



# Fairfax Conservatory of Music

## Fairfax Conservatory of Music: Policies, Operations, and Courses

### ● **IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

- Students *may enroll any time* throughout the year.
  - All students must be registered with our automated payment system; **no exceptions**. Lessons are payable by ACH Checking/Savings withdrawal.
    - Debit/Credit card is also accepted with fees:
      - \$7 standard additional fee or 3% for monthly installments over \$400
    - Cash, Check, or any other forms of payment outside of our PaySimple software is NOT accepted.
    - After a 1st failed payment, the student will be required to provide a 2nd form of payment. After a 2nd failed payment (within a 1-year period), the student will be immediately expelled and no longer eligible to return to Fairfax Conservatory of Music.
  - Each regular plan already factors in 7 weeks off within the plan period (10mo or 12mo) to account for typical vacations, cancellations, weather closures, and public holidays.
  - Monthly tuition installments are based on a payment plan to pay off the entire tuition amount.
  - Monthly tuition installments are NOT for the lessons attended per month.
  - There are no make-up Course Events.
  - Adult Course, Enrichment Course, and Master Mentorship students are NOT required to attend Course Events and may request to have select Course Events integrated into their weekly curriculum.
  - School-Year Plan and 12-Month Plan will auto renew billing.
  - After the Course End date, the student forfeits all lessons not completed by that date.
  - If a student finishes all lessons in their package early (1 or 2 months before the Course End date) before making the final tuition installment, they will be required to still pay all remaining tuition installments, in addition to the new course payment when their package autorenews.
- 1) **HOW OUR PLANS WORK:** On the School-Year plan, you pay 10 installments from Sep 1-June 1 and get 36 lessons to complete by June 30. On the 12-month plan, you pay 12 installments and get 45 lessons for the year. You may start either plan anytime of year. School-Year will just be shorter the first year if you join after September. On either plan, you show up to your lesson on a weekly basis (unless you're on a custom plan). Each

regular plan already factors in 7 weeks off that don't require makeup time within the plan period (10mo or 12mo) to account for typical vacations, cancellations, weather closures, and public holidays. Students enrolled in our School-Year/10-Month/36-Lesson or 12-Month/45-Lesson packages, agree to our Automated Renewal Policy. Upon completion of all tuition installments, your package will auto-renew.

- 2) **SCHOOL-YEAR PLAN:** 10 Tuition Installments or Less (Less, if 1st-time enrollment is in any month after September). Installments end on June 1st, with the option to purchase additional lesson packages or individual Pay as You Go lessons in the Summer months. If a student's allotted lesson numbers have not been completed by the last tuition installment June 1st, lessons remaining must be fulfilled by June 30th, or they will lose the remaining lessons. Everyone goes at a slightly different pace, but most students following a normal school calendar with average vacation time/sick days will complete their tuition-paid lessons around the beginning of June.
  - **Examples:**
    - Student joining in September, 10 tuition installments, covers 36 lessons/events
    - Student joining in October, 9 tuition installments, covers 32 lessons/events
    - Student joining in February, 5 tuition installments, covers 18 lessons/events
- 3) **12 MONTH PLAN:** *The most popular plan and has a discounted rate.* Tuition Installments active for 12 months starting at any given time. Students join any month and pay 12 installments towards 45 lessons per calendar year. Recommended for students with optimal attendance and who don't always vacation in the summer.
- 4) **CUSTOM PLAN/DROP-INS:** If you have off-peak scheduling availability (mornings, afternoons before 4pm, etc) or a special scheduling request involving less frequent lessons for maximum flexibility, such as bi-weekly lessons or ad hoc lessons, we are open to discussing options for you. Due to high demand, we can't reserve a regular prime-time slot for you (weekday evenings and weekends), but we can look at openings as they arise each week from cancellations/vacations/off-peak hours, etc. How it works: you contact us to schedule a lesson, and we see if we can work out a specific option for a particular date. There's no set commitment — you just pay for that individual lesson at a slightly higher rate than our committed tuition plans. For bi-weekly lessons through tuition plans, contact us.

**FAQ: 1)** *What about make-up lessons? If I have to cancel my lesson, do I lose that lesson or get charged for it?*

**No — not if you cancel at least 24-hrs in advance. Every student has different attendance rates, and every month may fluctuate. Therefore, students always pay the same amount each month as an installment towards tuition for a total number of lessons given. No need to worry about 'losing' a lesson or trying to keep track of make-up credits, etc. As long as you give sufficient notice when canceling, you get the exact number of lessons you're paying for (36, on the School-Year plan, or 45, on the 12-month plan) unless you have an unreasonable number of cancellations (more than 6 per plan).**

2) *What if I don't show up for my lesson or forget to give notice of a cancellation?*

**Out of respect for the instructor’s time and schedule, we ask that you always give at least 24-hrs notice when you have to cancel your scheduled lesson. Otherwise, we have no choice but to count the lesson as fulfilled. Teaching is our livelihood, so we ask for your understanding and cooperation when it comes to the importance of giving notice as a courtesy.**

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

**It depends on the payment method and number of lessons purchased. Please see the chart included on our website and in this document. The monthly installment does not cover 4 lessons per month because every month fluctuates and student attendance rates fluctuate. Instead, you can calculate your lesson price based on the payment plan you choose divided by the number of lessons it covers. For example, if you are doing the Youth Course with a 12-month/45 Lesson Plan for 60-min lessons and paying through ACH, your monthly installment is  $\$353 \times 12 \text{ installments} = \$4,236/45 \text{ lessons} = \text{your price per lesson } \$94.13$ .**

*4) What if I have to discontinue lessons? How will I ensure my lessons are fulfilled if my attendance fluctuated prior to giving notice to terminate lessons?*

**No problem — we understand if you have to discontinue lessons, though we hope you had a great experience with us. We ask for 1-Month’s Notice to terminate lessons, so we have enough time to adjust our schedules. Lesson termination is handled on a case-by-case basis. We look at how many installments have been paid and adjust the number of lessons that should be fulfilled based on that. Then we look at your attendance record, and if your lessons have already been fulfilled, we’re all set. If your lessons have not yet been fulfilled, then we set appointments to complete those remaining lessons.**

*5) I just paid my final tuition installment for the year on June 1st, but I received a notice that I have to pay for additional lessons if I want to continue this month. I thought my June 1st payment covered lessons in June?*

**Students must complete their set number of monthly installments regardless of whether they complete their set number of lessons prior to June 1st or not, unless they give notice to terminate lessons/payments. The lessons you receive are not based on the month in which you paid the installment — that doesn’t work as a matter of policy due to the natural fluctuations of days in a month, holidays, sick days, etc. We keep it fair by having a set number of tuition installments matched with a set number of lessons we fulfill. For example: If a student completes 36 lessons by May 28th, they still pay the monthly installment in June because their monthly installments are part of a total tuition for a set amount of lessons. The following chart displays the number of lessons new students will receive based on the month in which they enroll.**

**10 MONTH SCHOOL PLAN:**

<b>Enrollment Period</b>	<b># of Lessons</b>	<b># of Monthly Payments per year</b>
September	36 per year	10

October	32 per year	9
November	28 per year	8
December	25 per year	7
January	21 per year	6
February	18 per year	5
March	14 per year	4
April	11 per year	3
May	7 per year	2
June	4 per year	1
<b>Summer Flex-Term</b>	No set # Custom Pkg	Custom

### Payment Methods and Tuition

All students must be registered with our automated payment system; no exceptions. There is a mandatory policy of a one-time student registration fee of \$100 that includes a Free consultative Audition with the Director to evaluate musicianship/learning style and assess which teachers may fit the student best. Lessons are payable by debit/credit card for a \$7 standard additional fee (or 3% for monthly installments over \$400) or ACH Checking/Savings withdrawal (the most economical option). Tuition Installments are always due on the 1st of the month. If a payment is more than one week late, a \$20 late fee will be applied to the student's account. If a payment fails, all exact fees and charges from the bank will be passed onto the student's account.

### Monthly Course Tuition Rate Chart

ACH Per Month	Youth Course	Adult Course	Enrichment Course	Master Mentorship
30 min	\$198	\$214	\$230	N/A
45 min	\$277	\$293	\$309	\$330
60 min	\$353	\$368	\$383	\$420
75 min	\$441	\$460	\$479	\$525
90 min	\$530	\$552	\$575	\$630
105 min	\$618	\$644	\$670	\$735
120 min	\$706	\$736	\$766	\$840
135 min	\$794	\$828	\$862	\$945
150 min	\$883	\$920	\$958	\$1,050

- **Youth Course:** Students may attend an event for a flat-rate.
  - **Adult Course:** Students may attend 2 Adult-only Soirées.
  - **Enrichment/Artistry Course:** Includes 4 Course Event Credits.
  - **Master Mentorship:** Students may attend an unlimited number of events and have regular lessons with the Master Teachers.
  - **Course Events** are classified as:
    - *Masterclasses*
      - Students perform for a Master Musician and gain new perspectives on learning their instrument.
    - *Workshops*
      - Hands-on and more in-depth than the scope of a lesson, workshops
      - involve student participation to address common, recurring weaknesses in music students, such as Complex Rhythms.
    - *Creative Workshops*
      - Involves application of music theory and team-building. Participants learn how to create a musical element which contributes to the whole, resulting in a collaborative music *composition*.
    - *Seminars & Lecture-Recitals*
      - Faculty deliver insightful research on a plethora of subjects such as: How Music affects the Brain, Music Psychology, Music History and Performing Stylistically Accurate Interpretations.
    - *Performance Classes (Ages 17 & under) / Soirées (Ages 18 & over)*
      - Students perform for their peers in an informal setting and learn about music history, practical performance tips, and how to manage stage fright.
    - *Internal Competitions*
      - Students get a healthy dose of motivation as they perform for faculty, receive constructive feedback, and vie to achieve the best.
  - Students may attend Course Events for a one-time flat rate fee.
  - Adult Course, Enrichment Course, and Master Mentorship students are NOT required to attend Course Events and may request to have select Course Events integrated into their weekly curriculum.
  - The Master Mentorship is only offered for Piano.
  - Course Events are offered throughout the year and there are no make-up Course Events.
- **Special Events/Additional Classes & Recitals:** We host special events year-round such as Masterclasses, Seminars, and Recitals which may take place in large venues and/or involve Professional Musicians. Depending on the scale of the event, we may charge admission or set a special fee for participation. Participation in these events is optional but encouraged. Students who participate in our twice yearly FCM Studio Recitals or Performance Classes may substitute one of their allotted lessons for the Recital/Class. Audience members are admitted free of charge for FCM Recitals.

**Auditions:** Auditions are accepted for all levels of playing ability, from absolute beginner to advanced, for all ages. Our audition process determines character, willingness to learn, musical strengths/weaknesses, and an overview of learning style. Unlike a typical music school, our conservatory does not automatically accept every applicant and requires all candidates to audition for a spot in our programs. The audition is structured to be a constructive, positive experience in which every applicant is given a chance to learn more about how to proceed with their music education. We have certain expectations of both students and their parents as well, when it comes to self-discipline and showing respect to our faculty.

**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. i.e. 12-month will renew for lessons to continue and School-Year means the student [after 06/30] will begin lessons again [after 09/01]. Custom packages and pay-per-lessons do not apply to this policy.

**Course End Date:** Students have either a custom plan, School-Year plan (10-months from Sept-June), or 12-months to complete all of their lessons (custom, 36 lessons, or 45 lesson packages). Students will be provided with a Course Start and Course End date, upon registration or renewal. After the Course End date, the student forfeits all lessons not completed by that date.

**Finishing Lessons Early:** If a student finishes all lessons in their package (custom, 36 lessons, or 45 lessons) early, before making the final tuition installment, they will be required to still pay all remaining tuition installments in addition to the new course payment, when their package autorenews. To avoid this and being charged twice, please keep track of how many lessons you have left, which your teacher will be doing as well.

**Failed Payments:** After the 1st NSF or failed payment, students agree to pay all fees and penalties incurred and will be required to provide a 2nd form of payment. After the 2nd failed payment, within a 1-year period, the student will be immediately dropped and no longer eligible to continue at Fairfax Conservatory of Music, and we will charge the secondary method of payment to collect any remaining balances. Tuition installments will be stopped effective immediately, they will be notified of how many lessons they are owed (or if any additional payment is required to cover a surplus of taught lesson time), and then they will not be allowed to continue or to return.

**Late Payments:** Students who are *more than 1 week late* in making their payment will automatically be subject to a late fee of \$20. If you are having trouble paying your tuition, please contact us before your scheduled lesson, and we will try to work through a solution. Late fees are added automatically if an invoice is not paid, and we cannot waive any late fees if you fail to inform us of a change in financial circumstances. Our instructors deserve to be paid on time for services rendered and need advanced notice to plan their schedules. We will work with you to keep your placement with an instructor, however, if you are frequently delinquent in making payments, we reserve the right to discontinue lessons with you and offer the lesson time to another client.

**School-Year Student Summer Packages:** Under our School-Year Plan, our tuition is based on 36 lessons to be completed each year from September to June 30th of the following year. Students who wish to purchase custom summer packages for July and August may notify FCM Administration of how many lessons they would like to purchase for both months.

**In-Home Travel Fees:** While typically, we do not travel to a student's home for lessons, we can do so for special cases. The following is an additional travel fee charge that goes directly to the teacher, based on distance from our FCM Fairfax, Virginia location;

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

### **Cancellation Policy**

Notice of a lesson cancellation must be given 24-hours in advance to the instructor (it's important to *communicate directly with your instructor* since our studio phone/email is not manned at all times); otherwise the lesson will be counted in the payment cycle: no exceptions. Out of respect for everyone's time, we ask that you adhere strictly to our policy. Serious, unforeseen events, including medical or family emergencies will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

**Frequent cancellations** (even if made in advance) that go beyond what an instructor may reasonably be able to fulfill will not be tolerated. If a student cancels in advance more than six times per course plan, the instructor is not obligated to fulfill more than six missed lessons. Instructors may not fulfill more than one rescheduled lesson per week in any term. Students who try to cram in all their remaining lessons in a 1-2 week period at the end of a term may be subject to lose those credits. No refunds will be offered if a student fails to complete their allotted number of lessons, and if a student is deemed to have an unreasonable amount of cancellations, FCM reserves the right to discontinue lessons with that student. Students facing unexpected circumstances that may affect their ability to continue lessons should notify us immediately. For more information, please see our *Discontinuing Lessons* clause.

*Keep track of your attendance, schedule, and more information through our online platform: **MyMusicStaff.com**. After you enroll with us, you will automatically receive Login information to access our studio software to keep track of your Attendance.*

### **Vacations, Holidays, Inclement Weather**

Lessons are non-obligatory during School Vacations or Public Holidays; Students should always check directly with the instructor to discuss any vacation or missed lesson plans. Lessons may still be offered during vacations and holidays pending on the availability of the instructor/student. When facing inclement weather, we close the studio by default based on decisions from Public Schools. If the road conditions are reasonable, instructors may contact students to offer lessons that day, however, students are not penalized if they do not attend, and the missed lesson will not be counted. If both parties agree to reschedule a lesson to another date, the rescheduled lesson is simply counted as a normal lesson fulfilled.

### **Lesson Slots/Timing**

Scheduling students is a difficult and compromising task. 12-month students will receive priority scheduling, over custom packages or School-Year students. Though every effort is given to ensure a lesson slot of your choice, it is not always possible to meet your request, and all students are asked to be flexible regarding schedule changes and time preferences so all students can be accommodated. If you are late to a lesson, the instructor is not obligated to make up the time and will not continue the lesson past the scheduled time slot.

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

### **Discontinuing Lessons**

Lessons may be discontinued at any time throughout the year, with reasonable notice (1-month in advance). We ask for a month's notice as a courtesy for scheduling other students. If you give notice before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month and your payment was received on time (the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month), lessons will terminate at the end of that same month and the payment schedule will be terminated. If you give notice after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, your lesson payment for the following month will still be scheduled, and your lessons and payment plan will terminate at the end of that following month. The instructor is not obligated to fulfill any excess of previously missed lessons if you terminate lessons mid-year. If you are terminating lessons, that also means your tuition installments will be terminated as well, so we add up how many installments you've paid up to that point and match the number of lessons a student should receive with that many installments. If we still owe you lessons, then you can bet those lessons will be fulfilled until you receive exactly what you paid for.

Your satisfaction is important, and feedback is highly valued. Any concerns will be addressed with priority, sincerity, and confidentiality. Likewise, FCM expects a respectful relationship from students and may discontinue lessons with students who exhibit frequent behavioral issues or scheduling inconsistencies.

### **Performances and Competitions**

FCM Recitals are offered a minimum of twice a year and are open to the public. Recitals count as a Lesson fulfilled, so any student performing in a recital will have their participation applied towards the lesson cycle count. (A student enrolled from September receives 36 lessons per year (on the School-Year plan); if that student opts to perform in 1 recital, the recital counts as 1 lesson). Recitals are non-ticketed events and there is no fee for audience members to attend. For additional opportunities, the instructor works in conjunction with Outreach programs to organize student performances in the community.

Adult students who choose not to perform in public have the opportunity to attend an organized Performance Class for a more informal, interactive experience with like-minded students.

Gifted and motivated students may participate in competitions, or judged recitals, based on the instructor's recommendation. Any festivals, competitions, and/or recitals hosted by outside member associations may require a fee payable to that particular association. FCM does not set the fees for 'outside' events, so please ask the instructor for more information. We are members of MTNA, VMTA, NVMTA, FLMF, and the Society for Music Perception and Cognition.



## Student Referral Program

- Eligible only to current students/clients.
- There is no limit to how many times this can be utilized.
- Once a newly referred student completes their registration, the referrer student will **receive 1 month of free tuition** after the newly referred student **attends at least 8 lessons**, after signing-up. This is to prevent people from joining and quitting shortly after.
- If the referrer attends multiple courses at FCM or shares payments with multiple people (such as a family plan): then the referrer shall receive 1 month of free tuition for 1 course, based on the most expensive course currently attending.
  - The referrer shall not receive an entire month of free tuition for their entire monthly payment (of multiple courses), but will instead receive free tuition for the most expensive course in which they are currently enrolled.