

CENTRAL JERSEY SCHOOL OF
MUSIC AND DANCE[®]
EDISON · CRANFORD

Music student handbook



Music

Tuition must be paid by automatic withdrawal from a checking or savings account or automatic debit from a debit or credit card. The withdrawal transactions must be set up at the time of registration to confirm class time. No times will be confirmed without checking/debit account information. All NSF's will be charged a \$30 NSF fee.

Music students are allowed one hour group make up lessons which will make up for 2 missed private lessons. You may only sign up for a Make up lesson if you have given 24 hours notice for the absence. School closings such as winter/spring break, inclement weather, and power outages will not be subject to *music make-up lessons*. In turn, students are not charged for any fifth week lessons. If your teacher is absent due to illness or a professional obligation a substitute teacher will be provided. Only if we are unable to obtain a substitute will a make up lesson be scheduled.

Edison School of Music and Dance LLC is not responsible for providing before or after care for students. Parents with children 5 years of age and under must remain in the school during classes. Students are not to be left at the school for excessive amounts of time before or after lesson time.

Parents, legal guardians of minors, students, and adult students waive the right to any legal action for any injury sustained on school property resulting from normal lesson or class activity or any other activity conducted by students before, during, or after lesson time.

There is a two month minimum for all lessons. One month notice from the first of the month is required to discontinue any classes. Withdrawal must be done in person, and will not be accepted over the phone. Withdrawal must be done at the school office and not with the teacher.

Withdrawal must occur within the first 7 days of the month. No withdrawals will be accepted after April 7th. To withdraw from classes, a parent or adult student must inform school administration in person, and complete and sign a withdrawal form provided by the office. Automatic transactions for one month after the withdrawal date will be discontinued. Edison School of Music and Dance reserves the right to terminate lessons with any student without notice. In such a case, a refund for unused lessons will be given.

Parents, legal guardians of minors, students and adult students hereby give Edison School of Music and Dance the right to use their image (photo, video, etc) for the website and any other promotional purposes.

5 Ways to Get the Most Out Of Music Lessons

These guidelines will help you to have a successful, rewarding experience learning an instrument. These are practical tips that we have discovered from years of teaching and our experiences with teaching hundreds of students each year.

1. How young is too young? Starting at the right age

Adults can start any instruments at any time. Their success is based on how willing an adult is to commit to practicing. For children, starting at the right age is a key element to success of their lessons. Some people will tell you “the sooner the better” but this attitude can actually backfire and be a negative. If a child is put into lessons too soon he or she may feel overwhelmed and frustrated and want to stop lessons. The last thing you want to do is turn a child off music just because they had one unpleasant experience, which could have been prevented. Sometimes if the child waits a year to start lessons his or her progress can be much faster. Children who are older than the suggested earliest starting age usually do very well. The following are guidelines we have found to be successful in determining how young a child can start taking lessons:

Piano/Keyboard: At our school 5 years old is the youngest age that we start children in private piano lessons. At this age, they have begun to develop longer attention spans and can retain material with ease.

Guitar-Acoustic, Electric, and Bass: 8 years old is the earliest we recommend for guitar lessons. Guitar playing requires a fair amount of pressure on the fingertips from pressing on the strings. Children under 8 generally have small hands and may find playing uncomfortable.

Voice: 10 years old is recommended as the youngest age for private vocal lessons. Due to physical nature of voice lessons (proper breathing techniques, development of the vocal chords, and the lung capacity), the younger body is generally not yet ready for the rigors of vocal technique. For children younger than 10, we offer an introduction to voice starting at age 7, which teaches them how to use their voices properly in a fun, relaxed environment.

Drums: the average age of our youngest drum student is 8. This varies greatly depending on the size of the child. They have to be able to reach both the pedals and cymbals. For students ages 5-7, we offer introduction to drums in which they will learn stick handling, drum pad technique, and percussion. This more basic lesson gives the student an advantage when graduating to the drum kit.

Flute, Clarinet, and Saxophone: Due to lung capacity (and in the case of the saxophone the size of the instrument), we recommend that most woodwind beginners are 9 and older.

Trumpet: The trumpet requires physical exertion and lung power. 9 years and older is a good age to start the trumpet

2. Insist on private lessons when learning specific instruments.

Group classes work well for theory lessons. However, when actually learning how to play an instrument, private lessons are far superior. In private lessons, it is hard to miss anything, and each student can learn at his or her own pace. This means the teacher does not have to teach a class at a middle of the road level, but has the time and focus to work on the individual student's strength and weaknesses. For that lesson period, the student is the primary focus of the teacher. The teachers also find this more beneficial, as they do not have to divide their attention between 5- 10 students at a time.

3. Take lessons in a professional teaching environment.

Learning music is not just a matter of having a qualified teacher, but also having an environment that is focused on music education. In a professional school environment, a student cannot be distracted by television, pets, ringing phones, siblings, or anything else. With only ½ hour of lesson time per week, a professional school environment can produce better results since the only focus at that time is learning music. Students in a school environment are also motivated by hearing peers who are at different levels, and by being exposed to a variety of musical instruments. In a music school, the lessons are not just a hobby or sideline for the teacher, but rather a responsibility which is taken very seriously.

4. Make practicing easier.

As with anything, improving in music take practice. One of the main problems with music lessons is the drudgery of practicing and the fight between parents and students to practice everyday. Here are some ways to make practicing easier:

Time: Set the same time everyday to practice so it becomes part of a routine or habit. This works particularly well for children. Generally, the earlier in the day the practicing can occur, the less reminding is required by parents to get the child to practice.

Repetition: We use this method quite often when setting practice schedules for beginners. For a young child, 20 or 30 minutes seems like an eternity. Instead of setting a time frame, we use repetition.

For example:

A student can be told "Practice this piece 4 times everyday, and this scale 5 times a day." The child then does not pay attention to the amount of the time he or she is practicing the instrument, but knows if he or she is on repetition number 3, the student is almost finished.

Rewards: This works very well for both children and adult students. Some adults reward themselves with a cappuccino after a successful week of practicing. Parents can encourage children to practice by granting them occasional rewards for successful practicing. In our school, we reward children for a successful week of practicing with stars and stickers on his or her work. Praise tends to be the most coveted award; there just is no substitute for a pat on the back for a job well done. Sometimes, we all have a week with little practicing: in that case, there is always next week.

5. Use recognized teaching material.

There are some excellent materials developed by professional music educators that are made for students in a variety of situations. For example, in piano, there are books for very young beginners, and books for adult students that have never played before. There are books that can start you at a level you are comfortable with. These materials have been researched and are continually upgraded and improved to make learning easier. These materials ensure that no important part of learning the instrument can inadvertently be left out. If you ever have to move to a different part of the country, qualified teachers and institutions will recognize the materials and be able to smoothly continue from where the previous teacher left off.

Have Fun!!

Music should be something that you enjoy for a lifetime. So, try not to put unrealistic expectations on yourself or your children to learn too quickly. Everyone learns at a different pace, and the key is to be able to enjoy the journey.