



# School of Fine Arts

AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

Student Handbook



# SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS HANDBOOK

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## WHO WE ARE

The School of Fine Arts at Houston's First Baptist Church offers instruction in many disciplines to develop each student's God-given talents and abilities to their fullest potential for service in ministry, their profession, or simply for personal enjoyment. The School provides children and adults, whether beginners or experts, with the highest quality education in music and the arts with instruction from Christian professionals and artists.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission at The School of Fine Arts at Houston's First is to equip people to glorify God through the Arts.

## FACULTY

### ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF



John Bolin

Executive Director, Minister of Worship & Arts

[John.Bolin@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:John.Bolin@HoustonsFirst.org)



Eric Belvin

Director, School of Fine Arts

[Eric.Belvin@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Eric.Belvin@HoustonsFirst.org) | [SoFA@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:SoFA@HoustonsFirst.org)

### INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

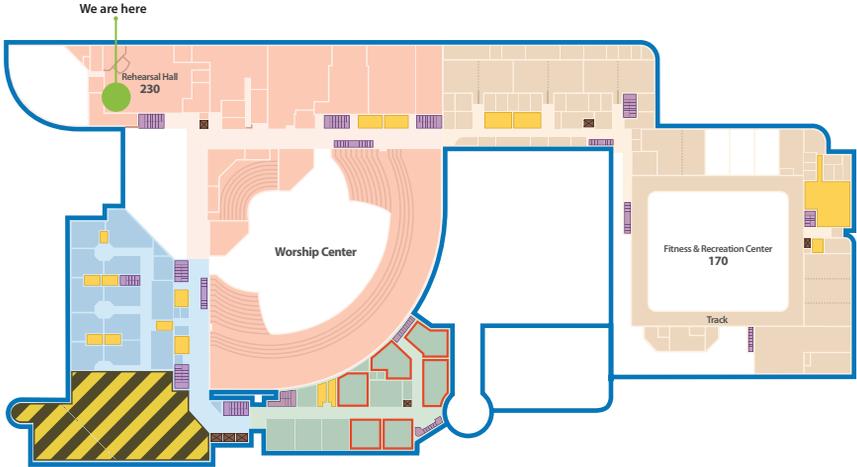
The School of Fine Arts has a high standard of excellence in our teaching staff. All of our instructors hold at least one degree from an accredited college or university. Most have considerable experience either in the performance arena or the field of education. Some have experience in both areas. Their high standards of excellence also apply to their personal lives. For more specific information about individual teachers, see the bio section on our website at [HoustonsFirst.org/SoFA](http://HoustonsFirst.org/SoFA).

# HOW TO FIND US

The School of Fine Arts at Houston’s First Baptist Church is located in the Rehearsal Hall on the second floor of the church.

Houston’s First Baptist Church is on the southwest corner of the interchange between I-10 (Katy Freeway) and I-610W (West Loop).

Parking for the School of Fine Arts is most convenient in the West Parking lot. To find the School of Fine Arts, enter the church at the main entrance from the West Parking lot. Once inside the building, the church Reception desk will be on your left. Just past that on the left you will find the elevator. Go to the second floor. As you exit the elevator turn right. The School of Fine Arts Reception area will be on your right.



## WHAT WE OFFER

Private instruction for all ages is offered in the form of 30-minute lessons or 60-minute lessons in the following instruments:

### PIANO

### WOODWINDS

Flute  
Clarinet  
Saxophone  
Oboe/English Horn  
Bass/Contrabass Clarinet

### PERCUSSION

Pitched and Non-pitched  
Drum set

### GUITAR

Acoustic  
Electric  
Bass

### VOICE

### BRASS

Trumpet  
Trombone  
French Horn  
Tuba

### STRINGS

Violin  
Viola  
Cello  
Bass

Group instruction is offered in the following areas:

### PHOTOGRAPHY

### DRAMA

### DANCE

### GRAPHIC DESIGN

The School of Fine Arts is open:

### Fall Semester

Monday–Friday

### Spring Semester

Monday–Friday

### Summer at SoFA - Lessons & Camps

Monday–Friday

## TUITION

Students may choose from two payment options:

1. Paid in full with application (via cash, check, credit card, or online payment)
2. 4 monthly installments using check or credit card with a \$20 convenience fee

### Private Lessons

30 minutes - \$35 per lesson - \$560 total tuition (\$35 x 16 lessons)

60 minutes - \$65 per lesson - \$1040 total tuition (\$65 x 16 lessons)

### Fees

1. A \$25 annual registration fee is due at the time of registration and is non-refundable. Family maximum fee is \$50.
2. A convenience fee of \$20 is due if selecting monthly tuition installments. This may be divided into 4 payments of \$5 paid with each installment.
3. The School of Fine Arts reserves the right to charge a \$10 late fee if payment is not received by the 15th of the month. The balance due plus the \$10 late fee may be charged to the credit card provided upon registration/enrollment application **if payment is not received within two weeks of the due date.**  
**The School of Fine Arts reserves the right to cancel and/or deny lessons for payments not received.**
4. A recital fee of \$35 is due each semester, even if the student does not perform at a recital.
5. Students may need to purchase music or supplies at the recommendation of individual teachers.

## Monthly Installments

For convenience, the monthly installment is made up of four equal payments. Payments remain the same regardless of the number of weeks in the month. These payments are due on the 15th of the month. Monthly tuition (including convenience fee) is as follows:

30 minute lesson -  $\$140 + \$5$  ( $\$145 \times 4 = \$580$ )

60 minute lesson -  $\$260 + \$5$  ( $\$265 \times 4 = \$1060$ )

The monthly installments are not related to the number of lessons in a month. The total tuition for the semester is divided into four installments.

## Payment Due Dates

First payment is due at, or before, the student's first lesson.

All subsequent payments are due by the last day of the month.

## Summer Payment

Fee schedule for summer tuition is released in late spring. Please contact the SoFA Admin at [SoFA@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:SoFA@HoustonsFirst.org) or call 713.957.5889 or visit the website for more information.

## Scholarship Information

Need based scholarships are available. Please contact SoFA at [SoFA@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:SoFA@HoustonsFirst.org) or call 713.957.5889 for more information.

# **ATTENDANCE**

## **Attendance - Private Lessons**

A typical semester will contain 15-17 lessons. The final lesson is the recital. One makeup lesson per semester will be granted to each student when 24-hour notice is given by email or phone call. Any lessons missed and rescheduled, excluding the one allotted makeup lesson, will be at the discretion of the teacher.

Students who are 10 minutes (or more) late for their lesson will be considered to have forfeited their lesson. This will be considered an unexcused absence and the instructor is under no obligation to make it up. If running close to lesson time, please call the SoFA Admin at 713.957.5889 while in transit. Communication is of the utmost importance.

If a student wishes to discontinue lessons, a 30-day written notice will be required. The student will be financially responsible for the lessons that occur during those 30 days from the date notice is given whether or not the student chooses to attend the lessons. A refund will be given for the remainder of lessons that occur after the 30 days if previously paid for. The registration fee is non-refundable.

## **Attendance - Group Lessons**

These classes consist of a fixed schedule of 16 classes per semester for which the student pays in advance. Because of the nature of the group class environment, we will not be able to issue refunds or reimbursements for missed lessons (excused or unexcused). We are not able to schedule make-up lessons for individuals for any reason.

If the teacher is to be absent on any given class day, the class will be notified ahead of time. This class will then be made up at no additional cost to the student.

If the school has to close due to weather or church-wide closure event, the class will be made up at no additional cost to the student.

# MAKE UP LESSONS

## Private Make-up Lessons

One make-up lesson will be granted each semester for an excused absence in which the instructor is notified as soon as possible by email and phone in advance. Excused absences include student illness, extreme emergency and death in the family.

Unexcused absences will not be refunded or made up by the teacher. They consist of, but are not limited to, forgetting the lesson, choosing to do another activity during the scheduled lesson time, and unnotified absences.

If a student is late, the teacher is not under obligation to extend the lesson. If the teacher is late, the teacher must either extend the lesson time or re-schedule the lost time.

One excused absence, as defined above, will be made up. These will be scheduled and approved by the instructor and School of Fine Arts office. Lessons will not be made up if they are missed or denied due to late payment. Students are responsible for paying for all lessons regardless of student or instructor attendance. Lessons not completed by the end of the semester due to teacher absence will be credited to the student.

If a lesson is canceled or forfeited by the student for any reason, the instructor may then schedule another lesson in the absentee time slot. The instructor is under no obligation to notify the parent or student who forfeits the lesson of the substitution. If the original student's schedule changes and they are able to attend the canceled lesson, it is subject to the instructor's schedule.

## Group Make-up Lessons

Group class lessons consist of a fixed schedule for which the student pays in advance. No refund will be given for student-initiated missed classes or for withdrawal. Instructor-initiated missed classes will be rescheduled. If that is not possible, the student will be credited the appropriate amount.

## **RECITALS**

### **Students**

At The School of Fine Arts at Houston's First, we consider recital performance an essential element in the refining of our talent. The recital is also a wonderful opportunity for friends and family to celebrate in what the students have learned, and it's an incredibly affirming time for the students themselves. For these reasons, we consider the recital a requirement for the over-all artistic experience. The student will come prepared to perform a specific piece assigned by their teacher, usually from memory. The recital date is posted at the beginning of the semester to give families plenty of time to calendar the event. Please make it a priority to attend this wonderful event each semester.

### **Faculty**

Two times a year our faculty performs for our students, their parents and the general public. Students are required to attend at least one of these each year.

## **PRACTICE**

Regular practice is an essential element in refining musical/artistic talents. In order to receive the full benefit of instruction, the student is expected to practice daily the same amount as the lesson time. If a student has a 30-minute lesson, then they should practice a minimum of 30 minutes each day. If the student has a 60-minute lesson they should practice a minimum of 60 minutes a day.

### **Practice Hints for Parents**

1. Sit down with your child and look at his/her schedule. Choose a set time every day for practice. Insist that this practice time be honored.
2. Provide a practice setting free of distractions such as TV, phone, personal electronics or interruptions from siblings.
3. Check your child's assignment sheet at the beginning of the week to see the teacher's comments and assignments for the week.
4. Check on your child's progress throughout the week. Make sure he/she has accurately recorded the amount of practice time each day.
5. Make sure your child finishes any written assignments and is prepared for each lesson/class.
6. Teachers will make practice recommendations based on the individual student's needs.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

In case of inclement weather, you may check our website at [HoustonsFirst.org/SoFA](http://HoustonsFirst.org/SoFA) or call the office at 713.957.5889. You should also check with your instructor.

The School of Fine Arts follows the inclement weather policy of Houston's First Baptist Church. Please listen to local TV and radio broadcasts for information about closings. When bad weather develops during the afternoon, the School of Fine Arts reserves the right to cancel classes for the remainder of the day. Please call the School of Fine Arts at 713.957.5889 for cancellation notices or to determine whether a decision to close the building was made during the day.

## SAFETY

Your safety is our priority. Please adhere to all policies and procedures to insure a safe environment.

**No** child under the age of 12 (whether student or sibling) may be left without adult supervision in the hallways or other areas of Houston's First Baptist.

Students under the age of 12 **must** be dropped off and picked up in the SoFA reception area by an adult or authorized sibling over the age of 16. Students 12 and over can be released if an authorization form is completed.

Students are expected to check in and check out with the school admin for each lesson. For security reasons, if a student is late for any lesson without notification, the school admin may call the parents to verify the child's whereabouts.

Parents and children should wait quietly in the School of Fine Arts reception area located upstairs from the main church entrance in the NW corner of the building. ([link to map of building](#))

Security cameras monitor the practice rooms at all times.

All teachers will have completed a background and security check.

*Please detach this page and bring it with you to the first lesson.*

**STUDENT AGREEMENT**

As a student of the School of Fine Arts at Houston’s First Baptist Church, I agree to:

- Be on time for my lessons.
- Obey the rules of SoFA.
- Behave appropriately while at SoFA.
- Sign in at the reception desk and wait quietly for my lessons.
- Bring any needed instruments and materials.
- Practice on my own between lessons.
- Participate in the end of semester recital.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (printed name)  
agree to abide by these requirements in order to receive instruction at SoFA. I understand that if I fail to follow this agreement, I may be asked to end my studies at SoFA.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**CONSENT AND WAIVER REGARDING THE USE OF STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO**

I hereby allow photos and video of myself to be published via print, video, or website which are affiliated with Houston’s First Baptist Church School of Fine Arts.

I understand that publication may be accomplished electronically via the Internet/ World Wide Web and that after publication the church/school will be unable to prevent persons from gaining access to the Internet/World Wide Web, copying my photographs and video from the web, and subsequently using, altering, or republishing it without my consent.

I waive any claim for damages against Houston’s First Baptist Church or the School of Fine Arts from any un-consented use, alteration, or reproduction of my photographs and video by third parties accessing the Internet/World Wide Web or obtaining copies of the print or video material.

Name of Student (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Signature of Legal Guardian required if Student is under 18*



## CONTACT US

Eric Belvin Director, School of Fine Arts

P - 713.957.5889 | Eric.Belvin@HoustonsFirst.org

SoFA@HoustonsFirst.org | HoustonsFirst.org/SoFA

7401 Katy Freeway, Houston 77024

Second floor, NW corner of the building (also known as the Rehearsal Hall)



## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Please feel free to discuss with your instructor any difficulties that you or your student might be experiencing with lessons. If you feel the situation is not being properly addressed, please contact the School of Fine Arts admin at 713.957.5889 immediately. If possible, put your concerns in writing. The School of Fine Arts is dedicated to making sure your student has a quality and rewarding experience.



**SoFA**  
HOUSTON'S FIRST

