Blue Valley Middle School

Orchestra Handbook

Please ***save*** this documentation for reference during the year. ***concert schedule is included!***

**BVMS Orchestra Class Expectations**:

1. **Always Play Like A Champion –** At all times play to the best of your ability

**2. Be Prepared To Play EVERYDAY –** Expect to play every class period

**3. Respect and be Responsible for yourself, others, your instrument, and the orchestra. WE ARE A TEAM!**

**Respect Yourself** – You are part of a great organization. Do your best every day, and we’ll do great things! Don’t settle for anything less!

**Respect Others** – Do not talk unless given permission or do anything to disrupt another student’s learning. Ask permission to leave your chair or the room.

**Respect your Instrument** – Maintain your instrument properly. Keep your instrument in your hands or in your cases, do not leave instruments out. **Respect your Music** – Take it home to practice, but don’t lose it or let it become damaged.

**Respect the Orchestra** – It is your responsibility to attend extra rehearsals and all scheduled performances! ***It is also your responsibility to communicate with the director if there is a problem in attending an event.***

**Be on-time and prepared**.

Bring the following everyday:

1. Instrument (also bow, case, rosin, etc.)
2. Pencil – yes, we do write in orchestra ☺
3. Music/Folder

Being on-time means you are in the room when the late bell rings. You have taken care of any “business” (**restroom**, locker, etc.) during passing time. There will be an additional **2 minutes** after the late bell for warm up time on the day’s schedule. Class begins immediately after these 2 minutes are over. Students who are not in their seat prepared will be deducted 5/10 participation points.

**Follow Directions**! Playing an instrument is complicated, put many in a room together and it is even more so. Every member of the orchestra needs to perform well for the group to sound good. Pay attention during rehearsals. Often a snippet of information delivered to one person or group can apply to YOU later!

**Be On-Task**! Remain actively engaged in class to receive the full benefit of the rehearsal.

(Look at your music and silently work it out if there’s nothing else to do!)

**Be Cooperative**! Orchestra is all about teamwork; playing instruments together takes just as much effort and focus as a team sport, and it takes a lot of cooperation!

**Grading Policies**

Grades are derived from calculating the percentage of points earned in a grading period against the total possible points in that period. Orchestra uses the BVMS grading scale.

**I - Playing** **Tests** - **80 points each -** These will be announced in advance and the materials will be taught in class, usually numbers from the book or concert music. The tests will assess the student’s preparation of the material. The playing tests are given in class.

**II - Class participation and preparation - 10 points possible per day** – Students will earn these points every day that they are in class fully prepared, follow classroom expectations and procedures, and are active learners. Once lost, participation points cannot be made up. On the next page there is more specific information about daily grading.

**III - Concert Attendance –** Orchestra needs to have everyone at their best at performances. Therefore concert attendance is ***mandatory***. Excused absences are limited to serious family events (weddings, funerals, serious illness, etc.) Please tell the instructor of any conflicts well in advance (2 weeks or more) so we can discuss the issue. Whether or not an excuse is acceptable is at the conductor’s discretion.

**IV - Extra Credit** – Extra credit will be given for student-driven activities that enhance musical growth or show support for the performing arts. Examples include (but are not limited to) attending an outside orchestra performance, attending **any** school ensemble performance. Please provide a program to receive credit. Students will receive 10 points for each activity.

**Classroom Participation -** Students may earn up to 10 points per day. Inappropriate behaviors will result in earning fewer points.

Students may lose **2 points** for the following behaviors, at the director’s discretion:

- Minor classroom disruptions (talking out of turn)

- Off-Task behavior

- Poor Posture

Students lose **5 points** for the following:

- Tardiness, No instrument/music/other required item

- Lack of participation

- Disrespect/major disruptions, earning any school disciplinary action

- Fighting, horseplay, profanity, or vandalism

Students will earn **NO** points for days in which they have an unexcused absence for which no make-up work is completed. Directors can provide make-up work on request.

**Professionalism** – It is very important that students take responsibility for their success in any activity. In orchestra, this means keeping parents and the instructor informed of concerts, conflicts, and outside commitments which might interfere with orchestra. An orchestra is very much a “team”, and the success of the entire group requires the best effort of ***every individual*** in the group.

It is appreciated if parents assist their students and support their performance. Please

attend concerts and show proper concert etiquette!

**Family Support and Instrument Care**

**Parents can:**

Ensure that students have a clearly defined practice time every day. It need not be very long, most musicians agree that frequent short daily practice times are more effective that a single long session of the same total time.

**Know when concerts and other orchestra events are, or find out. Students *NEED* to be *at concerts, their grades are partly based on it!***

**Communicate! If there is a conflict, please let the director know so we can deal with it.**

**Occasionally, transportation to an event becomes a concern. Please let us know and explore other options for getting students there.**

**Concert Dates:**

**Side by Side Concert-6th/7th/8th Grade Strings**

Tuesday, October 8th

BVHS 7:00

**District Middle School Orchestra Festival-7th/8th Grade Strings**

Wednesday, November 6th

Church of the Resurrection 11:00-2:20

**Winter Concert-6th/7th/8th Grade Strings**

Thursday, December 12th

BVMS Commons 7:00

**Crown Center Performance-7th/8th Grade Strings**

Tuesday, December 17th during school day

**District 6th Grade Strings Workshop**

Thursday, January 30th

Blue Valley Middle School 3:00-6:00

**District Middle School Orchestra Solo/Ensemble Festival-6th/7th/8th Grade Strings** Saturday, February 22nd

Aubry Bend Middle School 8:00-2:00

**South Area Orchestra Festival-6th/7th/8th Grade Strings**

Thursday, March 27th

Blue Valley High School 7:00

**Music in the Parks-7th/8th Grade Strings**

Saturday, April 26th

Worlds of Fun-All Day

**Spring Concert-6th/7th/8th Grade Strings**

Tuesday, May 13th

BVMS Commons 7:00

**Concert Dress:**

Black and White is ***mandatory*** for concerts. Get your concert dress NOW! Black socks and shoes. **Appropriate concert dress is included in concert grading.**

**Instrument Care**

1. Maintain the instrument as near to room temperature as possible. ***Do NOT leave your instrument in the car!***
2. In general, only touch the parts of the instrument you use to play. If the instrument goes out of tune, **don't try to re-tune it until shown how!**
3. Do not allow the instrument to get wet.
4. Clean all rosin dust and fingerprints off of the instrument and bow when you have finished playing.Never use any sort of wood/furniture cleaners. If your instrument needs serious cleaning, your teachers can help.
5. Only tighten the bow when you are going to play. **Loosen the bow to put away.**
6. Apply rosin to the bow once a week or as suggested.
7. Do *not* touch the bow hairs! The oils on your fingers are slightly acidic and will

damage the hair, meaning you will have to re-hair more often.

1. Never leave your instrument out of the case! Keep it away from those who may do it harm (young children, pets, etc). **Cellos and basses should be set down on their sides, not on the back.**
2. Do not let anyone else play your instrument unless you are sure they know how!
3. **Do not** attempt any repairs yourself. Good intentions aside, you may cause further damage, as luthiers use very specialized tools, materials, and techniques.

**----Please cut along this line and return bottom form to director&Keep the handbook----**

**Parental Acknowledgement Form**

Please read the handbook, sign it with your student, and provide an e-mail address if you have one. If everyone provides an e-mail address, I can communicate any changes.

I acknowledge that (student name)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has read and understands this handbook and we will abide by its policies.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_