

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (YAMAHA, CYMS & KEYBOARD):

(Please be sure to also review our Policies on our website under the Yamaha tab.)

YAMAHA FAQ:

What is the Yamaha Music Education System (YMES)?

Designed to meet the unique needs and developmental stages of each age group, Yamaha programs develop each student's comprehensive musical ability in an environment that inspires a love of music and a lifetime of active music participation.

Yamaha develops children's musical skills with three fundamental principles:

- 1) **Timely Education:** In order for children to enjoy music and to absorb and understand the given material easily, we believe it is best to give them appropriate guidance in accordance with the degree of their physical and mental development. Based upon this concept of timely education, the Yamaha method introduces music fundamentals to children at the time when their hearing capabilities are rapidly developing.
- 2) **Group Lessons:** Group lessons have many advantages that enable children to enjoy rich musical experiences such as making friends through music, developing cooperativeness and deepening understanding of music through participation in ensembles. For this purpose, Yamaha has adopted a method whereby students can listen and play in a group, learning music while enjoying it.
- 3) **Emphasis on Creativity:** In order to enable students to develop their creative capabilities, it is important to help them develop the ability to express themselves by thinking freely. We hope to help them acquire and enhance sensitivity and imagination, which are both sources of creativity through our comprehensive system of music education.

When is the best time to bring a child to music? Between the ages of 3-8 the major development of the ear occurs. This is also the age when a child is eager and receptive to learning through imitation and participation. Years of experience have proven that the prime time for tuning the ear to the understanding and lifelong enjoyment of music is during these early years. Through our programs the young child learns all the principles of music – relative pitch, notation, melody, harmony, and rhythm – all in an atmosphere that is nurturing, rewarding and fun.

Why is music important? Music helps children physically, mentally, socially and emotionally. Yamaha establishes the environments, through music, to expand your child's natural abilities. Through musical games, singing and playing, your child enters a new world of enchantment.

How are the parents involved? In our group lessons, a close partnership between parent, child and teacher develops. Together we explore the world of music in class so that you and your child can continue this adventure at home. Our homework assignments strengthens concepts and skills that have been taught in class.

Who teaches your child? Our classes are taught by teachers who are college graduates in music, and many have master's degrees in music. They are energetic, well-qualified musicians, screened through interview and testing, and then trained by Yamaha's educational staff. You will find our teachers to be warm, bright, enthusiastic, and eager to work with young children and their parents. For more information, please view the Teachers section of our website.

How do we go about it? Through the ear, the voice, the fingers and the mind, music becomes part of the real world of each child. We provide the necessary tools, guidance and support to encourage you and your child to form a learning partnership where natural musical abilities can flourish, where children can be creative, and where the solid foundation for a lifetime with music is built. Also, the time to begin is while the child's ear is receptive to the sounds which make up music. Creative teachers, using the guidelines and techniques developed of many years by Yamaha, can give your child the right start in music through our music fundamentals courses.

How is Yamaha Different from Piano Lessons? The Yamaha curriculum is broad compared to traditional private piano lessons. Children sing solfege, play the keyboard, sing songs with lyrics, move to music, play rhythm and keyboard ensembles and participate in music appreciation activities. They develop diverse musical skills without prematurely focusing on one instrument or style. This approach allows students to choose their future musical path when they are more physically and mentally mature. Yamaha students are often leaders in school orchestra, band, and choir programs.

Will My Child Learn to Play the Piano or Keyboard? Both! For ages 4 and up, an instrument is required at home (keyboard or piano). Children enjoy playing the keyboard and can become excellent pianists with Yamaha's holistic approach.

How Many Children Are in the Class? Classes are typically taught to groups of 6 -10 children. This format motivates children and provides an opportunity to develop ensemble skills and cooperation within a supportive community of friends and parents.

Should Parents Have a Musical Background? Parents do not have to have a musical background to support their child's learning. In the first few years, parents are deeply involved and learn right along with their child. Parent support and commitment are the most important.

What is the Parent's Role? Parental attendance facilitates accelerated growth. The parent/child partnership is active, not passive. Each partnership develops into a mini-ensemble, where co-learning, co-practicing and co-discovering can be enjoyed in class and at home.

Are Student's Required to Practice? Yes. For ages 4 and up, Yamaha's programs require parents to spend time making music at home with their child. Students receive 'homework' to reinforce the classroom activities. This serves as a guide for parents as they begin to integrate fun, active music-making into the daily life of the family. We

provide our parents with workshops and tools to support their time outside of the classroom.

How is Yamaha Different from Other Pre-School or Elementary School-Aged Programs? Most music programs share a common goal to introduce children to the joy of music making.

YMES is unique because:

Teachers Our faculty has a genuine commitment to teaching beginning musicians and are certified by Yamaha through extensive training and rigorous exams.

Fun and Rewarding Children can have fun *and* achieve a high level of music proficiency.

Play Performance opportunities are available in a wide variety of settings, including semester recitals.

Curriculum Materials include books, CD's, DVD's and other materials that combine decades of experience with the most recent research in music education.

International History We are part of a vibrant international network of Yamaha education centers in over 40 countries. More than 6 million students over 50 years have learned to play using the Yamaha method.

How is Yamaha Different from the Suzuki Method? The Yamaha curriculum and the Suzuki Method both began in post World War II Japan. They share some core concepts, such as teaching music like a language (introducing music in a manner similar to native language acquisition, or 'mother tongue approach'), timely education (training at a young age) and a belief that all children can learn.

Some general differences include:

Group or Private Lesson

Yamaha: Emphasis on an immersion into the musical community through group classes, ensembles, parents, teachers, friends and concerts.

Suzuki: While the musical community is valued, the emphasis is on the individual lesson.

Early Emphasis on Comprehensive Musicianship or Instrument Technique

Yamaha: Systematic and comprehensive training model includes singing, ear training, movement and music appreciation. In the beginning, the keyboard is a tool to confirm a broad range of musical abilities. While private lessons are an important part of the curriculum, they are added later when the student is more physically and mentally mature.

Suzuki: Students acquire fundamental musical skills. However, there is an early emphasis is on specific instrument technique (violin, etc); during the lessons, time and effort is spent on holding the instrument, bowing, and producing a sound.

Curriculum Materials and Assessment

Yamaha: Broad range of materials: method books and workbooks, CDs and DVDs in a variety of musical styles; integrated use of repertoire and tools to develop the child's musicianship. After two years, children may take the Yamaha Fundamental Skills Survey (FSS). As they advance through the curriculum, students may take the Yamaha Grade Exam.

Suzuki: In general, students learn musical concepts and instrument technique with a reliance on listening to and playing a single piece, rather than multiple pieces and styles.

Is Yamaha good for other instrumental interests?

The Yamaha Music Education System is a rounded musicianship approach that prepares a child for success in any instrument. It is keyboard/piano centered and children learn to play fluently. Classes are taught in a group setting, using ear training, solfege, movement and rhythm, music appreciation and ensemble. Yamaha allows children to develop solid musical skills without early focus on a performance instrument.

CYMS NEW STUDENT FAQ:

How often do new classes start? New classes start every 6 months, typically in February and August. We generally accept new students up to the 4th week into each semester. After 4 weeks it can be difficult to catch up to the rest of the class.

What if my child is not the required age by the first day of class? The Yamaha curriculum is specifically designed for certain ages. Children must be the required age before the first day of the semester (typically Feb 1 or Aug 1). (Music Wonderland age 3, Junior Music ages 4-5, Young Musicians ages 6-8.) This requirement helps ensure that children are enrolled in a course for which they are developmentally ready.

How does the school year work? CYMS operates on semesters, each semester is 6 months or 24 weeks long. Each semester consists of 2 quarters, & each quarter is 12 weeks long. Quarterly tuition is due 4 times each year – Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1 & Nov 1. (A current school calendar can be found on our website.)

How long are the lessons? Classes meet one time per week for 55 minutes (Music Wonderland meets for 45 minutes). Each level lasts for one semester (fall or spring), & is 23 lessons + 1 recital.

What does the yearly enrollment/materials fee cover? Group students have an enrollment/materials fee, which covers administrative costs and extensive materials that are essential to class. Each new JMC & YMC student receives a YMES shoulder bag, a student kit 'laptop', & homework book, in addition to multiple books, a CD & sometimes a DVD. Students receive the next level of books & CDs each semester.

Can we observe a class before registering? We offer free preview classes before the start of each semester, this is a great opportunity to see the school, meet the teachers, view the materials, & participate in a sample class. There is always plenty of time for questions and answers. Free preview classes are held in January/February and July/August. Check our website for dates and times. If you miss the preview class, it is possible to observe a class already in session, please email the office for details.

What do you do in class? We have lots of musical fun! All YMES courses provide activities that teach basic music skills and encourage independence, creativity and self-expression. Each class includes singing, keyboard playing, ear training, theory, ensembles, movement, and more!

How long do the YMES curriculums run? Student in our Junior Music Course (for 4-5 year olds) can continue with group lessons for up to 6 years. It starts with 4 semesters (2 years) of JMC 1-4. Then, the students move up to Junior Extension Course (JXC 1-4, also called JMC 5-8) for 4 semesters (2 years). After completing JMC 1-8, students typically take the Yamaha Grade Examination and receive a certificate of achievement. Some students then continue in our Junior Ensemble Course (JNC 1-4) for 4 semesters (2 years) or begin private lessons.

Our Young Musicians Course (for 6-8 year olds) is 6 semesters in length (3 years). After completing YMC 1-6, students typically take the Yamaha Grade Examination and receive a certificate of achievement. Some students then continue in our Junior Ensemble Course (JNC 1-4) for 4 semesters (2 years) or begin private lessons.

KEYBOARD FAQ:

Do we have to have a keyboard at home? Yes. For ages 4 and above, the Yamaha curriculum is sequential and requires consistent at-home practice. Ideally, you should purchase your keyboard before the beginning of the semester. You must have a keyboard by the second class.

Being new to the Yamaha School, I'm concerned about my child's long term interest level. Do we have to buy a "top of the line" keyboard? An entry level portable keyboard is fine, as long as it has a minimum of 61 keys.

Does the keyboard have to be "touch sensitive"? A touch sensitive keyboard, while not absolutely required in the beginning, is preferable. Many entry level keyboards are touch sensitive.

Can we purchase the same keyboard that is used in the class? No, the classroom instrument (KBL 300) was specifically designed for the Yamaha classroom and is not available for sale. However, entry level keyboards are very similar to the classroom instrument.

Do we have to purchase a keyboard stand and stool? Yes. Correct posture at the keyboard is essential, and this is not possible without an adjustable keyboard stand and stool.

We already have a keyboard (or piano) at home. Can we use this? Yes, as long as the keyboard has at least 61 keys with an adjustable bench and stand. Acoustic pianos must be tuned on a regular basis.

Where can I purchase a Yamaha keyboard? Yamaha keyboards are available at many locations, including Music Connection, Best Buy, Target or Walmart.

(Please be sure to also review our Policies on our website under the Yamaha tab.)