

Welcome to the Music School! We are committed to providing quality musical instruction at all levels. In order to provide the best possible environment for music education we ask that all students and their families agree to abide by the following policies. Faculty and staff, in turn, commit to providing the best musical instruction possible.

Music School Offerings:

From September to mid-June, the Music School calendar is organized in two sixteen-week long semesters, roughly mirroring the local school district calendars. Lessons and classes are scheduled within these two sessions. Faculty may offer from 10-16 lessons during the semester. Please visit www.bmcbvt.org for current class information. In summer the schedule is largely determined by faculty and family schedules.

Lessons: Signups for lessons are made **by semester**, with most students continuing across the full academic year. New students are welcome at any time: we will pro-rate the semester-based fees according to actual start date. Any arrangement for less than a full semester of lessons may only be made with the approval of the teacher.

Orchestras/ensembles: Registrations for the Orchestras/ensembles are also based on the semester schedule. Most participants wind up continuing through both semesters.

Classes: Are offered for a set number of weeks within the semester. Many, but not all, are offered throughout the academic year.

Chamber Groups and Special Activities: Chamber ensembles/special event classes are arranged based on demand and teacher schedules. Contact the office for more information.

Summer Programs: The BMC offers camps, classes, individual lessons, and chamber ensembles during the summer months. Specific information about schedules and fees is posted mid-spring.

Summer lessons: Summer lessons are typically offered in “4-packs” or “6-packs” to accommodate families’ more variable summer schedules. Not all faculty teach during the summer – discuss with your teacher. Please see the cancellation/scheduling policy outlined below.

Other Participation: There are lots of other ways to participate in the BMC musical community!

- All BMC students are encouraged to attend concerts – over the course of the year we offer more than 40 programs of all different kinds! Students under the age of 18 can get 2 free tickets to any concert. Please contact the office in advance of concert day to sign up!

- Do you have some spare time or does your teenage student need community service credits? Volunteer! We can sometimes use ushers for concerts, people to bake for receptions, and help with filing or other office tasks.

Tuition, Payment and Fees:

- Our faculty commits to teaching for a specific number of weeks each semester. **Once you have registered for a specific number of lessons you have committed to pay for the entire set of lessons, regardless of whether all lessons take place.** Please see the “absence” and “refund” policies below.
- Payment for lessons and classes: At least partial payment of tuition is due when you start. The most common payment plans are to
 - o pay in full
 - o pay half at the start and half at the midpoint of the semester
 - o pay monthly (must be set up as a regular payment plan)
 - We are happy to set up automatic billing to your credit card.
 - o Other payment arrangements can be made but must be in place when lessons/classes begin.
- Invoices will be issued by the office at least 3 times per semester (at the beginning, midpoint, and end) until you have paid the entire balance.
- Non-payment may result in the suspension of lessons until payment is received. Teachers are under no obligation to teach lessons for which there has been no payment.
- No new classes or lessons may be attended until any balances due from previous semesters have been addressed.
- A \$16 registration fee/semester is charged for lessons to help us cover administrative costs. There is a cap of \$32 in fees per family per semester. There are no registration fees in summer.

Tuition Assistance

Our mission has always been to make music education available to the entire community, no matter the financial situation of an individual or family. Tuition Assistance applications are best made before the start of each semester and can be made as soon as you know you wish to take lessons or classes. Awards made first semester are typically extended to the second semester.

To apply for Tuition Assistance please complete a Tuition Assistance Application and return it to the office with the required supporting documentation (see form for details).

Tuition Assistance is awarded based on a formula that considers federal guidelines, household income, the number of members in the household, and available funds. Awards typically do not exceed 55% of tuition. We do our best to take into consideration unusual circumstances – so don't hesitate to ask! If you have received financial support in the previous semester you may assume that it will continue. We require updated information once a year, usually in the fall.

Questions about Tuition Assistance can be directed to the Education Programs Director at carol@bmcvt.org.

Scheduling and Attendance:

We consider music study to be a long-term endeavor which requires a regular schedule. Students are expected to commit to a full semester unless given prior approval by their teacher to register for less. At the beginning of each semester the office will check with all teachers to confirm any such arrangements.

- Please think about your vacation and travel plans before you establish a schedule with your teacher!
- Lessons are set up for a specific day and time. If your schedule changes and necessitates a long-term change, please talk to your teacher. If you need to miss a specific lesson, your teacher is not obligated to reschedule it.

Cancellations and makeup lessons:

If a teacher must cancel a lesson, it is the teacher's responsibility to reschedule a makeup lesson at a mutually convenient time for both student and teacher. Often such lessons are re-scheduled during the BMC "Make up Week" but may be arranged at other times. Makeup lessons must be scheduled within the semester. In the event a missed lesson cannot be made up, the fee for that lesson will be refunded.

If a student must cancel a lesson:

- Please contact your teacher directly at least 24 hours before the lesson time or as soon as possible! You may also call the Music Center at (802) 257-4523. Do your best to speak directly to a person rather than simply leaving a message.
- **Students have one official makeup lesson per semester.** Such make up lessons are often scheduled during the official BMC "make up" week but may be scheduled by the teacher and student at any mutually convenient time within the semester. **Faculty is under no obligation to offer a make up for more than one student-missed lesson under any circumstances.**
- You are financially responsible for 100% of the lessons for which you are registered.

- There are no “make-up” lessons offered in the summer or for trial “four-packs.”

Snow Days/Severe weather: The Music School follows the Brattleboro school district snow day closings. We want you to be safe. Many of our families and faculty live close enough to the BMC to get here even when schools are closed but safety is our priority. We live in an area where conditions can vary widely and there may be times when the school district’s decisions do not match your local weather: please be sure to get in touch with the teacher or the office if you know you cannot safely make it to your lesson! Cancellations due to weather are not automatically made up.

Withdrawal/Refunds

Emergencies and unanticipated events happen and sometimes withdrawal is necessary. Notice of withdrawal from the program and any requests for refunds should be made in writing to Carol Compton, Director of Educational Programs, carol@bmcvt.org. Verbal notice/requests from students/parents may not be accepted. Due to the increasing difficulty in filling empty lesson slots as the term progresses, refunds are made on the following basis:

- Before the first scheduled class but under one week prior: 90% of tuition payment.
- Before the midpoint of class or semester: 40% of tuition payment.
- After the midpoint of the class or semester: 0% of tuition.
- **Please note that if you are on a payment plan you will be responsible for any further balance due when you withdraw.**
- Full refunds will be made when class size is not sufficient to run a class.
- Summer programs: A non-refundable deposit is required to hold a space in summer camps. Otherwise, the refund schedule above applies.

Lesson Etiquette

- In order to start on time, please arrive at least 5 minutes prior to your lesson.
- Please care for your own, and all BMC, instruments: make sure your hands are clean and treat all instruments with respect.
- If you need to miss a lesson or rehearsal please let your teacher know at least 24 hours in advance when possible. You are responsible for paying for the missed lesson (see cancellation policy).
- To facilitate the highest quality learning experience for all parents and students, cooperative and appropriate behavior is necessary during lessons, classes and special events such as concerts and recitals.

Changing instructors

- There are times when a change in a student/teacher pairing is in the best interests of all concerned. We want to make such transitions as positive and comfortable as possible. We encourage teachers and students to share expectations and concerns directly with each other. In the event that is not possible please contact the Education Programs Director, Carol Compton, so we can facilitate a smooth transition.

Student Safety

- The BMC Music School seeks to create a welcoming and nurturing environment and has zero tolerance for those whose actions may jeopardize the safety, health or innocence of any person involved in our programs. All participants are responsible for treating fellow students, faculty and staff with respect. Anyone observing behavior to the contrary is required to report it to the main office immediately.
 - a. Copies of our board approved behavior policies are posted in the building and available from the office.
- Students are welcome to be a little early for lessons or wait to be picked up afterwards: please wait in the sitting room or the front lobby.
- Parents: if you have a young child coming to lessons here:
 - a. Please do not leave your child here unattended. If you think you may be delayed in picking them up please alert a staff member (not just your teacher).
 - b. Please make sure the office (not just your teacher) knows if your child has your permission to come and go on their own
- If a student is not feeling well - please stay home!
- All students and families are expected adhere to all posted safety protocols.
- Please report any observed safety issues to the office immediately

Our Music School community is based on the belief that music plays a significant role in our lives. It is important to us that our faculty, students and their families work together to build the best possible programs and a supportive and inspired musical community. Please do not hesitate to contact us with your ideas, concerns, and kudos so that we can continue to serve the greater Brattleboro community in the best possible way.

–Carol Compton, Education Programs Director. carol@bmcvt.org