



NCCMI Coaches' Handbook

NCCMI REPERTOIRE AND STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

REPERTOIRE

Administrators assign music in the fall of each year, including selection appropriate for the Federation of Music Clubs Junior Festival (takes place in March). These pieces are listed on the repertoire list for each group and uploaded to their repertoire folder.

For 2nd semester, coaches know best! **In December**, coaches confer and make **specific recommendations for 2nd semester repertoire**. Please try to give the violinists opportunities to play both 1st and 2nd violin. Liz can provide uploads to the repertoire folders, if needed.

Additional notes about Federation: All groups eligible to participate in the Federation Competition in early March are assigned one required piece in September. This required piece is listed on each group's repertoire list along with the difficulty level. Federation requires an additional choice piece at the same level. Even though they are assigned other repertoire that might fit, this should be reviewed in December for possible change. ([Chamber Guidelines](#), [General Guidelines](#))

WORKING TOWARDS GOALS

Each ensemble must meet 5 requirements (see below). They can earn recognition for community service at the end of the year for 3 or more outreach events. And there are many attractive Master Classes and Workshops. It is the job of the Group Coordinator to keep track of these, but it is also important for you to be aware of your group's schedule! That way, you can better prepare them for imminent events.

CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

- 1 Performance Review (beginning of January)
- 1 Spring Final Concert (late April and early May)
- 1 Outreach Event (Ovations, Retirement Communities, etc.)
- 1 Master Class or Workshop (throughout the year).
- 1 IMPACT Series Event Attendance

LOGISTICS

SCHEDULING

Important reminders:

1. It is beneficial to have **evenly spaced sessions**. If this is a challenge, see “Solving Problems” section below. It is helpful for the Lead Coach to meet with them for the first scheduled session.
2. The **Kickoff Meeting** is the group's initial meeting with Liz to go over the spreadsheet, group expectations, scheduling concerns, etc. **Lead Coaches should plan to attend the Kickoff Meeting.**
3. If you must miss a session, it is possible to make up the time by adding to other sessions in the semester.
4. Coaches should **work together on the scheduling** to ensure a positive cadence to the semester. If there are too many big gaps, reach out to Ben so that an intern or Jimmy can step in to help out.

Steps to schedule your sessions:

1. Click on the link to your group's **spreadsheet**. You'll see all possible dates listed.
2. Insert your name in **four dates in the coach column** on the group spreadsheet as soon as your group is formed.
3. Write in your **starting time** so the group knows how to structure their time to best advantage. If the group is more advanced, they are given a 2 hour time slot. This allows for 30 minute warmup or short practice before or after your coaching session.

LOCATIONS

NCCMI manages partnerships with multiple Triangle area churches. We have differing and specific scheduling formats to follow at each church. **Please do not try to change the dates at these locations with less than 2 ½ weeks notice** since they require us to give them any changes with 2 weeks notice.

CHURCH VENUES

Park in marked spaces. Enter and exit the buildings as instructed. Students, families and faculty can use the restrooms, coffee machines, etc. Help us **ensure respectful behavior** among the students. Make sure children do not run in the hallways. Families can sit quietly in the lobby areas of the churches and use the wifi there as long as you have two adults in your room.

CHURCH ROOM SETUPS

Your group will be given a specific room assignment at partner churches.

Do not go into other rooms even if they are empty. Start and end on time as there are often other classes before or after your sessions. If you need additional time, ask your Group Coordinator to

build that into the scheduling requests at the beginning of each semester. **Return the room to its original state** before leaving.

Students are required to bring their own folding music stands. If there is a stand in the room, you can use it. Just put it back in its original location and make sure no one leaves anything in the room.

Check to make sure none of the students have left anything behind.

GROUP COORDINATOR

Each coach should connect with the group coordinator as soon as possible. It's important to establish a rapport right from the beginning and the coordinator is an essential partner in organizing the group and keeping everyone on a positive track. They will set up a communications system (text group, Google calendar, etc.); make sure you are aware of and a part of this system.

LEAD COACHES

Each team of two coaches must have one **Lead Coach** who serves as Artistic Steward for the ensemble (\$100 extra per semester).

Lead Coach duties:

1. **Connect with the other coach** by phone or zoom once per semester to help coordinate your teaching plans.
2. Lead Coach **must attend** either their group's **Kickoff Meeting** or the **NCCMI Orientation** in September.
3. Lead Coach must attend at least **one major performance event** for their group (Performance Review or Spring Final Concert).
4. Schedule first coaching as early in the semester as possible, perhaps even the **group's first session** to help them get a good start.
5. Make the last semester coaching as close to the Performance Review or Spring Final Concert as possible. This can be **combined with the dress rehearsal time** for best results.
6. Event assignments will be listed on group spreadsheets by mid October. Lead Coaches **determine the repertoire for each event at the beginning of each semester**. Any changes must be made by at least two weeks prior to an event.
7. Ensure that the group gets all of their coachings sessions and **tracks their progress** towards specific events/goals.
8. Determine **repertoire for 2nd semester** (in consultation with the other coach).
9. Help plan possible competitions/extra events.

TRAINING/PAYCHECKS/TAXES

Teacher training takes place each year in August or September. It's important to attend to learn about policy updates, share strategies and other important matters. Teachers are paid extra to attend.

Coaches are required to submit a W9 and must undergo a background check. Paychecks are issued at the end of each semester except for special events like Performance Review panel and Side by Side Workshops. In those cases, coaches are given checks immediately after the event. Teachers are considered to be independent contractors. They will receive 1099 Tax forms in January and are responsible for payment of their own taxes.

COACHING GUIDELINES

TEACHER MEETING

At the beginning of each year, there will be a paid, 90-minute teacher training which **is required for all coaches**, including returning ones. This training will go over the guidelines and expectations of the NCCMI program, including policies and procedures that are new for that year. The date for this training will be provided over the summer.

KICKOFF NOTES

Each coach will receive a packet of their group judging forms to help you have a “baseline understanding” of the group’s level, needs and potential. Please use this, along with your first coaching session, to make an initial assessment of your group.

Questions to consider:

1. Do they need a peer mentor to help with student-led sessions?
2. Does one individual stand out as being a lot less capable/prepared or advanced.
3. Do the repertoire assignments meet the needs of the group?

TEACHING TO THE LEVEL OF EACH GROUP

As experienced teachers, our coaches are great at differentiating their style of coaching. Our groups range in level from advanced beginner to highly advanced. Here are some suggestions to add to your repertoire of teaching techniques!

TEAM WORK

Please plan to connect with the other coach at some point each semester. This can be an email, phone, text or you can share a score or notebook. In this way, you will ensure that you are in agreement and not duplicating each other’s efforts.

STUDENT-LED REHEARSALS

This is really important and all-too-often overlooked... Please look ahead on the schedule prior to each session you teach. **IF the next session is a student-led rehearsal, give the group and/or their student intern a plan/list of things to work on.** This can include specific measure numbers and metronome speeds to practice, sections to practice in pairs or trio groupings, ideas about slowly practicing for intonation (with one person holding a drone note), etc. If you wish, you can even send them a short video clip of you playing part of the music so they can practice along with it. Refer to the [NCCMI Rehearsal Guidebook](#) for more suggestions.

FOR ALL GROUPS: Emphasize positive reinforcement. **Try not to focus on any individual student for too long.** Be encouraging. Share your personal stories of playing in chamber music groups. Your enthusiasm is infectious and inspiring!

Checklist for all groups:

1. Basic ensemble skills: listening, following, leading.
2. Good rhythm and intonation.
3. Following written directions: tempos, dynamics, articulations

4. Bowings should match!
5. Style elements.
6. Communication within the group: body language, eye contact
7. Telling a story through the music.

Young, inexperienced Groups-

- Fewer student-led rehearsals each semester (4-5).
- Groups are told that a parent must help facilitate the rehearsal based upon the coaching notes, unless a student intern is there. **Make sure that a parent is taking notes at your coaching session or send an email with suggestions.** Otherwise, the students tend to simply play through their music, repeatedly making the same mistakes.
- Story-telling is key to helping them get over the hurdle of technical challenges that would otherwise be very frustrating.
- Practicing in pairs and trios can be really great for all levels.
- Please be VERY encouraging to these groups. Positive reinforcement is definitely the best way to make progress.

Intermediate Groups-

- These groups vary a lot but they have more rehearsals in their calendars (5-6).
- Some of them are more advanced players in first-time chamber ensembles. They might not understand how to play together well or how to follow through in effective rehearsals.
- Take notes at your coachings and have one student take a scan or photo of your notes to help them in their student-led rehearsals. Emphasize style points and performance “energy” with these groups as they become more advanced.
- At this age, kids can feel very self-conscious and easily scrutinized. Emphasize that chamber music is a team sport; each part is only a PART. The WHOLE happens when they make the music come alive TOGETHER.

Advanced Groups-

- These groups need to be given musical and technical challenges. They have 6-8 rehearsals each semester but most groups do not meet more than once per week.
- Understand that they are committed to the program but also have many other demands upon their time. Their parents are often stressed out over college planning. We try to assign music that keeps them feeling challenged, moving forward and having fun without undue frustration.
- Ideas:
 - Have them play off of a score and write cues in their parts.
 - Have them play standing up sometimes (except the pianist and cellist!).
 - Try playing back to back to heighten listening skills.
 - They should learn to play phrase beginnings and endings by memory so they can maintain better eye contact.
 - Encourage them to play more performances to reinforce their ensemble “bonding”.
- These kids are nearly adults but they still need a lot of positive support.

SESSION NOTES

NEW THIS YEAR! All group spreadsheets have a tab labeled "Coaching Sessions" which you should use to type in notes following each of your sessions. Include which pieces were covered in the

session, which sections, what the group should work on in their next rehearsal, and a note about repertoire to focus on for any upcoming events they have. This helps the group review and understand what needs to be worked on and also lets your fellow coach know what has already been addressed. This is important for all groups, though the types of comments might vary depending on the level (see above).

SOLVING PROBLEMS

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

If you are unable to reschedule a coaching session, it is possible to get a substitute. Start by asking your team coach to take the session. It is possible for you to then take one of their sessions in the next semester. Otherwise, we can find a substitute coach from among the staff.

LONG GAPS IN SCHEDULES

The ideal spacing between coaching sessions is 1-2 weeks apart. If there is likely to be a gap of 3 weeks or more, the lead teacher and group coordinator should work together to fix that (at the beginning of the semester). If it is not possible to correct the gap, contact Liz or Ben. We will assign an intern or teacher to fill it in.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Parents should sit at the back rows of the room, unless it is an elementary grade group. It's important to establish positive and clear boundaries early on with parents about the role they play in the coaching/rehearsal process for the group. This varies from group-to-group, especially with age.

Parents can be great partners in the learning process but they might not know how best to support your efforts. If your group is younger, give them a rehearsal checklist at the end of your coaching. One parent can be asked to help them follow through in rehearsal. **But it is important for the group to learn how to rehearse on their own, even if there are stumbles along the way.** Parents need to know that is okay and a natural part of the learning process.

Staff will review these guidelines at the Kickoff Meetings, specifically how to be respectful of each coach's authority and time while maintaining an active role in the group, if necessary. We will strongly suggest **a limit of two parents** in the coaching and rehearsal sessions. If a parent is getting too involved in your group, contact Liz or Ben to help resolve the issue.

TARDY OR ABSENT STUDENTS

NCCMI requires its students and parents to sign a Guidelines Form. Among the items is an understanding that 2 or more unexcused absences and/or history of unexcused late arrivals/early departures can result in dismissal. We have had to dismiss some students in the past but prefer to take care of little issues before they become bigger. It is often possible to head off problems by talking with the families involved. Please fill in for a missing student's part so that other students can continue to make progress

Do not ignore consistently tardy students. **Ask them if they have a job or other conflict causing their tardiness.** If so, it is usually possible to slightly shift the start time of the weekly sessions so they can arrive on time.

Coaches are expected to be on time. Do not cancel sessions with less than a few days notice.

ASSISTANCE FOR THOSE WITH CHALLENGES

NCCMI is committed to helping students who have family challenges, affording private lessons or some other accessibility issues to consider.

If you feel that one student is holding back the group, we can approve a private lesson for them and will pay you for that lesson (\$75). Try not to focus too much on that individual during the coaching sessions, as this can lead to frustration on the part of the other students. Individuals who have been in chamber groups before but are not very advanced technically might need more personal attention. NCCMI cannot afford extra payments on a regular basis so please limit these requests to those in extreme need.

We want all students to feel valued and secure in our program and excited to play chamber music. Let us know if you have an interest in serving on our accessibility committee.

MEDICAL OR OTHER STUDENT ISSUES

You will be informed if any of your students have health or family issues to consider. Groups are told to have scheduled sessions even if one student is out sick. They can join by zoom if up to it. If two or more students are absent, the session will need to be rescheduled.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES

Protecting children and staff safety and health is a top priority for NCCMI. Here are NCCMI requirements to protect the safety of our students and staff:

2 ADULT DEEP POLICY: Best practice is to have two adults present at every session, inclusive of the coach. This is a requirement at most churches. **For every coaching session at a church, you must have one other adult present.** This can be the Group Coordinator or another parent. It is our policy to have 2 adults present at coachings in students' homes and at student-led sessions, if possible.

Check to make sure that restrooms are clear before letting students go in.

Make sure someone stays with any student waiting for a lift at the end of a session. **Please do not leave kids completely unattended in a church.**

In smaller locations like the Parlor at HUMC or in private homes, the 2nd adult can sit in the lobby or another nearby room. In that case, leave the door open while rehearsing.

Do not cover windows in the doors.

Some church locations require a training session for any adults in those spaces. All those teaching at Highland UMC must participate in the Safe Sanctuaries Training Session and sign an agreement which states that you will abide by the policies of the church. Contact Liz or Jimmy with any concerns by you or any students. We will let you know if you are required to do a training session. These are very short sessions, either on zoom or videotaped.

TEACHER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NCCMI relies upon feedback from our teachers to continuously improve our program. Committee meets on an ad hoc basis, 1-3 times per year. If you would like to serve on this important committee, please let us know! In addition, feel free to share your own suggestions with the members of this committee. These will be discussed on a regular basis.

PERFORMANCES

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Coaches are encouraged to attend any performances they can. The students love to see teachers there!

YOUR PERFORMANCE NOTICES

Let us know of your own performances. We will post them on our social media outlets and encourage our students to attend them!

WE APPRECIATE YOU!

Thanks for teaching for NCCMI. You are the heart and soul of our program and we couldn't do what we do without you!