

Kilbourne Middle School Orchestra

2017-2018 Handbook

Julie Ellis, Director
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to KMS Orchestra! We have a fun and talented orchestra program at KMS. I'm so excited that you're now a part of it! Please read through the handbook so you know what to expect this year at KMS.

- Mrs. Ellis

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Middle school orchestra is different from elementary orchestra because you develop so many more advanced skills on your instrument that allow you to play lots of new music. Some of these include shifting, 1 and 2-octave scales, and vibrato. The skills that you develop in middle school will prepare you for music in high school orchestra and for the rest of your life.

NOTES FROM MRS. ELLIS

My favorite teaching quote is from a famous cellist named Pablo Casals. He said, "I don't teach the cello because the cello can't learn – I teach the child."

I will do my best to make orchestra the best experience possible for you this year. In return, I ask that you work hard, stay positive, and always come to class ready to participate.

REHEARSAL PROCEDURE

- 1. Be on time!** Be in place with your instrument, music and pencil two minutes after the tardy bell.
- 2. Be respectful!**
- 3. Gum, candy, food and drink are not permitted** in the orchestra room.

Students are expected to have the proper equipment at each class. This includes an instrument and bow in good condition, music, pencil, and rosin. Violin and viola players need to have an extra set of strings, a nametag on their case, a shoulder rest. If you do not have the proper equipment, see Mrs. Ellis or for information on obtaining needed items.

For your instrument security, violin and viola players will be assigned a locker and lock. The instrument must be placed inside the locker and locked securely during the school day. This is in room 106A.

MUSIC & BOOKS

Students need to purchase the following materials:

7th Grade: Sound Innovations Book 2

8th Grade: Sound Innovations Book 3

1-inch binder for sheet music

Pencil

All other music will be provided by the district.

INDIVIDUAL PREPARATION

Being a member of a successful orchestra requires that students practice his or her instrument outside of the orchestra period. The amount of practice time required would depend on the individual and how well that student is able to perform the assigned orchestra part. The quality of practice time is more important than length of practice time. It is very important to understand that **frequent practice for a moderate length of time is of greater benefit to the student than one or two extended sessions.**

When practicing outside of class, use the orchestra rehearsal procedure as a guide for effective practicing. Careful tuning, warm up with scales or finger patterns, working in technique books and then playing parts of your orchestral music that need improvement will ensure that you are using your time wisely.

Since students are in orchestra to not only play music but to further their skills on their instrument, there will be testing for mastery of playing skills. Without daily practice, students will not progress, and this will be reflected in their grade.

PERFORMANCES

Performance is the natural culmination of the daily learning experience in rehearsal, and is an important part of the evaluation process. Both rehearsal and performance are necessary for a positive orchestra experience. **Attendance at performances is mandatory and is worth 100 points.**

All concert and contest dates are printed in this handbook. Any changes in the dates or times will be given up to three weeks prior to the event. If changes cause a conflict, the conflict must be discussed with the director within three (3) days after the change is announced.

The only time a student is excused from a performance is in the event of family emergency (i.e.- death in the family, a student's extreme illness). A parent needs to inform the director preferably before the concert, or at least by the next school day. The director's office phone is 450-6280 and is accessible 24 hours a day.

The director and administration of Kilbourne Middle School will make a final decision on whether or not an absence is excused. If the absence is excused, the director will assign the student make-up work either in the form of a playing test or a written paper. **If an absence is un-excused, the student will not receive credit and will not be allowed to make up the points lost due to the absence.**

Any students involved in athletics, other school and/or community organizations or who have work commitments must inform your coach, advisor, or supervisor well in advance about his or her orchestra

performance schedule so conflicts may be avoided.

In middle school we do not have after school rehearsals like we did in the 6th grade! Dress rehearsals are the day of the concert, during the school day.

GRADING CRITERIA

All nine weeks' grades are based on a point scale using the following criteria:

1. Musicianship and Instrument Care – 20%
2. Scale Mastery – 20%
3. Playing Assessments – 20%
4. Performances – 20%
All performances are required. See “Performances” for more details.
5. Written assessments and practice assignments – 20%

CONCERT DRESS

There is a set stage “uniform” for all middle school students. This uniform not only improves the overall stage appearance of the orchestra, but also helps to establish greater sense of unity within the performing ensemble. The KMS orchestra wears a blue “Worthington Orchestras” polo, black dress pants or long skirt, black socks, and black dress shoes. Order forms for shirts will go out in mid-September. The shirt will cost under \$20.00.

SCHOOL MUSIC AND EQUIPMENT

Students are responsible for all school-owned equipment assigned to them. This includes instruments, rosin, bows, endpin stops, and mutes. Any equipment damaged or lost will be the responsibility of the student assigned to the instrument. The student may either replace the equipment or may reimburse the cost of replacing or repairing the equipment to the orchestra fund.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Students are strongly encouraged to take private lessons. With Private lessons, participating students can have the extra help on orchestra literature and instrumental technique sessions on a one-on-one basis. If you do not have a private teacher and are interested in beginning lessons, a list of teachers in this area is available from the directors. Extra credit is awarded for taking lessons.

SOLO & ENSEMBLE ADJUDICATED EVENTS

Students in the vocal and instrumental music programs are strongly encouraged to participate in the OMEA Solo & Ensemble Adjudicated Events held every March or April. The purpose of this event is to promote and encourage students' improvement in the areas of musicianship and technique.

See Mrs. Ellis for rules and preparation guidelines.

HOW TO CONTACT MRS. ELLIS

My office phone/voice mail number is **450-6280**. My e-mail address is **jellis1@wscloud.org**. Students and parents are encouraged to contact me at any time by phone or e-mail. I may respond faster over e-mail as I am traveling between buildings.

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

I have read the 2017-2018 Kilbourne Middle School Orchestra Handbook and have received the 2017-2018 performance calendar. I understand the responsibilities of my child as a member of the orchestra. I also will see that the uniform dress code for concerts is followed.

Student Name

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Before turning this in, remember to:

___ Add jellis1@wscloud.org as an e-mail contact

___ Secure a 1-inch 3-ring binder for all music and handouts

___ Purchase Sound Innovations Book 2 (7th Grade) or Book 3 (8th Grade) by Friday, Sept 1.

___ Follow us on Twitter! @orchestra_twhs

Please return this form to Mrs. Ellis by Friday, Sept 1.