**Basic Piano Class Syllabus**

**Instructor: Mr. Russell Carter**

**2021-2022 School Year**

**Email Address: rcarter@cmitacademy.org**

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**WELCOME PIANO STUDENTS!**

Greetings everyone and welcome to a wonderful new year at CMIT Academy North High School! My name is Mr. Carter and I am your piano teacher.

I am thrilled that I will share in your musical journey this year and look forward to having you in my classroom. This Syllabus contains a **TON** of important information for you and as such you have received two copies. One of these copies should stay at home and the other (which I have hole punched for you) should stay in the front or back of your piano binder.

If you ever have questions about grading policies, classroom expectations or anything

else, most of it can be found in this document. If the Piano Syllabus fails to give you the

appropriate answers, please email me at rcarter@cmitacademy.org and I will get back

to you within 24 hours.

I am looking forward to sharing an amazing year filled with new opportunities!

Musically yours,

Mr. Carter

**ABOUT THE BASIC PIANO PROGRAM**

The Basic Piano Program at CMIT Academy is offered for students in grades 9-12. Students

in Basic Piano will experience a basic musical repertoire including both the basic piano

songs as well as more contemporary piano songs. In addition to learning his or her

instrument, students will also explore basic music notation, piano fingering, piano technique, music theory, music history and basic composition.

Instruction in piano is highly individualized and unique to each student’s learning style.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES: BASIC PIANO PROGRAM**

In an apprenticeship-based classroom, the focus is teaching for lifelong learning instead

of teaching without encouraging the retention or application of necessary knowledge to

be a musician. The piano program at CMIT Academy North High School provides a music education built

on an Apprenticeship model and focused on empowering our students to be lifelong

consumers and creators of music. Fundamental to this empowerment are five guiding

principles:

1. Every Student Can Be Successful in Music

2. Students Learn Music Best Through Experience

3. Students Derive Meaning in Music from their Ownership

4. Students Take Ownership of Music Through Understanding

5. Students Learn Best from Teachers who are Still Learning

With the student serving a central role to the program philosophy, emphasis is placed on

fostering the relationship between the learner and music.

**BASIC PIANO CLASS GOALS**

To ensure that the fulfillment of the aforementioned goals have been established for the

Basic piano program. These goals represent a combination of program philosophy, district

goals and school goals. The Basic Piano class at CMIT Academy North High School will:

**1.** Deliver a music education grounded in “learning by doing” that

teaches the students about how they best learn music.

**2.** Provide all students with a basic framework in music through teaching basic music notation, reading, theory and appreciation in addition to basic technical studies such as scales and chords.

**3.** Empower all students to take ownership of music through the teaching of basic music notation, theory and music composition.

**4.** Equip students with the basic skills needed for more advanced piano or music classes.

**CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS**

In order to ensure success in our classroom, both the students and the instructor must

adhere to a set of high expectations.

**The Student expectations are as follows:**

1. Follow all directions the FIRST time they are given.

2. Be Respectful and Kind at all times.\*

3. Involve yourself in instruction.

4. Be prepared and ready to work, learn and perform.

5. Leave doubts and drama at the door.

6. No running or playing in the Piano Lab

7. No playing the drums without permission

8. No eating or drinking in the piano lab

\*\* Expectation number two is possibly one of the most important expectations for

the classroom. Being respectful does not just mean to be nice to other students

and the instructor, but also to respect the equipment (pianos), learning environment and the learning of others. Distractions such as off task talking or taking away from another student’s

learning qualifies as infractions of this expectation.

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As previously stated, it is important that both the students **AND** the instructor adhere to a

set of high expectations. Therefore, as the instructor I will:

1. Always show respect to my students.

2. Answer all questions in a polite and helpful way.

3. Give 100% at all times.

4. Provide prompt and positive feedback on all assignments.

5. Keep our classroom a learning centered environment.

**CLASSROOM RULES AND PROCEDURES**

1. COME to Class on Time. Put on your Headphones and have a seat.

2. Once the bell rings there should be no standing, talking and socializing.

3. Go to canvas for your warmup or assignment. If there are no assignments, then go to your book and review your last assignment. Or sit and wait for instructions.

4. When instructions are given, no one should be talking or playing the piano.

5. When a student is playing the piano, everyone should stop playing and listen.

6. When the teacher says “Class I need your attention”, no one should be talking or playing the piano.

7. When the teacher says “Stop Playing The Keyboard”, no one should be talking or playing the piano.

8. When the teacher says “Take your seats or no one should be standing”, then take your seats.

9. There is absolutely no running in the piano class.

10. There is absolutely no eating or drinking any beverages in the piano class.

11. There is absolutely no banging on or abusing pianos.

12. Respect Others, yourself, the teacher and the classroom.

13. No running or playing in the Piano Lab

14. No playing the drums without permission

15. No eating in the piano lab

**CONSEQUENCES**

Violating class expectations will initiate the following action plan.

1. Verbal Warning

2. Email or Phone Call to Parent or Guardian

3. Office Documentation Form (and phone call home)

4. Removal from Class\*

\*In extreme cases, students removed from class will be sent to the office. If this occurs a

phone call will be made home and the student may be written up on a school **form PS-74.**

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

**Quarter 1**

***Finger Numbers,***

***Introduction to the Keyboard,***

***Counting & Rhythm Beat Duration***

***Basic Notation***

***Notes & Rests***

***Pitch Identification***

***Right Hand C Position***

***Left Hand C Position***

***Preliminary Exercises***

***Introduction to Basic Chords***

***Basic Songs***

***Principles of Practice***

**Quarter 2**

***The Language of Music***

**Developing Equal Skills with All Fingers**

***General Intervals***

***Whole Steps and Half Steps***

***Scale Building***

***More Basic Chords Building: Major***

***Basic Songs***

***Extended Learning...***

**Quarter 3**

***More Scale Building***

***More Basic Chords Building & Chord Analysis***

***Major Key Signatures***

***Basic Composition***

***Start Composition or Piano Project***

***Extended Learning... About The Blues***

**Quarter 4**

***Composition or Piano Projects Due***

***Extended Learning… Jazz/Contemporary Music***

***Review for Final Exam***

***Final Exam***

**PLAYING TESTS**

Once per week, students will be expected to complete a playing test .

Test may include Scales/Technical Exercise (Correct Notes, Finger Placement, Consistent Tempo, Tone) and Songs.

\*The scale segment of each playing tests (with the exception of the final exam) may be

retaken for an improved score at the student’s request. Test Retakes are to be completed

outside of class time and must be scheduled by the student.

**HOMEWORK POLICY**

I understand that students may not have keyboards at home for practice.

However, written assignments may be assigned.

These may include scales, etudes, technical studies, sight reading exercises, improvisation exercise and ANY current specific assignments.

**CANVAS**

We will use canvas for online learning this year.

Parents can view canvas for of any submitted assignments at any time.

Some assignment will be completed on paper.

Other online software students may use are: Collabra, MusicFirst, NoteFlight, and Soundation.

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

All students should bring the following materials to class every day:

1. Pencils (2)

2. 1: 2 inch three ring binder

3. Binder Dividers (4)

4. Headphones\*

5. A charged and functioning Chromebook is the most important school supply for all students.

6. Lysol Wipes to clean the piano

7. Hand Sanitizer

8. Masks

9. Boxes of tissue

10. Disposable Gloves

The theory textbook will be provided to all piano students and should be kept in the piano

lab. \*Due to Covid-19, students are expected to bring their own headphones to class every day. Headphones may be provided if the student does not have their own headphones.

In the event that a student forgets their headphones, extra headphones may be available. Students

who consistently forget their headphones may have points deducted from their grade (See

“Grading Policy”). Any headphones are suitable for use in the piano lab, but I

recommend one of the following pairs of headphones for sound quality:

**1. JVC HA-RX500 Full-Size Headphone w/ Cushioned Headband**

**2. Audio-Technica ATH-T200 Closed Back Dynamic Headphones**

Both of these pairs of headphones can be purchased online at Amazon.com

All Pianos in the Piano lab are equipped with metronomes. However, students are

advised to acquire their own metronome for use when practicing at home. (For iPod and

Smart Device users, metronome apps are available for free on the app store).

**PIANO LAB FOOD POLICY**

Our lab is equipped with professional level musical equipment. To ensure the longevity

of our piano lab students are not permitted to eat or drink while in the Piano lab. This

includes gum, chips, and other snack foods.

**INSTRUMENT/EQUIPMENT CARE**

1. At the start of each class, **students are wipe the piano keyboard with wipes.**
2. At the end of each class, students are expected to carefully put away their headphones, clear clutter from their piano station and turn off the piano.
3. At the end of each class, **students are wipe the piano keyboard with wipes.**

Failure to maintain Piano lab equipment will result in a reduction of points for the day. *(See “Grading Policy: Detailed”)*

\*\*The student will be required to **pay for repair or replacement** if the piano is damaged by neglect, playing in class, banging the piano keys or playing the piano in a manner not intended, water or damage caused by any drinks or liquids; unauthorized accessories (risk of fire, electric shock and personal injury;

**CELL PHONE POLICY**

No Cell Phones or Apple watches will be used unless required for special lessons or assignments by the instructor. In addition, no ear buds are allowed in the classroom.

**SHEET MUSIC**

We will play music from a variety of sources, and I will supply the student with most of

that music. Every student will use his or her music binder both in class and at home.

Supplemental books will be used in class but are not available to be taken home.

Students cannot make adequate progress if they are unprepared for class. All assigned

music **MUST** be brought to class each day.

**GRADING POLICY**

Students will be graded on the following expectations. Grades are calculated by quarters, and a

student or parent may ask for their grade at any time.

**1.) 60% CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION, EFFORT, AND COOPERATION**

**Classroom Participation, Effort, and Cooperation…………… 60%**

This includes all work completed in the classroom setting:

In-class solo and ensemble performances, projects, concepts/objectives that have been met, critiques, composition, dictation, completion of project, creativity, originality, proper technique and interpretation of style, class participation, daily work habits, care of supplies and equipment, time on task, group interaction, active participation, ensemble etiquette, and preparation for class (materials).

**2.) 30% ASSESSMENT …………………………………………… 30%**

Self-Evaluation, Journals, Notebooks, Research, Projects, Tests, Quizzes, Exams, Written Critiques, Oral Presentations, Ensemble Etiquette, Attendance at Scheduled Performances and Programs.

**Assessment................................................................................30%**

**3.) 10% INDEPENDENT ASSIGNMENT**

This includes all work completed outside the classroom and student’s preparation for class (materials, supplies, etc.) Assignments can include, but not limited to:

Performance evaluation, practice logs, warm-ups, vocabulary, notebooks, journal entries, written critiques (self and group), ensemble etiquette, and class critiques, reports and projects.

**Independent Assignments ................................................................................10%**

**NOTE: RETAKING ASSIGNMENTS. Not all assignments and tests are eligible for retake. I will announce in canvas whether a test, piano exercise or other assignment is eligible for retake. Students who wish to retake an assignment must first do preparation work for that assignment. Preparation work may include written work. If the retake is a piano test or exercise, practice under my observation will be required. This may also require practice during lunch or after school.**

**STUDENT COMMUNICATION POLICY**

Students can and should email me from their PGCPS email at any time if they have any

questions about class or assignments. Students are expected to represent themselves and the

school professionally in all class correspondence. Students must observe formal email

protocols and include a subject, greeting, body, closing, and signature in all emails. An

example of an appropriate email has been included below for reference.

*Good Afternoon Mr. Carter,*

*I have been practicing my assigned piece and am having an issue with*

*measure 30. Do you have any suggestions for practice?*

*Regards,*

*- Susan*

Parents will be copied on all email replies to students. Please ensure that I have your most

current email on file.

**ATTENDANCE AND TARDY POLICY**

* Students must submit excused notes to the front office to verify that is a lawfully excused absence in accordance with PGCPS policy. ADD LINK TO GOOGLE FORM FOR EXCUSED NOTES
* A student is allowed to make up work within an equal number of days as they were absent and will receive the credit they earn for that work if it is marked as ‘excused.’  If a student does not obtain and complete the missed work within the time allotted, the grade will be recorded as a 0. It is the student’s responsibility to acquire work immediately upon return. If a student is absent on a day an assignment is due, it will be entered into the gradebook as a 0, until the student returns to school. If the assignment is not submitted on the day they return, it may not be accepted.
* Students who are tardy to class will be marked tardy in SchoolMAX.  If the tardy is excused, students will be provided the opportunity to make up missed work from the beginning of class.  If the tardy is unexcused, students will receive a 0 for the assignments missed.

**PLAGIARISM**

Teachers at CMIT have a Zero Tolerance Policy for cheating and plagiarism. Plagiarism means using words, ideas, or arguments from another person or source without citation. This includes unintentional plagiarism,
which results from failure to attribute all source ideas to their original creators. To gain more understanding about plagiarism, refer to this helpful resource from TurnItIn.com: [The Plagiarism Spectrum](https://www.turnitin.com/static/plagiarism-spectrum/)
Some examples of cheating and plagiarism might include:

* Copying others’ work or claiming someone else’s work as your own
* Completing someone else’s work for them
* Using archived work from previous terms
* Sharing answers, questions, or work unless specifically instructed to do so by your instructor
* Using electronic devices, the internet, or social media to achieve any of the above
* Plagiarizing, whether intentional or unintentional

Your original work is valuable for a number of reasons, primarily because we want an accurate assessment of what you know and can do even if that does not look as polished as you would like. This is the only way we can support your growth as a student. We also want to ensure that you are developing the ability to produce quality work of your own. As you do, you likely will grow to understand the importance of giving others credit for theirs.

**ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR**

I am Mr. Carter and am the Basic Piano and Music Survey Instructor at CMIT Academy North High School.

I hold **a B.A. Degree in Music** from University of the District of Columbia; **B.S. Degree in Electrical Engineering** from Howard University; and a **MBA (Information Systems Concentration)** from Southeastern University.

This is my 5th year as a Music Teacher in the PGCPS system. I have Three years (3) experience as a Substitute Teacher. Two (2) years of experience as a long term substitute teacher at CMIT North in Computer Technology and Math.

I have over Twenty (20) years as a Woodwind (Saxophone, Flute, Clarinet) and Piano Instructor at the DC Music Center. 14 Years as the Director of the DC Music Center music program. I Supervised the implementation of the music program at the DC Music Center, a non-profit music school formerly located in Washington, DC where I also served as the President of the Board of Directors and was in charge of day to day operations.

I was also the Piano Instructor for Basic Jazz Piano. Taught students with no previous piano background basic scales, pitch and notation, music symbols specific to reading and playing keyboard music with appropriate technique; jazz chords specific to playing jazz and contemporary music.

Also served as the Jazz Band Instructor for students ages 10-18 and was responsible for rehearsals and directing the band at various recitals, concerts and other events.

As a freelance performer, I have lead my own Jazz Bands; and have performed in local and national R&B, Jazz, Gospel, Hip Hop and Latin Music bands. I have also performed with the legendary Jazz singer and band leader, Cab Calloway; and the world famous O’Jays R&B vocal group!

*“Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to guide your child along their musical*

*journey. I am looking forward to an exciting year of working with all of you.”*

Mr. Carter