



Helena Middle School Orchestra

2022 - 2023

Welcome to a new school year of fun and excitement in the orchestra program! This handbook has been assembled to explain to students and parents the details of our program and expectations. Please review it, discuss the information it contains, and ask questions if any arise. Please sign the contract and return to Mrs. Nelson by Wednesday, September 7, 2022.

CONCERT DATES

Great Beginnings - 6th Grade ONLY - Thursday, September 29 @ HMS Auditorium

- ★ This is not a traditional performance, so concert attire is not required; this is an opportunity for parents and students from HMS and C.R. Anderson to learn together about instrument set up, playing technique, and practice expectations. This evening is designed so your parent/guardian knows what they should see and hear when you practice at home, therefore, students must attend with their personal instrument and at least one parent or guardian.

Winter Performance - Thursday, December 1 @ HMS Auditorium

- ★ 6th, 7th and 8th Grades @ 6:30 pm (arrive 30 minutes early)

8th/9th Grade Festival 8th Grade ONLY - Tuesday, March 14 @ HMS Auditorium

- ★ 8th Grade Only @ 6:00 pm (arrive 30 minutes early)
 - With 6th and 7th Grade Students from C.R. Anderson

6th/7th Grade Solo & Ensemble Festival - Friday, April 21 @ Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church

- ★ 6th Grade - 8:30 am - 10:30 am
- ★ 7th Grade - 10:30 am - 12:30 pm
 - With 6th and 7th Grade Students from C.R. Anderson

Spring Performance - Tuesday, May 16 @ HMS Auditorium

- ★ 6th Grade @ 6 pm (arrive 30 minutes early)
- ★ 7th Grade @ 7 pm (arrive 30 minutes early)
- ★ 8th Grade @ 8:15 pm (arrive 30 minutes early)
 - With students from C.R. Anderson

Classroom Expectations

- **Students will treat all members of their class with respect.** Music will make each of you feel vulnerable sometimes, so show each other support and offer words of encouragement whenever possible. Refrain from derogatory language and actions at all times.
- **Students will arrive at class on time.** It is expected that students will arrive, pick up their music and instrument, tune, be in their seats, ready to play in 5 minutes.
- **Students will enter the room calmly and quietly.** There is a tremendous amount of money sitting in the orchestra room in the form of instruments. Horseplay and wooden instruments do not mix!
- **Students will be responsible for personal materials.** Label your cases, folder, and music. Bring everything you need to class each day, and care for your music and instrument as if it were your own (as is frequently the case).
 - *Every student needs the materials described in the [supply list](#) specific to his or her instrument. Purchasing those supplies is recommended, but the school owns a limited quantity of supplies that can be rented or borrowed depending on individual circumstances.*
- **Students will participate in classroom activities.** You are in an ensemble with each other, and the ensemble cannot succeed unless everyone works cooperatively, seeks to improve skills daily, asks questions, and follows instructions.
- **Students will practice regularly.** Learning musical skills requires regular repetition outside of class. Beginning students are advised to practice at least twenty minutes each day, but all students are expected to take materials home at least twice each week and demonstrate their progress during every class rehearsal.
- **Students will participate in concert activities.** Sharing music is an important part of learning to sing in a choir, so each student is expected to prepare for and participate in all concerts throughout the year.
- **Students can bring bottled water to class/concerts.** For student safety, gum is prohibited in choir.
- **Music requires complete, undivided attention during class.** This means cell phones will be kept out of sight and out of hands, or better yet, not brought to class. Cell phones will be confiscated if out during rehearsal.

All of these may be summed up with a few simple rehearsal rules:

Be respectful, listen to your director, take pride in your work, and do your best!



Consequences

When expectations are met:

1. You will earn participation points in class
2. You will meet or exceed skills tests
3. You will receive the respect of your fellow musicians, Mrs. Nelson, and your audience
4. You will create beautiful music

When expectations are not met:

1. You will lost participation points in class
2. You will not be able to pass skills tests
3. Parents or guardians will be called
4. Detention will be assigned with Mrs. Nelson
5. A referral will be made to the assistant principal

Disciplinary Action

The HMS Orchestra Program will operate with a tradition of excellence and pride. There are very few rules as we try to operate on the idea that everyone will do their best at all times. When working with a large number of students, it is necessary to have certain responsibilities and rules. Each member is expected to uphold and follow these responsibilities and rules. It is the director's responsibility to ensure fairness in the classroom and to act if the criteria for proper class behavior are not followed.

Grading Policy

Classroom Participation/Preparation - (40% of quarter grade) When arriving on time and participating respectfully, students earn up to 5 points per class. When students miss a class, a **Practice Reflection** may be completed as a make-up. The guidelines for these assignments are discussed during class, and students may pick up a **Practice Reflection** the day after an absence. Up to 5 points will be awarded based on completeness of makeup. Please keep a practice reflection in your folder at all times.

Performance Skills - Total point value will depend number of playing quizzes throughout each semester

- 20 points - Assigned selection of music played solo or in small groups

Concerts - 100 points per concert

- 20 points - Arrive 30 minutes prior to the start of the concert
- 10 points - Bring music, instrument, and other materials in playing condition
- 10 points - Wear required concert attire
- 40 points - Participate in performances of selected pieces
- 20 points - Demonstrate appropriate concert behavior while playing and while in the audience

Other Assignments - Total point value will depend on varied assignments

Final Grade: Earned Points / Total Points = Final Grade

- 100 - 90 A
- 89.9 - 80 B
- 79.9 - 70 C
- 69.9 - 60 D
- 59.9 - below F

Concert Attire

Students are asked to wear semi-formal clothing. Dress pants (*very dark* denim is ok), or long skirt, shirts with sleeves, and dress shoes (or dark tennis shoes). If students wish to wear a shorter dress, students should wear tights or leggings in addition to the dress.

Concert Absences

It is each student's responsibility to plan for concerts during the year, but it is also understood that conflicts sometimes arise. If you have a family conflict, you must turn in a note (signed by a parent or guardian) to Mrs. Nelson two weeks prior to the concert and consult with her about your make-up assignment in order to receive full credit. Missing a concert because of illness will be similarly excused, but the parent-signed note will be turned-in following the concert. Deviations from this policy may result in complete or partial loss of credit for the concert.

Parents/Guardians and Students:

Please sign this page by Wednesday, September 7 showing that you have read through the handbook. This handbook will remain on Teams for the year.

Orchestra Contract

For the 2022 - 2023 School Year

I have read and understand all of the policies stated within this handbook and agree to uphold them as a contributing member of the HMS Choir Program.

_____ Grade _____ Class Period _____
Printed Students Name

_____ Date _____
Student's Signature

_____ Date _____
Parent/Guardian's Signature