

Shamokin Area High School Concert Orchestra Handbook

Welcome

Welcome to the 2019-2020 Shamokin Area Concert Orchestra! I am looking forward to working with you in this new performing ensemble. Since this is a brand new group, there are a couple of logistical things I want to get out of the way first, but we will get into learning and playing our music very quickly. This handbook contains important information that you will need for this year's orchestra program, including department policies and expectations. Please be sure to read completely and carefully.

Orchestra Goals and Procedure

This is a performing ensemble for beginning-to-intermediate level string players. We will be learning 2-4 pieces of music to eventually perform at our Spring Orchestra Concert in May. This ensemble is open to any musicians wanting to learn a new instrument. Specific instrumentation will depend on availability of instruments and materials, but the school district will provide instruments that students may use for their duration as members of this ensemble.

Facilities

Rehearsals will take place weekly on Wednesdays from dismissal to 3:15 in the rehearsal room (A107). Students will be assigned shelf/rack spaces for their instruments and cabinet slots for their music. Strings lessons will take place in the rehearsal room, the middle school classroom (A122), or the storage room (A123) as necessity demands. It is expected that students will take care of their shared rehearsal space, keeping it clean and neat, as well as the equipment in that space. Misuse of the space or equipment can result in the loss of certain privileges as well as appropriate disciplinary action.

Rehearsal & Behavior Expectations

During practices and lessons, students are expected to:

- Come prepared to rehearsal with all necessary materials (music, instrument, pencil, etc.)
- Gum, food, and drinks are prohibited during rehearsal
- Be attentive, listen, follow instruction, and avoid excessive talking (KEEP PHONES AWAY)
- Use proper techniques and apply musical skills to the best of your ability

As members of the orchestra and of the music department, students are expected to behave in the following manner:

- Serve as positive examples for the rest of the student body
- Cooperate with your classmates and work as a team
- Act respectfully towards fellow students and faculty
- Show respect for property and equipment of others and of the school
- Be responsible and dependable
- Come to rehearsal ready to learn
- Follow through with your commitment to the ensemble year-round

Additionally, smoking or use of any drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited at any Music Department function. Violations may result in the immediate expulsion of the student from the program and/or the loss of any awards, festival/trip participation, etc. The high school principal will be notified and apply any further disciplinary action required.

Performance

Spring Orchestra Performance: Wednesday May 20, 7:30PM

Concert Dress:

Men

- White button-down dress shirt (long sleeves preferred)
- Purple or black tie
- Black dress slacks (no jeans)
- Long black socks, black dress shoes (no sneakers)

Women

- Floor-length black dress (long sleeves preferred)
- OR black dress pants/floor-length black skirt, with a white OR black top (long sleeves preferred)
- Black dress shoes (heels or flats)

Participation/Attendance

This group is not a graded class, like the 1st period Symphony Orchestra or Band, but many of the expectations regarding participation and attendance are the same. If you are going to commit to this group, it is expected that you will make an effort to attend the majority of rehearsals, lessons, and the concert. In any ensemble, a musician's goal is not only to learn their own part, but how their part fits with the rest of the ensemble.

Orchestra is a group effort, and progress can only be made if the individual acts as part of the whole. If you do not come to any practices, but come to the concert expecting to be allowed to participate, you are going to be sorely disappointed! If you do not put in the preparation time with the group, you are showing me that I can't rely on you as a performer. **If you miss too much rehearsal time, you will not be allowed to perform.** It's as simple as that!

The inverse is also true – it makes no sense to put in the effort of coming to practices, and then miss the concert. Learning all the music, only to not participate in the concert, is like cooking a 5-course meal for a dinner party and then throwing it all out when the guests arrive.

I understand that many students have meetings for clubs, sports, or other music groups many days after school. This is why rehearsal time is intentionally short (only about 40 minutes), and also why we have lessons for students during the day. If you are going to commit to this group, please follow through with that commitment!

Fundraising

The Concert Orchestra may occasionally participate in fundraisers. Music programs are expensive to operate, and there are certain costs to be considered. In the event that the orchestra does have a fundraiser, all students should consider participating. The profit from fundraisers can help the orchestra go on trips, repair or replace instruments, or can help ease the many other financial burdens of running a music program. Fundraiser participants should make sure any checks or money orders collected are placed in a sealed envelope clearly labeled with the student's name, the fundraiser, and the amount enclosed. All fundraiser envelopes should be placed in the black box in the band room (A106) before fundraiser deadlines.

Practicing

Rehearsals and lessons are not enough for the orchestra to be the best it can be. Orchestra members are expected to take a certain amount of personal responsibility for learning the music through lessons and independent practicing. Students are encouraged to take advantage of study hall time during school and to take home their instruments as often as possible, especially over weekends.

In-school practicing:

Members of the Concert Orchestra will have group sectionals every other week on Wednesdays during the school day. You can find your lesson times on the music department bulletin board. This is where we will focus on any section- or individual-specific issues that may come up in the concert music.

For extra practice time, students may only come to the music suite during a study hall, and **MUST** have a pass from a music teacher. Getting the 'ok' from another teacher is not acceptable. While you are in the music suite during a study hall, you are expected to **PRACTICE**. You will be asked to return to study hall if you cannot stay on task. Students wanting extra practice time may also utilize the practice rooms in the music suite after dismissal until 3PM.

Some practicing tips:

1. Practice in a place where you will not be distracted.
2. Practicing more often for less time is generally more productive and will yield better results than practicing less often for more time. (i.e. practicing 20 minutes every day vs. practicing 2 hours every Saturday)
3. Start with clear goals in mind. Do not just play through your music in 'autopilot mode.' Say to yourself, "I will be able play (x) with correct bowing/with better technique/with more accurate rhythm," and then work towards that goal.
4. If you are having difficulty with a certain passage, break it up into chunks and slow it down. If it keeps giving you trouble, move on to something else, but be sure to come back to it.
5. Vary your practice session by practicing several different things. Working on a single passage or even a single piece for half an hour can be hindering and frustrating.
6. Do not practice just the fingerings. Practice things like rhythm, articulation, bowing, dynamics, phrasing, etc. All these aspects are just as important as the notes, if not more so.
7. Practice how you perform! Play with correct technique, proper posture, etc.

Contact

In an attempt to save paper and resources, Mr. Hollenberg has started an email newsletter to inform parents/guardians of orchestra business. This will be sent out periodically and will contain important information about orchestra events, fundraisers, etc. that students and parents will need to be aware of. To make sure that you get these emails, please either add Mr. Hollenberg as a contact, or take steps to ensure that his emails will not go directly to spam.

Additionally, Mr. Hollenberg or the band/orchestra boosters may occasionally make contact home regarding school or orchestra business by email, phone, Remind, or through mail.

Mr. Hollenberg can be contacted the following ways.

- Email: jhollenberg@indians.k12.pa.us
- Phone: (570)648-5731 ext. 3424
- Remind app: text @samorch to 81010 or enter class code @samorch in Remind to register for text announcements.

***NOTE: Students must now have parental permission to use Remind.**

Please fill out all requested information. Sign and return this page to acknowledge that you have received, read, and understood the attached information.

Additionally please fill in all requested information where able.

I give my permission for my child to use Remind for the purpose of Orchestra business and announcements. (check box if yes) **CLASS CODE: @samorch

Student Name (print)

Parent/Guardian Name (print)

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Preferred Phone

Parent/Guardian Preferred Email

Additional Phone (if applicable)

Additional Email (if applicable)

Please list any after-school activities which MAY interfere with Concert Orchestra practices
(Practices for Concert Orchestra will take place **weekly from 2:40-3:15**)

Please list any instruments you currently play

**NEW PLAYERS ONLY: list your TOP TWO instrument choices (violin, viola, cello, or bass)
(I will do my best to give you your first choice, but it depends on what I have available)

Please return this completed form by our next practice where I will have your instruments ready for you:
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2:40-3:15
