



Still Middle School

2016-2017

ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Orchestra Department at Still Middle School! The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with an awareness and understanding of the policies, organizational structure, and general functioning of the Still Middle School Orchestras. **Please read the handbook in its entirety, discuss it with your family, and keep it for future reference.**

Music in District 204 is a vibrant part of the curriculum. In addition to providing music education, our orchestra program is designed to help meet the emotional, social, and cultural needs of every student. The State and National Standards are what guides our curriculum.

The handbook is broken into three sections:

- 1. Curricular Information**
- 2. Instrument Care**
- 3. Extra Opportunities**

Please keep this handbook for future reference. Please make sure you sign the last page of the book and have your student return it.

We're looking forward to a great year!

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Section 1

Curricular Information

CALENDAR

DATES IN BOLD ARE REQUIRED PERFORMANCES FOR THE INDICATED GRADE LEVEL.

THESE CONCERTS ARE PART OF THE STUDENTS GRADE. ANY CONFLICT THAT YOU HAVE RIGHT NOW WITH ANY OF THESE DATES SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE DIRECTOR WITH AN ABSENCE REQUEST FORM FOUND ON THE WEBSITE. WE KINDLY ASK THAT YOU MAKE US AWARE OF CONFLICTS AT LEAST TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE OF THE CONCERT DATE.

THE OTHER DATES THAT ARE LISTED ARE CONCERTS THAT STUDENTS MAY ATTEND TO RECEIVE EXTRA CREDIT. OTHER PERFORMANCES NOT LISTED MAY ALSO BE ATTENDED FOR EXTRA CREDIT. ALL CONCERTS ARE HELD IN THE GYMNASIUM AT STILL UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED.

August

31 Encore Curriculum Night at Still Middle School 6:30-8:30 pm

September

22 ILMEA Rehearsal for those auditioning. 5:45—7:30 pm at NVHS (optional)

October

1 ILMEA auditions (optional) in Yorkville

20 8th Grade Orchestra Concert at MVHS 8:15 pm

24 6th & 7th Grade Orchestra Demo Concert 8:00 pm

November

TBA WVHS Warrior Strings Dessert Concert including Fiddlin' Bulldogs 8:00 pm at WVHS (Fiddles only)

4 ILMEA Music Festival at Oswego East High School, Oswego, IL (for those that made it)

December

6 Honors Concert 7:30 pm (Chamber & Fiddles only)

January

31 7th Grade BCO Concert 7:30 pm

February

6 6th Grade BCO Concert 7:30 pm

15 8th Grade BCO Concert 7:30 pm

18 Solo and Ensemble Contest for interested students at Gregory Middle School

March

10 District 204 Organizational Music Festival at Scullen (*Chamber Orchestra only*)

May

20 Fine Arts Festival at WVHS times to be announced

22 Spring Orchestra Concert at 7:30 pm

June

1 Funway for interested students

GRADING

Orchestra is a vital part of the school curriculum and therefore, an orchestra grade is given each quarter. A major portion of the orchestra grade is based upon performance tests given during technique class. The grading process also considers rehearsal participation, daily effort, written and performance tests, reporting home practice, and concerts. **Attendance at all performances is a crucial part of the curriculum, and consequently a large part of students' grades.**

CONCERT ATTENDANCE POLICY

- Students are expected to attend all performances. Failure to attend a required concert without a valid, written excuse via the Absence Request Form (available on music website), fully explaining the absence will result in the lowering of the student's grade (approximately 10%). The Absence Excuse Form must be received **at least 2 weeks prior** to the event in order for the excuse to be considered. The preference is that all excused absences will be reported by the time the handbook is due. (Notification of emergency conflicts will be received up to one week following the concert.)

- Upon notification of an absence via the Absence Request Form, **the director will acknowledge on the form that the absence is either Excused or Unexcused.** An excused absence allows the student to make up the grade in the form of an alternative assignment for a possible 100%. In the case of an unexcused absence, the student will be given the opportunity to make up the event however, the highest possible grade a student can receive will be 50%.

- For Fine Arts Festival and Grade Level BCO concerts, Combo students must complete two separate Absence Request Forms: one submitted to their Choir Director and one submitted to their Instrumental Director.

Although it would be impossible to include a complete list, the following items are examples of **unexcused absences.**

1. Commitments accepted after a rehearsal or concert date is announced.
 - a. This includes all sports, dance, theater, etc...(not held at Still MS)
2. Homework
3. Transportation problems.
4. Babysitting.
5. Watching TV.
6. Falling asleep
7. Forgetting instrument and/or music.
8. A family member's birthday.
9. Your birthday

CONCERT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

- Students will need to remain for the entire concert
- All school rules apply
- School policies applying to concerts will apply for all performers and audience members.

SUPPLIES

Sixth Grade

- Essential Elements for Strings Book 1 (Orange Cover)
- Orchestra Expressions Book 1 (Yellow Cover) - needed beginning in January
- Shoulder rest for violin and viola players with a way to attach this to your case
- Rosin – please put your name on the bottom
- Three ring binder – ONE INCH with dividers
- Soft cloth for cleaning the instrument
- Pencil
- Rock stops for cello and bass players for concerts
- Metronome to be used at home when practicing - this could be an app on a BYOT device

Seventh Grade

- Orchestra Expressions Book 2 (Red Cover)
- Shoulder rest for violins and viola players
- Rosin – please put your name on the bottom
- Three ring binder – ONE INCH with dividers
- Soft cloth for cleaning the instrument
- Pencil
- Mute
- Students may receive original music for orchestra. If the music is damaged or lost, **there will be a \$5.00 fee for every piece.**
- Rock stops for cello and bass players for concerts
- Metronome to be used at home when practicing - this could be an app on a BYOT device

Eighth Grade

- Orchestra Expressions Book 2 (Red Cover – this is the book we used in 7th grade we will use it during 1st quarter of 8th grade technique)
- Expressive Technique for Orchestra (We will begin using this in mid-October. Please order at the start of the school year.)
- Shoulder rest for violin and viola players
- Rosin – please put your name on the bottom
- Three ring binder – ONE INCH with dividers
- Soft cloth for cleaning the instrument
- Pencil
- Mute
- Students may receive original music for orchestra. If the music is damaged or lost, **there will be a \$5.00 fee for every piece.**
- Rock stops for cello and bass players for concerts
- Metronome to be used at home when practicing - this could be an app on a BYOT device

HOME PRACTICE = HOMEWORK

Home practice helps make it possible to play a musical instrument to the best of one's ability. **All orchestra members must practice regularly at home to insure progress.** This is daily homework for the class. The benefits of home practice include building self-confidence and pride in one's performance. Quality of practice time is more important than quantity of practice time.

An online practice record will be used to help each student develop a regular practice routine and to keep track of home practice. ***Practice Records will be available on the orchestra website each weekend from Friday after school through Sunday night at midnight.***

Practice Records will be worth 10-15 points each week.

Each day practiced will earn 2 points and each correctly answered review question or reflection question completed will receive 1 point. Students should aim to practice a minimum of 5 days each week. 6th Grade students should start with 5 minutes each time they practice and build up time throughout the year. 7th & 8th Grade students should start with 20 minutes and increase throughout the year.

TECHNIQUE CLASS

In conjunction to the daily rehearsal, the District 204 music curriculum provides an opportunity for instrumental music students to have technique classes during their ensemble rehearsal. The benefit of technique class is that it allows for small group instruction that addresses students' specific needs.

MUSIC UNIFORM

Pride in the uniform means pride in the school and one's self. All students should have the following:

- Music department shirt – shirts will be tucked into the pants
- Black pants – no jeans, shorts, or skirts
- Black socks – high enough to cover the ankles when seated
- Black closed-toed shoes – no athletic shoes, flip flops or sandals

The order form for the department shirt is located with the contract.

Make sure your uniform is neat and tidy. Alteration to the shirt of any kind will result in the necessity to purchase a new shirt.

LOCKERS

Orchestra lockers are available for eighth grade, and some seventh grade students, and will be assigned during the first week of school. We ask that students store only their instrument and orchestra related materials in their orchestra locker. **Any student wishing to use an orchestra locker should purchase a combination lock from us when they receive their locker.** Locks cost \$5.00. Other students will have instrument racks to store their instruments in the orchestra room.

Section 2

Instrument Care

SCHOOL OWNED INSTRUMENTS CONTRACT (FOR CELLOS & BASSES)

Students using school owned instruments will need to read, sign and return the “District 204 Music Instrument/Equipment Contract”. Contracts will be passed out by orchestra teachers so that students have the correct instrument identification numbers on their contract.

INSTRUMENT REPAIR

Instrument repair is a highly specialized area. It is very easy to damage an instrument in an attempt to repair it if you are not a trained professional. Please share any instrument problems with the orchestra directors so that we can assess the problem and make recommendations as to what sort of repair it needs. This is to protect you and your instrument from unnecessary or costly repairs.

PURCHASE OF INSTRUMENTS

As your child progresses on their instrument, the quality of the instrument on which they play becomes very important for their sound and technical skills. When you feel it is appropriate for your child to purchase an instrument please contact us for information on reputable stores in the area. You need to be able to see and play a variety of instruments before you purchase one. Most stores will allow you to take instruments to compare in your home. We will be happy to play them as well. Please remember that this is an investment if properly purchased and taken care of.

Section 3

Extra Opportunities

Chamber Group

The Still Middle School **Chamber Group** is designed for students wishing to broaden their musical development and participation. Membership for this ensemble is based upon student desire, musical ability, and instrumental needs. The Chamber Group meets from 6:45 a.m.—7:50 a.m. on **Mondays and Thursdays**. Audition information and materials may be obtained from the director at the start of the school year. There will be further information provided to students about concerts and participation requirements at that time.

Fiddlin' Bulldogs

Fiddlin' Bulldogs is designed for students wishing to experience other styles of string music. Membership for this ensemble is open to all students in the Still Orchestra Program. Fiddlin' Bulldogs schedule for 2016-2017 is to be determined. Please listen for announcements. There will be further information provided to students about concerts and participation requirements at the first fiddle rehearsal this fall.

Solo and Ensemble

Orchestra students are given the opportunity to perform solos and/or ensembles at the Illinois Grade School Music Association (IGSMA) contest in February. **Registration for this event will occur in October.** If you are taking privately, your private teacher should be selecting a piece with you. Piano students are also welcome to participate in this event as long as they are participating in the schools music program.

ILMEA

More experienced orchestra members also have the opportunity to audition for and perform in the Illinois Music Educator Association (ILMEA) festival orchestras. There will be a district rehearsal in September. If you would like extra help with the music, please sign up with one of the orchestra directors. Auditions will be held on October 3 in Yorkville and the festival will be on November 21.

SUMMER ORCHESTRA

Students are highly encouraged to participate in the District 204 summer music program. This is an excellent way to continue improving skills during the summer months. Registration information will be available in the spring.

PRIVATE LESSONS

It is **impossible** for us to overemphasize the positive impact of private lessons. Individual instruction is the best way to help students fulfill their potential. The benefit of a private lesson is weekly one on one instruction with a specialist on your particular instrument. A private instructor will immediately reinforce strengths and give specific instruction for improvement. A list of instructors is available in the Orchestra Room.

Still Orchestra Website

Please use the orchestra's website for information about your child's orchestra class this year. You will find important updates and other important information. Any goal sheets, technique schedules, worksheets, etc. given out in class will also be available here.

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE YEAR

10 pts – Attend a professional or student concert (e.g., Any Band/Orch/Chorus concert, CSO). Be a polite audience member throughout the concert. Turn in a concert program with your name on it and signed by a parent/guardian and fill out the sheet in the front of the room. If you are unsure if a performance applies, please ask your teacher. Visit the high school websites for their concert dates.

10 pts – Read a book having to do with music and give a book talk to the class.

5 pts – Listen to a professional recording that uses violin, viola, cello and/or bass. Write a one-page review of the performance (typed, 12pt, times). Be sure to include the title of the piece, the performer/performing group, and where you found the recording. Remember, there are lots of CDs in our LMC and at the public library.

2 pts - Read an article about an orchestra related topic. Write a one-page review (typed, 12pt, times) that summarizes the article including what you found interesting about the article.