

Elementary Orchestra Handbook

A Guide for Students and Parents

2020 - 2021

This Handbook contains information
pertaining to expectations,
music supplies, and lesson schedules.
Please read carefully!

Contact Information

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Teacher Website: Please go to the teacher menu
on your school's Website to locate my website.
All assignments will be located on the Orchestra Google Classroom.

Course Outline

SIXTH GRADE ORCHESTRA This elective course of study is part of the comprehensive, sequential instrumental music program that begins in fifth grade and continues through high school. Students will acquire knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the artistic, cultural and intellectual accomplishments of our civilizations while developing skills to express personal musical talents. In sixth grade, students meet with a NYSED certified instrumental music specialist for one ensemble class and for one lesson class in each six-day cycle. Students are expected to participate in the concerts and rehearsals that may be held after school hours. Our music educators have used the New York State Education Department's publication "Learning Standards for the Arts" to design the curriculum.

"I would like to teach children music, physics, and philosophy; but most importantly music.
For in the patterns of music and all the arts are the keys to learning." ~ Plato

WELCOME TO ORCHESTRA!

Whether you are joining us for the first time in 5th grade or beginning 6th grade orchestra after summer break, I would like to welcome you. There are many activities planned for this year so get those dates on your calendar right away. Parental and guardian support and encouragement are keys to developing habits for success.

COURSE OUTLINE

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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The WCSD Elementary Orchestra Program at Kinry Rd, Sheafe Rd, and Oak Grove introduces students to the Performing Arts by:

- Exploring various styles of music
- Promoting the use higher order thinking skills in music: classify, decide, compare, analyze, predict, generalize
- Encouraging creativity, setting goals, and reaching them by following a plan: brainstorm, dream, plan, organize, follow through
- Introducing string specific terminology and notation & encouraging students to talk and write about music using music vocabulary
- Promoting appreciation and enjoyment
- Making connections to the world around us
- Introducing and developing technique

In addition to these general goals for musical development, I expect to see individual student development in such areas as:

- Demonstrating Proper Instrumental Technique
 - Intonation: left hand technique
 - Tone Quality: right hand technique
 - Be able to use correct fingering, sticking, or bowing to play simple melodies
- Demonstrating knowledge of basic music symbols.
 - Reading and playing basic rhythms
 - Scale study
 - Be able to compose or improvise an original simple melody
- Demonstrating an understanding of Musical Expression
- Critical listening skills
- Being able to play solos and in an ensemble setting

"It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."

~ Dumbledore, Harry Potter and the Secret Chamber

SUPPLY LIST: Supplies are available at area music stores.

- Instrument: Please be sure you have a nametag on your case!
- Celli and Basses — Endpin Xeros Anchor
- Violin and Violas — shoulder pad or shoulder rest
- Rosin
- Lesson Book
 - 5th Grade Students Book I: Essential Elements 2000 or latest edition
 - 6th Grade Students Book I & 2: Essential Elements 2000 or latest edition
- Pencil
- Folder or binder to keep sheet music together
- Music stand for home practice or festivals
- Dust Cloth to keep instrument clean.

ORCHESTRA UNIFORM

Most Concerts: All-Black clothing is preferred. Black Bottoms and White Top will also be acceptable. If you do not own black clothing, please wear dark bottoms and light top to concerts. Avoid shorts and short skirts. Our goal is to have the audience focus on the music, not our wardrobe.

CARE OF INSTRUMENT

- Be responsible. Practice the habit by taking care of your instrument.
- Keep your instrument clean! Wash your hands before you play. After playing, wipe off the rosin dust, smudges, fingerprints, etc., with a soft, clean, cloth.
- Handle with care! Your instrument is made of breakable wooden parts, so repairs can be expensive and time-consuming.
- Store your instrument safely when you are not playing it.
- Do not let your instrument get too hot or too cold. If the temperature is uncomfortable for you, it is also bad for your instrument. For example, never leave it in a car on a hot or cold day.
- Allow only your teacher or an experienced repair person to fix your instrument.
- Violins and Violas:
 - Before you pick up your case, make sure the latches are closed!
 - Never push down on the case lid to make it close all the way.
 - Before closing and latching it, check for things that may be out of place inside.
- Celli and Basses:
 - The bow pocket of the case goes on the same side as the strings. The music pocket is on the back.

“Ah music...a magic beyond all we do here!” - Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Progress depends a great deal on what is achieved during daily home practice sessions. Proficiency is gained only through frequent use of the skills.

Practice Chart: Students will receive a practice chart from his or her orchestra instructor. The chart in the front of the Essential Elements Book may be used if the practice chart is lost.

Recorded Practice Time: Accurate and *honest* practice time should be recorded on the practice chart and turned in during lessons each week. Parents should check and sign practice charts. The practice charts are a means of communication and helps me adapt my teaching strategy.

Environment: Practicing should be done in an area free from distractions — away from the T.V., stereo, telephone, and family traffic with good lighting and a music stand.

- Violinists and violists **should** practice while standing although occasional practice while sitting with good posture is sometimes acceptable.
- Cellists need a chair with a flat seat
- Bassists should stand or use a stool approximately 2 inches shorter than his/her inseam.

Goals: While a sufficient amount of time per day is important, practice time will be used more efficiently if the student has specific goals in mind. These goals might include such things as:

- being able to keep the bow thumb bent or the pinkie curved
- being able to play a tune or exercise rhythmically correct
- attending to accurate finger placement on finger tapes

Length of Time

- Beginning Students - 10 minutes at a time twice a day. Usually, beginners do not have the muscle tone or endurance to practice for long periods of time. It is counterproductive to practice with tired muscles.
- Second half of 5th Grade and 6th Grade Students: Practice 30 — 55 min once a day or two shorter sessions. By the 2nd year, students have developed some of the muscle tone and endurance needed for longer periods of time. However, two 15 or 20 minute sessions are often more productive even at this stage. Whatever works best for your family is fine.

If there are no pets or younger siblings in the house/practice room that might bother the instrument, try setting up a permanent practice location and leave the instrument case open for violins and violas or out of the case for celli and bass between lessons. I practice more frequently if I am able to leave my instrument out of the case in a safe place.

Parent Responsibility: Your child's success depends a great deal upon your sincere interest in his/her progress and participation. Spend some time listening to your child practice. Choose your words carefully when offering praise or constructive criticism.

Local Instrument Vendors:

Amadeus Strings	(845) 486-7617
Paul Effmance	(845) 452-8528
D&M	(845) 635-1120
Joseph Regh Violins	(845) 297-2521

Additionally here are some online dealers with whom I have dealt personally that have shown to offer reliable instruments and materials:

Shar Music	www.sharmusic.com
Southwest Strings	www.swstrings.com

SCHOOL LESSONS

As part of the instrumental program, students will have one small group lesson and two full band rehearsals as instructional time. The schedule runs on a six day cycle, so students will be assigned a number day (1-6) and time for their lessons and rehearsals.

The 6th grade orchestra students need to make sure that they bring in their instruments and their music every Day 1 & Day 4. During the winter, the snow days will push the cycle day calendar forward, so please check the Website for the correct cycle day calendar. My schedule for my three schools is as follows:

Day 1 & 4 – Sheafe Rd

Day 2 & 5 – Kinry Rd

Day 3 & 6 – Oak Grove

Lesson Length: 30 minutes for 5th Grade & 40 minutes for 6th Grade

Schedules: A copy of the schedule will be posted in the instrumental room or bulletin board as well as each 5th and 6th grade homeroom.

Punctuality: Students need to be ready to play ASAP when lesson time begins. Please come in quietly, rosin your bow, and do silent exercises if the preceding lesson is finishing as you enter. If you are joining a virtual lesson, please make sure you have your supplies prepared before your lesson time.

Attendance: If the student is at school, he/she is expected to attend physical lessons. During distance learning, students are expected to be logged into the google meet during their lesson time. Join on mute, but students will be expected to participate during lessons, so they will need a video and microphone available.

SNOW DAYS & DELAYS

In the event of school delay, an adapted lesson and rehearsal schedule will be handed to the homeroom teachers. If school is cancelled, such as a snow day, the cycle day will be moved to the next week day. I will never skip a lesson day. If there is a snow day on what would have been a Day 3, the following school day then becomes the new Day 3. If we are in a hybrid or remote learning environment, please refer to the district instructions regarding snow days and delays.

INSTRUMENT TRANSPORT & STORAGE (DURING HYBRID MODEL)

Students are always allowed to bring small instruments to and from school on the bus. Each student is expected to bring his/her instrument home at the end of each school day, over weekends, and before long vacation breaks or absences. This will allow them the opportunity to practice and develop their musical skills. Please remind your children to take their instrument home so there are no damages resulting from instruments left at school. Larger string instruments, such as the cello and double bass are not allowed on the bus. These larger instruments may require you to drop them off before school and pick them up after school.

ORCHESTRA REHEARSAL PROCEDURES, RULES. EXPECTATIONS

Before Rehearsal

- Set Up: Students, please help with set up if necessary.
- Get Ready: Get out instrument, music, and equipment.
- Get Tuned: Please make a line and wait patiently if you need assistance.
- Sit and STAY!
- Warm Up, practice, or chat with your neighbor until rehearsal begins.

During Rehearsal – Make a point to develop good habits!

- Participate in a positive manner.
- Be considerate of others feelings.
- Refrain from playing or talking while director is speaking or rehearsing another section.

After Rehearsal – More habits to establish!

- Put your instrument away.
- Put away chairs and stands.
- Do not leave the room until your name is called for early dismissal or as instructed by a teacher.

Concert Attendance is mandatory! If there is an emergency and your child is unable to attend, please contact Ms. Gricius before the concert. A make-up assessment will be given to students unable to attend the concert. **Concert schedule during the 2020-2021 school year may be altered according to safety protocols and guidelines.**

GRADING CRITERIA

The quarterly orchestra grade will be based on the combination of string lesson and orchestra rehearsal assessments. The grade will be a result of formative, summative, and diagnostic assessment. Grading factors will comprise of musical skills and knowledge, such as ability to demonstrate through performance and written assignments to display understanding of correct rhythms, tone production and quality, intonation, correct articulation, and specific hand/body position for the student's particular instrument. These factors will be gathered through playing exams, composition assignments, written assignments based on history and cultural musical subjects, and weekly lesson checklists and assessments.

Grading will be based on a four point standards scale.

1 – Does Not Meet the Standards

2 – Developing Skills to Meet the Standards

3 – Meets the Standards

4 – Meets the Standards with Distinction

If your Child receives mostly 3's for the first half of the year, this is right on course with my expectations. Children will not receive a 4 unless they are excelling and exceeding my expectations. They may receive a 4 if they learn pieces on their own, if their posture and technique are consistently perfect, if they perform NYSSMA Solos, and if they receive 4's on their playing exams. If your child receives a 1, please examine his/her practice habits and lesson assignments and try to establish a routine practice schedule.

1st Quarter

50% Playing Exams & Quizzes

50% Weekly Lesson/Orchestra Assessments

2nd Quarter

50% Playing Exams

25% Winter Project

25% Weekly Lesson Assessments

3rd Quarter

50% Playing Exams

25% Composition/Improvisation Assignment

25% Weekly Lesson Assessments

4th Quarter

50% Playing Exams and Final Solo

25% Final Spring Performance

25% Weekly Lesson Assessments

Elementary String Orchestra 2020-2021

Wappingers Central School District

Orchestra Contract

I, _____, have read the orchestra handbook and have understood and agreed to the terms of participation and orchestra policies. I also understand the grading procedures and agree to complete all assignments to the best of my ability. I agree to practice my instrument and be prepared for lessons and ensemble rehearsal. I also agree to attend all concerts during the school year. I understand that being a member of an ensemble requires dedication and commitment and I am prepared to give my best effort.

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

You do not need to sign this electronically, just hit Submit once you've read the handbook. Submitting your assignment will indicate that you have read and agreed to the terms and expectations outlined in the handbook.