

MacArthur Middle School Orchestra Handbook



2019-2020

Orchestra Director

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"Tones sound, and roar and storm about me until I have set them down in notes."

-Ludwig Van Beethoven

Mission Statement

The orchestras of Prospect Heights District 23 are dedicated to continuous musical and personal development, culminating in meaningful musical experiences for all orchestra members and our audience.

I am committed to the development of a lifelong interest in and appreciation of our musical tradition.

With patience, understanding, caring, and commitment, I will strive to develop in each orchestra member the ideals of leadership, personal responsibility, ownership, tenacity, and pride.

Objectives

- **Logical**: To provide each orchestra member with a practical knowledge of music and the music making process.
- **Technical**: To provide each orchestra member with the skills needed to participate fully in the orchestral experience and realize their full potential.
- **Citizenship**: To help each student become a better citizen through a membership in a community where each person's contribution is equal in importance.
- **Performance**: To provide rewarding performance and learning experiences for all members of the orchestra and audience through a fun, technical, and diverse repertoire.
- **Emotion**: To promote personal expression and creativity through listening to, playing, discussing, practicing, and performing music.
- **Community**: To encourage students to take ownership over their learning, practicing, performing, and collaboration with others.

- **Teamwork:** To collaborate with our fellow musicians performing in chorus and band to experience the full spectrum of musical expression and to promote a friendly and rewarding environment.

Student Expectations

1. Do your best every day. Be proud of what you are doing and show it!
2. Respect yourself, others, and the instruments and equipment.
3. Practicing at home is essential. The amount of effort you put into learning your instrument at home will equal the amount of success you will have in the classroom.
4. **Sectionals:** Each student is responsible for showing up on time and making up and missed class work from their regular academic classes.
5. Follow all school-wide expectations.
6. Have Fun and be TENACIOUS! Being a part of orchestra should be a fun and positive experience. This is a great opportunity to make new friends and learn all sorts of fun music.

Rehearsal Procedures

1. Every student is responsible for bringing their own instrument, ipad, music, pencil, and other necessary equipment to orchestra everyday.
2. There is to be no excess talking or other disturbances (iPads, phones, etc....) during the rehearsal. This is vital to the effective use of rehearsal time and will be strictly enforced. **Cell Phones and air pods are prohibited in class and will be turned into the main office for parent collection.**
3. Gum chewing, eating, or drinking of any kind is not permitted during any rehearsal or performance.
4. Each student should be seated at the time designated by the director or the student will be marked late.
5. **Sectionals:** Students will be provided with a schedule of sectional times. It is their responsibility to attend all sectionals! If there is a conflict with a different class (test or presentation), it is the student's responsibility to contact me and show up to a different sectional time. Students are also responsible for making up any assignments or quizzes missed in their other classes.

6. All music, instruments, and equipment should be kept in their proper storage places.
7. **Students are required to attend each 9th/10th period class and are not permitted to be in any other part of the building during this time unless permission is received from Mr. Boyer.**

Grading

Class grades will be determined on the following criteria:

- ★ 10% Homework (written work, permission slips, and other assignments)
- ★ 10% Practice Journals and practice related assignments
- ★ 20% Playing Tests, Scales, Exercises, and Quizzes
- ★ 30% Daily Participation Grade
- ★ 30% Performance Grade (Concert participation AND behavior)

Practicing at home- A minimum of 75 minutes total of practice for 6th graders and 90 minutes total of practice for 7th & 8th graders are required each week

PLEASE NOTE: Quality is better than quantity when it comes to practicing. Just playing the same song over and over to reach the minute total is not beneficial to your progress. We will work together to set appropriate and attainable practice goals at the end of each rehearsal.

“Mastering music is more than learning technical skills. Practicing is about quality, not quantity. Some days I practice for hours; other days it will be just a few minutes.”

-Yo-Yo Ma, Cellist

Playing Tests, Scales, Exercises, and Quizzes- Students will be evaluated on their improvement and effort in the following areas:

- ☐ Music Production (tone and intonation)
- ☐ Music Literacy (reading notes, rhythms, dynamics, markings, and symbols correctly)
- ☐ Musicality (phrasing and expression)
- ☐ Posture (correct posture for their specific instrument)

Daily Participation Grade- This includes readiness to begin on time, having required materials, following student PRIDE expectations and participating to the fullest using your best effort.

Performance Grade- All students are required to attend all performances. Please refer to the concert attendance policy below for more information.

Other Homework- All assignments besides practicing (worksheets and forms).

Instruments and Accessories

Personal Instruments- Every orchestra student in the D23 Orchestra Program is required to own or rent a personal instrument. Violin and viola students need to bring their instruments to school for every class. Instruments should not be left at school over the weekend or for more than one day. During the winter months, please take extra care to not leave instruments in cold spaces (garage, car, basement, etc...). Cellists and bassists will be permitted to use a school-owned instrument during the school day, but will need to rent or own one for practice at home and to bring to performances. Please do not hesitate to bring your instrument to school if there is damage or it needs to be tuned.

A student's instrument is considered personal property, therefore MacArthur Middle School is not liable for any loss, theft, or damage that may occur while the instrument is on school grounds or being used for a school function. **PLEASE** make sure that your rental company supplies you with maintenance and insurance, or that you have placed the instrument on your homeowner's or renter's insurance.

*For further safety, please make sure the instrument case has a nametag with the correct phone number and contact information, and instruct your child to only keep the instrument in the **instrument storage space or locker** during the school day.

Necessary Equipment- All MacArthur Middle School orchestra students are required to have the following standard accessories:

- ☐ Rosin
- ☐ Shoulder Rest (Violins & Violas)
- ☐ Endpin Rest/Rock Stop (Cellos & Basses)
- ☐ Music Stand (to keep at home)
- ☐ Cleaning Cloth
- ☐ Nametag
- ☐ Pencil (bring to every class)
- ☐ Tuner (there are lots of free apps!)

Sheet Music/Practice Copies- Please bring *your* music to every class as we will be making important markings throughout rehearsal.

Concert Attendance

Concert attendance is mandatory! All members will be expected to play in all scheduled performances dressed in proper concert attire (see concert attire portion below). Students should arrive at the performance at least 45 minutes before the concert starts to tune and warm up.

Performance attendance is equal to 30% of a student's grade in orchestra. An unexcused absence from a performance will significantly impact a student's overall grade for orchestra. Only in cases of extreme family emergency, personal illness, or unavoidable circumstances approved by the director will a student be excused from a performance. To receive the full 30% for an excused absence, students will be required to provide a letter signed by parents explaining the reason for the absence. Students will then be required to "perform a concert" for the director upon return to school (similar to making up a missed test). Students with unexcused absences may receive half of their performance grade (15%) by setting up and performing a concert for the director.

Remember: We are all in this together and EVERY part is crucial to the success of our performance! **Sporting events are NOT an excused absence.**

Performance Dates for 2017-2018

- ★ Tuesday, October 29th- Mac Gym @ 7pm (7/8 Grade only!)(arrive at 6:15pm)
- ★ Tuesday, December 10th- Little Theatre @ 7pm (students arrive at 6:15pm)
- ★ Thursday, March 5th- Little Theatre @ 7pm (students arrive at 6:15pm)
- ★ Tuesday, May 19th- Little Theatre @ 7pm (students arrive at 6:15pm)

Please see the attached calendar for other important dates. More details will be provided closer to the dates.

Serenading Strings

Serenading Strings is the top chamber orchestra at MacArthur Middle. This group performs for a variety of venues and plays mainly "pops" style music. Students are selected through an audition process and are responsible for showing up to all extra events, activities, and early morning rehearsals (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 7:25 AM). More information and audition materials will be distributed to interested students.

Concert Attire

The following concert attire is required for all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade orchestra students. All concerts will utilize our formal concert uniform. Please note the uniform is a change from previous years.

Formal Uniform: Black pants, socks, and shoes (all supplied on your own this year), and our red VIM (Vocal Instrumental Music) polo which is ordered through me. Buy your shirt a bit bigger and it can last all three years!

Informal Uniform: Jeans, any closed toe shoes, red VIM polo.

Activity Fee:

An Activity Fee has been applied to all Vocal & Instrumental Music (VIM) classes and interscholastic sports. The fees are as follows:

Band or Orchestra: \$75

Participation in two ensembles: \$125 total

Checks should be made payable to **MacArthur Middle School**. If families have more than one child involved in VIM classes, then fees **can be** combined into one check. Please put checks or cash in an envelope with the student's name on the outside of the envelope, and give it to a Mr. Boyer, not the front office. The VIM teachers will be keeping track of all money turned in, and submitting money and corresponding names to the Office.

Instrument Care and Maintenance

Do...

- Loosen your bow before you put it away
- Take your shoulder rest off before shutting the case (violin/viola)
- Shorten your end pin and lock it into place (cello/bass)
- Wipe off excess rosin from your strings and instrument using a soft cloth (old t-shirts work great for this!)
- Keep your instrument in a safe place
- Practice your instrument everyday

Don't...

- Let other people play your instrument
- Leave your instrument in the car
- Leave your instrument in its case over long weekends and holiday breaks. They get really scared and lonely :(
- Tap the bow against any objects (music stands, the floor, other bows, etc...)
- Touch the hair of the bow with your fingers. We have natural oils on our hands that will deteriorate the hair.
- Use any furniture cleaner or polish on the instrument or bow. Just a soft, dry cloth will do.
- EVER try to fix the instrument at home or on your own. (*Parents too!*) Duct Tape and superglue are not always the answer.

Helpful Parent Tips

- ☐ Set aside a regular time and place (free from distractions) for daily practice
- ☐ Check in frequently with school and private teacher
- ☐ ALWAYS be positive. Not all sounds will be pleasant at first, but a little encouragement goes a long way.
- ☐ Encourage daily practice
- ☐ Attend all concerts and listen to practicing at home.