

***MOUNT VIEW
MIDDLE SCHOOL
ORCHESTRA
HANDBOOK***



2009-2010
Andrea Aldrich, Orchestra Director

Name _____

Program Format

The orchestra meets daily during CORE+ time. In addition, each student has sectionals one time per week. Sectionals are on a rotating basis, and students come out during related arts for sectionals. There are two orchestras at Mount View:

1. Intermediate Orchestra is comprised of 6th grade students.
2. Advanced Orchestra is comprised mostly of 7th and 8th grade students, with a few extremely advanced 6th grade students. 6th grade students are selected for the advanced orchestra based on playing ability, ensemble skills, and instrumentation. Students are chosen at the discretion of the director.

In addition to the orchestras, there will also be opportunities for many students to perform in duets, trios, quartets, or other small chamber ensembles. These groups will meet either before school, after school, or during sectionals. I also hope to start a full orchestra this year comprised of strings, winds, brass, and percussion that will meet on Fridays after school from 2:30-3:30. Interested students will be chosen for this group based on fall auditions. If you are interested in participating, be sure to write "yes" on the last page of this packet.

Orchestra classes focus on learning a variety of musical styles and skills through challenging repertoire, as well as improving technique, and learning new skills to increase each child's individual playing as well as the ensemble level of performance.

Rehearsal Procedures for Orchestra

1. Arrive at rehearsals on time. Seventh and Eighth Grade students must be in their seat and ready to play by 10:53 AM. Sixth Grade Students must be in their seat and ready to play by 12:09PM. **You will be marked late if you are not in your seat and ready to play by this time.**
2. Show up to **all** rehearsals with your instrument, music (including lesson book), supplies and a pencil. It is not acceptable to depend on your stand partner to bring music and a pencil. Each student must bring these items so that bowings, dynamics, and other musical markings can be added to each part.
3. At rehearsals and lessons, get your music and instrument in an orderly manner and be seated immediately. Adjust your chair and stand so that you can see the music as well as the conductor.
4. Sit with good posture, that is, both feet flat on the floor, legs uncrossed, and back away from the back of the chair.
5. Do not eat, drink, or chew gum when you play.

6. When the conductor comes to the podium stop playing and talking. Stop when the conductor cuts you off and listen for directions. Talking during rehearsal will not be accepted.
7. Be respectful of all teachers, staff and students. Teasing, bullying, and other disruptive behaviors will not be tolerated.
8. Do not touch any instrument other than your own unless instructed to do so.
9. Your name must be on your case and music at all times.
10. At the end of rehearsals put your chair, and stand back in place, pick up the area around you, and leave the room in an orderly manner.
11. Arrive to your next class on time.
12. Your instrument and music must go home each day.

Practice Habits

Correct daily practice is vital in building and strengthening the skills taught in class. There is a direct correlation between correct consistent practicing and success and enjoyment. Each student is required to practice for 20 minutes each day, for five days a week. Although I am aware that many students are busy participating in extracurricular activities such as dancing, sports, and boy or girl scouts, daily practice is expected of all students. Unlike the other activities listed, **instrumental music is an academic class and has work that must be done at home, just like any other academic subject.** Practice sheets will be stapled inside the music folder. Students should list how many minutes they practiced each day. **Parents need to sign the practice sheet each week.** Practice sheets will not be accepted without a parent signature. **Practice sheets are checked each week during sectionals.**

Grading System for Practicing:

100 or More Minutes= A

80-99 Minutes= B

60-79 Minutes= C

59 Minutes or Less= D

No signed Practice sheet= E (0% averaged with Grade!)

Minutes practiced over 100 will have a positive impact on a student's grade.

What you can count on your practice sheet:

Any practice time on your orchestra instrument outside of school. This includes private lessons and GT/ Enrichment orchestra. You cannot count class time, after school rehearsals, or concerts.

Helpful Practice Hints

1. Work through difficult sections first.
2. Practice slowly before speeding up. You have to walk before you can run.
3. Count and clap difficult rhythms. Follow this by bowing the rhythm on an open string.
4. Practice difficult bowings of the piece on an open string. Make sure that the rhythms are correct as well as the bowings (slurs, separate bows, staccato, legato, etc.).
5. Work out the notes of difficult sections in small chunks. If necessary, practice the notes out of rhythm first.
6. Do allow yourself some fun to play through something all the way without stopping.
7. Go back and fix difficult parts. Try not to keep playing through the whole piece a million times. Stop and fix the measures that are difficult. Practice each difficult section until you can play it 10 times perfectly.

Learning the correct notes and rhythms is just the beginning of quality practice.

Once the basics are down, consider the following:

1. **Intonation**- Work slowly on getting each note in tune. It doesn't matter if you use the correct fingerings if it's out of tune. Tapes are only a guide for intonation. Use your ear and listen carefully for precise intonation.
2. **Bowings**- Check that your bow is going the correct direction and you are slurring or playing separate the right notes. Make sure you are in the right part of the bow (tip, frog, middle).
3. **Technique**- What technical aspects of your playing are you working on? What can you improve and focus on while playing? Examples are: keeping fingers curved and relaxed, left wrist down, vibrato, etc.
4. **Tempo**- Practice with a metronome so that you learn your piece at the correct speed and have rhythmic precision.
5. **Dynamics**- Work on creating a musical performance by adding the dynamics (soft, medium, loud, crescendo and diminuendo)
6. **Phrasing**- Where does each line or musical sentence begin and end? Where are the high points in each phrase?

7. **Articulation-** Should the notes, section, or entire piece be played smooth and connected (legato) or short and detached (staccato)?
8. **Tone quality-** Are you using the right amount of weight in the string to create a good tone? Is your bow parallel to the bridge and in the correct spot for a good sound? Think about what you can do to make the best, most beautiful sound possible.
9. **Style-** What kind of style is your piece? Is it a dance or march? When you play, does it sound like a beautiful piece of music, or just a bunch of random notes? What words can you use to describe how the song sounds? What color best describes this piece? How can you demonstrate all of this in your playing?

What Parents Can Do

1. Schedule a regular time or times each day for practice.
2. Provide your child with a quiet place with good lighting and ventilation.
3. Make sure your child's instrument is maintained well. It is difficult for a child to practice on an instrument that doesn't work correctly. Also, the higher the quality of the instrument, the better the sound. The better the sound, the more your child will enjoy playing.
4. Listen to your child practice. Congratulate him or her on something well done. Offer compliments and acknowledge improvement.
5. Build a music library for your child to listen to.
6. Expose your child to concerts and recitals. Many colleges offer recitals for free.
7. Encourage your child to play for friends and family.
8. Often children will go through periods when they are more or less enthusiastic about playing. Encourage your child to persevere through the difficult times.

What to Avoid:

1. Using practice as a punishment.
2. Ridiculing or making fun of your child for mistakes or less than perfect playing.
3. Talking to others negatively about your child's playing.

Concerts/ Additional Rehearsals

The musical ensemble cannot exist without each of its members; therefore it is crucial that all members attend all functions. Howard County Public Schools recognizes the following reasons for excused absence: 1. Severe illness 2. Death in the family 3. Court appearance. As we near concerts and adjudications, there will be 2-3 afternoon or evening rehearsals that are mandatory. In the same way, all string players are expected to attend every concert. A concert schedule will be sent home in the next few weeks. **Failure to attend rehearsals or concerts will result in a loss of 25 points from the quarterly participation grade per unexcused absence.** Students are expected to arrive 45 minutes before a concert. This allows enough time for tuning all of the instruments properly.

Concert Attire

- A long sleeved white shirt with a collar
- Black pants or a long black skirt
- Dark shoes
- Dark socks or hose

Concert dress is required for all concerts.

The goal of the concert is to focus on the ensemble sound as a whole. Visual distractions take away from the performance of the group.

Grading Policies

The following areas will determine grades:

Playing Tests and Written Assignments 60%

Practice Sheets 10%

Daily Participation, Sectionals, Concerts, Extra Rehearsals 30%

An unexcused absence from class or sectionals will result in a "0" for the day.

Forgetting an instrument, music, pencil, or shoulder rest (violins/violas) will result in a loss of 15 points for each item missing per day.

An unexcused absence from a concert or after school rehearsal will result in a loss of 25 points off your total participation grade for the quarter.

"C" work and below is unacceptable on playing tests. Students receiving a "C" or below may be required to come in for extra help and/ or retest until a "B" or above is received.

Grades will be posted on teacherease.

Orchestra Website

The orchestra website can be reached from the Mount View website, or directly at <http://www.mvstrings.org>. On the website, you can find letters that have been sent home, extra practice sheets, current news, and listen to the orchestra.

Instrument Rental Information

I have listed a variety of places that offer rental or purchase programs. It might be worth calling a few stores to compare quality of instruments and prices. I also have some brochures for a few stores I can send home if you request them. You are free to go anywhere to get an instrument. I have marked with an asterisk stores that specialize in strings. Some of my students and parents have found that the instruments at the string specialty stores are often of better quality, produce a better tone, and rarely require servicing.

Bills House of Music 410-747-1900 (Catonsville)
Dale Music 301-589-1459 (Silver Spring)
*Gales Violin Shop 301-474-4300 (College Park)
Music and Arts 410-461-1844 (Ellicott City)
*Perrin and Associates 410-539-0043 (Baltimore)
*Potter's Violins 1-800-317-9452 (Bethesda)
Woodbridge Music Shop (Ellicott City)
Woodbridge Music Shop 443-535-9677 (Clarksville)
Washington Music Center 301-946-2300 (Wheaton)
Farrell's 410-366-7610 (Baltimore)
Stu's 410-876-7585 (Westminster)

Instrument Purchase Information

I HIGHLY discourage purchasing bargain brand violins. If the price seems too good to be true, there is most likely a reason. If you are in doubt of the quality of an instrument, please show it to me. I would be glad to help you. My goal is not to force everyone to buy top of the line expensive instruments. My goal is to help you find the best instrument in the price range you are looking, so please don't hesitate to discuss this important purchase with me. Often violin shops offer higher quality instruments. In addition to being a better instrument, you will get more for your money at these places. If you are interested in purchasing a higher quality instrument, I would be willing to accompany you to a music shop to help pick out an instrument. Please contact me at andrea_aldrich@hcpss.org if you are interested.

Perrin and Associates 410-539-0043 (Baltimore)
Potters Violins 1-800-317-9452 (Bethesda)
Gales Violin Shop 301-474-4300 (College Park)
Ray Hardy Violins 410-747-1423 (Catonsville)

Materials Needed

- An instrument in good working condition
- *8th Grade Only- Introducing the Positions by Henry Whistler Volume 1*
- *6th and 7th Grade Only- Essential Technique 2000 for Strings by Allen, Gillespie, and Hayes*
- A name tag on the instrument at all times
- Rosin
- A soft cloth for wiping rosin off the strings
- A shoulder rest or sponge for violins/ violas.
- A spare set of strings is recommended (I recommend Dominant brand for violin and viola, Helicore brand for cello). Do NOT buy Red Label Strings.
- A rock stop for cellos/ basses for home practicing
- 2 pencils in the case at all times!
- Folder (provided by me)
- A music stand for home practicing
- *A metronome*
- *A chromatic tuner (you can purchase a separate metronome and tuner, or 1 that does both functions)*

Please have all supplies by Monday, September 14th!

Where to Purchase String Supplies

Strings supplies and music can be purchased at Music and Arts in Ellicott City or Laurel, Woodbridge Music Shop in Ellicott City or Clarksville, or Potters Violin Shop in Bethesda. Purchases can also be made online or by phone at the following places:

Shar Music 1-800-248-7427 sharmusic.com

Southwest Strings 1-800-528-3430 swstrings.com

Both Shar and Southwest Strings sell music and supplies (like tuners, metronomes, strings, shoulder rests, rosin, etc.) at cheaper prices.

Private Lessons

Private lessons are not required to be in strings, but I do recommend them for all students. Many students thoroughly enjoy taking private lessons! The one on one teaching situation allows students to move at their own pace, and helps them progress quickly.

Name	Instrument	Phone Number
Rosemary Lather	Violin	rosemary_lather@hcpss.org
Naomi Liang	Violin	410-461-9396
Mia Choi	Violin	410-313-8115
Bonnie Zeitler	Violin	bonnie_zeitler@hcpss.org
Cathleen Jeffcoat	Violin at HCC	410-772-4871
Irena Zamoroko	Violin	410-418-8973
Jennifer Sigmon	Violin	410-730-3423
Joan Bob	Violin	410-484-5648
Cynthia Carmichael	Violin	410-465-2570
Ronald Mutchnik	Violin	410-461-0618
Jeoung Kim	Violin	410-772-9471
Landa Feng Ling	Violin	410-531-2230
Jong Ku Ahn	Violin	410-730-7421
Emil Chudnovsky	Violin	410-746-5995
Hana Morford	Violin	410-980-3130
Bonnie Zeitler	Viola	bonnie_zeitler@hcpss.org
Alice Young	Viola	410-532-3649
Hana Morford	Viola	410-980-3130
Joan Bob	Viola	410-484-5648
Phyllis Freeman	Viola	301-631-0526
Jennifer Rende	Viola	410-455-0491
Jason Love	Cello	443-831-8450
David Shumway	Cello	410-532-3649
Tim Anderson	Cello	410-832-5289
Erin Espinoza	Cello	410-908-6321
Jorge Espinoza	Cello	410-908-6321
Ben Myers	Cello	410-715-3506
Yoon Nah Cho	Cello	410-772-4871
Cindy Rosenberg	Cello	410-489-4434
Kiersten Walsh	Cello	410-243-6218
Matthew Boggs	Bass	443-340-2973

Other Places that Provide Lessons

Peabody Prep Main Branch 410-659-8125

Peabody Prep Howard County Branch 410-203-0664

Howard County Community College Musical Arts Center 410-772-4297

Woodbridge Music Shop 443-535-9677

Music and Arts Ellicott City 410-461-1844

**This list does not represent a recommendation or endorsement by the Howard County Public School System.

How to Reach Me

If at any point you have questions or concerns about your child or the program in general, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can email me at andrea_aldrich@hcpss.org or call me at Mount View, 410-313-5545.

MVMS Handbook Acknowledgment and Instrument Information

Please **return this form** to Mrs. Aldrich and **have all supplies** by **September 14, 2009**.

Please Print:

Name as you would like it on concert programs _____

Nickname or name you wish to be called in class _____

Parents' or Guardians' names _____

Home Phone Number _____ Work Phone Number _____

Parent Email address (please print clearly!) _____

Student Email address (please print clearly!) _____

Birth Date _____

Instrument _____

Make/ Model _____ Serial Number _____

Private Teacher's Name (if applicable) _____

Are you interested in participating in a symphonic orchestra (strings, winds, brass, percussion) that will meet after school? _____

If yes, could you meet Fridays from 2:30-3:30? _____

Please list any medical concerns for rehearsals, concerts, field trips, etc.

I give permission for Mrs. Aldrich to take pictures for the annual orchestra slide show.

I would prefer my child's picture to be excluded from the orchestra slide show.

I give permission for Mrs. Aldrich to include pictures of my child on the orchestra website (your child's name will not be listed).

I would prefer my child's picture to be excluded from the orchestra website.

I have read and understand the Mount View Middle School Strings Handbook.

Parent's signature

Student's Signature

Date