NMPAT

Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust

Inspire • Nurture • Excel

Dear Family

I am delighted that you have decided to give your child the opportunity to take piano / keyboard lessons this year, and am writing to share some information that I hope will help you to support your child on their musical journey.

There will be 33 lessons across the academic year. If I am ever unable to teach, I will arrange a catch-up visit with the school. A full list of teaching weeks and other useful information can be found on our website: www.nmpat.co.uk/keyboard

What to expect in the lessons? What does my child need to bring?

In addition to learning piano / keyboard specific technique, your child will also be learning a variety of general musical skills, such as improvisation, aural, sight reading and composition, that I hope will develop their musicality and inspire them to continue playing and making music for their own enjoyment.

Your child will be given a practice diary in which details of what your child is learning will be written. I shall share with you some information on the appropriate tutor book for your child after we have had a few lessons. Any book I suggest will be available at St Giles Music in Northampton. If you take your NMPAT practice diary, you will receive a small discount on purchases in store and online. Music can also be purchased at other online suppliers and often good quality secondhand copies can be found on Amazon marketplace and Facebook marketplace.

It can be helpful to have an A4 wallet folder for your child to keep their diary, tutor book and any other sheet music in, which they can easily bring to their lesson each week.

Playing at home

It is advantageous if your child has access to a keyboard or piano at home. A small electric keyboard is fine initially. If possible, it should have full-sized keys and be touch sensitive.

Playing in between lessons is important and should be encouraged as it will help to consolidate what they have covered in their lesson and develop their confidence. As a guideline, short and regular practice sessions are preferable for beginners: aim for at least three 10-minute sessions a week. These sessions can include warm ups / scales and pieces, which will be listed in the practice diary, with free play also encouraged.

Additional opportunities

NMPAT Saturday Centres are a fantastic opportunity for children to meet and play music with other students. This can be especially rewarding for piano / keyboard students who spend most of the time playing as an individual. Saturday Centres have venues across the county and are open to anyone, regardless of experience. Your child is entitled to one entire term completely free. Find out more at www.nmpat.co.uk/centres

The keyboard department also offers performance opportunities, for all ability levels, at regular performance evenings throughout the year. Please look out for a letter, later in the term, with more details. There will also be a workshop day for pianists, during the spring term, so again, look out for a letter with more details.

Assessments/grades

We offer several progression and assessment opportunities to encourage your child on their musical journey. These include our Rainbow Award scheme for beginners, (details on the website) graded exams with external exam boards, and our internal grade assessments. Details will be shared with you at the appropriate time in your child's journey.