

STUDENT HANDBOOK

-POLICIES AND PROCEDURES-

UPDATED AUGUST 2026

(813) 445-3125 – www.TampaBayMusicAcademy.com

Mission Statement

The purpose of Tampa Bay Music Academy is to provide quality music education in a professional, safe environment for both children and adults.

Program

Tampa Bay Music Academy is the area's premier music conservatory serving Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco County Florida. Private instruction is offered to virtually all ages and ability levels. Every week students come to TBMA for private music instruction ranging from four and five years old, elementary, middle and high school ages, all the way to college students and adults. We can accommodate the first year beginner as well as the most advanced student. All lessons are customized with personalized lesson plans according to each student's skill level and area of interest. Lessons include performance techniques, music theory, ear training, harmony, etc. Our Program is designed to maximize the student's musical potential with the goal of preparing each individual for future performance, ministry, and personal enjoyment.

Passion

We're passionate about music—and we want our students to share that passion too! Our music lessons are designed not only to develop skill, but also to inspire a love of music that will last a lifetime.

Quality

Our staff and facility meet the highest standards of excellence. We believe that music is an important part of a balanced education and life and we strive to provide quality music instruction for our community. Offering a wide variety of choices for lessons and encompassing the culture of fine art, TBMA is suited to help you at your current age and skill level. It is our privilege to provide you with "Music for Life!"

Faculty

Our experienced music teachers work to make each lesson positive and enriching. They tailor lessons to the student's personality and musical goals, and find ways to keep students motivated to practice and succeed. Students and parents will be given regular feedback so that they can track their growth and accomplishments, and optional contests and judging events encourage students to put what they've learned to the test.

Parent Expectations and Responsibilities

1. Support the fulfillment of your child's responsibilities. Consistency is the key to learning a musical instrument! This means showing up to lessons, practice and performances.
2. Encourage progress. Many small steps throughout the year yield big results!
3. Remind your son/daughter of daily practice and help them to schedule this practice time in their daily routine. Better yet, have a practice chart.
4. Provide a practice environment that is free from interruptions (family, friends, TV, computer, or phone).
5. Be financially responsible and pay tuition ON TIME. Contact us promptly if you have questions regarding tuition.

Communicate with the teacher about any questions or concerns you have regarding the student, music, practicing, performances, recitals, or lesson content.

Student Expectations and Responsibilities

1. Schedule 15-30 minutes of practice each day for **at least** five days per week. Two of those days must include the day of and following the private lesson. Remember: playing is not practicing!
2. Complete all assignments the teacher has written down on the assignment sheet. Practice steps are included verbally in the lesson, and on the lesson assignment sheet.
3. Review carefully any suggestions or instructions given in the previous lesson. Teachers will write the main goals of each assignment on your assignment sheet.
4. Arrive promptly at your lesson time. You reserve the time slot, not the number of minutes.

If questions arise, be sure to ask your teacher questions during lessons; We want you to understand the assignment and expectations.

Teacher Expectations and Responsibilities

1. Provide each student with the personal attention and respect necessary to develop his/her individual talents.
2. Guide each student to a greater **understanding** and **enjoyment** of music.
3. Guide each student towards an awareness of her/his capabilities – clearly communicating short-term and long-term goals. This may be verbal or written communication.
4. Encourage a feeling of success at each student's individual rate of learning.
5. Guide each student towards Musical Independence and Initiative through a balanced program of theory, technique and repertoire.
    a. **Theory** - studying the "grammar" of the language of music.
    b. **Technique** - the physical mechanics of the instrument
    c. **Repertoire** - a list of pieces to be learned based on standard classical, jazz and popular music essential to gaining an understanding and appreciation for music of many different kinds
6. Report the progress of the student to the parent, listen to any concerns and answer any questions that the parent and student may have.

Facility Guidelines

Tampa Bay Music Academy is proud of the cleanliness and professionalism of our facility, and it is our desire to keep it in the best condition possible. Below are some guidelines we ask you to follow.

Parental Supervision

Children must be supervised at all times. Parents, please do not allow your children to roam the facility by themselves. Please keep noise to a minimum.

There are other students and teachers in the other rooms. We ask that parents remain at the facility during your child's lesson. Do not drop your child off and leave. The teacher cannot supervise your child before or after the lesson while giving his attention to another student.

Food and Drink

Please do not bring food or drink into the facility that has the potential to stain the carpet or furniture (colored drinks or messy foods). Also, please do not place any food or drink items on the pianos or other instruments in the studio classrooms.

Bridgewater Office Park

Tampa Bay Music Academy is one of several businesses residing in the office park at Bridgewater. Please be respectful to our neighbors as you come and go from the property. Keep noise to a minimum.

Animals

It is our desire to provide a clean, safe, and healthy environment for all of our students. As a result, no animals are permitted inside of our facility for any reason. Please leave pets at home.

No Smoking

TBMA is a smoke-free organization. Please do not smoke inside of our facility.

Lesson Procedures

Arrival/Departure

When a student arrives at our facility he/she should come directly into the waiting room area. Do not wait outside the building. If the teacher is with another student, he/she should wait patiently in the seating area for the previous lesson to finish. **Prompt drop off and pick up are expected.** Parents are welcome to wait in the waiting area.

Schedule Lesson Time

Each student has a specific time slot which has been agreed upon by the student or parent and the teacher. **Lessons must begin and end on time.** If a student arrives late for a lesson he/she may only use the remainder of the allotted time. The lesson *will not* be lengthened to accommodate tardiness. If the student or parent knows he/she needs to talk with the teacher for more than just to inquire about the lesson, this must be done during the lesson time, or an appointment at another time must be scheduled. An arranged phone conference is usually the best way to handle more extensive questions. If the student is more than 15 minutes late to a scheduled lesson, that lesson will be forfeited and the teacher is excused to leave.

Online Lessons

In many ways an online private lesson is similar to a traditional in-person lesson, but both also have unique advantages. Learning online will take place at a scheduled time, with a live TBMA faculty member (not pre-recorded videos). The teacher will prepare an exciting lesson plan, tailored for the specific student, that will take advantage of fun music technology, and will be accessible from the comfort of home through the internet. A computer or tablet is required to participate (not provided by TBMA). Any sheet music needed will be ordered and delivered to the student's location. We have the ability to choose from multiple online platforms like Zoom, Google Duo, Skype, and Facetime for our online music lessons. Prior to your first scheduled lessons, the teacher will reach out to coordinate the preferred method that will work for the student's devices.

Practice Time Expectations

"You don't have to practice every day, just on the days that you eat."

This is good advice, but not always the most practical. The most important time for the student to practice is immediately following the lesson – or at least on the same day as the lesson, after the student has received instruction. Research indicates that retention rate is as high as 90% on the first day, whereas it drops to almost 60% if the students waits just 24-hours.

We at TBMA say aim for six and expect five days of practice. If a student has 30 minute lessons, a good daily practice session would last between 15 and 20 minutes each day. If a student has a 45 minute lesson, a good daily practice session would last between 30 and 45 minutes each day.

You get out of it what you put into it – what we require is consistency and the results speak for themselves.

Fifth Week Policy

Students will receive one lesson per week, resulting in **four total lessons each month** (except for those months that include a paid holiday noted below). Occasionally there will be a month with a fifth week. You will *not* be given an extra lesson on the fifth week. Those times are used to assign make-up lessons for students who missed lessons earlier in the month.

Missed/Make-Up Lessons

• With 24 hours advanced notice a missed lesson may be made up. If a student does not show up for a lesson or calls the day of the lesson, regardless of the reason, that lesson will be forfeited. This is to ensure that the teacher has time to reschedule another student in that time slot.
• The 24-hour advanced notice policy also applies to the Free Trial Lesson promotion. If a trial lesson is scheduled, and the trial student cancels within 24 hours, or does not show up at all, he/she will not be entitled to receive another free lesson. The next scheduled lesson will require payment.
• Without the 24-hour advanced notice, there is no rescheduling of missed lessons.

• No credits, refunds or discounts will be given for missed classes/lessons.
• A maximum of two make-up lessons will be given during any single month, and a maximum of four per year. If more lessons than two per month or four per year are missed, those lessons will be forfeited.
• If the teacher cancels the lesson, for any reason, a make-up lesson will be scheduled.
• If a student does not show up for a scheduled make-up lesson, he/she forfeits the opportunity to receive that lesson. It will not be rescheduled.

Tardiness

In the event that you are late for your lesson, the teacher will wait for you for fifteen minutes. If you are more than fifteen minutes late the lesson will be forfeited. If the lesson starts late, the total lesson time will be shorter. It will not be extended past the original end time.

Inclement Weather

Should the need arise to cancel lessons due to bad weather, the lessons will be made up.

Waiting List / Referrals

Openings in the TBMA studio schedule occur as students quit. We often have a waiting list but do appreciate referrals from current students. Please contact us for information on our referral incentive program. We are happy to talk to anyone interested in lessons. If you need a schedule change, please let us know as far in advance as possible and we will do our best to work with you.

Ensembles and Classes

TBMA offers seasonal vocal and instrumental ensembles and performance groups for its students and the community. These larger group classes will be announced on a case-by-case basis through our various online and print marketing channels.

Outside Performances

TBMA offers regular outside performance opportunities for its students, including performances at malls, nursing homes, community recreation centers, restaurants, talent shows, competitions, in-home recitals, etc.

Recitals

Formal recitals will be held two times each year, typically in January and July. All music performed for recitals should be memorized. All students are strongly encouraged to participate in the TBMA recitals.

A student may choose 1 or 2 pieces not to exceed 4 minutes total performance time. Selected advanced students may play one longer piece.

Recital Dress:
Recital DRESS CODE IS BUSINESS FORMAL
Ladies: Dresses and skirts or dress pants are appropriate.
Gentlemen: Dress pants, dress shirts, ties, dress shoes are appropriate.

Please do not wear jeans, shorts, or T-shirts since our recitals are formal events.

2026 Holidays

TBMA will be closed for the following weeks and no lessons will be given:
March 16-21 – **Spring Break**
June 29-July 4 – **Summer Break** corresponding with **Independence Day**
November 23-28 – **Fall Break** corresponding **Thanksgiving Day**
December 21-January 2 – **Winter Break** corresponding with **Christmas Day** & **New Year's Day**

• *The TBMA scheduled holiday breaks above are not included in the 43 lessons per year, that each student pays for with his/her monthly tuition installment plan. As a result, no refund or make-up lesson will be given for the above holiday dates. See the "Tuition / Fees" section below for further clarification.*

Additionally, no lessons will be given on the following single holidays, but students scheduled on these days *will* receive a make-up lesson (unless the day also corresponds with a 5th week; see "5th Week Policy" above):
May 25 (Last Monday of May) – **Memorial Day**
September 7 (First Monday of September) - **Labor Day**

Photo / Video Release

Tampa Bay Music Academy celebrates the achievements of our students, faculty, and staff. Throughout the year, we may take images/photographs and/or videos of students, faculty, and staff while at our facility or while participating in school activities. These images/photographs and/or videos may appear in various TBMA publications, including, but not limited to, the TBMA website (www.tampabaymusicacademy.com), newsletters, programs, brochures, institutional calendar, social media, or mass media outlets. If a student or parent desires to "opt-out" of having your image/photograph and/or video presence captured and used for marketing, communications, and PR purposes, please send your request in writing to the director of the school and your request will be granted.

Tuition / Fees

Our commitment to each student is to provide 43 lessons per year. Each student's year begins on the date of his/her first enrolled lesson. The nine weeks in the year when we do not teach consist of our scheduled holiday breaks (see above section for scheduled holidays) as well as those occasions when there is a fifth week in a month (see fifth Week Policy above).

All tuition is billed monthly. The weekly lesson fee is multiplied by the total number of lessons that will be given per year (43) and is divided into 12 equal installment payments.

Because of this, the monthly installment amount does not fluctuate from one month to the next, regardless of how many individual lessons are received in a given month.

• Tuition is paid in advance for each month and is due by the 1st day of that month.
• If monthly tuition has not been paid by the 5th of the month, the student is not permitted to attend any further lessons until tuition has been paid in full. Any missed lessons resulting from non-payment will not be given a makeup credit.
• A $25 fee will be charged for any returned checks.
• All tuition payments and fees are non-refundable.

• No credits, refunds, or discounts will be given for missed classes/lessons. Instead, make-up lessons will be scheduled for missed lessons that meet our Missed/Make-Up Lesson Policy above.

Base Monthly Payment for Private Music Lessons:
*$135/month - 30 min. lesson - once each week (43 lessons per year)
*$187/month - 45 min. lesson - once each week (43 lessons per year)
*$250/month - 1 hour lesson - once each week (43 lessons per year)

Group Music Lessons and Classes:
We offer a variety of special group classes throughout the year and the rates for these vary depending on the class. Please see our website for more details.

Additional Fees:
-For each new student who enrolls, there is an initial $40 registration fee.
-On September following the student's initial registration, there will be an annual administration fee of $50 for individual students and $65 for families of 2 students or more.
-Each private and group lesson student is required to pay for his/her own music books and sheet music.

Further clarification of TBMA billing and fee structure:

EACH STUDENT WILL RECEIVE 43 LESSONS PER YEAR.
After removing the 5th week (4 times in a year) that are used for built in make-up lessons there remains 48 weeks in a calendar year. TBMA will be closed on 5 of those weeks (see above for the TBMA Holiday Schedule). Those 5 weeks correspond with the Hillsborough County Public School schedule and are weeks when most students are not available for lessons anyway. That leaves 43 billable weeks for the year when lessons will be taught.

Throughout the course of the year, each student will receive and pay for 43 lessons billed as 12 equal monthly installments. Each student also has built in flexibility to reschedule up to 4 of those if necessary (using the 5th week make-up days).

Termination of Lessons (Cancellation Policy)

We hope you stay in the TBMA family forever! But if the day comes that you need to say goodbye, please observe the following procedures for cancellation:

• **TBMA requires a 30-day notice if you decide to stop taking lessons.**
• Your cancellation notice **must be sent via email** to:
admin@tampabaymusicacademy.com

The 30-day notice allows us time to interview and schedule a new student to fill your spot so that the teacher does not experience a loss of personal income.

Once notice of termination has been submitted:

- You will be billed for one final month. The student is welcome to attend these final lessons but is not required to do so.
- There will be no credit or discount given for any make up lessons that are still remaining on the makeup list.
- All outstanding makeup lessons will be forfeited.

Pausing Lessons Temporarily:

TBMA does not offer an option to "take a break from lessons." If you need to discontinue lessons for any amount of time (1-2 months or indefinitely), please submit your 30-day notice in writing to complete your current enrollment. When you are ready to return, simply call the school office to reschedule your start date.

The TBMA Policies and Guidelines have been presented to me and I have had an opportunity to ask questions.

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the terms of the Tampa Bay Music Academy Policies and Guidelines.

(This form must be detached, signed, and returned to the teacher by the first lesson of a new year for returning students and by the second scheduled lesson or class for new students)

_____

(PARENT SIGNATURE—if student is under 18 years old)

_____

(STUDENT SIGNATURE)

_____

(PARENT NAME) **Please Print*

_____

(STUDENT NAME) **Please Print*

_____

(DATE)

TAMPA BAY MUSIC ACADEMY
MUSIC FOR LIFE