

OLATHE SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL

ORCHESTRA

HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Olathe South Orchestra. The Olathe South Orchestra has established many traditions as well as an excellent reputation throughout the years. This year the orchestra is celebrating the largest membership since the school opened in 1981.

As you become a member of this orchestra you accept a great responsibility. Many have come before you to establish traditions and to build the fine reputation that this orchestra enjoys both here in our community and in its travels around the country. Many will also follow you and remember the legacy that you leave when you graduate from Olathe South. It is your responsibility to uphold these traditions and add to them through your commitment, dedication and professionalism. This is a proud organization and you should feel pride as a member of the Olathe South Orchestra.

This handbook has been written to provide information pertaining to the policies and goals of the Olathe South Orchestra. All orchestra members and parents should carefully read and familiarize themselves with the rules and guidelines of this organization.

I. The Orchestra

The mission of the Olathe South Orchestra is to provide an opportunity for students to improve their technical and musical skills through performance using various styles and genres of music as well as enhance the orchestra member's music education by teaching **teamwork, commitment, and cooperation** and create a desire for lifelong musical learning and appreciation for the arts.

Members of the Olathe South Orchestra will show **respect** to each other, the directors, as well as guest clinicians. In addition, a **positive attitude** is expected from each member. A negative attitude defeats our goal of teamwork and cooperation and will not be welcomed.

“The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual.”

Vince Lombardi, football coach for the NFL (1913-1970)

II. Attendance

Attendance of all rehearsals and concerts is required. You will find a list of the orchestra's rehearsals and concert dates for the school year on our website (osorchestra.com). It is your responsibility to refer to this list and know the dates and times of each rehearsal and concert. During the year changes may be made to the list. Every effort will be made to give as much warning of any changes as early as possible.

Orchestra members will receive full credit for attending required events, with the proper dress, and all materials needed for the event. An excused absence from a required event may receive only partial credit.

Orchestra is a performance-based class; therefore, concerts are an integral part of the experience and cannot be replaced through written work. Please note, it may not be possible to make up the points for missing a rehearsal or concert. Make up points and requirements will be determined by the Director. Any conflicts or problems must be brought to the Director's attention immediately, *not the day before!* Illness requires a phone call or email from a parent or guardian within 24 hours of the concert/performance. A note from the *student and parent* is required to receive partial credit for an excused absence. Excused absences include, but are not limited to: illness; family emergency; required academic function that was on the calendar prior to orchestra event. ***NO CREDIT IS GIVEN FOR AN UNEXCUSED ABSENCE!***

“When you're committed to something, you accept no excuses, only results.”

III. Rehearsal expectations

To be an orchestra member requires a positive attitude, teamwork and cooperation as mentioned earlier. Students will earn a daily grade for their rehearsal work, which will be part of each quarter grade. Daily rehearsals are the most important part of the success of the Orchestra. Anything less than 100% cooperation, dedication, and effort during daily rehearsals will not be accepted. If you do not want to rehearse, work as a team, and focus you are in the wrong class. You must listen and respect section leaders, fellow orchestra members, guest conductors and conductor.

Things to remember for each rehearsal:

- Be prompt – in your seat 2 minutes after tardy bell
- Use proper posture
- Listen, no talking
- Do not work on other homework
- Work together – Teamwork
- **NO FOOD, DRINKS, OR GUM** (Bottled water is fine)
- Have a pencil (and use it!)
- Show respect

Personal Electronic devices like cell phones, MP3 players, handheld computers/games, are not allowed during rehearsals or performances. Using these devices during rehearsals or performances is rude, inappropriate and disrespectful to the director, clinicians and the orchestra members. Keep these away from the rehearsal/ performance area and in silent mode while in class or a performance. If this rule is broken the device may be confiscated, a tardy assigned, a referral written, a conference with the parents, all of the above and/or other creative consequences at the director's discretion.

IV. After-school rehearsals

The Olathe South Orchestra rehearses during the school day in *six* separate classes. Therefore, for the orchestra to perform successfully and uphold the excellence and integrity of the Olathe South Orchestra, after-school rehearsals are vital! All after-school rehearsals are required. Missing rehearsals may result in a change of seating position in your section. Multiple absences from after school rehearsals may result in omission from the next concert or concerts. Make up assignments for missing rehearsals will be assigned at the discretion of the director.

Please refer to the schedule of after-school rehearsals listed on our website when setting your schedule.

Do not schedule other events during after-school rehearsals such as;

- Doctor and dentist appointments
- Make up work and tests with other teachers/coaches
- Studying/completing work for other classes
- Events or assignments for other activities/clubs/classes
- Work
- Illness/injury unless doctor's note is provided
- Meetings with counselors, other teachers, coaches, sponsors, etc.

CELLISTS NEED TO BRING THEIR OWN INSTRUMENTS FOR ALL AFTER SCHOOL REHEARSALS.

V. Equipment and supplies

Orchestra members should have the proper supplies and materials needed for each rehearsal and performance.

1. **Violinists and Violists:** a standard size instrument in a well-maintained condition with high quality strings and a wooden bow (preferably pernumbuco) with horse hair (not fiberglass), a shoulder rest, and a cake of high quality dark rosin.

Cellists and bassists: a standard size instrument in a well-maintained condition with high quality strings and a wooden bow (preferably pernumbuco) with horse hair (not fiberglass), a rock stop or cello strap, and a cake of high quality dark rosin.

2. Music (your own folder...not someone else's)
3. PENCILnot an optional item
4. Additional items REQUIRED to play your instrument correctly and at your best

Failure to have all supplies will result in loss of daily rehearsal points.

Music is what feelings sound like. ~Author Unknown

VI. Grades

Daily Grade

The student may earn up to four (4) points every rehearsal in the orchestra class for being in their assigned seat with all materials needed for class at the assigned time; for sitting with proper posture (this includes having trimmed fingernails); using proper playing position; and for using proper conduct during the rehearsal.

Playing & Written Tests

Playing tests will be administered throughout the semester. The student will earn points for: playing the assignment as accurately as possible; using proper positions and fingerings; using proper posture; good tone quality (with a mature vibrato); and overall preparedness. Written tests may also be given each semester,

Attendance at Performances and After-school Rehearsals

The student will receive full points for attending performance events (see section II). The student will receive full points for attending after-school rehearsals (see section IV). Orchestra is a performance-based class; therefore concerts and rehearsals are an integral part of the experience and cannot be replaced through written work. Please note it may not be possible to make up the points for missing a rehearsal or concert. Make up points and requirements will be determined by the Director.

NO CREDIT IS GIVEN FOR AN UNEXCUSED ABSENCE!

VII. Uniforms

Uniforms are provided for all orchestra students. In order to complete the uniform, men need to provide black dress shoes and black dress socks and a proper tuxedo shirt. Ladies will need "nude" hose and appropriate dress shoes! Ladies--little or no jewelry and please do not wear jeans or other shirts under the assigned uniform, this is very unprofessional!

All students are required to wear a school uniform at concerts and contests. Uniforms are provided for all orchestra students free of charge, but a \$100 replacement fee will be assessed for lost or damaged units.

VIII. Orchestra Leadership Team

The orchestra leadership team may consist of students elected from the orchestras and/or students selected by Mr. Ferguson to fill managerial positions. If you have any questions or concerns about the orchestra program, please do not hesitate to contact one of these orchestra members. If you would like to serve on the O.L.T., please contact Mr. Ferguson. Also, please note that all O.L.T meetings are open to anyone in the orchestra program.

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more,
do more and become more, you are a leader."*

John Quincy Adams

IX. Seating

Teamwork is the most important aspect of orchestral playing. Therefore, each student should remember that it is more important to do your best and contribute what you can regardless of where you are seated. With that said, initial seating of the orchestra will be determined through an audition at the beginning of the year and subsequent placement tests throughout the year as deemed necessary by the Director. A daily seating rotation will be implemented allowing students to experience the orchestra from various positions in their section. Seating will be "frozen" one week prior to a performance. All decisions of the Director are considered final. Seating placement reflects a combination of factors: playing ability, preparation, rehearsal attitude, maturity, and leadership. Strong players tend to rise to the front, although I do give consideration to class standing.

*"It is amazing what can be accomplished when nobody cares
about who gets the credit."*

Robert Yates

“The Parental Section”

Parental involvement and support of the Olathe South Orchestra program is very important. Your attendance at orchestra concerts and other orchestra events, and your involvement in the Orchestra Boosters, will show your student that you believe their musical achievement is valuable and worthy of support. There are many ways to get involved with the orchestra. The following section lists just a few:

1. The Orchestra Boosters is a volunteer parent organization whose purpose is to provide support for the Olathe South Orchestra program. The Boosters provides assistance through fund-raising for orchestra expenses beyond the school budget (trips, clinics, supplies, etc.), receptions after South orchestra functions, transportation of equipment and students to and from orchestra events outside of school as needed, and acting as the moral support for the finest students at Olathe South High School.

An active parent organization dedicated to student needs makes the day-to-day activities of an orchestra program much easier. With parent involvement, the Director can concentrate on student, music, and school issues. If you would be interested in joining the Boosters please contact Mr. Ferguson at gferguson@olatheschools.org or Mrs. Carter at kcarteros@olatheschools.org

2. Stay informed of orchestra events and assignments through our web site, www.osorchestra.com . This site will list our performances, rehearsals, in addition to special announcements and other information pertaining to the orchestra. Of course, it is the student's responsibility to be at required events and turn in assignments on time, but the parents' awareness of these requirements is a great asset to the student.

3. Encourage your student to practice regularly. Help them find ways to use their time wisely and fit practice into their daily schedule. Remind them to practice whatever music they are responsible for in class or on their next playing test. Ask your student about their practice habits. Students have a tendency to practice from the beginning and play to the end. That is not practicing. Practicing is taking a piece of music apart and playing small parts of it until it is perfect. Then, by putting these small sections together, the piece becomes mastered.

4. Although private lessons are not mandatory for participation in the orchestra, they can make an enormous difference to the musical development of a student. The orchestra classes at South are very large which makes it quite challenging for one teacher to give the kind of individual attention that each is able to receive from a private instructor. Lessons with an effective private instructor *and* performing in the Olathe South Orchestra are an ideal combination for orchestral growth. Please ask me for recommendations if you need help looking for a private string teacher in your area.

Orchestra Letters

Letters will be awarded to those students that have earned 1,500 points throughout the school year. Points may be earned for all required orchestra concerts (100 points per concert), and for various other activities as listed below:

- ♪ Required concerts (100 pts. each)
- ♪ Private lessons (on your orchestra instrument – 400 pts.)
- ♪ Olathe Area Youth Symphony (400 pts.)
- ♪ Solo and Ensemble contests (100 pts.)
- ♪ Section leader
- ♪ Orchestra committee member
- ♪ Solo at church or other public performance
- ♪ Olathe Community Orchestra member
- ♪ Kansas City Youth Symphony

These are only a few of the ways to collect points for your letter. Other activities must be approved by the Director.

If you have further questions or comments please contact Mr. Ferguson at gferguson@olatheschools.org and Mrs. Carter at kcarter@olatheschools.org.

Additional information about the orchestra may be found on our web site:
www.osorchestra.com

We will also be using a new system to help with communication and organization through the Charms Music Office Assistant. You may log on to this system by first going to the web site www.charmsmusic.com and then log on in the parent/student section with school code: OlatheSHSOrch and then your student ID number.

Thank you for your continued support of the Olathe South Orchestra program.

