

FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRAS HANDBOOK 2014-2015



Mr. Gerald Fowkes,
Director

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September 2, 2014

Dear Orchestra Parents/Guardians and Students:

As we begin the school year together, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Fairfax High School Orchestra family! As a new edition to the FHS music department I'm excited to begin this musical journey with my fellow student musicians.

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize you with the orchestra program at FHS and to establish guidelines for a successful program. I am hopeful that this handbook will inform the students as to what is expected of them as members of the orchestra program and of the many opportunities which the program at FHS offers to each of them to improve and share their musical skills. Several important changes have been made to the handbook, so please be sure to read through it carefully and become familiar with its contents.

A number of evening concerts and special activities have already been tentatively scheduled for the school year. For your convenience, they have been listed on a separate Calendar page (17). Please mark these dates on your home calendars. I am sure there will be several additions or changes, and I will notify you of these as soon as possible.

I look forward to working with you during this school year. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at FHS (703-219-2236) or by e-mail (gifowkes@fcps.edu).

Sincerely,

Gerald Fowkes,
Orchestra Director

WHY STUDY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC?

Instrumental music education is necessary and unique for all students. Music is a basic way of knowing oneself and one's world. Music offers a cognitive, meaningful experience unavailable to us in any other form. All meanings cannot be adequately expressed by words. If they could, then music would not exist. Music education develops this unique intelligence and is necessary for all students if their essential humanness is to be realized.

The creative process of music is most important. The composer has certain ideas and life experiences that influence a piece of music. The performer brings other ideas and life experiences that influence the interpretation of and reaction to the piece. The listener brings still other ideas and life experiences to the process that affects their reaction to the piece. Music is something different and meaningful to each of us and captures emotions and ideas too complex for words.

Playing an instrument is a powerful tool for brain stimulation involving such areas as aesthetic beauty, communications, creative experience, cultural science, history, math, physics, and science. Studies have shown that students that play an instrument score forty or fifty points higher on the math and verbal sections of the SAT.

Goal setting, problem-solving, self-discipline, self-evaluation, stress management, teamwork, and time management are other skills that are learned in the process of music making. These are invaluable to the successful person, no matter what profession they pursue.

On a physical level, playing an instrument helps students develop fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination.

Playing an instrument is fun and can become a career or a meaningful hobby for life. Colleges, communities, and religious organizations welcome capable string players. Great opportunities for education, profit, and travel are also often made possible by playing an instrument.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The FHS orchestra program is designed to develop, in a sequential pattern, ensemble skills to parallel Standards One – Ten as listed in the Fairfax County Public School's (FCPS) Program of Studies (POS). The program offers technical instruction with emphasis on musical styles and a variety of music literature. String orchestra is emphasized as a working means to develop compatibility of individual abilities, depth of tone, musical maturity, style, and technical adjustment. The study of music history, music theory, and ear training is emphasized as an extension of the previous levels of instruction. Performance activities as educational experiences are an important consideration at the secondary level. These activities include community performances, concert attendance, festivals, full orchestra, small ensembles, solos, and string orchestra. String orchestra classes are considered an integral part of the academic educational structure, and appropriate course credits are awarded towards graduation.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The FHS orchestra program will provide the student the opportunity to:

- Demonstrate awareness of ensemble intonation within the dynamic levels and ranges achievable by the ensemble as a whole, and to become aware of the intonation characteristics of string instruments.
- Demonstrate an acceptable balance and blend between sections and within sections within the dynamic levels and ranges achievable by the ensemble, while working for the continuous development of proficiency levels.
- Develop awareness of the dignity and work of all participating members.
- Play music which is within the capabilities of each ensemble and will provide motivational variety.
- Develop awareness within the total ensemble of the relationship between instrument maintenance and learning capabilities.
- Develop awareness of the decorum expected of all participating members.
- Develop in the student the ability to work effectively through the acquisition of such traits as cooperation, eagerness to grow, industry, and persistence.
- Satisfy the requirements for Standards One –Ten as set forth in the FCPS POS. These general standards are:
 1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
 2. Performing a varied repertoire of music alone, on instruments, and with others.
 3. Improvising accompaniments, melodies, and variations.
 4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
 5. Notating and reading music.
 6. Analyzing, describing and listening to music.
 7. Evaluating music and music performances.
 8. Understanding relationships among music, other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
 9. Understanding music in relation to culture and history.
 10. Understanding music in relation to technology.

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS AND SOCIAL CONDUCT

1. The student is expected to enter and leave the classroom in a courteous and quiet manner.
2. The student is expected to warm up quietly at the beginning of each rehearsal.
3. The student is expected to have his or her **instrument, music folder, pencil, 2 inch binder** and all other necessary accessories (**cloth, mute, rock stop, rosin, set of extra strings and shoulder pad**) at all rehearsals and performances. Mr. Fowkes will schedule a graded check at the beginning of the year to see that each student has acquired these items.
4. **The student is expected to purchase a 2 inch binder to hold and organize all music history and theory worksheets, quizzes, tests, and vocabulary lists and tests.**
5. The student is expected to remain quiet and seated during the rehearsal, especially when Mr. Fowkes is working with another section of the orchestra.
6. The student is expected to be cooperative, courteous, and helpful to other members of the orchestra.
7. The student is expected to show proper respect to Mr. Fowkes, substitute teachers, student teachers, guest conductors, guest speakers, and visiting parents.
8. The student is expected to obey school policies of appropriate behavior, dress, electronic device usage, honesty, and language. Remember that you, the student, are a representative of our music department and our school.
9. **The student will not be permitted to chew gum in the classroom at any time. Points will be deducted from your grade for doing so.**
10. **Only water is permitted in the classroom. No other drinks will be permitted.**
11. **The student is expected to use only his or her own personal instrument and accessories, or the instrument and accessories assigned to him or her. Students are not permitted to use other student's instruments and accessories.**
12. **The student is expected to provide an identification label for his or her instrument case. This should remain on the student's instrument at all times displaying the student's first and last names.**
13. The student is to demonstrate proper care for all equipment, music, and music facilities. The folder and music that is given to each student is the equivalent of a class textbook. Lost music and folders will need to be replaced by the student at cost.
14. **The student is expected to store his or her instrument safely inside its case in the locker assigned to him or her. The locker should be locked at all times. The music locker is to be used only for orchestra related items.**
15. The student must understand that learning his or her music is the responsibility of the individual, and is necessary to the success of the group as a whole.
16. Cell phones, laptops, and tablets must be off and out of sight during rehearsals.

GRADING DESIGN

Quarter Grade

The evaluation of each student's progress in orchestra is based upon his or her performance and improvement in five areas:

I. Weekly Grade (20%)

- "A"**
 - the student comes to class on time
 - the student comes to class prepared with accessories, binder, instrument, music, pencil, and any written assignments
 - the student participates fully in all aspects of the rehearsal
 - the student employs to the best of his or her ability all skills that have been taught
 - the student leads others by example
- "B"**
 - the student usually comes to class on time
 - the student usually comes to class prepared but may have forgotten his or her accessories, binder, instrument, music, pencil or written assignments one day
 - the student usually participates in all aspects of the rehearsal and performance
 - the student usually uses all skills being taught but may be weak in one area
- "C"**
 - the student has been tardy to class two or more times
 - the student has forgotten his or her accessories, binder, instrument, music, pencil or written assignments two or more times
 - the student does not always fully participate in rehearsals or performances
 - the student is using some of the skills being taught but is not consistent in effort
 - the student is easily distracted and not focused in rehearsal
- "D"**
 - the student is frequently tardy to class
 - the student does not have his or her accessories, binder, instrument, music, pencil or written assignments on a regular basis
 - the student does not fully participate in rehearsals or performances
 - the student uses few of the skills being taught
 - the student is frequently disruptive in rehearsals and concerts
- "F"**
 - the student is always tardy to class
 - the student comes to class unprepared and without any accessories, binder, instrument, music, pencil, or written assignments
 - the student does not participate in rehearsal
 - the student makes no effort to uses skills being taught
 - the student is disruptive in rehearsal

II. Playing Quizzes (20%)

Playing quizzes on the music that the orchestra is preparing will be given on a regular basis. These quizzes will occur during class.

III. Playing and Written Tests (30%)

Playing tests on the music that the orchestra is preparing will be given on a periodic basis. These tests will occur during class. Written tests on music history, music theory, and vocabulary may also be given on a periodic basis.

IV. Rehearsals, Dress Rehearsals, and Performances (30%)

Periodically during the school year, after school or evening sectionals or rehearsals may be scheduled to assist in the preparation for a concert. These rehearsals are necessary to the growth and development of the individual student and to the success of the group as a whole. If the rehearsal is not already listed on the year's calendar, every effort will be made to provide the students with at least two weeks notice of a rehearsal. The student should organize his or her or schedule accordingly and is expected to attend all rehearsals.

All excused absences from rehearsals must be **preceded** by a written note. An unexcused absence from a rehearsal will result in an "F" being averaged into the **Rehearsals, Dress Rehearsals, and Performances** portion of the quarter grade.

Dress rehearsals prior to each concert are **required**. An excused absence from the dress rehearsal should be **preceded** by a written note. A student who has an unexcused absence for the dress rehearsal will not be permitted to perform in the concert and an "F" will be averaged into the **Rehearsals, Dress Rehearsals, and Performances** portion of the quarter grade.

Performance is the ultimate goal of the orchestra. Therefore, attendance is **required** at every performance. A student's absence from a performance without a **prior** note will be considered unexcused and an "F" will be averaged into the **Rehearsals, Dress Rehearsals, and Performances** portion of the quarter grade.

According to FCPS Regulations, excused absences include:

- Death in the family
- Doctor's appointment (please make every effort to schedule these referring to our calendar)
- Prearranged absence from school (requires the principal's approval)
- Religious holiday
- Student illness on the day of the concert
- Suspension

For a doctor's appointment, a prearranged absence, or a religious holiday, a **written note** must be received by Mr. Fowkes **two weeks prior to the concert**. If student illness is the reason for the absence, an **e-mail** (gifowkes@fcps.edu) **note, or phone message (703-219-2236)** must be received by Mr. Fowkes the day of the concert.

Since you are being provided with a calendar the first week of school, please make every effort to not schedule routine doctor's appointments during rehearsals or performances.

Final Exam and Grade

The final exam will consist of one of the following: performing at graduation, a written exam based on music theory, music history, and music literature performed during the school year, and/or an essay exam reflecting on the music and skills learned throughout the year. The final grade is the average of the four quarter grades and the final exam.

NOTE: Mr. Fowkes will be available to help students after school on Mondays and Thursdays. Please make arrangements with him ahead of time.

PLAYING TESTS/SEATING POLICY

Playing tests/seating auditions will be held at least once each quarter. Tests will include: passages from repertoire we are currently studying, scales, and sight reading. The test requirements will be given to each student at least two weeks prior to the auditions. Seating will reflect ability, experience, musical maturity, and progress over time.

Section leaders will be chosen for their strong playing ability and ability to sight read. A section leader must exhibit the ability to ask questions, receive answers, and communicate these answers fully to his or her section. A section leader must exhibit the ability to help his or her section without undue criticism or rudeness. A section leader must have an impeccable record of attendance and preparation for class. This means always coming to class with all appropriate materials.

Depending on the outcome of the playing test, violinists will be provided experience playing in both the first and second violin sections

SCHOOL INSTRUMENT RENTAL INFORMATION

Cellos and basses will be available for use while in school. A rental contract must be filled out and the appropriate fees must be paid for the annual rental (cash or a check made out to Fairfax HS is acceptable). Contracts will be sent home the first week of school.

There are a limited number of school/county owned violins and violas for rent and these will be offered to students first on a need basis and then by seniority. Contracts will be sent home the first week of school.

Otherwise, students are encouraged to rent a second instrument from a music store to leave at school. It is recommended that you rent an instrument of good quality, while staying within a modest price range. Mr. Fowkes will have information about local music store rental programs.

If a school owned instrument is damaged due to normal wear and tear, then the repairs will be handled by the county's instrumental repair service, ATEC. If the damage is the result of a willful act against the instrument, then the student will be responsible for the repair costs.

INSTRUMENT MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE

Instruments should not be stored in a student's vehicle for long periods. Cold, dryness, heat and humidity must be regulated for your instrument's health. For security reasons, students will not be permitted to retrieve his or her instrument from their car during the school day. Store your instrument at school in the locked lockers provided.

Regularly check your bridge to make sure that it is standing straight and is not warped. Regularly check the humidity of your instrument and use a "Dampit" as needed. Monitor the temperature and humidity of the area in your home where you store your instrument. While at home, while not practicing, keep your instrument in its case.

You should schedule a maintenance check for your instrument and have your bow rehaired at a reputable violin shop within the first week of the school year.

PERFORMANCE DRESS

The performance dress for each concert except the Masquerade Pops will be as follows. Additional information regarding the distribution of uniforms will be provided during the first week of school.

Ladies: Long black dress (provided by the Fairfax High School Orchestra Patrons Association – FHSOPA)

Black dress shoes

Black hosiery

Gentlemen: Black tuxedo (provided by FHSOPA)

Long-sleeved white tux shirt (purchased by the student through Mr. Fowkes)

Black satin bow tie (provided by FHSOPA)

Black satin cummerbund (provided by FHSOPA)

Black dress shoes

Black socks

SPRING TRIP

The spring trip is an exciting and important activity for all orchestra members. It gives the orchestra the opportunity to grow closer and rewards students for their hard work and dedication. This year we will travel to Chicago to hear the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) perform Mahler's 7th Symphony on April 11, Bernard Haitink conducting; on the 13th we will have the opportunity to perform in Symphony Center, the home of the CSO. Additional information regarding the trip will be provided in October.

FUNDRAISING

In order to assist each student in raising the funds necessary to participate in the spring trip, the following fund raisers will be scheduled:

1. 2 - Family Favorites sales, sponsored by Joe Corbi's
1. Pie sale, sponsored by Chef Pierre

Additional information about the sales and dates will be forthcoming.

SOME ENCOURAGEMENTS

All students are encouraged to:

- Study with a private teacher who specializes in teaching your instrument. Mr. Fowkes will have lists of private teachers available.
- Participate in a youth symphony orchestra. (American Youth Philharmonic, Levine School Orchestra, McLean Youth Orchestra, and Youth Orchestras of Prince William, etc.) See Mr. Fowkes for more information.
- Audition for the Senior Regional Orchestra (SRO) - grades 9-12 and the Senior District Orchestra (SDO) - grades 9-12. You may audition for SRO in September. If you are not accepted, then you may audition for SDO in November. If you are accepted into the SRO then you may not audition for the SDO. Mr. Fowkes will provide information about these auditions in September and then again in late spring. Please remember that you will be eligible to audition for All Virginia Orchestra only if you have been selected for and performed with the SRO (not SDO).
- Perform in the District Solo and Ensemble Performance Assessment in April. Mr. Fowkes will provide information about this event in early January.

AWARDS

Throughout the school year, a number of musical events occur for which participating students may receive recognition. All awards are presented during the final concert of the year.

- Senior Regional Orchestra – Each student who is selected by audition to participate will receive a medal.
- Senior District Orchestra – Each student who is selected by audition to participate will receive a medal.
- District Orchestra Performance Assessment – If the orchestra should earn either an **Excellent** or **Superior** rating at the District Orchestra Festival, then each student who performed will receive a medal (gray ribbon for an **Excellent** rating or a blue ribbon for a **Superior** rating.)
- All Virginia Orchestra – Each student who is selected by audition to participate will receive a medal.
- District Solo and Ensemble Performance Assessment – Students who perform and earn either an **Excellent** or **Superior** rating will receive a medal (gray ribbon for an **Excellent** rating or a blue ribbon for a **Superior** rating).
- Fairfax High School Orchestra Letter, Pin, or Bar – A letter, pin, or bar is awarded to a student that accumulates 200 or more points through their orchestra activities, outside musical activities, and service to the orchestra. More detailed information will be provided in the fall.
- National School Orchestra Association Award – A certificate, desk award, and pin is awarded to a senior in the Advanced Orchestra who has enthusiastically and positively represented the orchestra, achieved outstanding grades in all music classes, received many music awards and honors, achieved outstanding grades in academic subjects, been involved in many extra curricular musical activities, and maintained an excellent attendance record involving all orchestra activities.

2014-2015 Fairfax HS Orchestra Calendar

Thurs, Sept. 18	Back to School Night	7 pm
Mon, Sept. 22	Tri-M Meeting - K104	2:15 pm
Mon, Sept. 29	Senior Regional Orchestra Auditions @ McLean HS	3-9 pm
Mon Oct. 27	Tri-M Meeting - K104	2:15 pm
Tues, Oct. 28	Music Dept. Masquerade Concert Dress Reh. - Auditorium	2:15-4pm
Wed, Oct. 29	Music Dept. Masquerade Concert Dress Reh. - Auditorium	2:15-4 pm
Thurs, Oct. 30	Music Dept. Masquerade Concert - Auditorium	7 pm
Thurs-Sat, Nov. 13-15	Senior Regional Orchestra @ Herndon HS	
Mon, Nov. 17	Tri-M Meeting - K104	2:15 pm
Mon, Nov. 24	Senior District Orchestra Auditions @ Irving MS	4 pm
Mon, Dec. 8	AO Winter Concert Rehearsal w/ Chorus – Auditorium	2:15-3:30p
Thurs, Dec. 11	AO Winter Concert Rehearsal w/ Chorus - Auditorium	2:15-3:30p
Mon, Dec. 15	AO Winter Concert Rehearsal w/ Chorus - Auditorium	2:15-3:30p
Tues, Dec. 16	AO Winter Concert Rehearsal w/ Chorus - Auditorium	2:15-3:30p
Wed, Dec. 17	AO Winter Concert Rehearsal w/ Chorus - Auditorium	2:15-3:30p
Thurs, Dec. 18	Chorus /Orchestra Winter Concert - Auditorium	7 pm
Fri-Sat, Jan. 9-10	Lock-In	10 p – 7a
Fri-Sat, Jan. 16-17	Senior District Orchestra – GMU	
Mon, Feb. 23	Tri-M Meeting - K104	2:15 pm
Sat, Feb. 28	All-Virginia Orchestra Auditions @ JMU	All day
Tues, Mar. 10	Pre-Performance Assessment Concert	6-9:30 pm
Fri-Sat, Mar. 20-21	Performance Assessment – Centreville HS	TBA
Thurs-Sat, Apr. 2-4	All Virginia Orchestra – Christopher Newport University	
Fri-Tues, Apr. 10-13	Orchestra and Band Spring Trip, Chicago, IL	
Fri, Apr. 17	Solo and Ensemble Assessment – Frost MS	4-9 PM
Mon, Apr. 20	Tri-M Meeting - K104	2:15 PM
Tues, May26	Spring Concert Dress Rehearsal - TBA	7a-2p
Wed, May27	Spring Concert Dress Rehearsal - TBA	7a-5p
Thurs, May 28	Spring Concert - TBA	7 pm

EVENT DESCRIPTIONS

Senior Regional Orchestra

Students, grades 9-12, who are registered in their District X, XI, and XII high school orchestras, may audition for acceptance into the orchestra on September 29 at McLean High School. The selected ensemble will rehearse under a guest conductor, November 13-15 at Herndon High School and perform a concert during the afternoon of November 15.

Senior District Orchestra

Students, grades 9-12, who are registered in their District XI high school orchestra may audition for acceptance into the orchestra on November 24 at Irving Middle School. The selected ensemble will rehearse under a guest conductor January 16-17 at George Mason University and perform a concert during the afternoon of January 17.

District Performance Assessment

The District XI Orchestra Assessment is scheduled for March 20-21 at Centreville HS. Each orchestra's performance will consist of an ungraded warm-up selection, two compositions selected from the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors Association (VBODA) Manual, and sight reading. The performance is judged by a panel of three adjudicators who provide the ensemble with constructive comments concerning our performance. Sight reading is judged by one adjudicator who will provide the ensemble with constructive comments concerning our performance of the sight reading selection.

All Virginia Orchestra

Students, grades 9-12, who have participated in their **Senior Regional Orchestra**, are eligible to audition for the All State Orchestra on February 28 at James Madison University. The selected ensemble will rehearse under a guest conductor April 9-11 at Christopher Newport University and perform a concert during the afternoon of April 11.

Solo and Ensemble Performance Assessment

Individual students and small ensembles (duets, trios, etc.) perform for an adjudicator on Friday, April 17 at Frost MS. Selections that are performed are chosen from the VBODA Manual. This festival provides students with the opportunity to prepare and perform solo or ensemble literature and receive constructive evaluation of their performance.

**FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA PATRONS ASSOCIATION
(FHSOPA)**

Any parent who has a student in the FHS Orchestra program is automatically a member of the Fairfax High School Orchestra Patrons Association (FHSOPA). During the last few years, the FHSOPA has managed to stay active with just a handful of very dedicated parents and alumni parents. The FHS Orchestra program deserves to have a booster organization made up of 100% of the orchestra parents in which each parent is able to help support the orchestra in some way.

Parents, please consider giving some of your valuable time and talents to support the wonderful work your children are doing in orchestra by completing the FHSOPA form below and returning it to Mr. Fowkes September 12, 2014.

FHSOPA VOLUNTEER FORM

- _____ Bake for concession stands
- _____ Chaperoning for local competitions, in-school concerts, etc.
- _____ Family Favorites (Cookie Dough and Pizza Kit) Chairperson
- _____ Pie Sale Chairperson
- _____ Telephone Tree
- _____ Uniform Chairperson
- _____ Work Concession Stands
- _____ I am available to help during the school day.

Name _____

Home Phone _____ **Cell Phone** _____

E-Mail Address _____

Most Convenient Time to Contact You _____

PROGRAM CONSUMABLES FEE

Each student in the FHS orchestra program will be assessed a program consumable fee. This fee helps to defray the costs of materials, music, repair and replacement of equipment and instruments, student awards, uniforms, and maintenance of uniforms, etc. These fees are collected from each orchestra member and become FHSOPA.

The program maintenance fee for members of all orchestras is \$75.00. Students who are on the free and reduced lunch program will pay a reduced fee of \$35.00 and must turn in to Mr. Fowkes a photocopy of your lunch plan confirmation from FCPS. Cash or checks are acceptable. Checks should be made payable to FHSOPA. The program consumable fee is due to Mr. Fowkes by September 12, 2014.

STUDENT’S COMMITMENT

I have read the **FHS Orchestra Handbook**. I understand the rules and regulations which govern one’s membership in the orchestra at FHS and I am confident that I have the ability, desire, and sense of responsibility to carry out what is required in order to be a positive asset to the orchestra.

Student’s Name Printed

Student’s Signature

Date

PARENT’S STATEMENT

I have read the **FHS Orchestra Handbook** and have discussed its contents with my child.

Parent’s Name Printed

Parent’s Signature

Date

******* Please return the FHSOPA Volunteer Form, this form, the program maintenance fee, and the Emergency Care Form to Mr. Fowkes by September 12, 2014.**