



GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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Studio Policies

Effective August 2024

Welcome to the Grace Christian School of Music (SOM)! Music lessons are a learning experience for your child that can lead to a lifetime of personal enrichment and blessing to others. Please read the following information regarding studio policies and the tuition schedule for students enrolled in the School of Music.

Lessons Overview

Lessons are typically one 30-minute session per week with the instructor. The School of Music also offers 60-minute lessons to advanced students. The instructor will determine if a 45-minute lesson is appropriate for the student and if it will work with his teaching schedule. The teacher will typically recommend this option for the parent to choose. Students may apply for lessons during the school year. Summer lessons may be available as each instructor chooses whether to offer them.

The lesson contract is based on 30 lessons that are scheduled from the beginning of the school year and continue into May. Because of differing weekly activities throughout the year, a lesson contract may finish by the end of April or it may continue through May depending when the 30-lesson schedule is completed. **NOTE:** *The lessons schedule is based on 30 lessons. Some months may have only three lessons for the month while other months may have five lessons. Billing is not based on the number of lessons per month but on the 30-lesson schedule spanning the school year. Studio Recitals are counted as one lesson each.*

Daily student practice on the assigned lessons materials is required. A lack of consistency in practice and/or preparedness may result in dismissal from the School of Music program.

Please understand that the provision of lessons is dependent upon both Grace Christian Academy's ability to secure qualified personnel as lesson instructors and subject to the schedule of available instructors. The preferred time will be scheduled, if possible. Returning this form does not guarantee that lessons are available.

Lesson registration is a commitment to the continuation of the 30-lesson schedule throughout the school year. Students withdrawn after the first day school resumes in January will be billed for the balance of the school year.

Billing

The lessons schedule is based on 30 lessons for the school year payable in nine monthly installments with the first due upon registration (payable with cash, check or credit card receipt with Visa, MasterCard or Discover – credit payment includes a 2.5% charge). See the current registration form for specific cost information. There is a \$10 monthly administrative fee. The activity fee covers administrative fees, music books, sheet music and awards. The registration payment will be returned if lessons are not scheduled (credit payments will be returned via check minus the 2.5% charge).

Students who begin after September may have a prorated billing schedule based on a reduced number of lessons provided with the number of months charged.

Following completion of the School of Music Lessons Registration Form with the first payment and confirmation from the instructor that lessons are scheduled, the school business office will place the lessons contract on a

monthly pay schedule for the remaining seven months from October to April. Billing is applied through FACTS. For those without a FACTS account, payment for billed lessons is due on the first of each month.

Summer lessons, if offered, have a separate form and payment is due in advance, but the exact cost is based on the schedule that is arranged by the instructor who offers lessons.

NOTE: In the event of excessive missed lessons due to school schedules, inclement weather and the like, the final May charge may be adjusted, and parents will be notified accordingly. The lessons are billed for eight (9) months starting with the initial payment and then running from October to May, ending at the same time as all other regular tuition fees. The monthly cost is more than 10% of the total contract because it is divided into only eight equal payments.

Delinquent Accounts. While it is necessary to have a policy regarding unpaid accounts, the School of Music and Grace Christian administration appreciate that participating families make it a rare issue to be addressed.

Billing is applied through FACTS. For those without a FACTS account, payment for billed lessons is due on the first of each month with a 2% fee assessed after the tenth of the month (payable with cash, check, money order, cashier's check, or credit card: Visa, MasterCard or Discover – credit card payments include 2.5% charge).

If the business office notifies the SOM of an unpaid school account, a notification may be issued that lessons are suspended until payment is made. The business office will notify the SOM instructor when lessons may resume. The business office will treat the bill as an unpaid account and may withhold grade cards and transcripts accordingly.

Since the instructor's livelihood depends on the lessons service he provides, he is not expected to negotiate or make exceptions with delinquent accounts. Therefore, students with unpaid accounts jeopardize their enrollment in the SOM program and may be dropped at the discretion of the instructor so he may freely enroll a new student.

The school administration implementing policies for the School of Music reserves the option to review them in light of relevant circumstances as it deems appropriate.

Enrollment

Families interested in lessons should complete and submit the SOM lessons registration form available at the school office or on the school website: <http://www.graceknights.org/forms.htm>. Students are accepted into the lessons program beginning at the following grade levels:

- Piano First Grade through Adult

The development of musical skills requires time, persistence and patience, and students are expected to continue enrollment in the lessons program for the entire school year. Parents who are concerned about how their child will do in the lessons program may have a trial period of three lessons to see that their child can fulfill his responsibilities and take lessons. After the trial period it is expected that lessons will continue for the entire year.

Students are accepted into the lessons program based on available instructors and suitable time schedules. Applicants placed on a waiting list will be enrolled as openings become available.

Lessons Expectations

Parents must realize that practice is a discipline, just like homework. Do not sign your child up for lessons if you are not committed to enforcing the practice time. A good formula to remember is "Teacher + Parent + Student = Success." The following summary of expectations affects a student's acceptance, progress and continuation in the program:

- All students must have an adequate practice instrument.
- Thirty (30) minutes should be set aside each day for practice or as instructed by the teacher.
- Students are responsible for coming to lessons each week with the appropriate supplies.

- The instructor will call the elementary student to his or her lesson each week. Secondary students will be called as needed.
- The End of Year Recital and Awards Program is required for all SOM students unless arrangements are made with the instructor.

Piano students are strongly encouraged to have an acoustic piano or a digital piano with weighted keys for practice. Younger students may benefit from shorter practice sessions two or three times per day, while older students should aim for concentrated practice sessions.

Students may also be offered several extracurricular activities during year. While these are not required, we strongly encourage the students to participate in as many as possible, since participation will lead to further excellence in performance and musicianship skills. The required End of Year Recital and Awards Program gives students the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned as musicians during the school year.

After their first full year of lessons, all piano students are required to take the Maryland State Music Teachers Association Keyboard Musicianship Test in the fall of each year. This test is given off campus in a one-to-one setting between a student and a piano teacher who is a member of the Maryland State Music Teachers Association. The student is evaluated on technical studies such as scales, chords and arpeggios, etc.

Parents are encouraged to participate in their child's music education as much as possible. An instructor may invite a parent to observe a lesson to gain a better understanding of needed practice or comprehension issues. Parents are welcome to contact their child's instructor at any time in order to discuss the student's growth as a musician. The instructor will be happy to answer questions relating to the child's music lessons.

Missed Lessons

Parents are asked to make sure the student is prepared for the weekly lesson. Please be aware of the following guidelines for missed or cancelled lessons. The reference to charges here indicates those lessons that are part of the billed contract lesson schedule.

- **All cancellations or absences not addressed here, with or without prior notice, will be charged.**
- Lesson cancellations without prior notice or forgetting the required instrument or materials are billed.
- If a student is ill, the parent must notify the **instructor** the morning of the lesson or sooner, otherwise the lesson will be charged. *Do not assume the instructor will find out from teacher with adequate notice.*
- Absences on the part of the student due to lack of preparedness will be charged.
- Students who arrive late to a lesson will be given instruction in the time remaining and the lesson will be charged.
- School-related cancellations, including school closure due to inclement weather, holidays, field trips or school activities **will not be charged unless the instructor is able to make up the lesson.**
- Non-school-related cancellations or absences are personal and will be charged.
- Interruptions to lessons such as a fire drill may result in no charge or in a rescheduled time to make up the balance of the lesson time.
- Charges during a major family emergency situation will be left to the discretion of the instructor.

Discontinued Lessons

Enrollment in the SOM lessons program is a privilege that wise students will recognize and commit themselves to diligent effort and consistent practice. Every instructor wants each student to achieve his or her greatest potential, and teaching is individually tailored so each student can reach that objective.

School of Music instructors are independent agents who have been accepted by Grace Christian Academy to provide a service to our families and who have agreed to teach within the parameters of the School of Music policies. Instructors are not required to continue teaching students who fail to meet the agreed expectations of the program, who fail to show up for lessons, who come unprepared without their instrument or lesson materials, or who fail to practice.

Instructors will communicate with parents via memo, email or phone to address issues that inhibit progress in the lessons. Failure by the parent to respond or remedy the issue to the satisfaction of the instructor is grounds for the instructor, at his discretion, to declare a discontinuation of lessons and to drop the student from the lessons program. Other instructors are not required to schedule students who have been dropped from the SOM program and future enrollment is not assured.

Students dropped from the SOM program or families who choose to discontinue lessons during the school year may be placed on a low priority schedule if accepted again into the program. Instructors may choose not to accept them as students.

Students who withdraw from lessons after the first day of school in January will be billed for the balance of the school year. This registration is a commitment to the continuation of lessons throughout the school year. The school administration implementing these policies reserves the option to review them in light of relevant circumstances as it deems appropriate.

Registration

Please complete the School of Music Registration Form which verifies your commitment to these policies and return it to the school office along with the first payment. Once your registration form and payment are received, your child can be scheduled for lessons. Please note that many students register for lessons each year and there may be a waiting list.

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