

Milton High School Orchestra Handbook

2011-2012

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Milton High School Orchestra is to learn to play, improve skills, explore musical understanding, and perform a variety of orchestral and chamber literature in concert and recital settings. Orchestra members will learn to be part of a functioning group and contribute each individual's skill to the common goal of making beautiful music together.

An Orchestra Member's Responsibility to the Orchestra

1. Be regular in attendance and account for all absences.
2. Be on time for all rehearsals. It is unfair to waste the time of other students.
3. Makes a real effort to learn and improve daily.
4. Be personally clean, neat, and dress appropriately.
5. Become responsible for and expect to assume the consequences of personal actions.
6. Display the proper respect for authority.
7. Follow all classroom rules/school regulations and travel instructions issued for trips.
8. Be honest and fair with others concerning equipment, music and school life in general.
9. Cooperate with fellow members and share with them the responsibilities and privileges that are part of the orchestra program.
10. Stay current: Visit our website miltonorchestra.com on a regular basis
11. Read and play music with understanding and expression.
12. Improve one's knowledge and understanding of music theory, harmony, and history as well as develop good listening habits.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is one of the key elements to a successful performing ensemble. Throughout the year, the orchestra program will be in need of parental assistance in various capacities. As I know you want only the best for your child, please get involved early in the school year with some of the routine duties of the planning and implementation of the program by contacting the Milton High School Orchestra Booster Club President, Mr. Bob Cookson, at his email address blackwatch@bellsouth.net. All parents of students enrolled in the orchestra program are expected to assist the officers of the Milton High School Orchestra Booster Club throughout the year, be they members of the Booster Club or not. The Booster Club Committees that need your help are: Communications, Finance, Travel, Hospitality, Membership, Performance and Ways & Means. During the school year, Booster Club meetings are held as called for by the Booster Club President and/or director as needed, usually in the orchestra room at Milton High School. Of course, to show how much you support your child's hard work in orchestra, all parents are expected to attend each concert given by the orchestra and its ensembles throughout the year. Please do not hesitate to contact me, via email (bombar@fultonschools.org), during the year if I can be of any further assistance or if you just have a concern or question.

Conduct

The primary responsibility of an orchestra member in class is to learn about music. Any behavior that distracts from, or interferes with, this learning process will not be tolerated. **NO STUDENT HAS THE RIGHT TO DISRUPT THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF ANY OTHER STUDENT.** Listed below are the rules for orchestra class. Adherence to these rules will ensure the success of every student in class and the ensemble as a whole.

Orchestra Class Rules and Consequences

Class Rules:

1. **No food, drink, or gum is allowed in the classroom or on the concert stage.**
 2. Be **in your seat** with your **music in order**, warmed up and **ready to play** within **two minutes** of the tardy bell.
 3. **No talking or playing during the rehearsal /lesson unless requested to do so by the director. No cell phones, personal listening devices (iPods/MP3 players) or hand held video games may be used during class.**
 4. Follow all directions; be courteous, respectful and polite to all.
 5. Adhere to all rehearsal procedures as set forth in this handbook
- Rules are meant to insure that everyone has a safe and healthy environment in which to learn.

Consequences:

Consequences for broken rules are as follows:

First offense: Verbal warning/student will put away instrument for 15 min.

Second offense: Verbal warning/student will put away instrument for 30 min./

30 min. detention assigned, parent notification of required detention/date & time

Third offense: Verbal warning/student will put away instrument for remainder of class/

30 min. detention assigned, parent notification of required detention/date & time

Fourth offense: Office referral

Severe Clause: Breaking any major school rule (i.e., verbal or physical abuse, etc.) will result in dismissal from rehearsal and immediate office referral and possibly suspension

REHEARSAL PROCEDURES

Rehearsal time is short and valuable. For that reason alone, every moment must be used for rehearsal/instructional purposes and appropriate announcements. The following practices/procedures are used in all good musical organizations and are required of all members in the orchestral program:

1. All students will be on time for all rehearsals/classes and will warm-up in a moderate manner. The dry-erase board is to be read when entering the rehearsal room and music/materials placed in the order as instructed.
2. All music folders, instruments and equipment shall be kept in their proper, designated storage spaces when not in use.

3. No gum chewing, eating of food and/or consumption of beverages (except for water contained in a clear plastic bottle with cap) is allowed in the rehearsal room or at any off-campus rehearsal or performance. If any gum, food or drink (water is exception as stated above) is brought into the room (and is at any time visible), it will be confiscated and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. If a student repeatedly (3X) chooses to leave his/her water bottle in the orchestra room after class/rehearsal, no beverage of any kind will be allowed for that student the rest of the school year.
4. **When the conductor steps on the podium (or in front of the class) and/or when the concertmaster rises and stands before the orchestra- all talking and playing must stop immediately.** If the director should be called away from the rehearsal, a student conductor will take over, if one has been so designated. The student conductor will now be in complete charge over the ensemble. In the absence of a student conductor, students will remain in their seats and use the time for individual practice.
5. Orchestra members must bring the following materials to all rehearsals: instruments, bow, **rosin, mute, all music, end-pin holders for cellos** and basses, **a #2 pencil**, and a clean soft cloth to wipe off your instrument every day. Students using school owned instruments must also keep these instruments in a clean condition by wiping off rosin, etc. after each use. Failure to do so will result in a loss of privilege to use said instrument and forfeit of Use of School Instrument fee. Do not rely on your stand partner; always have your music with you as well!
6. **Students will stop playing when the director gives the “cut-off” signal. Students will not talk or play when the director is talking/demonstrating or rehearsing individuals/sections of the orchestra.**
7. All of us come to our orchestra with various levels of skill, abilities and experiences. Each student has the right to enjoy their orchestra experiences, no matter what their ability, without the fear of harassment of ‘put-downs’ from others. Negative comments or “put-down” will not be tolerated. Violation will result in disciplinary action.
8. **All students will enter the room with their primary focus being their preparation for the day’s lesson/rehearsal. Conversation (“free-time”) is reserved for the end of class (if time allows).**

REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS WITH A SUBSTITUTE

The absence of the director (hence you have a substitute teacher) does not mean you have a “free day”; you are expected to practice individually or in small groups (sectionals) the entire period! A record of the above requirement will be kept by the substitute teacher and parents will be contacted upon the return of the director in the same manner as outlined under “Class Rules and Consequences”. **No free day unless I say so!- Period!!**

Rehearsal & Performance Attendance

An orchestra performs at its optimum when all members are present. Therefore, attendance at all rehearsals and performances is mandatory. Any unexcused absence from a performance will result in a “0” for that performance event. The **only** acceptable excused absences are the following:

1. illness with a doctor’s excuse
2. funeral/death in the family
3. emergency situations as deemed valid by the director
4. prior commitments (A prior commitment is defined as a date already committed to another event when the scheduled event is **announced**. Students who work are expected to request that their work schedules be arranged to accommodate all rehearsals and concerts. Employers should be informed that this is part of the student’s requirement for a class and not an extra curricular activity.)

All excused absences must be in writing, specifically describing the reason for your absence, signed by a parent or guardian, and turned into the director within three school days. When possible, in the case of #2, advanced notice should be given. In the case of #4, advanced notice is **mandatory**. If you miss a performance or rehearsal due to any of the above four reasons, you must see the director for appropriate make-up work so you do not receive a “0” for a performance/rehearsal attendance grade.

There will be after-school rehearsals scheduled throughout the year. They are included on the orchestra calendar. Attendance at all scheduled rehearsals is mandatory. Absences from these rehearsals will be reflected in the student’s rehearsal attendance grade. There are some instances for which special considerations may be made. They are the following:

1. Excused absences from school day. Documentation must be shown to the director (if the student does not come up as excused/illness from the attendance office) in order that the student does not lose points.
2. Doctor or dental appointments that absolutely and positively cannot be scheduled at any other time. These must be approved **one week** in advance.
3. Any other circumstances, at the discretion of the director, if notified **one week** in advance.

Miscellaneous Attendance Policies:

1. Students may **not** miss orchestra class to take or finish a test, help another teacher, etc.
2. If you are well enough to attend school, you are well enough to play your instrument. If you cannot play due to an injury, you **MUST** have a note from your doctor, parent or guardian.
3. When coming to school for a rehearsal or performance, students are expected to allow time for unforeseen circumstances or delays. Do not use parents or traffic as an excuse for being late.

Attendance Policy for “Extra” Performances

During the school year, Milton High School Orchestra Ensembles may have the opportunity to perform in the community for various functions such as business meetings or nursing homes. Students are encouraged to participate in as many performances as possible. The director will check with the students about their availability for a performance. The students should then check their calendars at home and inform the director of any conflicts. Once the date is confirmed and the student commits to a performance, it is then required and the same attendance policy will be observed as previously described.

Grades

Students in the Milton High School Orchestras will be graded by the following school criteria: 90-100=A 80-89=B 70-79=C Below 70=F

Performance and Written Exams (35%)

Playing tests will cover material from sheet music, technique books, and/or scales and arpeggios. Written exams will cover various components of music theory and music history covered in class. Grades are based **entirely** on the student’s effort and progress as they relate to his/her musical potential and aptitude. See syllabus for details regarding the point distribution on performance exams.

Rehearsals (20%) & Performances (30%) – Participation/Attendance

Each student may earn points up to a maximum of 100 for each scheduled (thus required) rehearsal and performance. See syllabus for details regarding the point distribution governing rehearsal and performance attendance.

Final Semester Exam (15%)

The final exam will be a cumulative test containing materials covered throughout the semester. The exam is 100 question multiple choice (theory & orchestra related info.)

Additional Grading Information

Test material will be provided one week prior to the test date. Each written test will be given during one class period.

Grades for playing exams will be based on the following criteria: tone production, intonation, rhythm, appropriate fingerings/bowings, and correct posture/position.

Opportunities for extra credit are available. Please consult with the director for extra credit “mini projects”. Each “mini project” grade will be counted as a test grade. A maximum of three “mini projects” are allowed during each semester.

Make-Up Grades: Make-up work for excused absences, missed written tests, and/or playing tests is available when requested by the student. For all unexcused absences, the make up grade will be lowered by 10% as per school policy. All make-up work must be completed (turned in) within three days of the student’s return.

Absence from a Rehearsal / Performance: Because the live performance given by an orchestra is an aesthetic experience and cannot truly be “made-up”, attendance at all dress rehearsals and concerts is an orchestra member’s most important commitment. Most of a student’s grade is derived from the preparation and team commitment leading to and culminating in the performance. In the event of an **emergency or serious illness** (therefore an excused absence), the director **may** ‘excuse’ the grade for being absent from a required after school rehearsal or performance in which case no grade is entered that would either help or hurt the student’s average. **No make-up grade can be given for an unexcused absence from a concert – SO BE THERE!**

Auditions

Auditions for chair placement within a section often bring a great deal of emotion and stress to the life of a student, parent, and director. Please remember that each and **EVERY** child is important to the success of the orchestra. Competition should be viewed as an isolated event, not an overall value judgment of the student as a person or musician. An audition judges a student’s performance at one specific time under one specific set of circumstances. It is an important part of the development of a musician. Auditions prepare students for other situations in life that have nothing to do with music. Students must learn how to function under pressure, “sell” themselves in a short amount of time and accept the results of the judges. They must learn how to handle both success and disappointment. Each student responds differently. Some perform easily under stress, others poorly. Therefore, it is critical that competition be viewed only as a part of the learning process and not an end in itself. **Auditions DO NOT determine grades.**

Chair auditions will be held **at the beginning of the Fall Semester**. They will cover scales/arpeggios and an excerpt from the musical selections assigned for that particular grading period whenever possible. Auditions (per orchestra section) will be held within one class period. Students will be required to perform before the class and director, as this performance will be counted as a performance exam as well. Additional chair auditions may be required during the school. In the case of a mid-year chair audition, all students involved will have a minimum of two weeks to prepare.

Care of Music

Students are responsible for all music they receive. Only one set of parts will be issued to each student. It is the student’s responsibility to make replacement copies of music misplaced, lost, stolen, etc. from another student’s parts. Students who come to orchestra class/rehearsal or concerts without music to perform from will receive no credit for that day’s class, rehearsal or concert. Students may borrow extra music from classmates if available. **Do not ask the director to borrow music from the orchestra’s general library!** Again, YOU are responsible for your instrument, music and accessories.

Equipment

The following will be expected of all orchestra members:

1. All instruments are to be in good playing condition. Failure to keep instruments in good condition will hamper a student's progress. Proper maintenance is REQUIRED. Proper maintenance includes: having bow re-haired as needed, replacing faulty strings, fine tuners and/or pegs, having sound-post adjusted, replacing warped and/or improperly cut bridges, and cleaning the instrument. USE ONLY CLEANER MADE ESPECIALLY FOR STRINGED INSTRUMENTS (Contact your favorite music store.)
2. Students are expected to have **rosin, shoulder pads**, instrument cleaning cloth, **pencils**, a good set of strings, etc. Violins and violas **must** have shoulder rests. Sponges or thick clothes are not allowed as substitutes at the high school level of performance. Cellos and basses should have rock stops at all times. Acceptable string brands include: Ultra-Sensitive, Chromcor, Thomastik Dominant, Jargar, Larsen, and Eudoxa. The recommended brands for shoulder pads include: Kun and Wolfe.
3. **All instruments kept in the school storage room during the day MUST have the student's name clearly printed on the outside of the case or on an ID tag attached to the case.** Failure to do so will result in the removal of the instrument from the orchestra room.
4. Students are strongly encouraged to purchase the following performance technique textbook:
Chamber Orchestra: Advanced Technique for Strings (Allen, Gillespie, and Hayes).
Concert Orchestra: Essential Technique for Strings /Book 3 (Allen, Gillespie, and Hayes)

Books for classroom use will be available through the school, but students must purchase them at a local music stores for home use and test preparations. (Each book costs approx. \$6)

Concert Dress

Ladies: Standard black orchestra dress which will be rented through the school. Each female student will need to provide their own **black formal shoes** to wear with the dress. Information on rental of these dresses will be forthcoming.

Men: Formal black tuxedo (again rented from the school) – Coat & Pants only! Each male student will need to provide their own **white long sleeve wing-tip tux shirt, black bow tie, black cummerbund, black dress shoes and black socks.** Information on the rental of tuxedos will be forthcoming.

Orchestra Officers

Officers are an integral part of any organization. Those students who are nominated to such positions must be responsible, serious, and dedicated members of their performing ensembles. One president & vice-president will be elected for each section (class) of orchestra. The categories, descriptions, and duties are as follows:

PRESIDENT: Must have at least one year membership in a Milton HS Orchestra ensemble. This officer will be the direct link to the director. This officer will advise the director and be available to classmates for grievances/concerns. The president will assist the director and booster club to organize special social events and be on-hand for assistance, as needed by the director. The president shall be responsible for selecting orchestra officer's meeting dates/times (with approval of the director), preparation of the meeting's agenda, print copies of the agenda for all officers in attendance, and shall attend all MHS Orchestra Booster Club meetings. The chamber orchestra student president shall be the only student officer given a vote at booster club meetings.

VICE-PRESIDENT: Must have at least one year of membership in a MHS Orchestra ensemble. This officer will assist the director, booster club and orchestra president with special social events, student officer meeting agenda preparations, Tee-shirts (if needed), publicity, etc.

Non-Officer Position:

PHOTOGRAHER: This student will be the "lead photographer" of the MHS Orchestra ensembles and will be responsible for obtaining a digital camera to take pictures at orchestra events and rehearsals throughout the year. This student will be responsible for developing a "year in pictures" for the school's annual yearbook and preparing the senior slide show for the orchestra's annual banquet.

Communication with the Director

If you ever need to reach Mr. Bomba during the school day, please email me at: bombar@fultonschools.org (I check my email every day during the school year) If email is not possible, you may leave me a message by contacting the Milton High School front office at 770-740-7000 x180. (I check my messages periodically throughout the week during the summer months.) **Communication is the key to a successful program. PLEASE do not wait until a problem is out of hand, to notify the director.**

I look forward to working with the Milton High School Orchestras this school year. Through the combined efforts of all, we can make these orchestras some of the highest level performing ensembles in the state!!