

Orchestra Student Handbook



2022-2023

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I. Courses/ Ensembles

- A. 6th Grade Beginning Orchestra:** This is a beginning strings class for 6th grade. 6th graders are required to take a music class and can choose to take band, orchestra, or choir. Students will learn basic note reading, identify strings and note names on their instrument, and become familiar with either violin, viola, cello, or bass. Students will also learn the basic anatomy of string instruments, instrument care, methods of performance, and how to practice at home. This course may seem slow at times because students would like to start playing and making noise right away, but there is a lot of ground to cover before getting to that stage. I have planned plenty of interactive and engaging activities to do along the way as students begin their string journey.
- B. 7th Grade Intermediate Orchestra:** This is a 7th-grade course. Students in this course will expand their knowledge and experience from 6th grade. The students will advance their techniques by learning how to play parts independently from other sections and bring them together to form more complex pieces of music within various genres. They will also learn more advanced concepts like key signatures, articulation, phrasing, rhythm meters, etc. These skills will help prepare students for upcoming events in Washoe County like the Orchestra Festival as well as preparing them for 8th grade.
- C. 8th Grade Advanced Orchestra:** This is the most advanced orchestra class offered at Shaw. These students will take their orchestra experience from the last two years and become more well-rounded musicians. Students will begin to understand how to express emotion by using written notes in music as well as their technical ability. Students will also learn how to interpret music beyond the paper. They will use these skills to prepare them for Orchestra Festival, school concerts, and other playing opportunities throughout the year. This course is also meant to prepare them for high school if they choose to pursue orchestra.
- D. Chamber Orchestra (Enrichment):** This group meets during the school Enrichment period. Any students in the 8th-grade orchestra may participate in the Chamber group. Students who play other instruments may also join the Chamber group with approval from Mrs. Warren first. The main goal of this class is to explore many different genres and focus on personal accountability within a small group. We will use our time to rehearse and perform music from pop, theater, classical, rock, multicultural, etc. These pieces will also broaden and advance the student's technique. Students will also fulfill the normal Enrichment class procedures which include SEL lessons, planner checks, and make-up/ retake times for all class assignments.

Objective: My overall goal for each class is to ensure students become well-rounded musicians. Students will have a strong foundational understanding of how to play their instrument, how to interpret and express music, and how to become independent musicians.

II. Classroom Rules and Expectations:

Classroom Rules:

1. At the beginning of class, students are expected to enter the classroom and set up their instruments, music, and pencil in their assigned spot.
2. NO TALKING or PLAYING when the teacher is talking/instructing.
3. Backpacks go under the chair, and cases go on the left side of the chair.
4. Cell phones must be put away and on silent
5. No food or drink is allowed (except for bottled water)
6. NO GUM
7. Be respectful to your instrument, peers, and your teacher

If you do not follow the classroom rules above, you will be required to attend 15-minute lunch detention in the Orchestra Room. During lunch detention, you will sit in a chair facing the wall in a good seating posture for 10 minutes. That time is meant for self-reflection and how to improve your behavior for next time. The last 5 minutes will be spent with me as you discuss how you will make better choices and improve your behavior in future classes. If the behavior is repeated, you will receive a referral.

Student Responsibilities and Expectations:

- Practice a little bit each day
- Be respectful and responsible with your instrument and bow
- Bring your instrument to class every day
- Come prepared with music and a pencil
- Don't be afraid to ask for help from your teacher and peers!

Parent/ Guardian Responsibilities:

- Set aside a space for your child to practice
- Encourage your child to practice a little bit every day (about 15 mins)
- Support your child with any opportunities they might be interested in with orchestra (i.e honor orchestra, private lessons, music camp, etc.)
- Be proud that your child is making music!

III. Office Hours and Communication

- **Office Hours:** Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 8th-grade lunch.
 - a. I will also be available after school till 2:45 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.
- **Infinite Campus:** This is the primary source of communication. Please make sure all your contact information is correct and up to date in the infinite campus.
- **Email:** Please allow at least 24 hours for a response. I rarely check my email on the weekends.

IV. Orchestra Academic Grades

A. Assessments (75%)

- a. Students will be required to test playing tests throughout the school year. Most of these tests will be submitted online.
- b. If you refuse to play the test then that is the equivalent of not turning in a written test and therefore you will receive a 0%.
- c. If you are absent or fail to turn in a test/quiz it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to arrange a time to perform for me during my office hours or submit the test at a later date.
- d. If you receive less than a 90% on any playing quiz/test AND it was completed on time, you may ask for a retake. This can be done during office hours or submitted online after teacher approval.

B. Classroom Work and Homework (25%)

- a. In order for students to be successful in the orchestra, they must come prepared with their instrument, music, pencil, *evidence* of home practice, and participate in class. Students will receive up to 100 weekly points for preparedness and participation.
- b. 50 points will go towards classroom preparedness (instrument, music, pencil, and evidence of home practice).
- c. 50 points will go towards attitude, participation, and good playing posture.

C. Smart Music (Homework)

- a. This year, we will be using a music software titled SmartMusic. This program is approved by the district and is immensely helpful in student practice outside of normal class time. All students will have an account created by the teacher and will learn the login process in class. There will be assignments throughout the school year to complete outside of classroom time. This assignment is expected to be completed at home. If a student cannot complete this at home, there will be a station in the classroom where the student can come in during office hours and complete the assignment each week that is necessary.
- b. Every assignment will have a 2-week time limit for completion. If a student does not, or is unable, to complete the assignment during the week due, there will be an additional week for them to complete the assignment for full credit. After the 2 weeks, the assignment will remain missing for the remainder of the quarter. (emergency exceptions must be discussed and approved with the teacher).
- c. Technological problems are not an excuse to forget the assignment. These problems need to be communicated with the teacher so that they can be managed or fixed.
- d. Students are expected to bring their instruments home once a week. Double Bass players will have an at-home instrument that remains home for the school year so that they do not need to carry one back and forth.

D. Written Work (Classroom Work)

- a. All written work will take place during class time.
- b. Students must write their first and last name, class period, and instrument they play on the paper in order to receive credit.
- c. No name = no grade
- d. All written work must be completed in pencil.
- e. Students are still required to complete written work if they are absent. You will have until the end of the following week to receive full credit, and until the end of the quarter to receive 75% of the grade.

V. Absent Work, Missing Work, Late Work Policy

- A. **Absent Work:** According to new WCSD guidelines, absent students are required to complete work in order for absences to be considered “excused.” In orchestra, students will have the number of class days absent plus one to complete the work. So, if Katie is absent for two days, she will have two days plus one more to complete the absent work. If Katie has not completed the absent work by the end of those three class days, her absence will count as “unexcused.” Even though her absence will remain unexcused, Katie has until the end of the unit or grading period to complete the work to count toward her grade.
- B. This is the process for how all orchestra students will complete absent work:
During my office hours, spend 20 minutes practicing in the orchestra room. This is a solid 20 minutes of practice, without stopping, talking, daydreaming, etc.
- C. Late work is accepted but the final score will drop a letter grade each day it is past due

VI. Instruments.

A. Instrument School Rentals:

- a. School instruments are available to rent on a first come first serve basis. There is a \$50.00 rental fee. This fee is separate from the classroom fee and does not include extra supplies. Once students have turned in their rental agreement form and money, they will be assigned an instrument for the school year.

B. Purchasing or Renting Online:

- a. Shar Music.....www.sharmusic.com
- b. Music and Artswww.musicarts.com
- c. Johnson’s Violinswww.johnsonstring.com
- d. Southwest Stringswww.swstrings.com

C. Purchasing or Renting in Reno/ Sparks:

- a. Blue Note B’s..... 775-453-9219
- b. Muzic Fuze.....775-432-2422
- c. Dodd Violins at Blue Note B’s775-453-9219
- d. Absolute Music..... 775-852-2637
- e. Carpenter’s Music..... 775-852-7618
- f. Terry Scott Strings775-379-0322
- g. Steinway Piano775-829-0600

- **DO NOT** purchase an instrument from Amazon, eBay, Craigslist, or an online store that is not supported by music teachers.
- **DO NOT** purchase a painted instrument (i.e. pink, blue). These instruments are painted for a reason to hide a manufacturer error.
- **DO NOT** purchase Cecilio or Mendini instruments. You will have to spend between \$50-100 just to get one that can play well.
- Check with your teacher if you are uncertain about what size to get.
- Please remember that you are investing in your child's education and you want them to be successful in music class. Students are more likely to succeed in orchestra when they can practice on good quality instruments.

VII. Class Fees

Class fees will be used to purchase orchestra shirts/ uniforms, books, strings, tuner batteries, classroom rosin, other classroom supplies, etc. **Please take note that this fee DOES NOT include instrument rentals. *The 8th graders are invited to join the Six Flags Music Department Trip and will be given a separate handout with more information on fees.**

- 6th Grade Beginning Orchestra- \$20
- 7th Grade Intermediate Orchestra- \$30
- 8th Grade Advanced Orchestra- \$30

ALL FEES must be in an envelope with the student's first and last name, class period, and what the payment is for. DO NOT seal the envelopes (I need to be able to double-check the amount when the students turn them in. DO NOT combine fees (i.e. classroom fee and instrument rental fee. This keeps the fees separate and easier to keep track of for each student account so that there is no confusion.

VIII. Concert Dress Attire

The orchestra focuses on making music together. Thus the proper etiquette requires all musicians to be dressed the same - in “concert black”. That way no one musician stands out from the other and the audience can focus on the music as a whole. It is imperative that students follow the proper dress etiquette when they have concerts. Please reach out if you have any questions about the correct dress attire for concerts.

6th Grade Concert Attire:

- Plain Blue Jeans - no holes, busy designs, or leggings.
- Shaw Middle School Orchestra Shirt
- White Shoes - these can be tennis shoes, vans, converse, or any full-toed shoe that is white.

7th and 8th Grade Concert Attire:

- Black slacks or dress pants - no leggings, jeans, skirts, or dresses
- Black dress shirt - tucked in
- Black socks
- Black dress shoes - no tennis shoes, black shoes with white markings, vans, converse, or flip-flops.

IX. Concert Expectations and Etiquette

Students are expected to attend and perform at all the concerts. Please remember that concerts are a valuable experience for a growing musician. This is an opportunity where they will be able to showcase their hard work throughout the school year in front of their loved ones. Dates and times will be announced in class and sent home with a handout.

There is an alternative written assignment in which students are responsible for reaching out to Mrs. Warren one week before the concert date to receive full credit.

Please treat each concert like you are attending a movie theater. Make sure to silence all phones and keep talking to a minimum. Everyone is encouraged to applaud at the end of each piece of music!

Due by Monday, August 29th

The orchestra student and their parents/ or guardians are responsible for understanding the following guidelines presented in this handbook:

- We have read and we understand the grading procedure and class guidelines for Shaw Middle School Orchestra class.
- We understand that orchestra is a year long class
- We are responsible for deciding whether or not our student will rent from the school or from an outside resource provided in this handbook.
- We understand that there will be concerts held after school hours.

(Student name, please print)

(Date)

(Parent/guardian, please print)

(Date)

(Parent/guardian signature)

(Date)

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