

Academy Handbook



2026-2027

Gateway Academy of the Arts

Academy Policy Handbook

Gateway Academy of the Arts began in 2006 and is under the administration, mission and vision of the Music and Worship Ministry of First Baptist Church of Melbourne, FL. All students are considered students of the Academy and not of the individual teacher and therefore are afforded all the benefits and privileges of being a part of the Gateway Academy of the Arts Community. All instructors are professing Christians, adhere to the mission and vision of First Baptist Church of Melbourne, and are active worshipers in a local congregation where the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed.

Registration

Each potential student, whether new or returning, must complete a registration form along with a non-refundable registration fee of \$25 each semester. A household family max of \$50 is available for families with multiple Academy students. [Registration forms](#) can be completed online only and [registration fees](#) can be paid online at [gatewayacademy.info](#) or in the church offices. **Any fees paid online or with a credit card will include a 3% service charge.** To avoid this 3% service charge, you can pay by cash or check in our church offices. Your registration fee must be paid in full and your registration form must be completed for lessons to be scheduled.

Members of First Baptist Church of Melbourne will have subsequent registration fees waived if they are continuing study in consecutive regular semesters. If a member student withdraws from the Academy and wishes to return at a later date, a new registration will be collected upon reentering the Academy.

Gateway Operating Schedule

Gateway Academy operates on a year-round schedule with Fall, Spring and Summer Terms.

- Private Instruction is offered in weekly 20, 30, 45, and 60 minute lessons.
- Fall and Spring semesters for private music instruction are sixteen weeks in length.
- The Summer semester has a six or nine lesson option to be scheduled with the instructor.

The Academy observes only Thanksgiving week and Spring Break week during the semester. There is a break of several weeks between semesters.

ACADEMY DATES

Fall 2026 Schedule:

Aug. 17	Lessons Begin
Nov. 20	Music Academy Recitals
Nov. 23-27	Thanksgiving Break (<u>no lessons</u>)
Dec. 7-10	Make-up Week for Excused Lesson

Spring 2027 Schedule:

Jan. 11	Lessons Begin
Mar. 22-26	Spring Break (<u>no lessons</u>)
Apr. 30	Music Academy Recitals
May 3-6	Make-up Week for Excused Lesson

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR GATEWAY ACADEMY

All Academy students must commit to a full semester of study to ensure the integrity of a student's experience in learning the individual instrument or discipline. It is also important that the student arrives a few minutes early to each lesson. Any student arriving late will be taught only for the remaining minutes of their allotted lesson time. If the instructor is late for any reason, they will give a full lesson to the student or reschedule at the student's convenience.

Student Safety

Please be prompt in picking up students so children will not be left unattended after lessons. Parents and siblings may wait, but please do not leave children unattended. To create the best learning environment and minimize distractions, we do ask that parents and siblings wait outside of the classrooms, but parents can sit in on a private lesson if they choose. Please note that when your child is enrolling in Private Music Lessons, they will be taught in a windowed room with an adult instructor alone. Your child's safety is important to us, and all Gateway Instructors have been thoroughly background checked.

Enrolling Mid-Term

Students may enroll at any time during the semester based on instructor availability and director discretion. Tuition costs are pro-rated for the remainder of the term at a per lesson price. The non-refundable registration fee is still required for all students when enrolling mid-term.

Withdrawal

The Academy operates on a semester schedule. If a student desires to withdraw from the Academy prior to the end of the semester, except in extreme circumstances, all tuition and fees for the semester are still the responsibility of the student. Withdrawal requests must be made in writing (includes email) to the Gateway Office.

Make Up Lessons

It is the student's responsibility to contact the Gateway Office (321.723.0561) if a lesson is to be missed, unless otherwise informed by your instructor. One make-up lesson for private instruction is granted only for an excused absence in which the instructor is notified at least four hours prior to the lesson. It is the Academy policy that an excused absence consists of student illness, extreme emergency, or death in the family. An unexcused absence includes homework, athletic events, school activity or vacation. Only one make-up lesson for an excused absence per semester will be granted. The final week of each semester is Make-Up Week and a student's one make-up lesson will be scheduled during this week.

Should the instructor miss a lesson, the instructor will make up the lesson at a convenient time for the student. All Music make-up lessons will be held at the Academy facility of First Baptist Church of Melbourne. No Music make-up lessons are permitted off the premises. If no convenient time can be arranged, the student's account will be credited for the lesson. A missed lesson by the instructor does not count toward the one make-up lesson reserved for the student at the end of the semester.

Dismissal

In the unfortunate event that a student's behavior or excessive absenteeism compromises the learning environment of him/her or others, the Academy holds the right to dismiss the student and end the relationship without refund.

Facilities Maintenance

The facilities of Gateway Academy of the Arts are provided courtesy of the First Baptist Church of Melbourne. Supplies and facilities should remain as they were before use of the classrooms. Please:

- Leave restrooms and waiting areas as you found them.
- Do not use church supplies intended for church use, including food/drinks/craft supplies.
- Do not allow children to run in the halls or play with church items/supplies.

Summer Semester

A \$15 non-refundable registration fee applies, maximum of \$30 per family. For private lessons, the student may choose six or nine private lessons over the summer term (May-July) at the scheduling discretion of the teacher and student. Tuition for the summer session is as follows:

	Six Lessons	Nine Lessons
20 minutes (PPE)	\$130	\$190
30 minutes	\$190	\$285
45 minutes	\$285	\$420
1 hour	\$380	\$560

Additionally, several special camps and workshops may be offered in week-long or block schedules.

Special Events

- Fall & Spring Music Recitals
- Community Recitals
- Summer Camps

Instruction

Private Instruction is offered weekly in the following areas of study. Private instruction fees apply.
(Beginning age level at teacher's discretion)

Bassoon	Cello	Fiddle	Flute
Guitar	Mandolin	Piano	Violin
			Voice

Recitals

The Academy offers various opportunities for performance and presentation throughout the year. At the instructor's approval, students are highly encouraged to participate in at least one recital each year. Each regular music semester has its own final recital at the end of the term.

Gateway Music Tuition

All semester tuition is **FULL Pay Only** and is payable online at gatewayacademy.info or in the church offices. Any tuition paid online or with a credit card will include a 3% service charge. To avoid this 3% service charge, you can pay by cash or check in our church offices. Payment for each semester must be made in full by the first lesson of each term. No student with an outstanding balance will be permitted to continue lessons, thereby forfeiting their slot in the academy.

20 minute private lesson - \$315 (Preschool Piano Exploration Only)

30 minute private lesson - \$465

45 minute private lesson - \$705

60 minute private lesson - \$930

Tuition fees are instructional fees only.

Books and personal supplies are the responsibility of the student.

Full Pay Tuition can be paid online or in the church offices during operating business hours, Mon-Thurs, 9:00am-5:00pm.

Any tuition payments made by credit card will include a 3% service charge. To eliminate this additional service charge, families may pay by check* or cash in the church offices, or after church office hours by placing their labeled payment in a sealed envelope in the black Gateway Payments mailbox located just outside the offices.

Payments by check* should be made payable to **FBC-Gateway Academy**

*Please note the student's name in the memo line on your check.



Get a GRIP!!



Gateway Recruitment Incentive Program

As families that are already part of the Gateway Academy of the Arts community here at First Baptist Church of Melbourne, we realize that you are our best advertisement. You already know the quality of the arts education we provide and our commitment to being a Christian "gateway" into our community.

So rather than giving lots of money to advertisers to promote Gateway Academy, we'd rather give you the money and allow you to **"Get a GRIP"** on your family, friends and neighbors.

For every new student who enrolls in Gateway Academy and tells us you told them about Gateway, we will credit your account for one week's lesson.

Our Academy Director

Dr. David A. Hasker came to First Baptist Melbourne as Worship Pastor in 2003 and had a vision for starting a Christian arts academy from the first time he set foot on the church campus. That vision became a reality in 2006 with the opening of Gateway Academy of the Arts. Pastor David holds a Bachelor's in Sacred Music from Liberty University and the Master of Church Music from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served as a worship pastor at churches in five states. While serving in Virginia, he returned to the classroom to complete a Master of Arts in Religion from Liberty University and taught Church Music and Conducting as an adjunct professor. In 2010 he became the first graduate of the Doctor of Ministry in Worship Leadership from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.



Gateway Academy Music Instructors

All Academy instructors are considered professionals in their field and have strong performance or educational expertise. Most faculty hold a bachelor's degree, with many having graduate degrees. All instructors are professing Christians and adhere to the mission and vision of First Baptist Church of Melbourne. Additionally, a criminal background check has been completed on all faculty members.

Bassoon

Lynnda Floyd graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education, studying bassoon under John Hunt and Jeff Keesecker. Lynnda went on to teach in the Brevard Public School system for 9 years as the assistant band director and orchestra director for Southwest Middle School, then moved to Bayside High School when the school opened as the Chorus Director, Orchestra Director, and AP Music Theory instructor. While teaching, she began serving as the Worship Associate at First Baptist Melbourne, primarily working with the worship choir and orchestra. Lynnda returned to the classroom as a student, and earned her Master of Arts in Worship Ministries degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 2018. Lynnda has continued to serve as the Worship Associate at First Baptist Melbourne for over 20 years, where she is currently the orchestra director. She has also been teaching bassoon lessons at Gateway Academy since 2018, and recently became a bassoon consultant for Brevard Public Schools, working with bassoon students from various middle and high school band programs throughout the county.

Cello

Dr. Tom Silliman has been an orchestra director and string teacher with the Brevard County School District for over thirty years and is currently the itinerant string specialist teacher for the Viera High School feeder chain. He is a cellist in the Brevard Symphony and previously served as the artistic director/concert orchestra conductor of the Brevard Symphony Youth Orchestra. He frequently performs with many other organizations in the Central Florida area and performs with his wife Becky in the Highwire flute and cello duo. Prior to moving to Brevard County, he served as professor of string education at Southern Utah University for three years. Dr. Silliman has a Bachelor of Music degree in cello performance from James Madison University and a Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in cello performance from Arizona State University. Dr. Silliman is an active member of the Worship Orchestra at First Baptist Melbourne.

Guitar

Kim Jacobs knows what it feels like to have a passion to play the guitar and to work hard to accomplish it. It is her desire to help others accomplish their goals and avoid bad habits and pitfalls along the way. She is personally attracted to all forms of guitar styles from rock to the simple beauty of acoustic finger-style guitar. But mostly, Kim loves to raise her instrument up in praise of God and offer back what He has so graciously given to her. She currently leads worship at Life's Oasis Church.

Her formal training allowed her two years to study classical guitar, music theory and musicianship from Ohlone College and the Mission San Jose School of Guitar in California. As a teacher of over 25 years, Kim is especially interested in developing a strong foundation from the beginning by teaching good technique, note reading and theory. Her professional experience includes playing for weddings and special family events, being a rhythm & lead guitar player in bands, leading worship services in local churches and teaching guitar to children and adults.

Piano

Le Ann S. Hasker is the wife of our Academy Director, Pastor David A. Hasker. She holds a Bachelor's in Music Education and the Master of Education in Educational Administration from Liberty University where she is currently pursuing the Doctor of Music Education. Mrs. Hasker has taught elementary music professionally in both Christian and Public schools in four states. She holds Orff Level III Certification and is currently the elementary music specialist at Viera Elementary School. She has taught piano privately for over 25 years and is the co-director of the Brevard Youth Chorus. She enjoys serving with her husband at First Baptist Melbourne where she sings in the Worship Choir and is the Children's Choir Coordinator.

Piano

Sara Rhodes has been playing the piano since the age of five. Having a natural ear for music, she quickly became proficient, even as a young child. Being the daughter of an Air Force Major, she moved often and was constantly awarded new opportunities to serve in every church music ministry. At the age of thirteen, she began formal training under a local teacher, Leigh Julian. During this time, Sara began to teach and share the gift of music with peers and young students alike. When she moved away to attend college in Jacksonville, she continued her musical education, both in voice and piano. Sara graduated with a Bachelor's degree, majoring in Secondary Education and Music. Today, she and her children attend First Baptist Melbourne where she works on staff as Worship Ministry Assistant, Gateway Administrator, as well as staying actively involved in music ministry. Sara has taught private piano for over 25 years.

Piano/PPE (Preschool Piano Exploration)

Lisa J. Wilt has been a private piano teacher for all ages for over 20 years. Since 2007, she has specialized in preschool piano which has inspired her to become the author of Piano Pals Program, a book designed for young musicians. In addition to piano, her background includes teaching elementary music for 21 years in Texas and Florida public and private schools. Also, she has taught preschool for 5 years in several local Christian schools. She holds a Bachelor of Music in Music Education, with minors in organ and music theory from The University of Texas at Austin. She earned a Master of Music degree with an emphasis in Kodaly Pedagogy, solfege, and folk song analysis from Sam Houston State University in Texas. She is also certified in Orff Levels I-III from Jacksonville University and the First Steps in Music course. Lisa has a passion for teaching piano and loves to make learning meaningful through games, manipulatives, improvisation, and familiar pieces. Lisa is an active member of Coastline Community Church.

Piano/Flute

Linda Hill received a Bachelor of Science in Music Performance from Radford University and a Master of Music Education from Florida State University. She taught beginning band for over 1 year and has taught private music lessons for 30 years. She has participated in the Space Coast Flute Choir, toured as a flutist with the Celebrant Singers, arranged Christian songs and performed for various churches under her Sounds of the Master's Flute ministry. She has been active in the music ministries of each church she has attended.

Violin/Fiddle/Mandolin/Beginner Piano

Sarah Dowell graduated with a B.M. in violin performance from Grand Valley State University, studying classical music under Dr. Gregory Maytan and Megan Crawford as well as jazz with Michael Drost. Prior to that she received training under Carla Trynchuk, graduate of the Juilliard School of Music. In 2015, Sarah placed first in GVSU's Concerto Competition, soloing the first movement of Jean Sibelius' Concerto in D minor. In 2016 and 2018, she premiered several new works composed for the GVSU New Music Ensemble National Parks Tours. Sarah served in the Battle Creek Symphony and Holland Symphony Orchestra. She currently shares music in a Christian duo called Living By The Stream. She attends First Baptist of Melbourne. Sarah has taught students at her home studio and at various academies. She knows how important it is to inspire and capture the interest of students. Thus, she incorporates classical, improvisation, fiddle, jazz, and other genres of interest to the aspiring student.

Violin

Jenna Cobb has been teaching violin privately for over 15 years. As a student, she was concertmistress of the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra in Atlanta, and became assistant concertmistress of the Atlanta Chamber Orchestra serving for three years before relocating to Melbourne. Jenna is most passionate about playing sacred music in the church. She has involved herself in church orchestras and soloing since the age of 13. She is currently an active member of the Worship Orchestra at First Baptist Melbourne. Excellence and wholeheartedness in worship is one of her primary goals for her students.

Violin

Juliana Benson began studying violin at the age of four through the Suzuki method and quickly developed a passion for music through competitive solo and ensemble performances. She attended high school at Baltimore School for the Arts before earning her Bachelor of Music in Violin Performance from Shenandoah Conservatory, where she performed in various ensembles and often served as Concertmaster.

Since moving to Florida, Juliana has continued her professional career as Assistant Music Librarian with the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra and has served as Concertmaster for the Melbourne Community Orchestra. She has been teaching violin since 2016 and holds Suzuki Teaching Certificates for Books 1–4. Juliana enjoys sharing her love of music with students of all ages and is passionate about helping each student grow in both skill and confidence.

Voice

Keira Rhodes is a passionate young musician and voice instructor currently pursuing her degree at Eastern Florida State College. A lifelong singer, she has been developing her vocal skills since early childhood and has spent the past two years studying private voice under the guidance of a college professor. In addition to her vocal training, Keira Rhodes is also proficient in both piano and violin, bringing a well-rounded musical perspective to her teaching. She has performed in church settings, concerts, and collegiate vocal juries, gaining valuable stage experience along the way. As a student teacher at Gateway Academy, she is excited to be working with students and sharing her love of music while continuing to grow in her own studies.