Arlington Middle School Orchestra Handbook

Course Description

String Orchestra provides students with the opportunity to learn life skills through performance and education in music. Individual performance opportunities include All-West, Concert Festival, Solo and Ensemble Festival, scheduled ACS orchestra concerts, as well as other such miscellaneous public performances throughout the year.

As the course nears a performance date, an occasional after-school rehearsal may be necessary. I understand that many students are involved in extracurricular activities, which is fantastic! Rehearsal and performance conflicts will be addressed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that students are able to satisfy all of their interests. Students and families will be given at least 2 weeks notice before any major after-school rehearsal, and at least 4 weeks notice before each performance. Conflicts should be brought to the director’s attention as soon as possible (no later than 48 hours in advance) so they can be resolved in a timely fashion.

**Performance Expectations:**

* Adhere to the attendance policy set forth in the ACS Student and Orchestra Handbook
* Participate in all playing tests to the best of your ability
* Adhere to ALL classroom rules listed below
* Attend all required rehearsals throughout the grading period
* Attend all required performances throughout the grading period

Method of Grade Calculation

**All homework must be completed to the satisfaction of the director!**

1. **Daily Participation**

Each student will receive 5 points daily. One point will be given for each of the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Participation | Students are expected to participate in discussions and classroom activities on a daily basis. |
| Timeliness | Students are expected to be in their assigned seats with the necessary supplies at the start of class. |
| Instrument | Students are expected to have their instrument in each class. Exceptions are given on an individual basis with a note from a parent or guardian. |
| Music and Pencil | Students are expected to have their own music in each class. They may share with a stand partner but must have their music readily available. This is necessary to mark any changes made so that music can be practiced affectively at home. A pencil is required at each rehearsal (sharing with your friend doesn’t count). |
| Attitude | Students are expected to come to class ready to learn with a positive attitude! |

1. **Playing Tests and Quizzes**

Playing tests and quizzes will be given on an as needed basis throughout the year but will occur at least once every grading period. All formal tests will be announced at least 1 week in advance and will cover only music we have studied in class. Quizzes are worth 10 points each. Tests are worth 50-100 points.

1. **Written Tests/Assignments**

A minimum of 1 written test will be given every semester. These tests may include vocabulary, note spelling, key signature identification, interval identification, rhythm counting, performance reflections, or other musical concepts covered in class. Written tests will be worth 50-100 points each.

1. **Rehearsals and Sectionals**

After school rehearsals, although rare, may become necessary prior to performances. All after school rehearsals will be announced at least 2 weeks in advance. Conflicts should be addressed at least 48 hours in advance.

1. **Performances**

Performances are mandatory. All performances will be announced at least 4 weeks in advance. Students must arrive on time with their instrument and their OWN music. Concert attire is required at each performance unless otherwise excused. Concert attire must comply with AMS dress code! Failure to observe concert dress code risks your participation in the concert. Participation will be left to the discretion of the director.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ladies | Gentlemen |
| White top, black pants/skirt, black dress shoes. *If wearing a skirt, legs must be covered with black pantyhose, leggings, or stockings.* | White button down shirt, black tie (bow or straight), black pants, black dress shoes with black socks. |

1. **Practice Charts**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A | 75-80 minutes |
| B | 68-74 minutes |
| C | 60-67 minutes |
| D | 56-59 minutes |
| F | 55 or below |

There is ALWAYS homework in Orchestra class! In order for students to grow musically and be a successful member of the Orchestra Program, they must practice their instrument on their own time (before school, after school, at home). The students have full control over the grade they receive on their practice chart. 80 minutes of practice time is expected each week. Practice Charts are required each week for all grade levels. Practice charts are due on the last day of each week (usually Friday). If you, the parent or guardian, forget to sign your student’s practice chart, please contact me at your earliest convenience, as 5 minutes of practice will be deducted per day for unexcused late charts.

**Percentage Breakdown:** Concerts (counted as test grades) – 40%; Rehearsals (during/after school) – 20%; Written tests and quizzes – 10%; Playing tests and Quizzes –20%; Practice Chart and Homework – 10%

**Attendance Policy:**

* Your presence is necessary and expected
* Students who do not attend the concert will be assigned an alternate assignment.

If you are in school during the day, you will be expected to perform at the evening rehearsal or performance unless you have been excused IN ADVANCE (at least 48 hours) by Mrs. Price. Acceptable methods of contact include a Remind101 text, email, or calling the school to leave a message. All methods of contact must include a phone number where the parent or guardian can be reached.

There is no way to make up the experience of a public performance. No amount of homework can amount to the same educational value as performing with peers in front of an audience. However, to make up the points in the grade book, an alternate assignment may be assigned at the discretion of the director.

Emergencies will be handled on an individual basis.

**Fees:**

*All Students:*

*Instrument rental/purchase - through outside vendor*

At home practice is a required part of any orchestra experience. Because of this, all students must have a working instrument for use at home on a regular basis. Students who choose violin or viola are expected to transport their instrument to and from school to facilitate this practice. Storage for instruments during the school day is provided within the orchestra portable. Cello and Bass players will be assigned an in-class instrument for use during the school day but are also required to have one at home readily available for practice and performances. Arlington Middle School does not currently have an instrument rental program, but we do work closely with area music stores to ensure each student has a quality instrument. Instrument rental, as opposed to purchase, is highly encouraged during the student’s first year. Please contact Mrs. Price for more information.

*$28 orchestra fee – paid to Arlington Middle School*

It is requested that all orchestra students pay a small fee of $28. This fee covers a class t-shirt, all music played throughout the year, instructional materials, performance expenses, and miscellaneous orchestra classroom supplies.

*Cello and Bass players: $15 Instrument Maintenance Fee - paid to Arlington Middle School*

Students who use 1 or more school owned instruments are encouraged to pay a $15 Instrument Maintenance Fee each school year. This fee covers basic cleaning and maintenance of the school instrument/s. Any damage that occurs to school owned instruments (accidental or intentional) is not covered by this fee and is the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian.

***\*\*\*\*Please make checks payable to AMS\*\*\*\*\****

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Detach this portion and return it with your fee’s on or before Wednesday, August 16th\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Orchestra Handbook

**Student’s name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Tshirt Size: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Parent’s Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Parent’s Email:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

I, (parent name, print)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_have read the Arlington Middle School Orchestra Handbook with my student and we understand what is expected to be successful in the ACS Orchestras.

Parent’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Student Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_