

THE McCORD MIDDLE SCHOOL

ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK

2014 - 2015

Mrs. Lori Wright, Director

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide members of the McCord Middle School Orchestra a clear understanding of what the program expects from its members and what its members can expect from the program. This handbook was developed to eliminate the possibility of student and parent misunderstanding of orchestra policies.

It is recommended that all orchestra members and parents take the time to read and understand the responsibilities outlined in this handbook. With everyone's cooperation, we can hope to have a positive and successful year for everyone involved.

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

You have the power to make a positive difference in YOUR orchestra!!

Attitude probably is one of the single most important factors in determining the success of an orchestra or any other organization. Every individual makes a difference...there are no unimportant people!!! We all have something important to contribute. When we do not contribute to the whole, we cheat everyone **including ourselves**, by not using our full potential.

If some of the following expectations seem high, keep in mind that these responsibilities are essential to your full development as a musician and to the success of the orchestra. It is an individual's responsibility to meet these standards; it is not possible to have a great orchestra experience without everyone's cooperation at all times.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Orchestra a course providing instruction in individual technical development, interpretive skills, ensemble training, and musicianship. Class instruction addresses these areas as they relate to each student's instrument within the orchestra program.

Selection of literature is based upon technical, musical, and performance considerations. During any particular year, the group performs a wide variety of music from all historical periods. While one musical period may be stressed for its contribution to individual skills, another may be used to develop of a particular aspect of musicianship or ensemble style.

REHEARSAL PROCEDURE

1. Be in place with equipment (instrument, music, pencil), and as needed mute, rosin, and a soft cloth, and ready to begin rehearsal by the start of the period. If not, you will be considered tardy to class.
2. Be courteous to everyone in the room- that includes when and how you talk!!
3. All talking, playing, and moving around should stop as soon as the director steps in front of the class.
4. Respect the property of other individuals. This includes instruments as well as music. You do not have the right to use anyone else's materials without their permission.
5. Dismissal from class will be by the teacher and not by the bell.

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

MUSIC

All music performed by the McCord Middle School Orchestra will be provided by the school district. Music used for solo and ensemble purposes will usually be provided by the student, however the school district does have a small solo and ensemble library that students are welcome to use. All original copies of music remain the property of the Worthington Schools. Students are expected to take good care of all music. Markings should be made lightly with soft lead pencil only. Excessive markings and "doodles" are not acceptable.

All original copies will be kept in school folders. No student is allowed to take their school folder home. Practice copies will be provided for home use only. It is a good idea to keep your practice copies at hand during all rehearsals so that you may copy fingerings, bowings, and other markings from your original copies into your practice copies.

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 will 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.** In addition to individual practice on assigned orchestra parts, students will improve their technical facility on the instrument by practicing scales, etudes and/or solos as part of their chosen area of concentration. It is an expectation that every member of the orchestra play in tune with proper posture and bowing technique. Each student's goal must be to improve and do their personal best every day.

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. A student who misses a performance not only negates previous efforts, but also effects the overall sound of the orchestra. **Attendance at all performances is mandatory.**

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.

Any students involved in athletics, other school and/or community organizations must inform your coach or advisor well in advance about his or her orchestra performance schedule so conflicts may be avoided. Students have an obligation to the orchestra and to themselves to fulfill this responsibility.

It is very important that all concerts start on time. In order to accomplish this, all students must arrive 30 minutes prior to the scheduled beginning of the concert. This time is for tuning, music check, and proper warm up. Students who arrive late will have points deducted from their concert grade.

At the conclusion of each performance, all members are responsible for putting their chairs and stands back on the racks provided. Students are responsible for making sure this is accomplished and for making sure that all music is returned to its proper place. Failure to do your part will be reflected on your concert grade.

CONCERT ATTENDANCE

Participation in all performing events has been designated as "mandatory" for previously stated reasons as well as course requirements. Therefore, consequences will be given as a result of non-fulfillment of this obligation. Consequences include but are not limited to: grade lowering and/or demotion in seating within the section.

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. You may call the school office or email Mrs. Wright with this information.

A final decision on whether or not an absence is excused will be made by the director. 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 unexcused, the student will not receive credit and will not be allowed to make up the points lost due to the absence.**

CONCERT DRESS

There is a set stage "uniform" for all students. These guidelines not only improve overall appearance of the orchestra but also help to establish greater sense of unity within the ensemble.

All students are required to wear white tops with either short or long sleeves. Sleeves are required! There should not be any print or lettering on the shirt. Students must also wear solid black pants or longer skirts, black dress shoes, and black socks or nylons. Stripes or prints should not be on the pants or skirts. Skirts need to be long enough to be at the knee when seated.

If you are not sure about a specific outfit or if you need clarification on the above, see Mrs. Wright. Any student with inappropriate dress (i.e.- white socks, short skirt, sneakers) will have points deducted from the performance grade. In extreme circumstances, the student could be asked to either go home to change, or to not participate in the concert.

GRADING CRITERIA

All nine weeks grades are based on the following criteria:

- Daily Participation

- Equipment Upkeep and Accessories
- Play test and/or ability level advancement
- Performances

Class Participation

Class participation points are earned by:

1. Following rehearsal procedure.
2. Promptness.
3. Attending class.
4. Demonstrating good posture and playing position.
5. Demonstrating an attentive attitude.
6. Marking music during rehearsal.

Equipment Upkeep and Accessories

Equipment includes instrument, a full ribbon of horse hair on bow, music, pencil, mute, rosin, spare strings, and a soft cloth. It also includes replacing broken strings and needed instrument repairs within a reasonable period of time. All strings need to be replaced every year. Old strings are very difficult to tune and to keep in tune. They also tend to "deaden" the tone of the instrument. Violinists and violists need to keep a spare set of strings in their cases.

Performance & Play Test

Details on areas of evaluation for this section are given under the sections labeled "Concert Attendance" and "Performance".

IDENTIFICATION OF EQUIPMENT

All personal equipment should be clearly labeled with the student's name, address, phone number and school. This is for your protection. You should also have your instrument's make, model, serial number, and purchase price written down and filed at home. Having a good photo of the instrument and accessories is also a good idea. Instruments that are not locked up can, and have, disappeared. Specific information on the instrument may help the police recover the instrument.

All violinists and violists will be assigned a school locker. *Students must have and use a combination lock on their lockers.* The director will have all lock combinations on file. **All students will be required to lock their instruments in their locker with the lock securely fastened.** This is for your protection.

SCHOOL-OWNED MUSIC AND EQUIPMENT

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

All students will be assigned a specific folder with music. The music in the folders are all original copies from the publisher. It may cost from \$2.50 up to \$10.00 to replace a piece of music. Some parts are permanently out of print, which means that they are irreplaceable. In other words, take good care of your music!! Do not fold, tear, or mutilate music. **Light** pencil markings are encouraged, **no** ink markings or colored pencil markings EVER!!

Generally, two people are assigned to a folder. Both students are responsible for the care of the music. Both students are responsible for making sure that the folder is put away and both are responsible if the folder or specific parts disappear. Moreover, both students will be responsible for reimbursing the orchestra fund for the cost of replacing the lost or mutilated music. **Music folders must remain at school in the music cabinet. Practice copies are to be taken home.**

PRIVATE LESSONS

Students are strongly encouraged to take private lessons. In an orchestra program this large, it is virtually impossible to meet the individual needs of each student, though every possible effort is made. With Private lessons, even just two lessons per week, participating students can have the luxury of extra help on orchestra literature and instrumental technique sessions on an 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 Mrs. Wright.

HOW TO CONTACT MRS. WRIGHT

1. You may call McCord Middle School and leave a message with the office.
2. My email address is lwright@worthington.k12.oh.us. Students and parents are encouraged to contact me at any time.

2014-2015 ORCHESTRA CALENDAR

This section is very important for all parents and students to read over carefully. These dates should be immediately posted in calendars at home so that possible conflicts do not occur later in the year. The dates indicated with a "*" are mandatory! All others are for your information.

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| <i>*November 5, 2014</i> | Orchestra Concert; WKHS Auditorium, 7:30pm |
| <i>*December 19, 2014</i> | Holiday Concert; McCord M.S., time TBA |
| <i>*March 10, 2015</i> | Orchestra Concert; WKHS Auditorium, 7:30pm |
| <i>*March 14, 2015</i> | Central Ohio String Invitational Hilliard, TBA |
| <i>April 12, 2015</i> | OMEA Solo & Ensemble Contest; location, date and times TBA. |
| <i>*May 12, 2015</i> | West District Orchestra Festival; WKHS Auditorium, <u>7:00pm</u> |
| <i>May 9 or 16, 2015</i> | Cedar Point- Music in the Parks Festival; time and date TBA |

"*" denotes a mandatory attendance

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

I have read the 2014-2015 McCord Middle School Orchestra Handbook and have received the 2014-2015 performance calendar. I understand the responsibilities of my child as a member of the orchestra.

PRINT STUDENT NAME _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

STUDENT EMAIL ADDRESS _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

HOME PHONE NUMBER _____

WORK OR CELL PHONE NUMBER _____

PARENT EMAIL ADDRESS _____

THIS MUST BE RETURNED BY THE SECOND WEEK OF SCHOOL!