



Dear CMSS Students and Families,

We hope this communication finds you safe, healthy, and enjoying summer. With a wild ride of a school year recently wrapped up, and a summer of remote lessons underway, we are eager to share with you our fall 2020 plan for lessons and classes at Community Music School of Springfield. Thank you for taking the time to respond to our end-of-year survey, as it has provided us with important insight into our planning for the upcoming school year.

CMSS will begin our school year as planned, on Monday, August 31, 2020. Lessons and classes will begin remotely, and we will ease into hybrid programming that will feature a mix of remote and in-person experiences.

The pace at which we transition into hybrid in-person offerings will be based on three very important factors: 1) enacting and revisiting state and CDC safety policies, protocols, and guidelines, 2) assessing the impact and practicality of these requirements, and 3) honoring the comfort level of the individuals involved when exploring the move to in-person programming (i.e., the student as well as the teacher).

Because remote lessons and classes will continue to be an integral part of the CMSS experience in the 2020-2021 school year, we would like to take this moment to make the following commitments to our community:

1. CMSS remote lessons will be of the highest caliber.

This summer, our faculty are refining their teaching techniques for this fall's remote music lessons. We are researching and investing in technological equipment and the best online platforms available so that our teachers can seamlessly deliver instruction and connect with their students meaningfully and effectively. Our faculty will have access to the CMSS building with technology support and high speed internet in order to teach remotely from their studios. While it is impossible to replicate in-person connections, we are committed to fostering musical growth, expanding creative expression, and deepening relationships with faculty and peers throughout the school year.

2. In order to inspire opportunities for community connection, all CMSS ensembles will be free for the 2020-2021 school year.

We enthusiastically encourage all interested students to join both beginner and advanced ensembles to meet and mingle with like-minded music-loving peers and create memorable music experiences. Stay tuned this summer to learn more about our expanded ensemble offerings for the upcoming school year.

3. CMSS will continue to support its students in need.

We know not all of our students have access to the resources and technology needed to participate in remote lessons and classes, and we are actively working on finding ways to bridge that gap. We remain committed to awarding financial aid and scholarships to as many students in our community as possible. We are still accepting financial aid applications, and we will award funds until none remain. [Click here](#) to learn more or start the process online. We are also currently exploring technological support initiatives, including device loans, portable hotspots, and community partnerships.

4. CMSS will take extra care to communicate, engage with, and respond to the needs of our extended community.

We are a non-profit community organization. We exist because there is a need, and we remain committed to serving the greater Springfield area now and into the future. We value our longstanding relationships with our families and our students, and this year provides an opportunity for us to innovatively and authentically connect with you even though we may not see you in our hallways.

As always, we are thankful you're part of our extended Community Music School of Springfield family. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns, and we can't wait to make music with you in the fall.

Sincerely,

Brooke Hopkins, Director of Enrollment
Rachel Rivard, Enrollment Coordinator
Eileen McCaffery, Executive Director

We anticipate you might have some questions about hybrid programming.

Please read on to learn more!

What kind of precautions is CMSS taking to make sure we can safely have in-person experiences when the time comes?

CMSS is instituting safety and sanitation protocols in accordance with state and local guidelines. When we move to hybrid programming and students prepare to arrive for in-person music experiences, we will fully communicate our processes and expectations with the community via email, our website, and signage at CMSS.

How will CMSS know when it's time to move to hybrid programming?

At the start of the fall semester, our "phase one" protocols will be in place so that our faculty can safely teach remotely from their CMSS studios. Once fall is underway, we will track the local and state data, consistently revisit the state and local standards and recommendations, and build in more protocols so that when it's appropriate we can move to "phase two" - the time at which we will begin accommodating students in the CMSS building (if they'd like in-person experiences). We don't have an exact date or timeline - the transition to hybrid programming will be based on our three factors: data and trends, our ability to activate protocols recommended by local and state guidelines, and the comfort of the individuals involved.

When CMSS offers transitional hybrid lessons and classes what might those look like?

- Socially-distanced lessons in a large space (with masks when possible/appropriate) if both the teacher and the student are comfortable with it.
- An alternating schedule of remote and in-person lessons if both the teacher and the student are comfortable with it.
- A beginner student has their first lesson with the teacher if both the teacher and student are comfortable with it.
- A small ensemble (or a smaller segment of a large ensemble) meets with their director in the very spacious and well-ventilated Robyn Newhouse Hall, where there is plenty of space to spread out.

What if I haven't registered for fall lessons and classes yet?

There's still plenty of time! You can simply respond to this email to get the process started. We know this year might pose some new challenges for your family, or that your needs might have shifted - we're here to make sure you find the perfect musical fit for the 2020-2021 school year.

What if I have some hesitation about starting with remote lessons in the fall?

Please let us know by [emailing](#) or calling! We'd like to know how you're feeling, and we'd like to suggest some options for how to move forward for fall in a way that *does* make you excited about learning and engaging with CMSS on your musical journey.

What if I'd like to help CMSS bridge the technology gap for students in need?

We'd love your support! If you'd like to make a financial gift (including donating your credits from unused spring lessons), if you have access to or expertise with technology equipment, or if you have a community partnership idea, we'd love to hear from you. You can [click here](#) to make a donation online, or please [send us an email](#) to share your thoughts.