

Striving for Musical Excellence

**NORTH OLMSTED
HIGH SCHOOL
ORCHESTRA**



**2010-2011
HANDBOOK**

Welcome to the 2010-2011 NOHS Orchestra!

We are very glad that you have chosen to be a part of the North Olmsted Orchestra for the 2010-2011 Season. This school year brings with it many opportunities for musical growth and achievement. In addition, we hope that you find your time in orchestra to be enjoyable, challenging, and rewarding as we *work hard to be our best!*

As we look ahead, it is necessary to provide basic information about how the orchestra operates. This handbook has been prepared so that you and your parents will know the requirements, expectations, and procedures of our cooperative group. Read the enclosed information carefully, and refer to the handbook when questions arise. Please be aware that, because we are a group that depends on each of its members for success, it is absolutely necessary that each musician follows the procedures and expectations that this handbook discusses.

NOHS Orchestra Directors & Contact Information

Mr. Ben McMurtrie
Director of Orchestras
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Mrs. Carey Whitehouse
Assistant Director
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Directors can be reached at (440)779-8816 in the Music Office. In addition, phone messages can be left by calling the Student Services Office at (440)779-8820.

Please be sure to visit the North Olmsted Instrumental Music webpage (**eaglemusic.org**) often, as it will serve as a primary means for communicating information and fun stuff, too!

This handbook is not intended to be all-encompassing. As the year progresses, there may be a need for additional assignments or modifications to expectations.

Orchestra Member Expectations

Each of the expectations below promote **RESPECT** and **RESPONSIBILITY**. Please adhere to them:

1. **BE HERE.** All orchestra members are expected to attend all rehearsals and performances. The attendance policy for the NOHS Orchestras is detailed on the next page.

2. **BE ON TIME.** All orchestra members must be in the Music Suite when the bell rings at 8:40 a.m. Failure to do so will result in a “tardy: Rehearsal shall then begin promptly at 8:45 a.m. The 5 minutes of time in between is for student musicians to handle individual equipment, tuning, and warm-up needs. All students are expected to be ready to rehearse no later than 8:45. Failure to do so will result in a “tardy”.
 - First tardy per 9 weeks: Warning
 - All subsequent tardies: Morning detention to be served on the following day from 7:10 - 7:30 a.m.

3. **BE PREPARED.** Each student is expected to come to orchestra with all necessary materials and equipment each day.
 - Pencil...VERY important
 - All necessary sheet music in assigned folder
 - String Instruments: Rosin, shoulder rest, rock stop, soft cloth, extra strings (just in case!)
 - Brass Instruments: Valve oil, slide grease, soft cloth (Please get your own.)
 - Woodwind Instruments: Extra reeds, swab, cork grease
 - Percussion Instruments: Drum sticks, mallets, practice pad, stick bag

4. **BE A GOOD CITIZEN.** As with any other class, NOHS rules apply to us. In addition, a few “orchestra-specific” regulations are listed below:
 - Gum, food, and drinks are not permitted in the orchestra room
 - All instruments and music must be stored correctly after every rehearsal
 - Improper use, misuse, or abuse of equipment will not be tolerated
 - Follow expectations and guidelines for performances. These will be discussed separately.

5. **BE YOUR BEST.** We operate under the assumption that all musicians in the ensemble consistently put forth their very best efforts at all times. This means that each of us is expected to:
 - Pay focused attention during rehearsals
 - Practice at home on a regular basis
 - Always produce your very best sound
 - Always demonstrate your very best technique

Attendance Policy

Because our group can function at full strength only when all members are present, all members of the NOHS Orchestra are expected to attend ALL scheduled events (performances and rehearsals). Please note that students will receive points for each meeting of the group, and these points cannot be awarded to students who are not in attendance. Any student who has documented a legitimate excused absence in advance will be given the opportunity to make up lost points by completing an extra assignment. Below is the procedure for documenting all absences. **All absences must be documented through the correct process prior to the absence in order to be “excused”.**

Absence Procedure:

- Make every effort to avoid absences through pre-planning.
- In the event of a legitimate, unavoidable conflict, complete a *Planned Absence Request Form* **at least two weeks prior to the absence.**
 - In the case of serious illness, a form must be completed upon return to school.
- Return the completed, signed form to your director or to the envelope on the Music Office door.
- If accepted as an “Excused Absence”, complete a make-up assignment from the *Make-Up Assignment List* in order to earn back lost points.
- If the assignment is “Unexcused”, you will be unable to recover lost points.
- This procedure is in effect for both performances and rehearsals (including in-school rehearsals).

*****While we cannot anticipate all possible conflicts which may arise, the spirit of our attendance expectation is that all students attend all orchestra events unless absolutely impossible. We ask that parents and students plan ahead to avoid unnecessary conflicts.**

Examples of Acceptable Reasons for Absence from Performances:

- Severe illness
 - Students who are present in school on the day of an event are expected to attend orchestra events that evening.
- Death in the family
- Other family emergency
- Conflicts with other NOHS activities...must be approved by Mr. McMurtrie

Examples of Unacceptable Reasons for Absence from Performances:

- Work!!!
- Conflicts with outside-of-school activities
- Rock concert, Indians game, etc.
- Driving class or in-car hours

Attendance expectation for NOHS Athletic/Activity Conflicts:

*****We value the participation of student-athletes in our orchestra, but stress that these folks have made a commitment to each organization.**

- Performances/games for one activity take priority over rehearsals/practices of the other
- When both groups have practice/rehearsal at conflicting times, it is expected that students share time evenly between both groups
- In the event that both groups have performances/games at the same time, communication between directors/coaches/advisors shall determine the course of action.

Concert/Public Appearance Expectations

Concert/Public Appearance Expectations:

1. Be prepared. Be sure you have all necessary music, your instrument, and your full and complete uniform.
2. Follow school rules. All school rules will apply at all orchestra events.
3. Display class and dignity whether onstage or offstage.
4. Know where you are supposed to be, and when you are supposed to be there. Do not insist on being reminded numerous times.
5. Out of respect for the efforts of all musicians in the various orchestras and orchestra, we expect that all students attend the entirety of all concerts. The schedule for each individual performance will be given to you in "The Word" and will also be posted online at <http://www.eaglemusic.org>
6. When watching other groups, demonstrate appropriate concert etiquette at all times, even if others in the audience are not. This means:
 - Give your full attention to the performer(s)
 - Refrain from talking, and discourage others from talking to you
 - Food and/or drinks are not appropriate for a band or orchestra concert audience
 - Clap (don't shout, scream, etc.) politely and enthusiastically at the end of each piece
 - Be sure you refrain from applause between movements of a single piece
 - Stay in your seat the entire performance. If you must leave, do so during applause. You should also return during applause. Do not move about when the performing group is playing.

Private Lessons & Outside Ensembles

In order to maximize all students' musical abilities, and therefore the quality of their experience in orchestra, we strongly recommend involvement in private music lessons. Individual instruction with a qualified instructor on a student's instrument is beneficial for players of all ability levels, because these lessons focus on a player's own strengths and weaknesses. Lessons are available at many local music stores, as well as with local independent teachers. Please see a director for more information.

In addition, many of our students participate in advanced youth orchestras and bands in the area. Organizations such as Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra, Contemporary Youth Orchestra, Baldwin-Wallace Youth Orchestra, Cleveland Youth Wind Symphony, and Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra can give advanced students a chance to perform with other top musicians from around the region. Auditions for these groups are generally in the spring. See a director for more information.

Evaluation and Grading

Orchestra grades will be reported as A, B, C, D, or F, with + or – indicated as necessary. The general policies and procedures of evaluation of the North Olmsted City Schools shall be followed. The specific objectives and criteria on which the letter grades are based appear below.

➤ (1/3) Attendance

Because Orchestra is a performance-oriented class, attendance at all rehearsals and performances is essential. Make-up assignments can be completed for credit, but only in the case of excused absences that are documented appropriately and in advance. Evaluation will be determined by in-class record keeping.

- A **Superior:** Student attends all performances and rehearsals. In the event of excused absences from rehearsals or performance, make-up assignments have been completed.
- B **Good:** Student attends all performances and misses no more than two (2) rehearsals (unexcused or no make-up assignment)
- C **Fair:** Student misses one performance or misses between 2 - 5 rehearsals (unexcused or no make-up)
- D **Poor:** Student misses one performance and misses between 2 - 5 rehearsals (unexcused or no make-up)
- F **Failing:** Student misses multiple performances and/or misses more than five rehearsals (unexcused or no make-up)

➤ (1/3) Participation

Because Orchestra is a performance-oriented class, all members are expected to participate fully and appropriately. Evaluation will be determined by in-class record keeping and teacher assessment.

- A **Superior:** Student consistently demonstrates excellent effort and a positive attitude, always brings required materials, and participates fully and appropriately at all times.
- B **Good:** Student generally, with few exceptions, demonstrates excellent effort and a positive attitude, brings required materials, and engages in appropriate rehearsal behaviors.
- C **Fair:** Student's effort, preparedness, and/or rehearsal behaviors are inconsistent.
- D **Poor:** Student demonstrates a general lack of effort, frequently comes to activities unprepared for success, and engages in inappropriate rehearsal behaviors.
- F **Failing:** Student does not participate in class.

➤ (1/3) Musical Growth

Because Orchestra is a performance-oriented class, all members are expected to practice their instruments on their own, to take personal responsibility for the development of their musical skills, and to be able to play all assigned orchestra music. Evaluation will be made by playing quizzes and in-class assessment.

- A **Superior:** Student performs all orchestra music with a high degree of accuracy and musicality, and improvement in performance quality is made over time.
- B **Good:** While student's performance skills are less than superior, student shows evidence of consistent improvement.
- C **Fair:** Student performs at a basic level of accuracy, but little improvement is made over time.
- D **Poor:** Student demonstrates some degree of improvement in musical skill over time, but is unable to adequately perform class material.
- F **Failing:** Student is unable to adequately perform class material and demonstrates a lack of improvement over time.

Use of School-Owned Instruments

Much effort, care, and expense has made it possible for the North Olmsted City Schools to purchase an inventory of quality school-owned instruments. In fact, over the past ten years, \$250,000 of taxpayer money has been allocated to the purchase of this equipment. Moreover, we work diligently to keep up with routine maintenance on these instruments. These instruments are provided to those students who perform on instruments that are either too expensive to be purchased by individual students or that fill a unique role in our ensembles. Indeed, it is a privilege and a responsibility to be able to perform on a quality school-owned instrument.

Students using school-owned instruments are expected to treat them with the utmost care and respect. Students shall be responsible for any damage - beyond normal wear & tear - that occurs to these instruments. In the event an instrument sustains such damage, repairs will be made to the instrument by the school-contracted repairman, and a bill will be sent to the child's parents.

In order to help limit possible damages, here are expectations for those using school-owned instruments:

- Instrument shall be put away properly after each use, with case latched
- No extra materials (music, shoes, water bottles, etc.) shall be kept in the case
- Instrument should be kept clean and well-maintained (oiled, greased, etc.)
- Student will refrain from horseplay, especially around instruments

NOHS Orchestra Uniforms

The Orchestra Uniform:

- Gentlemen:
 - Black Tuxedo – Provided by NOBOB
 - White tuxedo shirt – Purchased by Student
 - Black bow tie & cummerbund – Purchased by Student
 - Black Socks and Dress Shoes – Purchased by Student (Marching shoes may be worn)
- Ladies:
 - Black Concert Dress – Purchased by student through NOBOB
 - Note: Because dress is machine washable, not cleaning fees will be charged
 - Natural colored hose
 - Black dress shoes

Wearing & Caring for the Uniform:

- The uniform is intended to be worn with no street clothes underneath.
- Uniforms are to be hung up neatly after each performance.

Student Leadership

Orchestra Officers:

The Orchestra Officers (President, VP, Treasurer, and Secretary) are responsible for representing the orchestra and providing input when certain decisions concerning the group are made. This group is also responsible for assisting with numerous tasks that arise over the course of the year, such as the coordination of rehearsal and performance set-ups and tear-downs. In addition, specific duties have been assigned to each of the individual officers. Orchestra officers are elected at the end of each year.

Music Librarians:

The librarians shall be responsible for filing, maintaining, and distributing all music for the various orchestras. Any music needs (lost music, etc.) should be addressed to the librarians. The librarians are appointed by the directors; all interested students should contact the directors at any point during the year.

Orchestra Historians:

These individuals, and their committee, will compile photographs, video, audio, newspaper clippings, etc. in order to create video presentations and scrapbooks of the year's occurrences. In addition, they will catalog concert programs and recordings at the conclusion of each concert. The Orchestra Historians are appointed by the directors; all interested students should contact the directors at any point during the year.

Earned Awards in Orchestra

All orchestra students shall have the opportunity to accumulate points in orchestra for such things as general participation, private lessons, outside performances, etc. The points earn the student an orchestra letter, silver pin, and gold pin. *Not all students will necessarily receive these items.* Specific procedures and details regarding these awards will be discussed in class.