

FAIRFAX CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

Studio Policies

2026–2027 Academic Year



Important Information

- **New Students:** A one-time \$100 Registration Fee is required to join FCM and reserve a lesson time slot. This fee includes a free Consultation Lesson to evaluate musicianship, learning style, and teacher/student fit.
- **Returning/Continuing Students:** Pay a yearly Admin Fee of \$25 per student, or \$35 per family (multiple enrolled students), to renew enrollment.
- **Pro-Rated Start:** If starting lessons anytime from Week 2 of the Fall Semester onwards, or at any other time of year, the first tuition payment will be pro-rated. Remaining payments will be of equal amount, withdrawn automatically on the 15th of each month.
- **Payment System:** All students must be registered with our automated payment system. Lessons are payable by ACH Checking/Savings withdrawal (no extra fees). Debit/Credit cards are accepted with a 3% fee per transaction.
- **Failed Payments:** After a 1st failed payment, the student must provide a 2nd form of payment. After a 2nd failed payment within a 1-year period, lessons will be paused until payment is settled, and the lesson slot may no longer be guaranteed.

Monthly tuition installments are NOT for the lessons attended per month or for 4 lessons. Monthly tuition installments are based on a payment plan to pay off a total tuition amount that goes towards the total number of lessons. You may cancel your plan/lessons anytime with 30 days' notice.

- **FCM Vacation Weeks:** Each plan already factors in multiple weeks off within each semester that do not need to be made up. These weeks are labeled as "FCM Vacation Weeks."
- **Auto-Renewal:** Once enrolled, your plan will auto-renew unless you notify us otherwise in writing (email preferred).
- **Plan End Date:** After the Plan End Date, the student forfeits all lessons not completed by that date. Try to let your instructor know well in advance of any planned absences so you can find solutions together, including rescheduling, adding time to a regular lesson, or requesting a substitute.
- **Early Completion:** If a student finishes all lessons in their package early (1–2 months before the Course End Date) before making the final tuition installment, they are still required to pay any remaining tuition balance owed, in addition to the new course payment when their package auto-renews.

How Our Lessons Are Scheduled

1. For One-on-One Lessons, you pay 10 installments from Aug 15 – May 15 and receive 36 lessons (18 in Fall, 18 in Spring), plus at least 2 recitals (and other events) prior to the start of the Summer Semester in June.

2. If you continue with regular weekly lessons in the Summer Semester (June 14 – Aug 22, 2027), you pay 2 additional installments on June 15 & July 15 and receive 8 Summer Lessons, for a total of 44 lessons for the whole year — a significant discount, plus scheduling priority with your teacher.
3. If you require more flexibility in the summer months, you may still have lessons on your own terms by purchasing a Custom Summer Lesson Package that applies only to the dates of your choosing.
4. You may start lessons at any time of year — we will customize the number of lessons and payments to adapt to your situation.
5. You show up to your lesson on a weekly basis (unless you're doing a drop-in or custom arrangement). Each regular plan already factors in major holiday periods that don't require makeup time. Enrolled students agree to our Automated Renewal Policy.

Semester Calendar

Academic Year: 2 Semesters (36 Lessons Total + 2 Recitals)

Fall Semester: Aug 17, 2026 – Jan 10, 2027 — 18 Lessons

- Thanksgiving Week: Nov 23 – Nov 29, 2026
- Winter Break (2 Weeks): Dec 21, 2026 – Jan 3, 2027
- Winter Recital: Jan 24, 2027

Spring Semester: Jan 11 – May 30, 2027 — 18 Lessons

- President's Day Week: Feb 15 – Feb 21, 2027 (Studio Maintenance)
- Spring Break: Mar 22 – Mar 28, 2027
- Spring (End-of-Year) Recital: June 6, 2027

Summer Break — Make-Up Weeks (No Regular Lessons — Make-Ups or Add-Ons Only):

- Summer Break Make-Up Dates: May 31 – June 13, 2027

Summer Semester: June 14 – Aug 22, 2027 — 8 Lessons

- **Summer Skip Weeks:** Each student may choose up to 2 weeks off within the term for vacation, arranged with your instructor in advance. There is no fixed studio-wide summer vacation week — simply don't schedule a lesson during a week you are away.
- 1 make-up is available for an unexpected, last-minute cancellation (illness or emergency) with at least 24 hours' notice.

Students have until June 13, 2027 to complete any rescheduled or makeup lessons from the Academic Year. To stay on track, students should complete 18 lessons in the Fall Semester and 18 lessons in the Spring Semester (if they started at the beginning of the school-year).

Summer Lesson Options

- Sign up for the Summer Semester at a significant discount by adding 2 additional installments on June 15 & July 15, receiving a total of 8 Summer Lessons.
- **Flexible summer scheduling:** Schedule your 8 Summer Lessons across the term and take up to 2 Skip Weeks off for vacation, arranged in advance with your instructor. Planned absences taken as Skip Weeks do not require a make-up.

- **Book a Custom Package.** The cost is calculated based on the advertised per-lesson price on our website at the time of purchase. Once paid, the teacher will schedule lessons on your requested dates. Regular, year-round clients receive scheduling priority over Custom Package clients. No make-ups will be offered for student cancellations on a Custom Summer Package.

Make-Up Policy

Students may receive up to 2 make-up lessons per Fall Semester and 2 make-up lessons per Spring Semester for cancellations made in advance. If a teacher cancels a lesson, the student will receive a make-up lesson or a substitute (when available and by request). Make-up time may also be added to a regular lesson slot. Please coordinate directly with your instructor for all make-up arrangements.

Summer Skip Weeks: Summer travel is unpredictable, so the Summer Semester works differently from Fall and Spring. Rather than a fixed studio-wide vacation week, each student schedules their 8 Summer Lessons across the summer term and may take up to 2 weeks off (“Skip Weeks”) for vacation — just let your instructor know in advance and don’t schedule a lesson that week. Planned absences taken as Skip Weeks do not require a make-up. In addition, 1 make-up remains available for an unexpected, last-minute cancellation (such as illness or emergency) made with at least 24 hours’ notice.

2 full weeks in our studio calendar are dedicated to make-up lesson time: May 31 - June 13, 2027.

NEW — 2026-2027: No secondary make-ups will be offered for a missed Make-up Lesson that was confirmed by both student and teacher, even if 24 hours’ cancellation notice was given. Any Make-up Lesson that was scheduled and missed by the student will be counted as fulfilled.

Custom Plans & Drop-In Lessons

If you have off-peak scheduling availability (mornings, afternoons before 4 PM) or a special scheduling request involving less frequent lessons — such as bi-weekly or ad hoc lessons — we are open to discussing options. Due to high demand, we cannot reserve a regular prime-time slot (weekday evenings and weekends) for drop-in students, but we can look at openings as they arise from cancellations, vacations, and off-peak hours.

How it works: contact us to schedule a lesson, and we will look for a specific opening for that date. There is no set commitment — you pay for that individual lesson at a slightly higher rate than our committed tuition plans (10% extra, of the per lesson price). For bi-weekly lessons through a tuition plan, please contact us.

Cancellation Policy

Notice of a lesson cancellation must be given at least 24 hours in advance directly to the instructor (it is important to communicate directly with your instructor, as our studio phone/email is not monitored at all times). Otherwise, the lesson will be counted in the payment cycle — no exceptions.

Serious, unforeseen events including medical or family emergencies will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If your child is sick and you could not anticipate the cancellation, you may request a virtual lesson in lieu of an in-person session, or request notes from the teacher that may help focus the student's home practice before their next lesson.

If a student cancels in advance more than 2 times per Fall Semester or more than 2 times per Spring Semester, the instructor is not obligated to make up any further cancellations, even if made in advance. Cancellations made during federal public holidays or FCM Vacation periods do not count against the cancellation allotment.

Instructors are not obligated to fulfill more than one rescheduled lesson per week in any term. Students who attempt to cram all remaining make-ups into a short period of time at the end of a term may forfeit unfulfilled lesson time. No refunds will be offered if a student fails to complete their allotted lessons. FCM reserves the right to discontinue lessons with a student who has an unreasonable number of cancellations.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. If I cancel my lesson, do I lose it or get charged for it?

Not if you cancel at least 24 hours in advance and have not exceeded the per-semester cancellation allowance (2 per semester). Monthly installments are consistent payments toward a fixed total number of lessons — not charges for specific monthly attendance.

2. What if I don't show up or forget to give notice?

Out of respect for the instructor's time, we ask for at least 24 hours' notice. Otherwise, the lesson will be counted as fulfilled. If you or your child are sick and could not anticipate the cancellation, you may request a virtual lesson instead.

3. What is the lesson price? Is the monthly installment based on 4 lessons per month?

The monthly installment is not priced to cover exactly 4 lessons per month. The number of days in a month fluctuates, as does attendance. Total tuition is calculated by multiplying the per-lesson price by 37 for the Youth Course (36 lessons + 1 lesson price folded in to cover Recitals/Events) or by 38 for the Adult Course (36 lessons + 2 lessons price folded in to cover Soirées/Events). That total is then divided into 10 equal monthly installments.

Example: Youth Course, Academic Plan, 60-min lessons, ACH payment: \$110 (per-lesson price) × 37 (36 lessons + 1 covering Recitals) = \$4,070 total tuition ÷ 10 installments =

\$407/month. Adult Course equivalent: $\$110 \times 38$ (36 lessons + 2 covering Soirées) = \$4,180 ÷ 10 = \$418/month.

4. What if I have to discontinue lessons?

We ask for 1 month's notice to discontinue lessons, so we have time to adjust our schedules. Lesson termination is handled on a case-by-case basis: we look at installments paid, calculate the number of lessons that should be fulfilled, review your attendance record, and ensure you receive exactly what you have paid for.

5. I just paid my final tuition installment, but I received a notice of a balance due. Why?

Lessons are not tied to the specific month of payment. We maintain a set number of installments matched with a set number of lessons. For example, if a student completes 36 lessons by May 13 even though the semester ends May 31, the installment on May 15 is still due, because installments are part of a total tuition for a set amount of lessons.

Tuition Rates

Pricing below is based on the Academic Year from Aug 17, 2026 – May 30, 2027. Tuition is divided into 10 equal monthly installments, withdrawn automatically on the 15th of each month from Aug 15, 2026 – May 15, 2027. Summer Semester rates are further discounted.

- **30 minutes:** \$58 per lesson — \$215/installment (Youth) | \$220/installment (Adult)
- **45 minutes:** \$84 per lesson — \$311/installment (Youth) | \$319/installment (Adult)
- **60 minutes:** \$110 per lesson — \$407/installment (Youth) | \$418/installment (Adult)

Lessons longer than 60 minutes are calculated based on the per-minute price of a 60-minute lesson.

Discounts

Discounts are offered for multi-lesson enrollment. A student's or family's first lesson enrollment plan is full price. A 2nd, 3rd, or 4th plan (whether for a sibling or the same student taking lessons with multiple teachers) receives a discount of \$5 off per lesson for 30-minute lessons (\$19 off each monthly installment), \$6 off per lesson for 45-minute lessons (\$23 off each monthly installment), and \$7 off per lesson for 60-minute lessons (\$26 off each monthly installment).

Course Definitions

- **Youth Course (Ages 4-17):** Includes lessons and at least 2 recitals.
- **Adult Course (Ages 18+):** Includes lessons, at least 2 recitals, and at least 2 adult-only Soirées.
- **Master Mentoring:** An additional \$12 per 60-min lesson for lessons with any faculty member who has 20+ years of experience. Includes all FCM events.
- **Drop-In Lessons:** Students who request one-time ad hoc lessons with no fixed schedule pay 10% extra per lesson based on the current market rate.

Payment Methods

- **ACH Checking/Savings:** No extra fees (most economical option).
- **Debit/Credit Card:** 3% fee per transaction.
- **Late Fee:** A \$20 late fee is applied automatically if payment is more than one week late. Late fees cannot be waived if we are not notified in advance of a change in financial circumstances.
- **Failed Payments:** After the 1st failed payment, you agree to pay all fees and penalties and must provide a 2nd payment method. After a 2nd failed payment within one year, lessons will be paused and a time slot may no longer be guaranteed.

Vacations, Holidays & Inclement Weather

FCM loosely follows the FCPS calendar. A “week” is defined as Monday through Sunday. Our official FCM Vacation Schedule is:

- Thanksgiving Week: Nov 23 – Nov 29, 2026
- Winter Break (2 Weeks): Dec 21, 2026 – Jan 3, 2027
- President’s Day Week: Feb 15 – Feb 21, 2027 (Studio Maintenance)
- Spring Break: Mar 22 – Mar 28, 2027
- Summer Break (Make-Up Weeks): May 31 – June 13, 2027
- Recital Dates: Jan 24, 2027 & June 6, 2027

During FCM Vacation Weeks, the studio is officially closed and the calendar is cleared. You do not have your regularly scheduled lesson unless you and your instructor agree otherwise (e.g., for a makeup). Vacation weeks can be an excellent opportunity to make up a missed lesson. If you would like a lesson during a Vacation Week but have no makeup time, you may purchase an Extra Add-On Lesson as a one-time charge.

Inclement Weather: We close the studio by default based on FCPS decisions. If road conditions are reasonable, instructors may offer lessons that day; students are not penalized for not attending, and the missed lesson will not be counted. Virtual lessons may be requested if the teacher can accommodate. If both parties agree to reschedule, the rescheduled lesson counts as a normal fulfilled lesson.

Lesson Slots & Timing

Year-round students who take lessons for the whole Summer Semester receive priority scheduling over Custom Package or Academic Year-only students. While every effort is made to accommodate schedule preferences, it is not always possible, and all students are asked to be flexible so everyone can be accommodated.

If you are late to a lesson, the instructor is not obligated to make up the time and will not continue past the scheduled slot’s end time.

Students may increase or decrease their lesson duration during their studies, schedule permitting, and the payment plan will be adjusted accordingly. Schedules are subject to change each Fall and Summer — lesson times are not indefinitely permanent.

Discontinuing Lessons

Lessons may be discontinued at any time with 1 month's written notice. If notice is given after the halfway point of a monthly installment, the following month's payment will still be processed, and lessons will terminate at the end of that month. The instructor is not obligated to fulfill any excess of previously missed lessons upon termination.

We calculate how many installments have been paid, determine the corresponding number of lessons that should have been fulfilled, and ensure any remaining lessons owed to the student are completed. If lessons have already been fulfilled, the plan is settled.

Your satisfaction is important to us, and feedback is highly valued. FCM also expects a respectful relationship from students and reserves the right to discontinue lessons with students who exhibit frequent behavioral issues or scheduling inconsistencies.

Auditions

Auditions are accepted for all levels of playing ability, from absolute beginner to advanced, and for all ages. Unlike a typical music school, our Conservatory does not automatically accept every applicant — all candidates are required to audition through a consultation assessment process. Our process determines musical strengths and weaknesses, motivation factors, learning style, and is structured to be a constructive, positive experience.

Auto-Renewal

After a student's Course End Date, their package will auto-renew with their previously selected payment method unless the student notifies us otherwise. For Academic Plans, this means lessons will resume with the Fall Semester (beginning Aug 23, 2027). Custom packages and pay-per-lesson arrangements do not apply to this policy.

Events & Performances

FCM Recitals are offered at least twice per year and are open to the public. Recital costs are already folded into tuition at the price of one lesson (shared across both recitals). Recitals are non-ticketed events with no admission fee for audience members.

Event Types

- **Masterclasses:** Students perform for a master musician and receive new perspectives on their instrument.
- **Workshops:** Hands-on sessions addressing common and recurring weaknesses in music students, such as complex rhythms.
- **Creative Workshops:** Involve music theory application and team-building, resulting in a collaborative composition.
- **Seminars & Lecture-Recitals:** Faculty deliver research on topics such as music and the brain, music psychology, and historically informed performance.
- **Performance Classes / Soirées:** Students perform for peers in an informal setting and learn about music history, performance practice, and managing stage fright.
- **Internal Competitions:** Students perform for faculty, receive constructive feedback, and compete for recognition.

- **Recitals:** At least 2 per year: 1 in Winter (approx. late Jan/early February) and 1 in Summer (approx. late May/early June). Additional recitals may be offered.

In-Home Travel Fees

While we do not typically travel to a student's home, sometimes we may accommodate special cases, pending teacher availability and a separate travel contract. The following travel fees apply, based on distance from our Fairfax, Virginia location (paid directly to the teacher):

- **Within 5 miles:** \$25
- **6 - 10 miles:** \$30
- **11 - 15 miles:** \$35
- **16 - 25 miles:** \$40
- **26 - 30 miles:** \$50
- **31 - 40 miles:** \$65
- **41 - 50 miles:** \$85
- **50 - 70 miles:** \$100

Student Referral Program

- Eligible only to current students/clients.
- No limit on the number of referrals.
- Once a newly referred student completes their registration, the referring student will receive 1 free extra add-on lesson after the referred student has been enrolled for at least 1 semester. (This grace period prevents abuse of the program.)
- If the referring student attends multiple courses or shares payments on a family plan, the free lesson is applied to their most expensive lesson plan.

Thank you for being part of the Fairfax Conservatory of Music community, sparking Artistry and Mastery since 2009!

Questions? Contact us at fairfaxconservatory.com