Hillcrest Middle School

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# Orchestra Handbook

**2018–2019**

Mrs. Amber Holden

Orchestra Teacher

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A Message to Parents

**CONGRATULATIONS!** Your decision to provide your child with a quality musical instrument is an investment in your child’s future. In making it possible for your child to play a musical instrument, you are providing the opportunity for self-expression, creativity and achievement.

Many research studies indicate that parental attitude, support and involvement are important factor in a child’s ability to successfully learn to play and enjoy music.

These guidelines are designed to assist you in giving your child the best support possible for his or her musical endeavors. Like any skill, interest counts far more than talent. With strong support from you at home and the teacher at school, playing music will become a natural part of your child’s life.

##### BENEFITS

Music participation enhances the following:

-Problem-solving -Teamwork -Concentration

-Goal-setting -Self-expression -Poise

-Physical coordination -Memory skills

-Self-confidence -Self-esteem -And much, much more!

**For your Future:**

Research indicates that S.A.T. scores are at least 40-60 points higher for students who study music seriously over several years. Music makes you smarter, and the longer you stay in orchestra, the more “in-tune” your brain develops!

**For Your Family:**

A child’s music study also offers opportunities for shared family experiences, including:

-Attending Musical Events

-Making music with family

-Performing for, and with, family and friends

-Learning about the lives of composers and the cultural heritage of many civilizations

-A sense of accomplishment and pride for the entire family.

Private Lessons

Students wishing to advance their skills beyond basic standards or receive extra assistance are encouraged to study privately. This will enhance student progress above and beyond the regular class work. Lessons are available from local teachers and/or high school students. Providing a young student with the role model of a highly motivated and bright high school student or professional string player will prove to be a positive experience for your child and is a lot of fun! Please see Mrs. Holden for a list of private teachers.

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**The Parent’s Role- HOW YOU FIT IN**

Always keep in mind that your morale and financial support is an essential element in your child’s success with music study.

Music achievement requires effort over a period of time. The time in strings class is limited. **New concepts learned at school need daily personal practice time by your child at home in order for these new skills to be developed.** We recommend at least 20-30 minutes per day, five days a week for middle school orchestra students. You can help your child by:

###### Scheduling Practice Times

-Providing a quiet place in which to practice

-Remaining nearby during practice times as often as possible

-Scheduling a consistent daily time to practice

-Praising your child’s efforts and achievements

-Signing your child’s practice calendar

###### WHAT TO DO

To give your child **the best possible support**, you should:

-Remind your child to bring instrument and music to orchestra class.

-Make sure your child’s fingernails are always trimmed to insure proper position and intonation

(playing in tune). Your child will be less than successful if fingernails are long (long fingernails

also result in a lower class grade).

-Encourage your child to play for family and friends.

-Offer compliments and encouragement regularly.

-Take your child to public concerts and recitals

-Encourage your child to talk with you about classes

-Make sure your child’s instrument is always well maintained

-Listen to your child practice, and acknowledge improvement

-Help your child build a personal music library

-Encourage your child to make a commitment to his or her music studies

(A year-long commitment is required each grade year)

**Teacher Contact information**

**Mrs. Amber Holden Hillcrest Middle School** [**aholden@greenville.k12.sc.us**](mailto:aholden@greenville.k12.sc.us) **864-355-6148**

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Expectations & Discipline Policy for Strings Students

**R.E.S.P.E.C.T in Orchestra**

# Classroom Consequences

# 1st offense: Verbal Warning/Student conference

# 2nd offense: Removal from group/Alternate assignment/Parent contact

# 3rd offense: Office Referral and Parent contact

Exemplify Amazing

Respect People and Property

No running/horseplay

No harmful words or actions

No food/drinks

No playing instruments that are not yours

Be responsible with sheet music

**E**nter Prepared and On Time

Bring a pencil every day

Bring a shoulder rest/rock stop, rosin and cleaning cloth every day

Bring your instrument, music, Essential Elements book and music binder every day

Immediately set up your things, tune, begin bell-work and be in your seat

**S**tay On Task and Work Hard

Follow directions the first time they are given

Raise your hand and wait to be called on by the teacher

Complete your work

Hand in your assignments

Practice only on the days that you eat ☺

Play Only at Proper Times

When teachers says “stop” - you stop

Listen when teacher speaks

Pay attention

Do your best

Exemplify Amazing!

You are part of an amazing orchestra!

Act as an amazing orchestra group

Exercise etiquette during concerts

Treat all teachers/visitors with respect

Care for your instruments

Set instruments in safe places

Keep your instrument clean

Loosen your bow after playing

Protect your instrument

Teamwork

Practice your part

Be a positive influence

Help others learn

Encourage other students

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Classroom Procedures

1. Enter the orchestra room quietly!
2. As soon as you enter the classroom take your instrument to your seat and get set up for class. Sharpen all pencils, turn in assignments/papers to your class bin, rosin your bow, put on your shoulder rest, place your music notebook and Essential Elements book on your stand, read the daily agenda and begin the orchestra bell ringer (Number 1 one the board). Make sure your book is open to the page we are working on today.
3. When Mrs. Holden raises her hand immediately stop what you are doing and focus all your attention on her. When Mrs. Holden raises her hand you will raise your bow in the air.
4. Follow proper tuning procedures.
5. Never talk or play out of turn. When the conductor cuts you off make sure to stop playing.
6. If you need tissue or anything that requires you to get out of your seat, raise your hand, wait to be called on, and ask for permission first.
7. Instruments that need to be repaired should be dropped off before school. Please sit your instrument under the repair sign and leave a detailed note explaining what needs to be fixed. Do not wait until class to do this!
8. You must have your Agenda at all times! The restroom and nurse pass are located in the agenda. Please try to visit the restroom before or after class.
9. At the end of class write down your homework (what are you supposed to practice at home?), clean your instrument with a soft cloth, loosen your bow and pack up at Mrs. Holden’s signal. At Mrs. Holden’s signal exit the classroom quietly. Make sure to practice at home! ☺
10. Always demonstrate Orchestra R.E.S.P.E.C.T

What To Do When You Have Finished An Assignment

1. Silently finger through music on the daily agenda.
2. Air bow music on the daily agenda.
3. Softly pizzicato music on the daily agenda.
4. Study rhythms in Essential Elements or your music.
5. Study terms in the back of the Essential Elements book.
6. Organize your orchestra binder.
7. Quietly help your stand partner.
8. Challenge yourself! Look ahead in the Essential Elements book or your music, and practice something difficult.
9. See if Mrs. Holden needs any assistance.
10. See Mrs. Holden for more ideas…

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MATERIALS LIST

The following is a list of necessary equipment for your child’s participation in string class:

**Instrument** – size \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ available at your local music store

**Instruction Book**  - available at your local music store

Essential Elements 2000 for Strings Method Book:

6th Grade: Book 1 and 2

7th Grade: Book 2 and 3

8th Grade: Book 3

\*Please make sure the book matches your child’s instrument (ex. Violin book for Violin, Viola book for Viola, etc.)

**Soft Cloth** – cotton, to keep in the instrument case for cleaning the instrument after use (a wash cloth works well)

**Rosin** – available at your local music store

**Rock Stop or Strap** – (cello and bass students only) to prevent the end pin from slipping and from possibly damaging the floor-available at your local music store

**Shoulder Rest** – (violin and viola students only) available at your local music store.

**Black 3 Ring Binder** – 1” with clear plastic sleeve on the front/back

**Pencil** – to keep in the instrument case

**Folding Music Stand** – recommended for at-home practice

**PLEASE SECURE ALL MATERIALS THIS WEEK,** as instruction will begin next week. I am looking forward to meeting and working with each of you this year. If you have any questions, please leave a message at the school and I will return your call as soon as possible.

Orchestra Class Schedule

1st period 6th grade orchestra 8:39-9:35

2nd period 8th grade orchestra 9:39-10:35

3rd period 7th grade orchestra 10:39-11:35

4th period 6th grade orchestra 12:19-1:15

5th period Planning Period 1:19-2:15

6th period 7th grade orchestra 2:19-3:15

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**Purchasing an Instrument**

Parents, when thinking about purchasing an instrument for your child, please ask your orchestra teacher for advice. Please, also, keep these tips in mind:

1. Think about a price range.
2. Go to several music stores.
3. When purchasing a full-size instrumental outfit, please invest in a wooden bow instead of a fiberglass bow.
4. Ask about future upgrades before you purchase (from ½ size, to ¾ size, etc).
5. Ask about trade-in or buy-back options.
6. Please be cautious about eBay or pawnshops. You usually get less than you pay for. Please investigate an option below first for your best instrument selection.
7. Please ask about instrument insurance before purchasing.
8. For online purchases, including accessories, please visit these websites:

[**www.southweststrings.com**](http://www.southweststrings.com) **or** [**www.sharmusic.com**](http://www.sharmusic.com)

**1-800-528-3430 1-800-248-SHAR**

**Where to Rent or Buy an Instrument**

**These are reputable local music dealers with whom we have had good experiences:**

**Bernhardt House of Violins**

**5 Cateechee Avenue**

**Greenville, SC 29605**

**864-282-8887**

**www.bernhardtviolins.com**

**Musical Innovations**

**150-G Tanner Road**

**Greenville, SC 29607**

**864-286-8742**

**info@musicalinnovations.biz**

Most of these vendors have some kind of appealing rent-to-own program, so that you can “trade-in” and “trade-up” from a smaller size instrument (which many 6th graders need to start with) to a larger, full-size instrument later in your school career. They all sell and rent violins, violas, and cellos. Some even rent basses!

There are a limited number of school district-owned instruments that are available for rent from the school district. You may request the rental document from your orchestra teacher. The fees and requirements for this procedure are printed on the rental form.

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***How to Care for Your Instrument***

IT IS ADVISABLE THAT THE INSTRUMENT NOT BE TAKEN OUT OF THE CASE UNTIL THE STUDENT HAS BEEN TO THE FIRST CLASS AND IS INSTRUCTED ON HOW TO HANDLE IT PROPERLY.

Stringed instruments are delicate and subject to such influences as temperature, humidity and careless handling. The following suggestions are offered for proper care:

1. Never touch the bow hair or the wooden parts of the instrument with your hands. The oil in your body can ruin these parts. If fingerprints do get on the wood of the instrument, “shine” them off with a dry, soft cloth.
2. Keep the instrument away from heat sources such as radiators and heaters, also hot sun (as found inside parked cars), excessive cold, or quick changes in temperature.
3. Never close the case on a violin or viola without first placing a cloth over the top of the instrument. Also make certain that the case is latched before picking up the case. Cellos and basses always need to remove the bow before unpacking their instrument.
4. Keep the powder residue of used rosin wiped clean from the top of the instrument with a soft cloth.
5. Always be sure the instrument is clean before putting it away.
6. Always loosen the bow after use. Tighten the same number of turns when preparing to play.
7. The instrument and bow should be kept in the case away from curious hands when not in use.
8. Do not leave the instrument in a car longer than 15 minutes – and then be sure to put it in the trunk. Extremely cold weather will cause the wood to crack; extremely hot weather will cause the varnish to blister.
9. Do not attempt to glue any part of your instrument. Always consult your string teacher or a qualified music dealer about repairs.

If you follow these recommendations, your instrument can last forever. If you do want to exchange your instrument for a different size or better quality model, your trade-in value will be much higher.



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**Grading Policy**

**Major Grades (50%)**

**Daily Class Participation**

1. Daily attendance: Being on time and ready for class to begin
2. Having all materials ready for class (instrument, pencil, music, book, etc.)
3. Proper tuning habits (silent voices combined with active listening)
4. QUALITY of contribution to the rehearsal and musical environment
5. Attentive and active responsiveness to instruction (marking your music with a pencil when the teacher identifies a problem area)
6. Playing when conducted/instructed to play, stopping immediately when conducted/instructed to stop

**Concert and Performance Grades**

1. All concerts are mandatory and graded. Athletic practices, doctor appointments, hair appointments, etc. are not excused unless cleared by the orchestra teacher **at least one week** in advance (because your class requirement to be present at a concert or dress rehearsal will have been announced further in advance than one week).
2. Punctuality and Proper uniform
3. Full participation is expected at all events (leaving early is unacceptable)
4. **MAKE-UP WORK:** If proper advance notification between parent and teacher (or coach) has occurred, or in cases of medical/family emergencies, the teacher may choose to “excuse” the absence and assign make-up work. Under no usual circumstances will this requirement be waived, as a major test grade was earned by the students who were present at the event. For a missed concert, the make-up work may be to come in after-school and play the concert music for the teacher for a test grade, or in some circumstances a written assignment may be considered by the teacher to be more appropriate or practical. In all cases, the best approach is to contact the teacher as far in advance as possible to coordinate a calendar conflict.
5. **Unexcused** absences are those for which an early or adequate reason could not be provided.

**Minor Grades (50%)**

**Tests, either written or performance**

1. Playing tests on sections of music
2. Written assignments and written tests
3. Alignment:

* Proper body posture (sitting on front half of chair, straight spine, feet apart, feet on floor)
* Proper instrument carriage (accurate angles between instrument, body, and floor)
* Proper hand, arm, and finger positions (absolutely no long fingernails)
* Proper points-of-contact between instrument and body/hands/fingers

1. Music/Notebook checks (to see if rehearsal corrections have been marked into the music with a pencil)
2. Homework- Practicing! ☺

**Calendar**

A calendar of events will be distributed separately at the beginning of the school year, listing the required events in which your child must participate as an orchestra student. You may receive extra credit for outside concert attendance.

**Uniform – What to Wear to Concerts**

Girls: Black dress pants or long black skirt, bright white blouse, black dress shoes, black socks or stockings

Boys: Black dress pants, white collard dress shirt, black tie, black dress shoes, black socks.

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*Please read the information on this page carefully. Your signature indicates that you agree to the following orchestra policies. Please have your student return this signed form to the next orchestra class. Thank you!*

**Mandatory Attendance Policy**

I understand that my child, as a member of the Hillcrest Middle School Orchestra program, is required to attend all respective performances. Attendance is mandatory, except in circumstances of emergency, sickness, or prior arrangement with the director personally. Parents have a responsibility to arrange for necessary transportation to/from special events. Unexcused absences may result in a failing grade for that particular concert, seriously jeopardizing the student’s grade in orchestra for that grading term.

**Full-Year Commitment Policy**

I understand that being a member of the strings program requires a full-year commitment (any exceptions are by the consent of the school principal ONLY). No student may be dropped from the class after the first four weeks of instruction. Students may choose on a yearly basis to continue in the program from 6th through 8th grade based on parental consent, student desire, and teacher recommendation. Students in our program flourish if they experience orchestra all the way through high school.

Classroom Discipline Policy

We have read and agree to follow the guidelines as described in this orchestra handbook.

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Print Student Name Student Signature Parent Signature

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Date Phone Number Parent E-mail Address