

2026-2027 Handbook



community music school

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These policies pertain to Community Music School
students, families & guardians, staff, faculty, and volunteers.

Dated 8.20.26

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1. Mission & Vision

Our Mission: *To enrich and inspire children and youth through access to and delivery of high-quality music instruction.*

Our Vision: To create a community where brighter futures are fostered through music.

Our Core Values - We believe:

- Music is foundational to every young person's development
- Creating a family environment is central in supporting a young person's musical development
- In the power of transformative student/teacher relationships
- Children and youth should be celebrated for their efforts and accomplishments
- Everyone should feel welcomed into the CMS community and be treated with dignity and respect
- Our community thrives when diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging are centered in all aspects of our organization.

2. Accessibility & Non-Discrimination Statement

Community Music School welcomes students of diverse backgrounds, beliefs and abilities. We are committed to providing equal access to music instruction to all students, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, or the presence of a disability. If your child has a disability, special need or unique learning style, please contact us so that we may discuss and consider how to best accommodate those needs as a student of Community Music School.

3. Social and Emotional Learning

Community Music School is a place of creativity and collaboration, as well as a place to nurture and care for students, providing ample and unique opportunities for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). SEL is defined as "... the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions." Students develop both SEL and musical skills through instruction at Community Music School.

4. Points of Contact & DonorView

Community Music School Phone Number: 919-832-0900

Melanie Doerner - Executive Director | mndoerner@cmsraleigh.org

David Dowless - Director of Music Education | ddowless@cmsraleigh.org

Adriana Arvelo - Director of First Impressions & DonorView | aarvelo@cmsraleigh.org

Parents/guardians are advised to check their email at least weekly for messages and updates.

It is the responsibility of all families to update contact information in the Parent Portal on DonorView (<https://app.donorview.com/wEnn>), including but not limited to email addresses, phone numbers, and mailing addresses.

5. Calendar

The Community Music School Year Calendar can be found on our website <https://cmsraleigh.org/our-programs/how-to-enroll/>

*All classes will start the week of **August 31, 2026***

6. Hours of Operation

Office Hours – reachable by phone or email: Mon-Fri 9:00am-5:00pm
Operational Hours – Mon-Thurs 4:00-8:00pm

7. Program Admission

As funding and scheduling permit, students are selected for the program after submitting an application and meeting the eligibility requirements. The program is intended for students with financial need.

8. Tuition

Starting in the 2026-2027 school year, we are rolling out new tuition rates as a pilot to all new CMS families. Current CMS families will continue to pay \$1 per lesson for the 2026-2027 school year during this pilot phase.

CMS's new standard tuition rate is \$10 per lesson. CMS also offers a Community Rate (\$5 per lesson). For those who have the financial means to do so and would like to support CMS's mission to enrich and inspire children and youth through access to and delivery of high-quality music instruction, CMS also offers the Supporter Rate (\$35 per lesson). If you are enrolling more than 2 students, please reach out to Director of First Impressions Adriana Arvelo aarvelo@cmsraleigh.org or call 919-832-0900 to discuss a family discount.

Tuition is due on the 15th of each month starting August 15 through April 15:

- Standard rate: \$40 per month (\$320 per year)
- Community rate: \$20 per month (\$160 per year)
- Supporter rate: \$140 per month (\$1,120 per year)

Payment should be made through the Parent Portal on DonorView (<https://app.donorview.com/wEnn>) by using a credit card or debit card.

9. Cancellations & Refunds

Enrollment is a full-year commitment, so refunds are not available. However, if a student needs to leave mid-year, monthly payments will simply stop after the current billing cycle.

10. Class & Lesson Times

Your lesson day/time will be determined by your assigned teacher. **If you accept your lesson time, you are accepting it for the entire school year and will not be permitted to change it.**

11. Practice

Regular practice is required for all Community Music School students in order to stay enrolled. Parents/guardians are required to monitor and support practice at home. Weekly practice charts may be given by each teacher. Each teacher will communicate his/her practice expectations. Teachers will evaluate progress.

12. Student Attendance Policy and Teacher Responsibility

Classes/Lessons missed by individual students **will not** be made up.

Regular attendance is necessary for students' success and to achieve the maximum possible benefits from their Community Music School experience. Attendance is the responsibility of both students and parents. **Students are required to have their instrument, music, and any other necessary materials with them for all classes and lessons.**

Student Responsibility: To attend class on a consistent basis. Any student having three consecutive absences or any three absences within a six (6) week period is in danger of being dropped from the program. Any student having three consecutive absences will have to be re-enrolled in the program. **Only two absences per semester are allowed.** Arriving on time for lessons is required. Students should arrive 10 minutes before the scheduled lesson.

Teacher Responsibility: To track attendance weekly and follow-up on all absences. It is a mandatory requirement that teachers contact parents for all unexpected absences during the missed lesson time. Calling is preferable. On the second absence, the parent should be told that another absence will put the student in danger of being dropped. On the third absence, teachers should reach out to the parent and then send the name and contact information to the Director of Music Education. The last follow-up and the

student drop (if necessary), will be done at the administrative level. All attendance matters will be handled on a case by case basis. There may be exceptional instances where the absences are warranted, such as absences due to family or medical emergencies. Sensitivity to life circumstances is important.

Parents or Guardians must notify their instructor at least 24 hours before an expected absence.

Parents are not allowed to be in the instructional classroom or lesson, unless invited by the teacher to do so.

13. Faculty Absences

If a faculty member must be absent, the faculty member reserves the right to determine if a make-up lesson is needed or can be accommodated. The faculty member is under no obligation to make-up the lesson unless directed by the Director of Music Education and under excessive absence cases. Faculty members can not be paid for lessons that are missed.

14. Dress Code

Students should demonstrate good judgment in dressing appropriately for lessons, performances, concerts, and other events where they are representing Community Music School.

15. Weather Closings

Community Music School follows the Wake County Public School inclement weather policy/procedures for full-day cancellations, early dismissal, and canceled after-school activities. Please check <https://www.facebook.com/cmsraleigh/> to confirm a cancellation.

16. Behavior/Safety

All persons associated with Community Music School, whether student, parent, faculty, staff, or volunteer should behave in a manner that is respectful of others and not disruptive, practicing courtesy and consideration in interactions with fellow students, families, faculty, staff, volunteers, and guests. Verbal, emotional, or physical abuse or bullying by any party will not be tolerated under any circumstance. All persons associated with Community Music School, whether student, parent, faculty, staff, or volunteer should use appropriate language at all times.

17. Illness

If your child is ill and cannot attend their lesson, please adhere to the 24 hour advance notice request. Please notify your instructor as soon as you know your student will not be able to attend their lesson.

18. Instrument Rental

Community Music School maintains an instrument loan program for actively enrolled students that are recommended by their faculty instructor for instrument rental.

These instruments are the property of Community Music School and must be returned promptly when requested or upon your exit from the program.

- Teachers select appropriate instrument for student (size, quality, case, accessories)
- At the end of the year, students who plan to return and remain in good standing may keep their instruments over the summer.
- **Equipment is due back to Community Music School within ten days if the student exits the program**

19. Plagiarism & Fair Use

All students are required to abide by all copyright laws and are forbidden to plagiarize. Students and parents/guardians are responsible for identifying the creator of any photos, videos, audio files, or other copyrightable material they distribute or post online. **Parents/guardians or students may not post online any photos, videos, or audio files of any student other than themselves without permission of those in the photos, videos, or audio files.**

20. Photo & Video Policy

It is necessary for pictures and videos to be taken of Community Music School students, faculty, and staff during lessons, events, and performances. Tuition paid for lessons constitutes less than five percent of the money needed to run the school. Community Music School must always strive for greater awareness in our community, and sharing photos and videos of our students is essential to building that awareness. Photos and videos of students may be shared on our website, social media, email newsletter, in the local media, and with our funders and student sponsors. As a condition of enrollment in Community Music School, you are granting Media Permission to utilize these images for marketing and fundraising purposes. Please be sure you have indicated “**Media Permission**” in your DonorView portal. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Executive Director.

21. Communications

Community Music School utilizes SchoolStatus Connect & Email as the primary means of communication with our participants. ***Parents are expected to respond to ALL Community Music School or teacher communications that warrant a response.***

22. Field Trips & Off-Campus Performances

Community Music School will have off-campus performances throughout the year. Parents/Guardians will be responsible for arranging transportation to and from these performances for their children. In the case of special field-trips, permission slips will be distributed and must be completed/signed before the student is allowed to participate in the field-trip.

23. Reservation of Rights

The Community Music School Board of Directors in conjunction with the Executive Director, reserves the right to amend these policies/procedures at any time. Please continue to visit our website: www.cmsraleigh.org for the most current information. Community Music School students/parents/guardians are responsible for checking our website on a regular basis for any organizational changes.