

CAREY MUSIC ACADEMY FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026–2027 Academic Year

WELCOME TO CAREY MUSIC ACADEMY

Welcome to Carey Music Academy. We are so glad you are here!

At CMA, we believe music lessons are not simply weekly appointments. They are a long-term formation of skill, discipline, artistry, and confidence. Our aim is to create an environment where students are known, challenged, and encouraged to grow into thoughtful musicians.

For lessons to be most productive for both students and teachers, we ask families to carefully review and agree to the following policies. These guidelines are designed to ensure clarity, consistency, and a high-quality educational experience for every student.

By enrolling in CMA, families agree to uphold the expectations outlined in this handbook.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Carey Music Academy exists to cultivate musicianship through excellence, encouragement, and intentional teaching.

We believe:

- Every student can grow into a capable and expressive musician.
- Consistent practice is essential to progress.
- Great teaching happens in a structured, prepared, and respectful environment.
- Music education shapes character, not just performance ability.

Our goal is not only skill development, but the formation of confidence, discipline, and joy through music.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Your CMA teacher is committed to providing high-quality, individualized instruction tailored to each student's needs and goals.

Teachers at CMA will:

- Develop a personalized curriculum for each student
- Provide structured, thoughtful weekly instruction
- Foster a positive and encouraging learning environment
- Track student progress and adjust instruction accordingly
- Prepare materials and repertoire in advance
- Maintain professional development and pedagogical training

Our teachers are dedicated to helping each student learn the language of music in a supportive and structured environment.

STUDENT & FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Music education is a partnership between teacher, student, and family. To ensure meaningful progress, the following responsibilities are required:

Instrument Access

Students must have consistent access to a quality instrument for at-home practice.

- **Piano students:** A full-size keyboard with weighted keys is acceptable. Acoustic pianos should be tuned at least once per year.
- **Voice students:** Access to a piano or keyboard is helpful but not required.
- **All other instruments:** A student-grade instrument approved by the teacher is required before lessons begin.

Practice Expectations

Consistent practice is essential for progress. Students are expected to practice a minimum of **4 days per week**. Parents play an essential role in establishing and maintaining this routine, especially for younger students.

Preparedness

Students should arrive at every lesson:

- On time
- Prepared
- With all assigned materials
- With their assignment notebook

Communication About Student Needs

If there are any changes at home, school, or in your child's emotional or learning needs, please feel free to let your teacher know. This communication helps us support your child with greater understanding and respond appropriately to their individual needs. A brief message before or between lessons can significantly improve the effectiveness of instruction.

LESSON MATERIALS

Each student must bring the following to every lesson:

- A 3-ring binder for music and assignments
- All assigned method books and repertoire
- Any supplemental materials provided by the teacher

New music is typically communicated at least two weeks in advance. Most families spend approximately \$50–\$100 annually on materials.

LESSON LENGTH & PLACEMENT

Lesson lengths are assigned based on student level and developmental needs:

- **30 minutes** – Beginner to Level 1
- **45 minutes** – Levels 2–5
- **60 minutes** – Levels 6+

Lesson length decisions are made by CMA faculty to support appropriate pacing, depth, and long-term progress.

ENROLLMENT & STUDIO CALENDAR

Enrollment at Carey Music Academy reserves a student's place in the academy for the academic year.

The academic year is divided into two semesters and includes a total of 40 musical experiences:

- Fall Semester: 16 private lessons + 1 masterclass + 2 recitals
- Spring Semester: 18 private lessons + 2 masterclasses + 1 recital

Enrollment is a commitment to a structured program of study, not a pay-per-lesson arrangement.

Our calendar is available at the following link: wmcarey.edu/music/academy/programs

TUITION & FEES

Tuition reflects not only weekly instruction, but the full scope of professional preparation required to deliver a high-quality educational experience.

Tuition supports:

- Individualized lesson planning
- Curriculum development
- Recital and workshop preparation
- Teacher training and professional development
- Studio administration and materials
- Instrument maintenance and tuning
- Long-term student musical development

Tuition Structure

Annual tuition is divided into **8 equal monthly payments** (September through April) for convenience. Families may also choose to pay per semester or annually. Tuition is based on enrollment, not attendance. Tuition reserves your student's placement in the academy. It is not contingent upon attendance or number of lessons received in a given month.

A non-refundable registration fee is due each semester (\$40/semester) or annually (\$60).

Registration and tuition should be paid using the following link: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/carey-music-academys-memberships>.

Payment Policy

Tuition is due no later than the 5th of each month. A \$30 late fee applies to payments received after the 10th of each month.

Teacher Levels

- **Undergraduate Teachers** – Currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in music with pedagogical training through CMA
 - **Graduate Teachers** – Hold a bachelor's degree and are pursuing or have completed a master's degree with CMA training
 - **Teaching Artists** – Hold a doctoral degree or equivalent professional faculty appointment
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ATTENDANCE, MISSED LESSONS & MAKEUPS

Consistency is essential in music study. CMA policies are designed to protect instructional time while maintaining fairness and clarity.

Teacher Absences

If a teacher must cancel a lesson, one of the following will be provided:

- A rescheduled lesson OR
- An alternative instructional arrangement (virtual lesson or recorded feedback)

Every effort will be made to ensure instructional time is fully delivered.

Student Absences

Because lesson times are reserved specifically for each student, missed lessons are not automatically rescheduled or refunded.

Illness Policy

Students should not attend lessons if:

- They have missed school due to illness.
- They have fever or contagious symptoms.
- They are experiencing vomiting, diarrhea, or similar illness.

Students must be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before returning to in-person lessons.

Makeup Lessons

Makeup lessons for student absences are not guaranteed and are offered only at the teacher's discretion and schedule availability.

Each semester, CMA may provide limited flexibility for exceptional circumstances such as:

- Extended illness
- Family emergencies
- Unavoidable scheduling conflicts

Makeup lessons, if granted, must be completed within the same semester unless otherwise arranged.

Late Arrivals

Lessons begin and end at the scheduled time. Late arrival will result in a shortened lesson. Lessons will not be extended beyond the scheduled time.

No-Shows

Missed lessons without notice are not eligible for makeup, credit, or refund.

Weather & Emergency Closures

CMA follows the closure decisions of William Carey University. If WCU closes, CMA will also be closed. When possible, missed lessons due to closures will be rescheduled or replaced with alternative instruction.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Clear communication supports a healthy studio environment.

- Email is the primary method of communication.
- Text may be used for same-day updates or urgent matters.
- Response time is typically within 1-2 business days.
- Communication outside business hours is not expected to receive immediate response.

CMA communication hours are Monday–Friday, 9:00 AM–5:00 PM.

PARENT & FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

We deeply value the role of parents and caregivers in each student’s musical growth.

Families agree to:

- Support consistent practice at home.
- Encourage punctual attendance.
- Trust teacher expertise in instructional decisions.
- Communicate changes or concerns proactively.
- Refrain from interrupting lessons unless necessary for safety.

****Parents are required to remain on campus during lessons for students under 18. Neither CMA nor its teachers are responsible for siblings left unattended during reserved lesson times.***

For safety reasons, please notify the teacher in advance if someone other than a parent or regular caregiver will be responsible for drop-off or pickup.

RECITALS, WORKSHOPS & COMMUNITY EVENTS

Participation in CMA recitals, workshops, and enrichment events is an essential part of the learning experience.

These events build performance confidence, strengthen community, reinforce musical goals, and provide long-term motivation. Recital participation is encouraged and is included with tuition, but participation is never required.

TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS

CMA faculty assign teachers based on student level, personality, and developmental needs. The academy reserves the right to adjust teacher assignments when beneficial for student growth or program structure.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Enrollment at CMA is a commitment for the academic semester.

If withdrawal is necessary:

- A **30-day written notice** is required.
 - Tuition remains due for the notice period.
 - Tuition already paid is non-refundable.
 - Mid-semester withdrawals do not guarantee refund of remaining tuition.
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SUMMER AT CMA

Summer instruction is offered separately from the academic year and may include private lessons, workshops, masterclasses, and enrichment programs. Summer enrollment is optional and based on availability.

FINAL NOTE

Carey Music Academy is built on partnership, excellence, and care.

We are honored to work with each family who entrusts us with their child's musical education. Our goal is to create a learning environment that is structured, encouraging, and deeply meaningful.

If at any time you have questions or concerns, please reach out to your teacher or the CMA Director, Dr. Christina Mathis.

We are glad you are here, and we look forward to making music with you!