234

- Per term
- Per year
- Post-dated cheques
- E-transfer



## Dealing with problems

- Remember to behave with the utmost of civility and put the issue outside your feelings.
- Avoid “you” statements or accusations of unfairness. Sentences like: “As I understand it, there is a concern that I have charged you unfairly? Is that correct?” can help lower the heat.
- We all want to be heard, so statements like, “I understand” or “I hear your concern” will go a long way to diffusing the situation.
- Try to see if there is a compromise, i.e. online lessons, or summer lessons, using a portion as a registration fee. Flexibility on your part is good, as long as you don’t feel you are being bullied by the parent.
- Sometimes it is in your best interest to let it go.



## Odds and Ends



Studio organizing apps:

My Music Staff: <https://www.mymusicstaff.com>

Invoice2go <https://invoice.2go.com>

- Pre-registration
- Payment deposit

## Taxes

Make sure you track:

- Income per student.
- Expenses for your studio organized according to type and activity:
  - ✓ Business (like computer, paper, etc.)

- ✓ Instrument expenses
- ✓ Studio Maintenance
- ✓ Vehicle (if applicable)
- ✓ Advertising
- ✓ Fees, i.e. business license, Criminal Records Check, BCRMTA fees
- Studio Costs:
  - ✓ Rent
  - ✓ Heat
  - ✓ Water (if applicable)
  - ✓ Internet
  - ✓ Electricity
  - ✓ Phone
  - ✓ Insurance
  - ✓ Percent of Mortgage (if home-based business)
  - ✓ Misc.

Consider having a separate bank account for your business. It really helps keep things separate and sorted out.

For tips on tax preparation for musicians, check out Canadian composer and piano teacher Rebekah Maxner's tips: <https://rebekah.maxner.ca/2022/04/09/piano-studio-business-claims-home-expenses-work-expenses-and-industry-codes-oh-my/>

## **Professionalism**

### Studio set-up/appearance

- ✓ Entryway
- ✓ Waiting area
- ✓ Toilet/washroom
- ✓ Studio: Clean, tidy and well-lit, limit clutter.
- ✓ Parking
- ✓ Pets
- ✓ Insurance
- ✓ Neighbourliness



### Studio hours

Set up a time when you are on duty and stick to it.

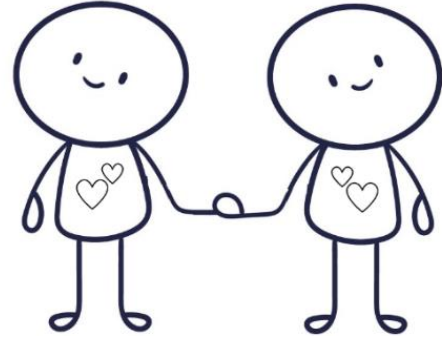
### Interruptions

- ✓ Let the answering machine take your messages.
- ✓ Check messages between students.
- ✓ Parents who want to check in should come at the beginning of their child's lesson.



## Collegiality

- Participate in branch activities
- Develop yourself professionally
- Competition vs cooperation
  - ✓ Undercutting your professional peers, say with lower fees, does not engender goodwill.
  - ✓ Badmouthing is the worst thing a professional teacher can do.
  - ✓ Speak well of your colleagues and of the teaching profession.
  - ✓ Deal openly and fairly with your colleagues.



## Advertising



### Paid

- Flyers, newspaper, circulars
- Website
- Facebook
- Business cards

### Free

- Volunteer concerts at the local *whatever*.
- Volunteer musically at the elementary school
- Volunteer to play your instrument at a church
- Connect with musical theatre groups and volunteer to accompany
- Connect with teachers of other disciplines and let them know your accompanying rates
- Do whatever you can (legally, of course) to make a presence for yourself.
- Consider freebees—one month's free lessons as a prize at the local Chamber of Commerce fundraiser.
- Start teaching at a music store—they are often looking for qualified teachers

If you are business-minded, this will be fun. If all you want to do is share your knowledge of Baroque ornaments, this may be torture. The important thing to remember is to get your business name out into the public sphere by as many ways as possible.

## Wider Community

If you exchange goods or services for money, you are a businessperson. You add to the economic vitality of your community and have a right to voice an opinion as to how business is run in your area. You can do this by joining your local Chamber of Commerce, attending city council meetings and participating in community events. This is challenging for music teachers as we don't usually sell goods at a booth, but we can volunteer ourselves or our students to perform at civic functions like Canada Day celebrations, sports events or parades. Granted, piano students are at a disadvantage if there are no pianos available, but creative solutions can often be found.



### Legal

- Business license

Depending on where you live, you may be required to purchase a business license to legally engage in business. In certain jurisdictions, there are fines for businesses operating without a license.

- Business Registration

Do I have to register a business? As a business you must register **to collect and remit Provincial Sales Tax (PST)** if you are located in B.C. and you sell or lease taxable goods, or provide software or taxable services in the ordinary course of your business in B.C. You may also need to register if you are located outside B.C.

For further information ...

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/business/managing-a-business/starting-a-business/starting-a-restaurant-in-bc/register-your-business>

- Business Insurance

Not to be confused with the CFMTA liability insurance program, business insurance protects your equipment and home from damage. Depending on your policy, you can be covered for theft, flood, fire, accidental dropping, etc. The Personal Insurance company offers all CFMTA members great homeowners and business insurance packages, and they donate a portion of their fees back to CFMTA to support programs and prizes.

- CFMTA Liability Insurance

Not to be confused with Business insurance, the CFMTA general liability insurance protects you and your students and their families from “slip and fall” type injuries while at your studio or participating in your studio concerts. If you teach at more than one location, your insurance follows you, unlike business insurance where the location is insured. This insurance costs \$60 and is administered by Marsh Insurance Brokers. There is no deductible for claims.

- Criminal Records Check

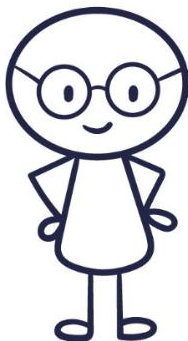
A CRC provides your families with a professional, third-party reassurance that you are whom you present yourself to be, that you are trustworthy and that you have nothing to hide.

For more information:

[https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/238\\_2002](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/238_2002)



### Conclusion



If you exchange goods or services for money, you are a businessperson. You add to the economic vitality of your community and have a right to voice an opinion as to how business is run in your area.

Remember, you are a professional and your business practices reflect on you and the music teaching profession in general. We are one of the few professions that require twelve years of comprehensive study before we begin post-secondary education. We must honour ourselves and our profession. *Music deserves it.*