



## Private Music Instruction Policies & Student Handbook

Thank you for choosing Potomac 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 Potomac Arts 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, Potomac 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 begins the week after Labor Day and runs until the third week of December, and the Spring Semester begins the week after New Years and goes until the last week of June.

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.

## **MISSED LESSON / MAKE-UP POLICY**

A weekly lesson 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.

Students enrolled in weekly lessons are allowed one makeup lesson for the Fall semester, and two makeup lessons for the Spring semester *for family emergency or illness only*. \*See Exceptions below. Once you have reached this limit, no more makeup lessons will be offered for any student absence. In order to qualify for a makeup lesson, prior notice must be given to the instructor or Potomac staff by 11am on the day of the lesson. If your lesson is on Saturday, notice must be given to the instructor or Potomac staff by 7 pm the Friday evening before the lesson. If you give no notice or late notice, you will not receive a makeup lesson and no refund will be given.

- For lessons that take place during the week, makeup lessons will be offered on designated Saturdays during the semester only.
- For Saturday lessons, make up dates will be built into the lesson semester. Makeups will be held on the designated date(s) at the regular lesson time, if needed. If makeup lessons are not needed, there will be no lesson held on those dates.
- In the event that an instructor must miss a lesson for any reason, a makeup will be offered, and will not count towards the student's limit.

Instructors will wait 15 minutes for students to arrive for their lesson. If they have not heard from the student within 15 minutes of the scheduled lesson, the instructor may leave and make-ups will not be given. If students arrive late, they may use the remaining time of their lesson with no refund or makeup offered. \*Note: If student is not able to attend the makeup lesson offered by the instructor or pre-scheduled by the Academy, no other makeup will be offered. Trial lessons and summer lessons are not refundable to reschedulable.

\*Exceptions: No makeups are allowed in the summer semester due to the flexible scheduling options offered, and no makeups will be offered for those students who register for lessons with 4 weeks or less remaining in the fall or spring semester.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

The Potomac Arts Academy is part of George Mason University, and therefore follows George Mason's inclement weather policy. We do NOT follow the Fairfax County Public School closings for Private Instruction, but may sometimes close for private lessons on the same day as FCPS. ***Any closure or delay will be posted on the Potomac website, and Potomac will make every attempt to email students and parents.*** In the event of inclement weather, if you do not feel comfortable driving to lessons, please contact your instructor to discuss makeup options. Instructors may offer online lessons for inclement weather makeups at their individual discretion.

### **LOCATIONS**

Lessons scheduled Monday – Friday will take place at the Potomac facility at 4260 Chain Bridge Rd in Fairfax. Saturday lessons will take place on the Mason campus in the de Laski Performing Arts Building second floor practice rooms. Lessons are not offered on Sundays, and instructors are **never** permitted to teach lessons in a student's home or in their own home.

### **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 attend and observe student's lessons to better understand their progress, the teacher's expectations, 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 a Potomac Administrator 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 Potomac 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 for a nominal fee. 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.*

### **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 Potomac Arts Academy building may park in spaces reserved for Potomac 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 Potomac without a free parking pass 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 [potomac@gmu.edu](mailto:potomac@gmu.edu).

*\*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 Potomac 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: \_\_\_\_\_