

Orchestra Handbook

McLean High School



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McLean High School
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Office hours:

Miss. Smith teaches 1st, 3rd, and 4th period at Mclean HS.
Miss. Smith teaches at Kent Gardens Elementary School
on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays after 11:30am.

www.mhsorchestra.org
www.charmsoffice.com

Philosophy & Goals

PHILOSOPHY OF THE McLEAN HS ORCHESTRAS

It is the special function of the arts to strengthen, extend, illuminate, transform and ultimately make life worth living. Art intensifies and draws together mere experience into aesthetic experience. When it is over, one feels a jolt or awakening in another world, not because the world of art is less real, but because it is more real, vivid, alive, highly integrated and structured than most of our daily experience. Throughout history, civilizations have turned to the arts for expression. Although some cultures have been found to exist without reading and writing, not one has been found without the arts. As a fine art, music is "feeling" intelligence. Musical intelligence is a unique dimension of every human being. It teaches people to feel and care and puts them in touch with some of the highest achievements of humankind. In other words, art music is part of what makes people well educated!

Playing a string instrument enables students to unlock some of the great stored wisdom of the ages. The majority of great Western art music was written for strings. This longstanding history includes the music of Bach, Vivaldi, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms, Mahler (and many others too numerous to list) plus works of great American composers such as Copland, Bernstein and others. String music is so prevalent that lifelong opportunities for playing string instruments abound. Community orchestras, sacred orchestras and amateur chamber music groups welcome capable string players. There is also a large field of opportunities for those interested in Pop, Rock, Jazz, Bluegrass, or Country. For some individuals, playing a string instrument can become a very meaningful hobby and passion well into their retirement years.

All children should be provided with opportunities to pursue their musical interests and talents. That is why every young person, without exception, should study music. While all students will not become professional musicians, all will be wholly human and wholly educated.

GOALS

The McLean HS Orchestra Program seeks to develop individual musical artistry, ensemble excellence, and promote life-long enjoyment of music in each young person. This important goal cannot be attained without a sincere desire, effort, and commitment from each orchestra member.

The purpose of the orchestra program is to provide a stimulating orchestral experience for each student in the program. We provide an environment for students to explore music as a life skill, either as a vocation or as an avocation. Students can also explore the opportunity to participate in chamber music. It is our hope that each student will leave McLean HS with a desire to continue their music throughout their life.



Rehearsal Procedures & Attendance

EXPECTATIONS

To create a strong and successful ensemble, it is important that we respect one another and act in the most appropriate ways to further our time together and music making. In doing so, I ask the following:

- Be responsible for your own parts (the music). Take the time to practice on your own.
It is your daily homework to practice!
- Be responsible for your sheet music. Original copies of all music should stay in the appropriate folder and the folder in it's slot. I will provide copies for home practice use.
Only use pencil to mark in music - **DO NOT USE PEN/HIGHLIGHTER!**
- Come to rehearsal prepared: Bring your instrument, your orchestra binder, a PENCIL, music, rosin, shoulder rests, rockstops and any other accessories
- Be respectful – create a positive learning environment by encouraging and supporting your fellow musicians and not putting anyone down for their playing. We are all here to learn and improve.
- **Absolutely no other homework, cell phones, texting, or eating will be tolerated in class.**
- Don't be afraid to ask questions ☺ !
- **LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN!** Listen to your instructor, listen to your friends, listen to your own sound production, and most importantly, listen to the music we create as a whole.

NOTEBOOKS

Each orchestra student should obtain a 1 inch black three-ring binder. This binder should be able to stay open by itself on a music stand (so do not buy a flimsy one). This will be used in class daily for practice music, music theory, and history assignments as well as storage for other important documents.

SHEET MUSIC

Each student will be provided with music for his or her use. One copy will remain in a folder at school for use in rehearsals and concerts. ***This folder is NOT to be taken home for any reason!*** A practice copy will be provided for the students' use at home in a separate folder. **Students will be charged \$5.00 for ANY MISSING music from the "at school" folders.** Students who misplace Philharmonic music from the folders will be charged accordingly for any missing parts.

REHEARSAL PROCEDURES

- **Tuning will commence three minutes after the bell rings. Students should be in their assigned seats with their music, instruments, notebook, and a PENCIL.**
- If your section is not playing, please respect the others' time by staying quietly in your seats. This is a great opportunity to look over fingerings for tricky passages in your own parts. Try to do this silently without plucking or tapping - try shadow-bowing or shadow-fingering instead.
- We will have students and/or other teachers run sectionals periodically. Sectional leaders should be given the same respect as you would a teacher, and they should respect their classmates in return.
- Rehearsal will end a few minutes before the bell to give you ample time to pack up. We all want to have good performances and need to use our time - your time - in the most productive manner, so please respect our time by not packing up until you are dismissed.

These expectations and procedures should foster a great learning environment and music-making experience. Failure to meet these guidelines or neglecting important classroom rules will result in points being deducted from your classwork grade, and possibly a harsher discipline such as in-school time-out or detention. Over all, we must all respect one another for a productive experience.

Important Information

EVENING REHEARSALS

The Philharmonic Orchestra will have a rehearsal on *Wednesday evenings from 7:00-9:00 p.m.* These rehearsals are a **MANDATORY** part of the course load. Students be ready in their seat, ready to tune at 7:00 PM. This means arriving early enough to get settled and unpack. Remember: *Early is on time, on time is late.* There will also be a few required Highlander Time rehearsals this year.

Concert & Symphonic Orchestra afterschool rehearsals vary this year (usually one or two rehearsals before each concert) from highlander time, afterschool, and in the evenings. The dates are on your calendar - *these are MANDATORY. Any conflicts must be approved by the director as per the attendance policy.*

SEATING PROCEDURES

Seating is not a competition. Seating is designed to help each of you progress with the help of your stand partner, not to cause headaches and heartaches. Throughout the year I will hold playing tests to acquaint myself with your playing (approximately once a quarter). After hearing everyone in the orchestra at seating auditions, I will seat the first chair or stand of each section as the section leader(s) for the upcoming concert or possibly the year, followed by the other members of the section. Do not mix up your seating assignments – sit where you are assigned. I withhold the liberty to change any student's seating at any time throughout the year.

Being a section leader is a privilege, not a right. Section Leaders are responsible for meeting with the director to discuss bowings and fingerings, and it is their responsibility to communicate those to their section. In the event of a sectional they will be responsible for leading the section with the tasks set by the director.

PLAYING TESTS

Students will have one major playing test each quarter, in addition to smaller in class quizzes. For these you are graded on a variety of musical categories including:

- 1) Tone – Factors that contribute to tone are bow hand shape, bow use, left hand placement, vibrato, etc...
- 2) Rhythm & Tempo – Are you playing correct rhythms? Are you keeping a steady tempo? Etc...
- 3) Intonation – Factors include playing the correct notes, listening to yourself, centering the pitch (playing in tune), your instrument is balanced (position), wrist is properly set, etc...
- 4) Musicality – Are you playing with dynamics, articulations, and phrasing? Style? Etc...
- 5) Posture and appearance – Balanced posture, bow direction, feet flat on the floor, straight back, arm placement, confidence, etc...

CONCERTS

There are a minimum of five main concerts given within the school year. You will be notified of these dates in the fall of the year. ***Put these dates on your calendar right away,*** as these performances are **MANDATORY**. You will be given a ZERO for your concert grade if you fail to perform – this is large percentage of your quarter grade! Remember, if you fail to show up to a concert you're not just affecting your grade, but you're letting your stand partner and section down as well as altering the sound of the entire ensemble. Only personal or family emergencies are an acceptable excuse and you must notify the director **prior to the start** of the concert. The school orchestra phone number is (703) 714-5817. **Students must stay for the entirety of each concert to be considered present.** All concerts will begin at 7PM. Students must arrive by 6:15 for warm-up.

DISTRICT, REGIONAL, STATE EVENTS

There are many events throughout the year beyond MHS Orchestra that can enhance your musical development. Senior Regional Orchestra, District Honors Orchestra, and Solo & Ensemble Festival are three of these events, all clearly labeled in your calendar, and all require additional practice on the part of the student. Students in **Philharmonic & Symphonic Orchestra are REQUIRED to audition** for either Senior Regional Orchestra OR District Honors Orchestra. This year, McLean High School will be HOSTING Senior Regional Orchestra for the Northern Virginia Region, and help from every student in the orchestra is required to make the even run smoothly and efficiently.

Grading Policy

GRADES

Rehearsal Techniques (classwork) 20%

Students will receive 5 points per class period based on their understanding and practice of good rehearsal techniques. This includes being prepared for class (bringing your instrument and music) and following the expectations for rehearsal practices in the classroom.

Practice Records –15%

Students are encouraged to practice around 200 minutes a week (30 minutes a day) to maintain and develop their musical skills. See Practice Records Section for more details.

Tests & Assignments– 20%

Each quarter there will be **playing tests** and **scale tests** as well as a variety of music theory and other assignments students will work on throughout the school year. Each quarter will have a different music focus – getting into the depths of music theory and music history, as well as string technique and practice routines.

Concerts (& Pre-Concert Dress Rehearsal) – 20%

As stated in the concert section, all concerts are a mandatory performance grade and are therefore a large part of each student's grade. This grade includes your participation in the afternoon/evening rehearsals leading up to the concert (10%), the concert itself (20%), and your self-evaluation after the concert (15%).

'Dress' Rehearsals– 10%

All students are required to attend the afterschool/evening rehearsals before the concert. Please check your calendar for dates. (And no, you do not need to wear your uniform to dress rehearsals.)

Reflective Assessment– 15%

After each concert, students will do a reflective self-assessment to enhance their learning experience. In most cases this will be done as an in-class assignment the day following the concert.

Make-Up Work

If a student is excused from a rehearsal or event, or in the event they are unable to play their instrument due to injury, they have the chance to make up the credit. Unexcused absences can not be made up.

Classwork can be made up in one of two ways: either by taping an individual practice and turning it in or through a written note from a student's private teacher detailing music instruction on the school material that they worked on in their lesson.

An excused student who misses a **concert or event** will need to complete an alternative assignment (5 page paper on a topic selected by the instructor, or equivalent assignment designated by Miss. Smith) due the day of the event. In case of illness, the students will have one week to make up the assignment.

All make-up work is due at the very latest one week prior to the end of the quarter.

Extra Credit:

Students may arrange for extra credit projects with the director, such as attending local concerts and writing overviews of them. Please contact Ms. Smith for details at least 3 weeks prior to the end of a quarter.



Attendance Policy

The McLean High School Attendance policy will be in effect for absences to all daily classes. Attendance at **ALL** after school and evening rehearsals and performances of the McLean High School Orchestra is required as part of the course. Regardless of the type of absence McLean High School expects that ALL students learn and demonstrate mastery on all topics covered.

STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO NOTIFY THE ORCHESTRA DIRECTOR IN WRITING FOR ALL ABSENCES.

NOTE/EMAIL FROM PARENT/GUARDIAN OR DOCTOR IS DUE THE FIRST SCHOOL DAY FOLLOWING ANY ABSENCE THAT IS NOT PRE-APPROVED.

EXCUSED ABSENCES INCLUDE:

- Illness or medical emergency (doctor or hospital note preferred)
- Family emergency (email or hand written note from parent required)
- Pre-Approved conflict – submitted in writing and **approved by director**
(8 weeks in advance for Performance or 1 week in advance for rehearsal)

ALL STUDENTS ARE INTERGRAL MEMBERS OF EACH ENSEMBLE – THE GROUP PERFORMANCE IS REHEARSED AND PREPARED INTRICATELY – PERFORMANCES ARE GREATLY AFFECTED BY THE ABSENCE OF EVEN ONE STUDENT. FOR THIS REASON, EXCUSED PERFORMANCE ABSENCES ARE SELDOM GRANTED.

****A PRE-APPROVED AND EXCUSED ABSENCE IS GRANTED
AT THE DISCRETION OF THE ORCHESTRA DIRECTOR.****

FCPS Grading & Reporting states:

Students MUST be present in school in order to participate in after school activities. We will follow McLean's Extra-Curricular/Co-Curricular Policy. Students are fully responsible for completing any missed assignments. Each day of absence affords one school day of makeup work opportunity. Students have a maximum of ten days to make up work missed during an excused period of absence. However, the period of time allowed to make up work may be extended at the discretion of the teacher. Makeup work for excused absences is graded and recorded in the grade book by teachers without penalty to students. For approved prearranged absence, a student may request assignments in advance of the absence. Teachers will provide regular or alternative assignments in advance of the absence, when feasible. Following any absence, including a prearranged absence, students should make arrangements with individual teachers for makeup work.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences do not mandate course failure. If students are absent and unexcused, they cannot earn credit for classroom activities or labs missed as a result. Students may choose to make up work following unexcused absences and teachers may help the student and parent or guardian to identify missed work, but teachers are not obligated to provide makeup work. Make up work is encouraged so that students will profit from future instruction. Regardless of the type of absence McLean High School expects that ALL students learn and demonstrate mastery on all topics covered.

Sports Policy

Orchestra is a CLASS. Sports are EXTRA-curricular.

Ms. Smith will try to be as flexible as she can to a certain point, but in here is a brief summary of conflicts and which activity you should plan to go to:

Orchestra rehearsal takes precedent over sports practice.

Sports games/matches take precedent over orchestra rehearsal.

Concerts take precedent over practices and games/matches.

Tournament play MAY take precedent over concerts. See Ms. Smith in this occurrence.

That being said, efforts can be made to arrange compromises. This happens with appropriate and early COMMUNICATION with Ms. Smith. Leniency will NOT be considered for day-of requests. Leniency will most likely not be considered for week-of requests.

The key to working out compromises in your schedule is EARLY COMMUNICATION!



Practicing

Practicing is your **daily homework.**

You are expected to practice a *minimum* of 200 minutes a week.

Practice Records & Quizzes

As student knowledge and skill evolve over the year, so will practice records and quizzes at MHS.

Students will turn in one practice journal per month on designated due date. Each week, students will document how many minutes they practiced per day, followed by a small written portion about their specific practice sessions. Students will receive feedback from month to month on how to improve their practice techniques so that they have a better understanding of “practicing with purpose” on their own. This should be review for upperclassmen, but an important one at that.

Practicing should be about *quality and not quantity*. Now this does NOT mean that you only practice once a week!! You should always aim for a minimum of 30 minutes a day / 200 minutes a week. The whole point of practicing is to grow and develop skills and that can only be accomplished with regular, thoughtful dedication. If you find the journals are helping you progress you are free to make copies of the form and use them regularly on your own.

Your goal is to learn how to create manageable musical goals. To create a goal:

IDENTIFY a small section of a piece that needs work (should be 1-12 measures)

DECIDE what aspect of music needs work: Fingering, Intonation, Rhythm, Tempo, Tone, Bowing, Articulation, Dynamics, Phrasing...

CREATE a way to work on this goal – we will go over some techniques in class. It all depends on the type of goal you have. Use the explanation guide in the front to help.

ANALYZE how you did. Did you improve, did you reach your goal, was this an effective way of reaching the goal or should you try something else.

This process will streamline your practicing in a way that really trains you how to practice.

Journals will be graded on thoroughness, understanding of musical concepts, understanding of musical goals, variety of practice techniques and completion.

Playing quizzes will be graded on accuracy as well as individual improvement not only of the musical passage but of string playing techniques. Quizzes will occur in a variety of formats - solos, duets, quintets, octets, etc to feature individual’s abilities to perform alone and with others.



Uniforms & Instruments

CONCERT ATTIRE

All orchestra students **MUST** wear the official orchestra uniform for concerts. In addition, students are required to wear **BLACK** socks/stockings and **BLACK** dress shoes.

Ladies will wear the black “Concerto” dresses. Footwear requirements include black hose or stockings and **black dress shoes, preferably close-toed, to be purchased on your own.** Remember, heels look excellent, but be sure you can walk in them across an elevated stage! Please no dangly earrings or excessive jewelry – they often rattle against your instrument when you play.

Gentlemen - Tuxedo pants that you had from middle school (**IF THEY STILL FIT**) or purchase new ones from the orchestra, a banded mandarin tuxedo shirt that you will purchase from the orchestra (this tuxedo shirt is different from the middle school one!), **black dress shoes to be purchased on your own** (you will not be allowed on stage with tennis shoes!), **and black socks.** All new orchestra gentlemen are also required to purchase a new cummerbund and a **button cover** for the top button on the shirt. Finally, you will **rent a tuxedo jacket** from the orchestra.

Everyone **MUST** have an orchestra uniform by the first concert of the year. Order forms will be available before school starts. Fittings will be made at Orchestra Information Night as well as during the first week of school. All orders must be in by the first Friday of school in order to be received on time.

CONCERT ETIQUETTE

STUDENTS: Respect the performers and audience members...**REFRAIN FROM TALKING, PLAYING YOUR INSTRUMENT (plucking counts!), AND USING YOUR CELL PHONE DURING ANY PERFORMANCE.** Respectfully enjoy watching your friends make beautiful music!

PARENTS: When seated in an audience one should stay seated throughout the selection, moving only when necessary between pieces or ensembles, and then moving as quickly and quietly as possible. For multi-movement works, please hold applause until the end of the last movement. If bringing small children, please consider sitting near an exit. Do not let small children run around in the front of or aisles of the auditorium. No flash photography. And of course, please turn all cell phones and pagers completely off (not just to silent as the vibrating can also be distracting). It is asked that the audience avoid using iPads and video games – the concert is for your entertainment, and it is disrespectful to use electronics and is important to honor a musician’s hard work by listening and enjoying! Thanks for helping making our concerts a success!

INSTRUMENTS

Students should provide their own instruments if possible. Students needing information about where to purchase or rent an instrument should contact Ms. Smith. For those students who need financial assistance, there are a limited number of instruments that can be rented from the school.

You must pay rent on a school instrument, if you are going to use it!

Private instruments may be stored in the orchestra instrument room during the day. Students are **NEVER** allowed to use another person's private instrument! Violinists and violists are to provide their own personal padlock for their storage locker. There will be two students assigned to each locker and students are responsible for keeping a lock on their locker all year. Cellists and bassists may rent a shared instrument for school use during the day for a minimal cost, though instruments are limited. Harpists should see Ms. Smith for details on harp use/rental. Pianists will use school pianos.

Trips & Fundraising

FUNDRAISING

We provide a minimum of two opportunities for each student to help pay for his/her spring trip. The orchestra will be offering **Holiday Greens** (wreathes, garland, etc.) for sale in October, with delivery in late November/early December in addition to a **Cheesecake/Pie Sale** in January, with delivery in February. Each student who participates will have a portion of the proceeds go directly towards their trip cost. The orchestra also has **car washes, bake sales, and restaurant nights** each school year. The money from car washes, bakes sales, and restaurant nights goes into the general orchestra fund, not to individual trip accounts – everyone must help at these car washes! These are our biggest money raisers for the general fund, which pays for professional sectional instructors, uniform costs, new instruments, new equipment, sheet music, and helping to defray expenses for buses for the spring trip, etc.

MEMBER PAYMENT

Each year we collect a \$50 member payment per student to cover general program expenses. Money collected directly benefits the students and orchestra in a number of ways. It allows us to apply all of the profits from student fundraisers into each student's individual accounts to help pay for their spring orchestra trip. It also helps cover student expenses such as registration fees for events, and for student scholarships. In addition to these it helps pay for music, supplies, sectional coaches, and other essential items pertaining to the running of our program.

SPRING TRIP

Each year, the orchestras participate in a competition or workshop at a location that provides an educational experience as well as a fun-filled trip! **Each student can help with payment of funds needed for the trip by participating in fundraisers during the school year (Holiday Greens & Cheesecakes/Pies).** We will alternate a larger trip one year with a shorter trip the following year in attempts to cut down on the four year cost of trips for families.

There are some funds set aside by the MHSOPA for those in need of financial help. See the Scholarship Section for details. Applications are available online as well as in the orchestra room.

Since we are often in competition at these events, it is imperative that we have full participation of the students, so that "points" are not taken off our total score by the judges because of incomplete sections. More importantly, missing many musicians results in an incomplete orchestral sound. Often, we will compete against schools from several states - we need to keep up our excellent reputation! Students must maintain exemplary behavior in orchestra and the school throughout school year to earn the right to participate in this trip. Students who do not participate will be given an alternate assignment to complete that quarter.

GERMAN EXCHANGE

McLean High School has the pleasure of participating in an exchange program with the Detmolder Jugendorchester from the Christian Dietrich Grabbe-Gymnasium in Detmold, Germany. Every other year the McLean Philharmonic goes to Germany to study and perform with this orchestra and experience life in Germany. On the alternating years, German students travel to the United States to spend time with the MHS community. Please see the DJO Exchange page on our website for more details. In years that we are hosting our German friends all students and families are welcome and encouraged to participate in the events with our guests and especially help with hosting!

More Information

SCHOLARSHIPS

Any student who anticipates needing help with the cost of the Spring Music Trip must complete the following steps:

1. Fill out the **scholarship form** completely, including a parent/guardian signature and bring it to Ms. Smith ASAP. Forms are available on our website and on the orchestra bulletin board.
2. **Active participation in all fundraisers is REQUIRED**, as students applying for scholarship are expected to contribute as much as possible for the cost of their trip. This includes but is not limited to car washes, selling Pies/Cheesecakes and Holiday Greens, bake sales, restaurant nights, etc.
3. We are not equipped to subsidize unlimited numbers of students. The MHSOPA will sponsor up to \$250 each for a maximum of 4 students.
4. Decisions will be made based on the requests submitted. Students who do not meet the deadline for requests will not be offered another opportunity for assistance. **You must have a significant need (such as those qualifying for FCPS free or reduced lunch program) and must notify us early enough to create a fundraising plan.**

MHSOPA

The MHS Orchestra Parent Association is dedicated to supporting the efforts of the orchestra director in promoting the highest level of music education and performance opportunities for McLean orchestral students. Utilizing the talents and resources of its member parents, alumni, individual supporters, and corporate patrons, the MHSOPA provides financial support, creative energy, and human power to support orchestra program goals. Parents are encouraged to help support the program in whatever way they can – any way small or large is helpful.

THE WHITE BOX

All money should be turned into the secure white box in the orchestra room. Checks should be clearly labeled with the student's name written on the bottom left hand part of the check. Cash (if necessary) must be in a sealed envelope with the student's name on it. Coins will not be accepted. All money (check or envelope of cash) must be attached to the form it pertains to or a document stating what the money is for. All checks (unless otherwise stipulated) should be made out to MHS Orchestra.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Each student is encouraged to take lessons from a private teacher. The benefits of taking from a private teacher are countless! There's nothing like a "one-on-one" teaching situation! A list is available of private teachers in the area on our website or in the classroom.

ORCHESTRA OFFICERS

Each orchestra will have several "officers" to help with the physical running of the group. These students will be selected by Ms. Smith to help with distribution and collection of music, distributing information, etc. Officers will be selected during 1st quarter.

In addition, any student looking for community service hours can ask Ms. Smith if there are t need work on for the orchestra program throughout the school year.

ALLERGIES/FOOD

No gum is allowed in the orchestra room! All drinks must have a cap/lid. Food is also not allowed in the classroom. Do not bring food, especially peanut products into the room.



Basic Procedure Cheat-Sheet

What do I do when I get to class?

Get your instrument, orchestra folder, personal binder, and pencil out right away. Check to see if the sign on the white board says “unpack” or “don’t unpack” and act accordingly.

After you are prepared, you can chat with your friends until tuning starts. Once tuning starts, please respect that this is the start of class and all talking shall cease.

What do I do if I forgot my instrument?

DO NOT forget your instrument! It should be an extension of you on class days!

If you do forget – get to class early and kindly let Ms. Smith know. If there are additional instruments available she will help you get one – but only if this is done before the bell rings for class. Spare instruments are limited, so there are no guarantees you will be able to use one. Points will be deducted from your classwork grade for every day you forget your instrument.

Where do I turn in money? \$\$\$

In the White Box. Only in the White Box. Please make sure of the following:

- 1) The check is made out to MHS Orchestra, unless otherwise instructed
- 2) The **check has your full name** on the “for” part.
- 3) The money is attached to whatever form it is dealing with.
- 4) IF you must bring cash (not recommended) it is in an envelope with your name on it.

Where do I turn in practice journals or other class assignments?

The practice-journal/assignment box (brown bin) on the grey table by Ms. Smith’s office.

What do I do if I am absent?

Please make sure to check in with Ms. Smith to set up a time to make up any missed theory lessons, playing tests, new music, or other business that you may have missed.

Why do I have to bring my notebook every day?

In class we work on a variety of musical concepts. You should have your notebook, just like in every other class to keep things organized and at hand. When we write fingerings or bowing in your school music you should then put them right into your practice copies in your notebook so that you have the correct things to practice and helpful hints at home. Use it!

What do I do if I have a conflict with a rehearsal or event?

All conflict must be discussed with the director at least 2 weeks prior to the event date to be *considered* for being excused. Conflicts with dates that were published at the start of the school year should be addressed at the start of the school year. To be considered as “excused,” all requests must be made in writing by a parent in addition to a discussion with the student and teacher. Students will be held responsible for completing make up assignments.

What time are concerts and when do I have to arrive?

All MHS concerts start at 7:00 PM. Students must arrive by 6:15pm to tune and warm-up. **DO NOT BE LATE...early is on time, and on time is late!**

What if I have more questions about procedures or dates?

Check the Orchestra Website & CHARMS:

www.mhsorchestra.org and www.charmsoffice.com

These websites have the orchestra handbook, calendar, updates, as well as a plethora of other information!



MCLEAN ORCHESTRAS 2014-2015

SYLLABUS

Starlet Smith, Orchestra Director – sasmith4@fcps.edu

Orchestra Office Phone – 703-714-5817

Like us on Facebook – McLean High School Orchestra

www.mshsorchestra.org

Office hours:

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Miss. Smith teaches at Kent Gardens Elementary School
on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays after 11:30am.

Please see the MHS Orchestra Handbook for further details,
available on Blackboard, Charms, and our website above.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

MISSION/PHILOSOPHY: The McLean HS Orchestra Program seeks to develop individual musical artistry, ensemble excellence, and promote life-long enjoyment of music in each young person. This important goal cannot be attained without a sincere desire, effort, and commitment from each orchestra member. The purpose of the orchestra program is to provide a stimulating orchestral experience for each student in the program. We provide an environment for students to explore music as a life skill, either as a vocation or as an avocation. Students can also explore the opportunity to participate in chamber music. It is our hope that each student will leave McLean HS with a desire to continue their music throughout their life.

The **Concert Orchestra** is McLean High School's intermediate orchestra. Many of the students have a solid foundation in playing a stringed instrument, though students in the group only require at least one year of instruction. This ensemble plays standard high school level repertoire throughout the year. Students in concert orchestra should be able to play two octave scales up to 3 sharps and 3 flats and be able to perform at least level III or IV string music. The course offers instruction in the development of intermediate performing skills, including individual playing and ensemble techniques. Students in the course will develop a better understanding of intonation, bowing techniques, shifting, playing in higher positions, and playing in a variety of styles. The Concert Orchestra performs in at least five concerts each year with one to two evening dress rehearsals outside of class time prior to each concert. All rehearsals and concerts are required as part of the course. In addition, students in this ensemble are encouraged to attend the orchestra trip in the spring to perform for a competition somewhere on the east coast.

The **Symphonic Orchestra** is one of McLean High School's advanced orchestras. This orchestra is for the more advanced string player who can play three octave scales up to 3 sharps and 3 flats and should be able to play level IV or V string music. The course helps students develop technical, ensemble and disciplinary skills necessary for refined rehearsal and performance. Students in the course will develop a more advanced understanding of music theory, bowing techniques, playing in higher positions, and playing in a variety of styles. The Symphonic Orchestra performs in at least five concerts each year with one to two evening dress rehearsals outside of class time prior to each concert. All rehearsals and concerts are required as part of the course. In addition, students in this ensemble are encouraged to attend the orchestra trip in the spring to perform for a competition somewhere on the east coast.

The **Philharmonic Orchestra** is the most advanced orchestra at McLean High School. Students in this ensemble are extremely dedicated musicians, most taking private lessons on their chosen instrument outside of school. The Philharmonic Orchestra performs at least five concerts a year and in addition, have the opportunity in the course of the school year to perform in smaller ensembles and at special events. The Philharmonic Orchestra for the most advanced level string player, forming the representative string-performing group for the McLean High School. Students are expected to play three octave scales up to 4 sharps and 4 flats and as well as VBODA grade level VI music, in addition to many more advanced pieces usually performed by colleges and professional orchestras around the world. This course helps students develop technical, ensemble and disciplinary skills necessary for refined rehearsal and performance. In addition to their regular rehearsals during the school day, students are required to attend weekly rehearsals on Wednesdays evenings. Rehearsals and performances both in and out of school are required. In addition, the Philharmonic Orchestra sometimes participates in musical retreats to the Shenandoah Valley over the summer. The Philharmonic Orchestra has an exchange program with a the Detmolder Jugendorchester from the Christian-Dietrich-Grabbe-Gymnasium in Detmold, Germany. Philharmonic students have the opportunity to travel to Germany and to host German students from year to year.

FCPS GRADING SCALE

A	(93-100) = 4.0	C+	(77-79) = 2.3
A-	(90-92) = 3.7	C	(73-76) = 2.0
B+	(87-89) = 3.3	C-	(70-72) = 1.7
B	(83-86) = 3.0	D+	(67-69) = 1.3
B-	(80-82) = 2.7	D	(64-66) = 1.0
		F	(below 64) = 0.0

McLean High School Honor Code - As a community, we value honesty, respect and what is fair. We choose honor and integrity in everything we say and do. In cases of Honor Code Violation, FCPS grading and reporting policies will be followed.

GRADING POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Grades will be computed using a weighted system with standard MHS and FCPS percentages determining letter grades. Final grades will be determined by the average of all four quarters. The final exam counts as a Test or Performance grade included in the 4th quarter.

Rehearsal Techniques (classwork) 20%

Students will receive 5 points per class period based on their understanding and practice of good rehearsal techniques. This includes being prepared for class (bringing your instrument and music) and following the expectations for rehearsal practices in the classroom. 3 points will be deducted for students who forget to bring their instrument to class.

Practice Records –15%

Students are encouraged to practice a minimum of 200 minutes a week to maintain and develop their musical skills. Practice records must be turned in on their due date – late practice records are deducted by 5 points a day, excluding weekends. Practice records will not be accepted after 10 days from their due date.

Tests & Assignments– 20%

Each quarter, there will be *playing tests* and *scale tests* as well as a variety of music theory and other assignments students will work on throughout the school year. *Final exams* and/or final project grades will be included in this category in the 4th quarter. If you receive a grade lower than a 73% (C) on a test or assignment (playing or written), the assignment or test can be retaken within a week of the original testing date at the discretion of Miss. Smith.

Concerts (& Pre-Concert Dress Rehearsals) – 20%

All concerts are a mandatory performance grade and are therefore a large part of each student's grade. This grade includes your participation in the afternoon/evening rehearsals leading up to the concert (10%), the concert itself (20%), and your self-evaluation after the concert (15%).

'Dress' Rehearsals – 10%

All students are required to attend the afterschool/evening rehearsals before the concert. Please check your calendar for dates.

Reflective Assessment– 15%

After each concert, students will do a reflective self-assessment to enhance their learning experience. In most cases this will be done as an in-class assignment the day following the concert.

Make-Up Work

If a student is excused from a rehearsal or event they have the chance to make it up. Unexcused absences cannot be made up. **Classwork** can be made up in one of two ways: either by taping an individual practice and turning it in or through a written note from a student's private teacher detailing music instruction on the school material that they worked on in their lesson. An excused student who misses a **concert or event** will need to complete an alternative assignment (5 page paper on a topic selected by the instructor) due the day of the event. In case of illness the students will have one week to make up the assignment. All make-up work is due at the very latest one week prior to the end of the quarter.

Re-Audition/Seating Test Policy

There is a strict NO RE-AUDITION policy within the McLean High School Orchestra Program. Auditions and seating tests are difficult, and almost every musician wishes they could redo at least one audition they've played in their life. If one student re-auditions, that opens up the doors for the many other students who want to re-audition because they aren't happy with their orchestra/seating placement. Re-auditions cause a never-ending sequence of issues involving moving students around and in turn, negatively affect each orchestra's structure. If you find yourself displeased with your audition or seating results, talk to Miss. Smith about what you can improve on for your next audition or seating test, and use your placement as a chance to develop as an even stronger musician.

Extra Credit: Students may arrange for extra credit projects with the director. Common ways to get extra credit are volunteering at local elementary school concerts or writing a critique after attending a public concert. Please contact Ms. Smith for details at least 3 weeks prior to the end of a quarter.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The McLean High School Attendance policy will be in effect for absences to all daily classes. Attendance at **ALL** after school and evening rehearsals and performances of the McLean High School Orchestra is required as part of the course. Regardless of the type of absence McLean High School expects that ALL students learn and demonstrate mastery on all topics covered.

STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO NOTIFY THE ORCHESTRA DIRECTOR IN WRITING FOR ALL ABSENCES.
NOTE/EMAIL FROM PARENT/GUARDIAN OR DOCTOR IS DUE THE FIRST SCHOOL DAY FOLLOWING ANY ABSENCE THAT IS NOT PRE-APPROVED.

EXCUSED ABSENCES INCLUDE:

- Illness or medical emergency (doctor or hospital note preferred)
- Family emergency
- Pre-Approved conflict – submitted in writing and **approved by director** (8 weeks in advance for Performance or 1 week in advance for rehearsal)

ALL STUDENTS ARE INTERGRAL MEMBERS OF EACH ENSEMBLE – THE GROUP PERFORMANCE IS REHEARSED AND PREPARED INTRICATELY – PERFORMANCES ARE GREATLY AFFECTED BY THE ABSENCE OF EVEN ONE STUDENT. FOR THIS REASON, EXCUSED PERFORMANCE ABSENCES ARE SELDOM GRANTED.

**** A PRE-APPROVED AND EXCUSED ABSENCE IS GRANTED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE ORCHESTRA DIRECTOR. ****

FCPS Grading & Reporting states:

Students **MUST** be present in school in order to participate in after school activities. We will follow McLean's Extra-Curricular/Co-Curricular Policy. Students are fully responsible for completing any missed assignments. Each day of absence affords one school day of makeup work opportunity. Students have a maximum of ten days to make up work missed during an excused period of absence. However, the period of time allowed to make up work may be extended at the discretion of the teacher. Makeup work for excused absences is graded and recorded in the grade book by teachers without penalty to students. For approved prearranged absence, a student may request assignments in advance of the absence. Teachers will provide regular or alternative assignments in advance of the absence, when feasible. Following any absence, including a prearranged absence, students should make arrangements with individual teachers for makeup work.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences do not mandate course failure. If students are absent and unexcused, they cannot earn credit for classroom activities or labs missed as a result. Students may choose to make up work following unexcused absences and teachers may help the student and parent or guardian to identify missed work, but teachers are not obligated to provide makeup work. Make up work is encouraged so that students will profit from future instruction.

Regardless of the type of absence McLean High School expects that ALL students learn and demonstrate mastery on all topics covered.

SPORTS POLICY

Orchestra is a CLASS. Sports are EXTRA-curricular.

Ms. Smith will try to be as flexible as she can to a certain point, but in here is a brief summary of conflicts and which activity you should plan to go to:

Orchestra rehearsal takes precedent over sports practice.

Sports games/matches take precedent over orchestra rehearsal.

Concerts take precedent over practices and games/matches.

Tournament play **MAY** take precedent over concerts. See Ms. Smith in this occurrence.

That being said, efforts can be made to arrange compromises. This happens with appropriate and early **COMMUNICATION** with Ms. Smith.

Leniency will **NOT** be considered for day-of requests. Leniency will most likely not be considered for week-of requests.

The key to working out compromises in your schedule is EARLY COMMUNICATION!

DISTRICT ASSESSMENT

District XIII Orchestra Assessment occurs every year during March. This is by far the most important event that we will participate in over the course of the year. This is Virginia's equivalent to our SOL. Our orchestras will play for a panel of nationally-recognized adjudicators and will be given ratings based on their performance. Please consult the attached calendar and pay careful attention to the date for your Assessment performance. **This event is absolutely required, no exceptions!**

REHEARSAL CONDUCT

Tardiness: There are two ways to be tardy to Orchestra class.

1. Students are not in the orchestra room by the time the bell rings.
2. Students are not in seats, unpacked, and ready to play when the warm-up routine has begun.

Class Participation: All students receive daily class participation grades. Points will NOT be awarded for the following cases:

1. Sitting incorrectly while playing the instrument
2. Talking excessively during rehearsal
3. Disrupting others during rehearsal
4. Running, throwing things, yelling, or any other inappropriate behavior in the orchestra room.
5. **Tuning will commence three minutes after the bell rings. Students should be in their assigned seats with their music, instruments, notebook, and a PENCIL.**
6. If your section is not playing, please respect the others' time by staying quietly in your seats. This is a great opportunity to look over fingerings for tricky passages in your own parts. Try to do this silently without plucking or tapping - try shadow-bowing or shadow-fingering instead.
7. We will have students and/or other teachers run sectionals periodically. Sectional leaders should be given the same respect as you would a teacher, and they should respect their classmates in return.
8. Rehearsal will end a few minutes before the bell to give you ample time to pack up. We all want to have good performances and need to use our time - your time - in the most productive manner, so please respect our time by not packing up until you are dismissed.

EVENING AND WEEKEND COMMITMENTS

Students are expected to be at the following Saturday and weekend commitments: (see attached calendar)

1. Car Wash Fundraisers
2. Holiday Bazaar Fundraisers
3. Bake Sale Fundraisers
4. Restaurant Night Fundraisers
5. Weekend performances
6. German-Exchange Program rehearsals and group events
7. Spring Trip Meeting(s)

EVENING REHEARSALS

The Philharmonic Orchestra will have a rehearsal on Wednesday evenings from 7:00-9:00 p.m. These rehearsals are a mandatory part of the course load. Students be ready in their seat, ready to tune at 7:00 PM. This means arriving early enough to get settled and unpack. Remember: *Early is on time, on time is late.*

Concert & Symphonic Orchestra afterschool rehearsals vary this year (usually one or two rehearsals before each concert) from highlander time, afterschool and in the evenings. The dates are on your calendar - *these are mandatory. Any conflicts must be approved by the director at least 2 weeks prior to the rehearsal.*

Review all orchestra event dates on our calendar and plan your schedules accordingly, including sports!

Please see the MHS Orchestra Handbook for further details, available on Blackboard, Charms, and our website above.

MHS ORCHESTRA MEMBER PAYMENT/UNIFORM ORDER – MENS

Full Name: _____ Orchestra: _____

GENTLEMEN'S UNIFORM: All levels of orchestra will be wearing tuxedo pants, shirt and a cummerbund that is ordered through the orchestra. Tuxedo pants from the previous year or from Longfellow MS are acceptable (if they still fit). If you have a tux shirt with the black collar that still fits you can use that as well. All *freshmen* or *new* students **MUST** order a button cover and a cummerbund through the orchestra. If you are a returning orchestra gentleman, your uniform should be complete – unless you have grown over the summer! Check now! Do you actually still have your button cover? All gentlemen rent a tuxedo jacket and garment bag on a yearly basis for \$10, unless you own one already. Students are responsible for keeping the jacket free of damage and stains while it is in their use. The replacement cost for the jacket is **\$60** and the replacement cost for the garment bag is **\$12**. By signing below you are accepting this responsibility. If the rest of your uniform is complete, a payment of \$60 covers the member payment and jacket rental.

GENTLEMEN'S FOOTWEAR: Black dress shoes and BLACK SOCKS (required for performances) must be purchased independently.

MHS ORCHESTRA MEMBER PAYMENT: Please note that we are collecting a \$50 tax deductible member payment per student to cover general program expenses such as music and instrument purchases as well as a variety of orchestra activities. This will allow us to apply 100% of the profits of our student fundraising events into each student's individual accounts to pay for their orchestra trip. Please include the member payment in the check for uniform rental/purchase costs. Please note that McLean High School will not be requesting any other student fees for orchestra this year.

Men's Adjustable Tuxedo Pants (please circle both correct size & length)

WAIST: (pants have adjustable waistband which gives you one inch in each direction)

inches: 25 28 31 34 37 40 43 46 49 52 55 58

LENGTH: Regular or Long

If you are over 5'11", add \$3.00 for a "LONG" which is 34" inches un-hemmed.)



Men's Banded Mandarin Tuxedo Shirt (please put checkmark in **each** column; we need both neck and sleeve measurements)

NECK (circumference)	SLEEVE (center of neck to bend of wrist)
XS: (13-13 ½ inches) _____	30/31 inches: _____
S: (14-14 ½ inches) _____	32/33 inches: _____
M: (15-15 ½ inches) _____	34/35 inches: _____
L: (16-16 ½ inches) _____	36/37 inches: _____
XL: (17-17 ½ inches) _____	38/39 inches: _____
2XL: (18-18 ½ inches) _____	

ORDER SUMMARY:

T – shirt @ \$10.00 Adult sizes only _____

Pants @ \$27.00 (+\$3 if ordering Long)

\$ _____

Plaid Cummerbund @ \$10.00

\$ _____

Shirt @ \$20.00

\$ _____

Top Button Cover @ \$3.00

\$ _____

(Shirts do not come with a button cover, so new students will need to order one.)

Tux Jacket/Garment Bag Rental \$10.00

\$ _____

_____ Check here if you already own your own tux jacket and are sure it's the same kind.

MHS Orchestra Member Payment

\$60.00 per student (includes T-Shirt)

**Checks to MHS
Orchestra Boosters**

Total (including \$50 MHS Orchestra Member Payment) \$ _____

We accept the Uniform Rental Policy stated above.

Student Signature _____ Parent Signature _____

MHS ORCHESTRA MEMBER PAYMENT/UNIFORM ORDER - LADIES

Full Name: _____ Orchestra: _____

LADIES UNIFORM: All ladies will wear the black “Concerto” dress pictured below. They are comfortable, don’t wrinkle easily, and are machine washable – cutting out the cost and time for dry cleaning! Students will have chance to try on the dresses during the first week of school.

LADIES FOOTWEAR: Black dress shoes must be purchased independently. Close-toed shoes are preferable. Black hose or stockings must be worn with the uniform. Remember, if you plan on wearing heels at concerts...you must be able to walk in them!

MHS ORCHESTRA MEMBER PAYMENT: Please note that we are collecting a \$50 tax deductible member payment per student to cover general program expenses such as music and instrument purchases as well as a variety of activities. This will allow us to apply 100% of the profits of our student fundraising events into each student’s individual accounts to pay for their orchestra trip. Please include the member payment in the check for uniform rental/purchase costs. Please note that McLean High School will not be requesting any other student fees for orchestra this year.



ORDER SIZE	0	2	4	6	8	10	12	14
Bust	29½-30	30½-32	32½-34	34½-35	35½-36	36½-38	38½-39	39½-40
Waist	20½-22	22½-24	24½-26	26½-27	27½-28	28½-30	30½-32	32½-34
Hips	30½-32	32½-34	34½-36	36½-37	37½-38	38½-40	40½-42	42½-43
Length/Knee	24	24	24	24½	24½	25	25	26
Length/Long	40½	41	41	41½	41½	42	42	43
ORDER SIZE	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	
Bust	40½-41	41½-43	43½-45	45½-47	47½-49	49½-51	51½-53	
Waist	34½-35	35½-37	37½-39	39½-41	41½-43	43½-45	45½-47	
Hips	43½-44	44½-46	46½-48	48½-50	50½-52	52½-54	54½-56	
Length/Knee	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	
Length/Long	43	43½	43½	44	44	44½	44½	

ORDER SUMMARY:

T-shirt @ \$10.00 – Adult sizes only _____

Checks to MHS
Orchestra Boosters

Concerto Dress SIZE _____ (if known) \$50.00

...If you don’t know your size yet we can fill it in later when you try them on.

If you fit the size in all columns except length and are taller you can get a Tall dress

Additional Cost for Tall Dresses (+\$3.00)

MHS Orchestra Member Payment \$50.00 (includes T-shirt)

Total (including \$60 MHS Orchestra Member Payment) \$ _____

Get Involved with McLean High School Orchestra!

The McLean High School Orchestra Parents Association (MHSOPA) is dedicated to supporting the efforts of the orchestra director in promoting the highest level of music education and performance opportunities for ALL McLean HS Orchestra students. Utilizing the talents and resources of its member parents, alumni, individual supporters, and corporate patrons, the MHSOPA provides financial support, creative energy, and human power to support orchestra program goals. Parents are encouraged to help support the program in whatever way they can – any way small or large is helpful.

We realize that each of our families is unique – with its own priorities, needs, talents, and time constraints -- and so we try to provide as many different kinds of opportunities for parental involvement as possible. Please review the **volunteer opportunities** suggested below, and check any you are interested in -- or tell us what you would like to do. Then return the form to Miss Smith as soon as possible.

Needs for the 2014-2015 school year at this time are as follows (check off which volunteer opportunities you plan to assist with):

- Office assistance, i.e. making copies of music and/or concert programs.
- Germany exchange program. The German students are visiting MHS this year!
- German exchange HOSTS. German students and chaperones need a place to stay while here from May 15 – May 24, 2015. If you are willing to open your home to our German friends, please check below:
_____ I am interested in hosting a German student (Please note the number of students and gender below)
_____ I am interested in hosting a German chaperone (adult)
- Spring Trip Chaperones. Spring Trip is April 15 – April 19, 2015.
- Concert assistance
- Concert promotion, i.e. contacting local newspapers, putting up flyers in community, etc.
- Videography of concerts
- Hospitality before/after concerts
- Assistance with orchestra assessments in March.
- Senior Regional Orchestra Prep Day – September 13 from 8 am – 1pm.
- Senior Regional Orchestra Auditions – September 29 from approximately 2pm – 9pm.
- Fundraising
- Holiday Bazaar Fundraiser Day – usually 1st or 2nd Saturday in December.
- Uniforms
- Patron Program

The MHSOPA is a non – profit 501 (c) 3 corporation and accepts tax deductible donations from individuals and corporations. If you or your company would like to support MHSOPA in any way, please indicate below. All donations will be recognized in all our programs during the school year.

- My company would like to be a sponsor for the MHSOPA/MHSO.
- I would like to make a donation to support the MHSOPA/MHSO.

Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____

Student Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____