Southwest Guilford High School

Piano Lab

Beginning and Intermediate Levels

**Course Description**

Piano Lab is designed to teach the concepts and fundamentals needed to perform on the piano. It will increase musical understanding beyond just reading notes by teaching students vocabulary of chords and keys, accompaniment patterns, and improvisational techniques. Students will play melodies in several positions and have the opportunity to participate in ensemble playing. Students will develop good practice habits, and learn techniques to increase the muscular agility and flexibility of their hands. We will delve into music at its source, find out how music is constructed, and discover the composers and history behind the music. At the completion of this course, the students will have learned to play some of the standards of piano repertoire while gaining a thorough understanding of the history and basic concepts of music.

**Course Outcomes**

Students will be able to:

* Follow classroom procedures regarding practice and instruction.
* Demonstrate basic competencies of piano performance in the areas of tone production, technique, and phrasing.
* Identify music notation and symbols relative to the level of proficiency.
* Identify basic musical forms within learned pieces.
* Identify proper performance habits.

**Course Philosophy**

The piano is a performance instrument, and the primary goal of this course is for students to become competent, independent performers on the piano. For this reason, students will be assessed largely based on their performances on the piano. It is equally important that a student develop the skills, discipline, and determination to prepare for a performance, therefore an equal portion of the grade will be derived from how well the student prepares and uses his or her practice time. Because not everyone has a piano at home, home practice is optional; however, students should come to class every day prepared to get the most out of the practice time they are given in class.

**Grading Policies and Breakdown**

Students will earn weekly participation grades based on the following:

* Practicing the entire class period on assigned material
* Not distracting other students
* Keeping fingernails short so proper hand position can be achieved
* Not drinking or eating in class
* Taking care of the school owned keyboards
* Being respectful of those around him/her

Performance tests will be given every other Friday. Students will be assessed on the piece they are working on, NOT a comparison to other students. Our goal is quality, not quantity. If two students have diligently practiced and participated in class and one is on page 15 and the other page 40, they can BOTH earn 100 on their playing tests.

Grades will be broken down into the following categories and weights:

50% Tests (performance and written)

40% Participation

10% Written classwork or homework

**Materials**

We will be using the Alfred Basic Piano Library series. If you would like to purchase these books for your child to practice at home, which is not required, please touch base with me after the first week or so of school. By then I’ll have determined each student’s appropriate level and be able to give you an exact book to purchase. Again, this is NOT required.

Students should bring the following items to class each and every day:

* Pencil
* Three-ring binder (may be stored in the Piano Lab)
* A good attitude and willingness to learn

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me. Please sign and return the attached Information Sheet as it is your child’s first homework grade.

Catherine Butler

butlerc3@gcsnc.com

336.819.2970

Piano Student Information Sheet

Student’s Name Grade

Guardian’s Name

Guardian’s Phone Number(s)

Guardian’s Email

Schedule Info (teacher and class):

First Block

Second Block

Third Block

Fourth Block

Does your child have any medical conditions or religious beliefs that will affect his or her performance in Piano? If so, please let me know. Is there anything else about your child that you would like to share with me? Your signature below indicates that you have read and will help uphold the standards presented in the attached Piano Syllabus.

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Guardian’s Signature