

Dartmouth High School Orchestra Handbook

Policies, Procedures, and Student Responsibilities

- I. Class Preparation
- II. Rehearsal Etiquette
- III. Practice Requirements
- IV. Chamber Orchestra
- V. Performance/Rehearsal Requirements
- VI. Grading Policy
- VII. Odds & Ends
- VIII. Forms to Sign (3)

Please keep this handbook so that you may refer to it throughout the school year.

I. Class Preparation

1. Instrument and bow must be in good playing condition. Violins and violas should have some type of shoulder pad (we highly recommend the brand, Everest) and celli should have a rock stop. Cases must be labeled with name, address, and telephone number and should contain a rosin and cleaning cloth. Instruments must be placed neatly in designated music room lockers when not in use.
2. Pencil ~ Students must have a pencil on their stands when rehearsal starts as we regularly use them throughout class. It is suggested that students leave a pencil in their folder so they are readily available.
3. Music and Folder ~ It is impossible for students to participate in orchestra class if they do not have their music. Every student will be assigned a music folder for the duration of the year. **This folder is to stay in school.** Students will be given copies of music to practice at home which should be placed in a 3-ring binder. This policy should prevent students from losing music. *All music will be available in Google classroom.*
4. Extra Set of Strings ~ Every student should have an extra set of strings in their case as strings will surely break. We highly recommend Dominant strings, but any will do. Strings should be changed once a year as they wear out.
5. Tuner/Metronome ~ A tuner is mandatory for this course as it will greatly assist in the tuning process both at home and in class. We recommend the Snark Tuner, which can be purchased at the Symphony Shop. These should remain in instrument cases and will be used in every school rehearsal. A Metronome will greatly assist students to establish a strong understanding of pulse and rhythm. ***Tuners and metronomes can also be found on any mobile device app store for free or for a small fee.**
6. Music Stand ~ Every student should have a music stand for home practice.

II. Rehearsal Etiquette

Student conduct in rehearsal is a very important factor for the development of an outstanding orchestra. The following objectives are given as an outline of expected conduct. In situations not covered below, good judgment is always the rule.

A. **Expectations**

Students will:

- Be respectful of everyone at all times
- Use good manners
- Be a team player
- Practice
- Work hard
- Give 100% effort

B. **Procedures**

1. Students are to be in the room when class begins. An additional 5 minutes is given to students for setting up, but this time is to be spent in the room. Any students entering after start time will be marked tardy. After five minutes of set up, students are to be in their seats with music, stands, chairs, instruments, and pencils ready to go.
2. The rehearsal order is usually listed on the board before class starts. Students should have their music in order for the start of rehearsal. Once students are seated, the tuning process will begin.
3. Permission to use the restroom, water fountain, or see the nurse will be given at the discretion of the director.
4. Students are to listen carefully and refrain from talking when class is in session; this includes the tuning process. In addition, students are not to pluck or play their instruments except when instructed to do so.
5. Absolutely no food, gum, or drink in the rehearsal room.
6. Students are not to touch instruments or equipment that does not belong to them (other instruments, percussion equipment, etc...).
7. The class is usually allowed to dismiss a minute or two early to break down and clean up. Students may not leave the room until class officially ends and the director dismisses them. Music folders must be put away neatly and the room must be in order.

8. Students should be prepared with any daily assignment, and/or be able to demonstrate improvement in his or her playing skills.

III. Practice Requirements

Home practice is essential to improving one's skills and technique. Though practice charts are not required at the high school level, students may choose to maintain records for extra credit.

*We recommend a minimum of 4-5 days per week at 30 minutes a day.

* Practice logs must be signed by a parent or guardian to receive credit.

Students who take private lessons and/or participate in one of the area youth orchestras may include the time spent practicing for these events on their logs.

IV. Chamber Orchestra

Chamber Orchestra is offered for the more serious musician. This orchestra performs additional music at concerts and is also required to perform at functions outside of school throughout the year. Chamber Orchestra auditions will be held the 3rd week of school. Students are expected to know 3 octave scales up to 3 sharps and 3 flats. Additionally, students will be asked to play an excerpt of music chosen by Ms. Church and Mr. Daniels. Students will be notified of audition results within one week.

V. Performance/Rehearsal Requirements

Concert attendance is especially important. A concert is the culminating experience of our daily rehearsals. It is our joint effort that makes us a success; hence each member of the orchestra is important in making the team strong. If a student does not attend a performance, this affects the other members and weakens the team. For these reasons, members are required to attend all concerts unless excused by the director.

A. Excused Performance

1. If a student is ill the day of a concert and absent from school, please call the music office at (508)961-2750 to notify the director prior to the concert. Students should make every attempt to be in class the day of a concert. Please avoid scheduling doctor's appointments during orchestra time the day of a concert. Many important last minute announcements are given during this time.

2. School is canceled for any reason.
3. If the student gives the director a written excuse from her/his parent prior to the performance. The written excuse should state the reason the student is requesting to be excused and must be accepted by the director.

B. Unexcused Performance

1. A student/parent who has not informed the director of the reason for the absence with a written excuse or phone call.
2. When the director does not feel that the excuse given is reasonable or acceptable. The parent will be notified if this occurs.
3. "I forgot!"
4. Lack of transportation. If the director is given enough of notice, transportation will be arranged beforehand.
5. Work is NOT an acceptable excuse. Students are notified well in advance to arrange for work adjustments. School functions should take priority.

Because concerts are so important, unexcused absences will be penalized by a reduction of one letter grade. Students are to arrive 45 minutes prior to concert time for tuning and warm up.

C. Concert Dress (PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY)

Concert dress is as follows for all members of the orchestra.

Girls: Long black dress, skirt or pants, black dressy top, black stockings, and black dress shoes.

Boys: Long sleeve white dress shirt, black dress pants, black dress socks, black dress shoes, and black bow tie. Black bow ties can be purchased at any men's formal wear store or department store.

D. Concert Calendar

The Orchestra will perform several times throughout the school year. Calendar to follow.

E. Rehearsal Attendance

If a student is in school, she/he is required to participate in orchestra rehearsal. On rare occasions, a student may not be able to participate fully in orchestra due to health problems, injuries, or instrument repairs; in cases such as these, an explanatory note from a parent/guardian is required to excuse her/him from playing. An excused rehearsal will also be accepted if a student is detained by a teacher and informs the director with a note.

F. Unexcused Participation

1. Again, **work** is not an acceptable excuse. School functions should take priority and the director reserves the right to deny the student to perform in concerts due to absenteeism from rehearsals with excuses such as this.
2. A student who does not attend because she/he forgot their instrument or music. Attendance is still mandatory and those students should plan to listen quietly and participate as much as possible during the rehearsal.

VI. Grading Policy

The grade that all students receive in orchestra is a direct result of the work they do at home and in class. Grades are assigned to students in four areas, which are then averaged to obtain the final grade.

Class Participation

Behavior, attitude, preparedness, punctuality, cooperation, and attendance. Class participation is one of the most important factors in a student's progress.

Playing Participation

This category focuses on each student's sincerity of effort and desire to improve. Students must demonstrate steady progress and a serious approach to playing in class. This will ensure the high quality orchestra which will enable us to advance as the year unfolds.

Testing

On occasion, playing and/or written tests are given in orchestra. Students who miss tests because of absences are responsible for arranging to make-up the test with the director. These results will be factored into their overall grade.

Performances

Each student is expected to be at every performance as they are the culmination of our daily work. Students are expected to stay for the entire performance.

VII. Odds & Ends

Private Lessons

By the time they get to high school, all students are strongly encouraged to study privately with a qualified teacher. This will ensure strong practice habits and the continuance of technical development. Below is a list of teachers:

Keri Benson ~ 508-717-7485

Luke Fatora ~ lfatora@communitymusicworks.org

Tim Nunes (violin) ~ 774-526-4540

Tessa Belkin ~ 508-971-8797

Johann Soultz (cello) ~ 617-504-4316 ~ jas1005@mac.com

Bonny Harlow (cello) ~ 781-254-8525 ~ classiquechambermusic@comcast.net

Adam Nunes (cello) ~ 774-526-4541 ~ adamnunest@gmail.com

Michael Daniels (bass) ~ 401-440-5523 ~ michaeldaniels@dartmouthschools.org

Communication

Communication is of key importance in any partnership. The best way to communicate directly with us is through email. You may also contact us at the music office @ 508-961-2750.

Important Information

- ✚ Music Department Secretary, Cathy Banville ~ 508-961-2750
cathybanville@dartmouthschools.org
- ✚ Ms. Church ~ heatherchurch@dartmouthschools.org
- ✚ Mr. Daniels ~ michaeldaniels@dartmouthschools.org
- ✚ Shar Music Products ~ 1-800-248-7427 ~ www.sharmusic.com
- ✚ Johnson String Instruments ~ 1-800-359-9351 ~ www.johnsonstring.com
- ✚ Symphony Music Shop ~ 508-996-3301
- ✚ Music Department Website
<https://www.dartmouth.school/domain/1533>

