



Private Music Instruction Policies & Student Handbook

Thank you for choosing Mason Community Arts Academy for your music lessons! We look forward to helping you develop your skills and further your love of music. Following are a few guidelines to ensure that you/your child has a positive and fulfilling experience with us.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

A good learning environment and efficient use of time are key to a student's musical development. Here are a few guidelines for student behavior to ensure they find their greatest success and enjoyment in lessons:

- Students must be respectful and attentive to their instructors at all times.
- It is very important that students bring all necessary materials (instruments, music, assignment books, etc.) to every lesson.
- Students should follow daily practice expectations established by their instructor.
- Parental involvement in lessons is strongly recommended, but only required at the teacher's discretion. Please consult with your teacher about the appropriate level of involvement if you have any questions.
- Families in waiting areas should be mindful and respectful of other lessons that may be happening nearby as sound travels easily into the lesson rooms.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

In order for all students participating at the Academy to have a rewarding, positive experience, certain conduct and behavior is expected. Behaviors, such as (but not limited to) those listed below are unacceptable:

- Using language or gestures that are profane
- Engaging in an act of violence such as hitting, kicking, and/or scratching a faculty or staff member
- Engaging in willful conduct that significantly interferes with the normal operation of programs

If the above behavior expectations are not met, Mason Community Arts Academy will give a verbal warning to students and/or parents. Should behavior continue or escalate, a meeting will be scheduled between student/parents and the program director. Continued disruptive behavior may result in dismissal from the program without refund.

SCHEDULING LESSONS

Our calendar for private lessons approximately follows the Fairfax County Public Schools Calendar. Students will register at the start of each semester for a specific lesson day and time agreed upon with their instructor. The Fall Semester usually begins the week before Labor Day and runs until the third week of December, and the Spring Semester begins after New Years Day and goes until the second or third week of June. (check the website for specific dates) When scheduling lessons for any semester, students/parents are committing to the full semester with a weekly lesson.

The summer semester runs on a slightly different system from fall and spring. It is shorter in duration (see website for specific starting and ending dates), and we encourage students to continue their studies even if just for 4 lessons during that period. Students interested in summer instruction must schedule a minimum of 4 lessons. Due to the flexible summer schedule being offered, there will be no makeup lessons or refunds given after the first lesson. See “Student Withdrawal” section for further details.

Payment must be received before lessons can begin for any semester. Please call the office to register and pay before your first lesson. Payment plans are available with no additional fee – please inquire about payment options at the time of registration.

ONLINE LESSONS

All in-person lesson policies also apply to online lessons, with additional technological requirements. All online lesson students must have access to a device with up to date audio/visual capabilities. This includes a computer (desktop or laptop), tablet, or cell phone with a working camera and microphone. Zoom is George Mason University’s recommended platform for video/conference calls. More information on how to access and enroll in Zoom will be provided to you at the time of your online lesson registration.

Recording lessons in any form is strictly prohibited without prior written consent from the student/parent (if a minor) and instructor.

MISSED LESSON POLICY

Weekly lessons and daily practice are essential in order to improve your skills and technique, so we encourage all students to attend every lesson. In order to ensure that you have the best lesson experience possible, students must adhere to the following policies regarding missed lessons.

Due to Academy space limitations, and out of respect for our faculty’s schedules, lessons missed by students are not eligible for make-up lessons or for refunds.

If a lesson must be missed due to illness or a family emergency, one make-up lesson in the Fall and two make-up lessons in the Spring will be given, with sufficient notice. Notice must be given in writing to the instructor by 11 am (EST) the day of a weekday lesson, or by 7 pm (EST) on Friday for a Saturday lesson. There are no make-ups for missed trial lessons. Due to the flexible scheduling offered for the Summer semester, no make-ups will be given. **ALL** makeup lessons will be held on a virtual platform on a time and day offered by the instructor.

If a student misses a make-up lesson scheduled with the Academy and the instructor, then no additional make-up will be offered, and no refund will be given.

Any lessons canceled by the Academy or by the instructor will be made up and will not count toward the student's make-up limit.

If students arrive late, they may use the remaining time of their lesson with no refund or make-up offered. Instructors are not required to teach students arriving later than 15 minutes after the scheduled lesson time.

All requirements and guidelines from the Missed Lesson Policy also apply to online lessons. Students must call/be available as advised by their instructor at their regular lesson time each week. If a student is unreachable, this is treated as an unexcused absence.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Mason Community Arts Academy follows George Mason University closure decisions for inclement weather. **We do not follow Fairfax County Public School closure decisions.**

In any closure event, we will contact registered students by email and will post closure announcements on our website and social media. To receive text message notifications on weather related closures, sign up for Mason Alerts at alert.gmu.edu

In the event of an inclement weather closure, all online lessons will still proceed as scheduled.

LOCATIONS

In-person lessons scheduled Monday – Friday will take place at the Academy facility at 4260 Chain Bridge Rd in Fairfax. In-person Saturday lessons may take place at either the George Mason University Fairfax campus in the de Laski Performing Arts Building second floor practice rooms or at the Academy building on Chain Bridge Rd. The confirmation email you receive from the Academy when scheduling your lessons will indicate which location. Lessons are not offered on Sundays, and instructors are **never** permitted to teach lessons in a student's home or in their own home. Online lessons will take place on the agreed upon virtual platform.

STUDENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

One of the most important aspects to your student's musical and artistic success is a healthy, trusting relationship with their instructor. A good three-way communication between the student, the instructor, and the parents (if applicable) is vital to developing this relationship. Parents are encouraged to understand their child's progress and the teacher's expectations via regular communication with the teacher, and to be able to assist with practice as needed. Parents should also feel free to contact their teachers directly with any questions or concerns they may have. Please consult with your student's instructor about their preferred means of contact.

Healthy communication promotes clear understanding and helps to avoid disagreements. However, if you ever have concerns about the way that you or your child's lessons are progressing, please do not hesitate to contact the teacher to work toward an agreeable solution. Most problems are the result of simple misunderstandings and can be quickly and easily resolved with a phone call or a meeting. In the event that an issue is not easily resolved, a meeting between the parent, student, teacher and an Academy staff member can be held to find the best solution. If it is determined that the student and teacher are no longer a good match, the Private Lesson Coordinator will be in touch with options for a new instructor.

STUDENT WITHDRAWAL

If a student is having problems with their lessons or their instructor, again we encourage them to speak directly with their instructor and express their concerns. However, if after following the process above (see Student Teacher Communication) the student still wishes to withdraw, they should notify their instructor and follow the policies outlined below.

Notice of withdrawal from instruction and all requests for refunds must be made in writing to Mason Community Arts Academy. Verbal notice or requests from students or parents cannot be accepted. A registration fee of \$50 for all scheduled lessons is non-refundable. Refunds will only be made according to the following schedule:

- Before the first lesson a 100% refund, less the registration fee, will be issued.
- Before the third lesson a 50% refund, less the registration fee, will be issued.
- No refunds will be issued after the third lesson.

*Please note: Trial and summer lessons are not refundable or reschedulable.

RECITALS

We encourage all of our students to participate in the fall and/or spring recital on campus in the de Laski Performing Arts Building. It is very motivating to participate and prepare for a recital and is a fun experience as well. We hope you will take advantage of this great opportunity to perform in a professional venue equipped with a Steinway concert grand piano with an appreciative audience of parents, friends and fellow students. A pianist is available to accompany all vocal and (non-piano) instrumental students. All students are strongly encouraged to work with one of our accompanists for the enriching musical experience it offers. **Please note that individual instructors may have their own policies about performances. Please speak to them before registering for the recital to choose your repertoire and determine if you should perform with an accompanist.*

PROGRAM FEE

All private lesson students will be assessed a program fee of \$35 per semester, or \$50 maximum per family, for the fall and spring semesters. This fee is not charged in the summer.

PARKING

Students taking lessons on the Mason campus on Saturdays may park in Lot K for free, or in the Mason Pond parking deck for a flat fee of \$8. Students taking lessons during the week at the Academy building may park in spaces reserved for the Academy for free with a semester pass from the office displayed on their dashboard. Please stop by and ask for a parking pass at your first lesson. Students with lessons at peak traffic times (between 5 and 7:30pm should plan to arrive a few minutes early to find a parking spot. Students parking at the Academy without a free parking pass displayed on their dashboard are at risk to get a parking ticket for up to \$100!

CONTACT

We welcome anyone to contact us with questions or concerns. Please call us at 703-993-9889 or email academy@gmu.edu.

WAIVERS

When you register for private lessons you agree to the following waivers from George Mason University:

- I do hereby grant and give these groups the right to use my or my child(s) photograph/video or image, both singly and in conjunction with other persons or objects and presentations, advertising, publicity, and promotion relating thereto.
- To the best of my knowledge, I am/my child is capable of participating safely in the Program and that any activity restrictions, allergies, and medications are listed on this form. I give my permission to Program staff to provide routine first aid care and in the event of serious illness or injury, I give Program staff permission to seek and authorize emergency medical treatment. I agree to indemnify and hold harmless George Mason University, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and their officers, employees and agents, from any claim, damage, liability, injury, expense, or loss, including defense costs and attorney's fees, arising out of or resulting from said medical treatment. I further agree to accept full responsibility for any and all expenses, including medical expenses, that may derive from any injuries to my child that may occur during his/her participation in this Program. I understand and acknowledge that my failure to disclose relevant information may result in harm to Participant and/or others during this Program. By signing my name, I represent that I have provided all materials and important information to the Program pertaining to Participant's medical, mental and physical condition and that it is accurate and complete. I agree to notify the Program of any changes in mental, physical or medical condition before the Program begins.

**Note: Because we are part of George Mason University, on occasion Mason School of Music students may observe and/or assist the instructor with lessons or classes. This is for educational purposes only.*

Welcome to Mason Community Arts Academy!
Student Acknowledgement of Handbook Policies

Please sign at the bottom of this page and return it to the office, to be kept on file. Parent signature required for younger children.

I have read and agreed to all of the policies contained in the Student Handbook. I acknowledge that I will...

- Be on time for lessons.
- Schedule makeups directly with my instructor and only at the designated makeup times.
- Clearly communicate all concerns with my instructor directly.
- Pay the full tuition amount if I withdraw from private lessons after the third lesson of the semester.
- Abide by any of my instructor's individual lesson policies.
- Follow all of the behavioral expectations

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____