



## **Private Music Instruction Policies & Student Handbook**

*revised Fall 2022*

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 you and your family find your greatest success and enjoyment in lessons:

- Students must be respectful and attentive to their instructors at all times.
- Students are expected to 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 and classes that may be happening nearby.

### **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 and offensive.
- Engaging in an act of violence such as hitting, kicking, and/or scratching
- Engaging in willful conduct that significantly interferes with the normal operation of the Academy.

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**

MCAA's lesson schedule follows a semester system that approximately follows the Fairfax County Public Schools calendar (check Academy website for specific dates). The year is divided into the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. Students will register at the start of each semester for a specific lesson day and time agreed upon with their instructor. When scheduling lessons for the Fall and Spring semesters, students/parents commit to the full semester with a weekly lesson at the same day and time. Students interested in Summer semester instruction must schedule a minimum of 4 lessons.

The Academy currently observes the following holidays and lessons will not be scheduled on these days:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Break (Wednesday – Saturday)
- Winter Break (between Fall and Spring semesters)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- FCPS Spring Break
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Fourth of July

**Payment must be received before lessons can begin for any semester.** Please contact the office to register and pay before your first lesson. Payment plans are available – 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. Zoom meeting details will be provided to you prior to the start of your online lessons.

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.

If a lesson must be missed due to student 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 on the indicated online platform at their designated lesson time. 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](mailto:alert.gmu.edu)

If MCAA closes due to inclement weather, **all regularly scheduled in-person lessons will be held online.** Online lessons will take place as usual. Instructors will communicate directly with students/families and arrange to hold the virtual lesson at the usual weekly lesson time. If students or instructors are unable to attend an online lesson due to weather-related issues like the loss of electricity or poor wi-fi connectivity, a makeup lesson will be scheduled for a later date. This makeup lesson will not count against the student's makeup lesson quota for the semester.

### **LOCATIONS**

In-person lessons scheduled Monday – Saturday will take place at the Main Academy Building at 4260 Chain Bridge Rd in Fairfax. Lessons are not offered on Sundays, and instructors are **never** permitted to teach lessons outside of the Academy building (including 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 of your student's musical and artistic success is a healthy, trusting relationship with their instructor. Respectful 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 the Academy can be arranged 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 WITHDRAWALS/REFUNDS**

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 contact the Academy office.

Notice of withdrawal from instruction and all requests for refunds must be made in writing to Mason Community Arts Academy's administrative staff by emailing [academy@gmu.edu](mailto:academy@gmu.edu). 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. 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 collaborative pianists for the enriching musical experience it offers.

### **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. This program fee supports student recital participation, student collaborative pianist fees, studio class participation, facilities fees, and other lesson related expenses.

### **PARKING**

Students taking lessons 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 4 and 8pm) 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](mailto: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 all of the policies contained in the Private Music Instruction Student Handbook and agree to follow all MCAA private lesson semester and studio policies.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_