



St. Francis Xavier High School Orchestra Handbook

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St. Francis Xavier High School Orchestra

Orchestra Students and Parents,

Please read this information carefully. Included are:

- Orchestra goals
- Practice requirements
- Grading policies
- Private lessons
- Materials list
- Concert dress requirements
- Concert attendance policies
- Additional concerts
- Solo and ensemble festival
- Orchestra trips
- Fundraising
- Orchestra awards
- Communication
- District-owned instrument rental

Please keep this handbook for the school year so you may refer to it if necessary.

ORCHESTRA GOALS

1. To experience the joy of music through playing, movement, listening, and reading.
2. To help each student improve the tone and technique he/she is presently producing and to increase student confidence level in making music.
3. To experience new musical concepts such as music theory and history, and make connections to the global community.

PRACTICE REQUIREMENTS

Regular practice is necessary for any musician to reach their full potential. It takes dedication and patience to learn to play well. Some students may need to practice some things more than others, but all are expected to show improvement. We do it until it is done right. Practice will be done as needed by each individual student.

GRADING POLICIES

Factors included in the grade are:

- Being on task in rehearsal
- Exhibiting appropriate behavior
- Being willing to participate in any and all activities
- Exhibiting optimal playing posture
- Being willing to work on improving playing technique
- Improving music reading skills
- Journal entries
- Practice records
- Bringing all materials needed to class
- Weekly private lessons

THE DAILY 5

A maximum of 5 points can be earned each class period, 1 point for each of the following:

- Being on time (with materials)
- Having instrument
- Having music/pencil
- Posture/set up
- Participation/cooperation

Concert participation is mandatory and missing it can cost you 50% of your total grade!!

Final grades are determined by the following weight-scale:

- 50% Daily preparedness
- 25% Written work
- 25% Lessons

Student conduct is included in the daily preparedness and participation grade

PRIVATE LESSONS

Each student will be required to take private lessons with the orchestra director throughout each term. There will be approximately six or seven lessons per term with one week for make-up lessons. Students taking private lessons outside of school do not need to come down for pull-out lessons. Students will, however, need to come down for playing exams when announced. Students will need to fill out the "Lesson Commitment Form" each term, which can be found on the orchestra webpage. It is the student's responsibility to sign up for lesson times. Students should try to rotate the class from which they are being pulled.

MATERIALS LIST

- Spiral notebook
- Pencils
- Equipment specific to your instrument as follows:
 - Violins/Violas: shoulder rest, rosin, soft cloth, extra set of strings
 - Cellos/Basses: Rock stop, rosin, soft cloth, extra A string (cellos only)

CONCERT DRESS REQUIREMENTS

Ladies:

- Black shirt
- Black bottoms (skirt must be below your knees when sitting)
- Black shoes

Men:

- Black shirt and long tie of any color
- Black bottoms
- Black shoes and socks

CONCERT ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Remember — Concert participation is mandatory and missing it can cost you 50% of your total grade!!

A concert is the final exam of the performance skills developed in the preceding weeks of class. Unlike a final exam in math which, if missed, could be made up another day, a concert cannot be recreated. Through orchestra, students learn the meaning of teamwork, commitment, and reliability. We prepare as a team and it is important to everyone that we perform as one. We need each other to do our best as a group. The dates, times, and locations of the concerts can be found on my webpage. Please make note of the concerts that involve your child and put these dates on your family calendar today. Then, as a family, make every attempt not to schedule any conflicting events on concert nights.

PREARRANGED ABSENCE FROM A CONCERT

If, when you check our concert dates, you find that there is already an unavoidable conflict, (i.e. a family wedding out of town or a family vacation already scheduled) please let me know in writing when you return the signed Handbook Acknowledgement form, found on the teacher webpage.

EMERGENCY ABSENCE FROM A CONCERT

An emergency absence from a concert happens when a student is sick the day of a concert and is not at school, or if the family suddenly has an unavoidable emergency which does not allow the student to attend the concert. If an emergency occurs please contact me at school (730-8849 ext. 214).

The following are some examples of situations that are NOT unavoidable emergencies:

- Team sports practices or games
- Babysitting
- Lessons
- Work
- Lack of transportation
- A decision to do something else that night

A concert missed due to this type of situation will cause the student's grade to go down a full letter grade (an A- in class becomes a B-).

ADDITIONAL CONCERTS

In addition to our scheduled concerts, we may be asked to perform at various system events, included but not limited to Xavier Preview Night, 7th Grade Day and Celebrate! You will be given as much notice as possible about these events. These events do count as part of your grade. If you miss an event such as this, you will need to have a written excuse at least two days previous to the scheduled performance and a make-up assignment will be assigned.

SOLO AND ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL

It is required that all orchestra members participate in the WSMA Solo and Ensemble Festival. The orchestra curriculum is focused on this event. Failure to attend the Solo and Ensemble festival will result

in a deduction of a FULL LETTER grade. It is suggested that each student prepare a solo and/or an ensemble for this event, in addition to the orchestra component.

ORCHESTRA TRIPS

Every other year (even-numbered years), the Fine Arts Department goes on a large trip. The main focus of these trips will be the educational value of traveling and performance opportunities. The most recent trip was to New Orleans and Memphis. Funds raised during the annual fruit sale will be applied to the cost of the trip. Any additional costs will be the responsibility of the student/student's family.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is a way of helping students offset the costs of orchestra fees and activities. Students are not required to participate in fundraisers, however, participation is encouraged.

Each student has an individual fundraising account that is similar to a personal bank account. All profit the student makes for the orchestra on fundraisers will be held in this account. Money in each account cannot be withdrawn or transferred for other needs.

Any money NOT used at the end of the school year will carry over to the next year. After the senior year, any unused money will be transferred to younger siblings, or placed into the general orchestra account. Students who drop orchestra forfeit their right to any money.

ORCHESTRA AWARDS

Each year, two awards are given to orchestra members at the end of the year. These awards are given under the discretion of the orchestra director.

- Most Improved Player is given to the student who works the hardest during the school year and has grown the most as a musician and performer.
- The Heid Family Foundation and Wallace Family Outstanding Musician Award will be awarded to the student who achieves improvement, but also goes the extra mile.

COMMUNICATION

The Xavier High School Orchestra webpage is where all the information you need about class can be found. Please go to the Xavier High School webpage and find the teacher web pages. Click on the "Notify Me" button. This way every time I add new information to my webpage, you will receive an email alert. Please have the student in class also click on the "Notify Me" button. This will help greatly in communication!

DISTRICT-OWNED INSTRUMENT RENTAL

Please review the rental agreement you receive with your district-owned instrument. Our district values these instruments and their replacement costs are prohibitive. Students will be required to handle instruments responsibly. Donations are always welcome! We accept instrument donations and provide a tax-deductible receipt for convenience. Check those closets and attics for those opportunities to share the music!