



FAIRFAX

CONSERVATORY
OF MUSIC

Studio Policies: 2025-2026

- **IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

- Students *may enroll any time* throughout the year. 1st Payment will be Pro-Rated, and remaining payments will be of equal amount, withdrawn *automatically on the 15th of each month*.
- All students must be registered with our automated payment system. Lessons are payable by ACH Checking/Savings withdrawal (no extra fees).
 - Debit/Credit card is also accepted with fees:
 - 3% per transaction
 - 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's 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 (the number of days in a month can fluctuate, and so can attendance). 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 of year with 30-days notice.**
- 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."
- Once you/your child is enrolled, your plan will Auto Renew unless you notify us otherwise in writing (email is preferred).
- After the Plan End Date, the student forfeits all lessons not completed by that date. Try to let your instructor know well in advance if you have planned absences. Then you can both find solutions, including rescheduling lessons, adding on extra time to a regular lesson slot to catch up, or requesting a substitute.
- 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 are still required to pay any remaining tuition balance that may be owed, in addition to the new course payment when their package autorenews.

- 1) **HOW OUR LESSONS ARE SCHEDULED (HOW OUR CALENDAR WORKS):** For One-on-One Lessons, you pay 10 installments from Aug 15 - May 15 and receive 36 lessons (18 in Fall, 18 in Spring) to complete prior to the start of the Summer Semester in June.
- 2) If you continue and sign up for regular lessons in the Summer Semester (June 8 - Aug 16, 2026), then 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, which results in a *significant discount for Summer Lessons and 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 anytime of year – we will just customize the number of lessons/payments to adapt to the situation.
- 5) How it Works: You show up to your lesson on a weekly basis (unless you're doing a drop-in/custom lesson arrangement). Each regular plan already factors in major holiday periods/vacations that don't require makeup time within Fall & Spring Semesters to account for school-breaks/vacation weeks. Enrolled Students agree to our Automated Renewal Policy. Upon completion of all tuition installments, your package will auto-renew unless you notify us otherwise, in writing.

To keep track of Attendance, students and teachers should plan on the following:

School-Year: 2 Semesters (36 Lessons Total + 2 Recitals)

Fall Semester: Aug 18, 2025 - Jan 11, 2026 (18 Lessons)/3 Vacation Weeks (No Lessons):

Thanksgiving Week: Nov 24 - Nov 30, 2025

Winter Break (2 Weeks): Dec 22, 2025 - Jan 4, 2026

*Winter Recital: Feb 1, 2026

Spring Semester: Jan 12 - May 31, 2025 (18 Lessons)/2 Vacation Weeks (No Lessons):

President's Day Week: Feb 16 - Feb 22, 2026 (Studio Maintenance)

Spring Break: March 30 - April 5, 2026

*Summer Recital: May 31, 2026

Summer Break (No Regular Lessons. Make-Ups Only or Extra Add-On Lessons Only) 2 Vacation Weeks: June 1 - June 14, 2026

Summer Semester: June 15 - Aug 16, 2026 (8 Lessons)/1 Vacation Week (No Lessons):

Summer Vacation Camp Week: July 27 - July 31, 2026 (Studio Maintenance)

Students have until June 14th, 2025 to complete any rescheduled/makeup lessons that may have occurred during the Academic Year. To stay on track with Attendance, students should complete 18 Lessons in the Fall Semester and 18 Lessons in the Spring Semester.

For Summer Lessons, you have 2 Options:

1. Sign up for the Summer Semester at a *significant discount* by simply adding 2 additional installments on June 15 & July 15 to your payment plan, to **receive a total of 8 Summer Lessons**.
2. Book a Custom Package. The cost of Summer Lessons is calculated based on the advertised Per Lesson Price on our website at the time of purchase. Once your Package is paid, the teacher will schedule the custom summer lessons on your requested dates. For scheduling consistency, the teacher will give regular, predictable time slots to Year-Round clients vs Custom Package clients, so please check with your teacher to confirm Summer Plans if you intend to purchase a Custom Package. No Make-ups will be offered for student cancellations whilst on a Custom Summer Pkg.

Make-Up Info: Students may receive 2 make-up lessons per Fall Semester and 2 make-up lessons per Spring Semester for cancellations made in advance by the student. If a teacher cancels a lesson, the student will receive a make-up lesson or have a substitute (when available, and by request). Another option for making up missed lessons is to add on make-up time increments to a regular lesson. Please coordinate with your teacher directly for make-up lessons/make-up time. Additionally, we offer a full week in our studio calendar dedicated to make-up lesson time, the week of June 1 - June 14, 2026.

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 (\$5 extra per lesson). For bi-weekly lessons through tuition plans, contact us.

FAQ: 1) *If I have to cancel my lesson, do I lose that lesson or get charged for it?*

Not if you cancel at least 24-hrs in advance and have not exceeded the per semester cancellation allowance (2 per semester). 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.

If you cancel more than 2 times per Fall Semester or more than 2 times per Spring Semester (cancellations made during a public holiday or FCM vacation period do not count towards the cancellation limit), the instructor is not obligated to makeup any further cancellations made by you, even if made in advance.

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. If you/your child are sick and couldn't anticipate the cancellation, you may request a virtual lesson in lieu of an in-person session.

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

Please see the chart included on our website and in this document. The *monthly installment is not priced to cover 4 lessons per month*. The number of days in a month can fluctuate along with student attendance rates; therefore, your lesson price is based on the payment plan you choose divided by the number of lessons + 1 lesson (Youth Course) or + 2 lessons (Adult Course) to cover Event costs. The +1 lesson cost covers Recitals/Events for the Youth Course. The + 2 lessons cost covers Soirees/Events & Adult Learning Customization for the Adult Course.

For example, if you are doing the Youth Course and taking lessons year-round to include the Summer Semester for 60-min lessons and paying through ACH, your monthly installment is $\$392 \times 12$ installments = $\$4,704/45$ (44 lessons + 1 extra lesson cost to cover Recitals) = your price per lesson of $\$104.53$. Whereas, on the Academic Plan without Summer lessons, in this same scenario, the cost per lesson is $\$106$.

4) What if I have to discontinue 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, but I received a notice that I have to pay a tuition balance. I thought my last payment covered lessons in that month?

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 13th somehow even though the Semester ends May 31st, they still pay the monthly installment on May 15th because their monthly installments are part of a total tuition for a set amount of lessons.

Payment Methods and Tuition

All students must be registered with our automated payment system. There is a one-time student registration fee for NEW Students of \$100 that includes a Free Consultation Lesson to evaluate musicianship/learning style and assess teacher/student fit.

Returning/Continuing Students pay a yearly Registration fee of \$25 per student or \$30 per family if multiple people in a family are enrolled. Lessons are payable by ACH Checking/Savings withdrawal (the most economical option – no fees), or via debit/credit card for a 3% fee per transaction. 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.

As a current FCM Student, you agree for any lessons to be charged by admin to your preferred payment method on file. If payment fails, we will run the payment again on your backup payment method.

Tuition Rates:

(Pricing below is based on the Academic Year from Aug 18, 2025 - May 31, 2026. Summer Semester Rates are further significantly discounted):

30-mins: \$56 per lesson. \$207 per installment for Youth. \$213 per installment for Adult.

45-mins: \$81 per lesson. \$300 per installment for Youth. \$308 per installment for Adult.

60-mins: \$106 per lesson. \$392 per installment for Youth/\$403 per installment for Adult.

***Lessons longer than 60-mins are calculated based on the per minute price breakdown of a 60-min lesson (the per minute rate of a 60-min lesson is cheaper than a 30-min lesson).**

*****Discounts: Discounts are offered for multi-lesson enrollment. A student/family's 1st lesson enrollment plan will be full price. A 2nd, 3rd, or 4th lesson plan, etc. will receive \$20 off per installment (this could be for a sibling or the same student taking lessons with multiple teachers, for example).**

Course Definitions:

- **Youth Course:** For Ages 4 - 17. Includes Lessons & at least 2 Recitals.
- **Adult Course:** For Ages 18+. Includes Lessons, at least 2 Recitals, and at least 2 Adult-only Soirées.
- **Master Mentoring:** an extra \$12 per lesson for lessons with any Faculty member who has 20+ years experience. Includes all FCM Events.
- **Drop-In Lessons:** Students who request one-time lessons ad hoc with no fixed schedule, pay \$5 extra per lesson based on the current market rate.

FCM often offers multiple unique events throughout the year – some are Free for public admission, some are Free for performers and audience, and some are fee-based/ticketed events.

- **Event Terminology:**
 - *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.
- *Recitals*
 - We host at least 2 Student Recitals a year: 1 in the Winter (around the end of Jan/beginning of Feb) and 1 in the Summer (usually 1st weekend in June). Other Recitals may be offered, but the aforementioned Recitals are the standard FCM Recitals included in all tuition plans.

○ **Special Events/Additional Classes & Recitals:** We also may host special events year-round such as Masterclasses, Seminars, and Recitals 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. 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 musical strengths/weaknesses, motivation factors, and 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.

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. Academic Plan means that the student [after mid-June] will resume lessons again [after Aug 15th]. Custom packages and pay-per-lessons do not apply to this policy.

Course End Date: All Students will work towards completing their lessons by May 31, 2026. Those who take lessons for the whole Summer Semester as well will complete their lessons by Aug 16, 2026. Students will be provided with a Lesson Start Date upon registration or renewal.

For the Academic Year, the deadline to complete all lessons & make-ups is June 7, 2026. After the Deadline for Lesson Completion, the student forfeits all lessons not completed by that date.

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's lessons will be paused, and a time slot may no longer be guaranteed with the teacher. We will charge the secondary method of payment to collect any remaining balances.

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.

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 2 times per Fall & Spring Semester, the instructor is not obligated to fulfill more than those 4 missed lessons cancelled by the student. Cancellations made for Public Holidays, FCPS Thanksgiving, Winter, Spring, or FCM Summer Break Weeks, do not count against a student's cancellation allotment.* Instructors are not obligated to 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 unfulfilled lesson time. 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

FCM loosely follows the FCPS Calendar system. *We do not take every single holiday or teacher workday, etc.* A WEEK is defined as the period from Monday - Sunday. We have our own FCM Vacation Schedule as shown below:

Thanksgiving Week (1 Week): Nov 24 - Nov 30, 2025

Winter Break (2 Weeks): Dec 22, 2025 - Jan 4, 2026

President's Day Week (1 Week): Feb 16 - Feb 22, 2026 (Studio Maintenance)

Spring Break (1 Week): March 30 - April 5, 2026

Summer Break (2 Weeks): June 1 - June 14, 2026

Summer Camp Week (1 Week): July 27 - July 31, 2026 (Studio Maintenance)

*****2026 Recital Dates: Feb 1 & May 31, 2026**

FCM Vacation Weeks mean that the Studio is officially closed, the calendar's wiped clean these weeks, and you don't have your regularly scheduled lesson unless you/your instructor agree to do so to make-up time. If your instructor's available, you may even schedule a lesson on a different day/time to suit your vacation schedule. Vacation weeks can be a great time to make-up a missed lesson! Students should always check directly with the instructor to discuss any vacation or missed lesson plans. *If you would like to have a lesson during an FCM Vacation Week but don't have any make-up time, you may purchase an Extra Add-On Lesson as a one-time charge.*

When facing inclement weather, we close the studio by default based on decisions from Fairfax County 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. You may request a virtual lesson if the teacher is able to accommodate at short-notice. Or, 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. Year-Round students who take lessons for the whole Summer Semester, will receive priority scheduling, over Custom packages or Academic Year-only 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 after half-way through the monthly installment, your lesson payment for the following month will still be scheduled, and your lessons and payment plan will terminate at the end of the 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 calculate 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. Recital fees are already rolled into the tuition as a half-price 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/Soiree for a more informal, interactive experience with like-minded students. The Adult Course Soirees fees are already rolled into the tuition at the cost of a lesson.

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 free extra add-on lesson (meaning, if a student gets 36 lessons for the Academic Year, then they will receive 37 lessons for 1 referral, and so on and so forth)** after the newly referred student has been enrolled for at least 1 Semester. This grace period 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 free lesson for 1 person, based on their most expensive lesson.