



Burlington School District

***Edmunds Middle School - ORCHESTRA PROGRAM - Michael Hakim, Director
2019-2020***

Introduction

It is a pleasure to welcome you and your child to the Orchestra Program in the Burlington School District and at Edmunds Middle School! This handbook was written to help you—the parent, guardian, or other significant adult—support a special child’s dream of playing a string instrument. Your child may be ready to explore new musical talents. He or she may be looking forward to meeting new friends, may feel ready for a new challenge, or may want to follow in the footsteps of an older sibling. Certainly everyone wants to be part of a satisfying and fun experience!

Orchestras are one of our culture’s great treasures. Being a member of this performance ensemble provides a broad historical perspective and playing a string instrument integrates a person’s physical, intellectual and expressive qualities. We are pleased that Orchestra is a part of the total education program and that it is offered to all students enrolled in the Burlington School District, Grades 6-12.

Playing a String Instrument

Regardless of the initial attraction to a string instrument, there are many reasons to support your child’s dream:

- According to neurologist Frank R. Wilson, “The child who is playing a musical instrument or singing on a regular basis is exercising the entire brain and stimulating general intelligence more than his or her counterpart who does not play or sing.”
- Making music requires the development of higher-level thinking skills. Students are called on to analyze, create, evaluate, and make informed judgments.
- Self-discipline, confidence, and a sense of pride and personal worth grow out of meaningful musical experiences. When students perform on a string instrument, the joy of learning becomes real, tangible, and powerful.

- Participating in orchestra prepares people for the world of work by fostering skills identified as critical by the business community-independence, cooperation, teamwork, craftsmanship, responsibility, and leadership. The independent student-worker becomes capable of making decisions in situations where there are no standard answers.
- Music has value in and of itself, and plays a role in the human experience. Participation in orchestra will challenge and heighten aesthetic perception, and nourish the quest for beauty and self-expression.

Orchestra Program Objectives

The objectives, activities, and strategies for the Burlington School District are aligned with the voluntary National Standards for Music Education adopted in the United States in 1994. A comprehensive music education for all children should include all of these goals. Realistically, goals are addressed in varying degrees at different age levels.

1. Singing
2. Playing instruments
3. Improvising
4. Composing and arranging
5. Reading and notating music
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
7. Evaluating music and musical performances
8. Understanding relationships between music and other arts/other disciplines
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture

The Parent's Role: *"Your Child Needs Your Support"*

To reach his or her full potential, your child needs you and your investment of time, money, and personal interest. Your child will progress more rapidly and confidently if the two of you are working side by side. Your genuine interest in your child's study of music will be very apparent. Your child will need your support when playing is fun, and all the encouragement you can muster when progress is a bit slower.

Acquiring an Instrument

Beyond the cost of buying the required method book (listed below), it need not cost anything to participate in orchestra. School instruments are available at no cost. They are, however, limited in both number (availability is not guaranteed) and quality. If you would like to be sure your child learns on an instrument of good (or great) quality, renting or purchasing an instrument is recommended (please see accompanying rental information). While there may be an instrument in the family that is available for him or her to play, your child must have an instrument that is the appropriate size. Mr. Hakim or the Burlington Violin Shop (listed below) will help you determine if your current instrument is the right size for you. Keep in mind, too, as your child grows, you may need to get a larger instrument. The other items your child will need include:

- Method Book: method books will be available for purchase from Mr. Hakim, at school, shortly after the start of the school year. You may also purchase your book elsewhere, but please do so as soon as possible. Your method book will cost approximately \$10. If renting from Ellis Music (listed below), your method book is included in the rental. If you already own a copy of your method book, please bring it to class.

6th Grade Students:

- *Essential Elements for STRINGS Book I*

7th/8th Grade Students:

- *Essential Elements for STRINGS Book II*

- Rosin
- Music Stand
- Soft Cloth
- Shoulder Pad/Shoulder rest (violin & viola) or Rock Stop (cello & bass; note, for cello, a belt-style rock stop works best)

The following are two music stores that offer quality instruments, excellent repair service, and good rental prices. Please see the accompanying flyers for more specific information regarding their rental prices. The Burlington Violin Shop (one of three Vermont Violins stores in the state) is local, and provides great quality instruments and expertise, allowing a student to see, hear, hold and try out instruments before you rent or purchase. Ellis Music, though in Vermont, is far from the Burlington area, so trying out an instrument in person is not usually possible. They do, however, provide very convenient weekly delivery and pickup to and from school.

<p>Burlington Violin Shop 23 Church St. Burlington, VT 05401 802-862-0349 www.vermontviolins.com https://www.vermontviolins.com/edmunds-middle-school-1</p>	<p>Ellis Music Company, Inc. P.O. Box 437, 1709 Route 107 Bethel, VT 05032 Office: 802.234.6400 www.ellismusic.com</p>
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Home Practice

Individual practicing is probably the most important, and often the most difficult aspect of a student's orchestra commitment. It is impossible to play your best without daily practice.

Practice Tips:

- Set up a regular time for practicing. Many young musicians choose to practice at the same time every day, like before school or right after dinner. The best place is a quiet place, away from the television, telephone, computer, and other disruptions.
- Using a music stand allows a musician to be able to sit or stand tall and hold the instrument correctly.

- If fingers, hands, and arms tire, take a few seconds to shake or wiggle them to relax the muscles.
- Take time in each practice session to play some favorite songs!
- Each day, review the teacher's feedback and instructions given on the pages of the lesson book and/or assignment sheet.
- Record daily practice time on a practice log. Set weekly practice goals and reward diligent effort.
- Initially, a daily practice session should be 10-15 minutes in length. As hand and arm strength improves, and skills become more complex, increase the length of a practice session to 20-30 minutes.
- Practice a song slowly before taking it at a fast tempo.
- At the end of each practice session you should be able to answer two questions, "What improved today?" and "Which songs or skills need work tomorrow?"
- A metronome, a small clock-like device that ticks a steady beat at any speed, is an excellent practice partner. It can be used to help a student play at a steady tempo or simply establish the speed indicated in the music. There are also a number of free online metronomes and metronome apps available.

Consistency is the key to success!

Concerts

The orchestras will present a series of performances each year for parents, peers, and the community. **Students are required to attend all scheduled performances (Cabaret Night, and auditioning for the District III Festival are optional). Please be sure to organize any family plans (vacation trips, etc.) around these dates, so that students are able to attend the concerts. Thank you!**

Here is the 2019-2020 Concert Schedule:

DATE	PERFORMANCE	TIME	PLACE
Thursday, September 12, 2019	Ellis Music Instrument Night (not a concert, but instrument pick-up for those renting from Ellis Music)	7:00pm	Edmunds Gym
Tuesday, December 10, 2019	7th/8th Grade Winter Concert	6:30 pm	Edmunds Gym
Tuesday, January 14, 2019	6th Grade Winter Concert	6:30 pm	Edmunds Gym
January 31 and February 1, 2020	District III Middle School Festival (7/8 th only)	TBD	TBD
TBD, 2020	<u>Snow Dates:</u> District III Middle School Festival	TBD	TBD
Wednesday, March 11, 2020	Orchestra Night	7:00 pm	Burlington High School Auditorium
TBD, 2020	<u>Snow Date:</u> Orchestra Night	7:00 pm	Burlington High School Auditorium
Saturday, April 11, 2020	Cabaret Night Music Department	6:00 pm	Edmunds Gym or

	Fundraiser		Cafeteria (TBD)
Thursday, May 14, 2020	Spring Orchestra Concert (all grades)	7:00 pm	Edmunds Gym

Concert Dress

It is important that we present ourselves in a professional manner when we perform, so please plan ahead in acquiring the appropriate concert dress. Each orchestra member will be expected to dress appropriately at all performances. The following is the required dress code for all orchestra performances:

Black bottom, white top

Black dress pants or black skirt (knee length or longer)

Black shoes, black socks or black stockings

White dress shirt or white blouse

Ties are optional, but encouraged

Grading

Orchestra is a fully graded class that is weighed equally with other courses of study. Student grades, as well as assignments due, comments and reminders, will be recorded on Powerschool Unified Classroom, an online learning management system (a link to the login page can be found on the EMS homepage). The course grade will be determined by the following:

50% Ensemble Participation (includes concert attendance and participation):

- Positive effort
- Respect for others and the music
- Appropriate behavior (according to EMS Rules & Regulations)
- Arriving properly prepared (with **instrument, music, folder, pencil**)
- Being ready to listen, and ready to play

25% Lesson Participation: (please see lesson policy below)

- Each student will have 3-4 small group lessons each quarter, during the school day. Unexcused missed lessons must be made up. Please see Mr. Hakim to schedule a make-up time.
- Small Group Lessons function as a LAB for Orchestra and are essential for skill development.
- Have lesson material prepared. Lesson material will be taken from the method books, school concert repertoire, and other supplemental materials. Lesson assignments (what to practice before a student's next lesson) will be posted on Powerschool Unified Classroom following each lesson.
- Be ready to listen, and ready to play.

20% Progress Assessments (Practice Logs and Practice Journals):

- Practice Logs and Practice Journals: Practice Logs record frequency and duration of home practice, and require a parent/guardian signature prior to submission. Practice journals incorporate reflective written answers to questions addressing goal-setting and self-assessment. Students will submit weekly practice logs and may be assigned an occasional practice journal.

5% Playing Tests:

- Each student will perform one playing test per quarter. A rubric will be used to critique each playing presentation assessing technique, skill development and musicianship elements. Musical excerpts will vary each quarter and will come from our method books, school concert repertoire, and supplemental material. Students will know exactly what to prepare for their progress assessments well in advance.

Grades for orchestra are based on effort and improvement. Orchestra is fun and enriching, and can provide a student a welcome break from an intense period of focus at another point in their school day. It does, however, of course, demand the same pursuit of excellence as does any subject in school. Accordingly, please note the following expectations:

In a given quarter, a detention will be given to a student for:

- 2 consecutive days without instrument and/or music
- 2 needs to address behavior in class (excessive interruption or distraction, preferring socializing to listening and/or playing, disrespect of equipment, etc.)
- 2 unexcused tardies
- 2 unapproved uses of technological devices (Chromebooks, iPads, phones). Students must have my permission to use a device in class, and must use it only for the purpose(s) I permit. School-issued Chromebooks do play a useful role in Orchestra.

In a given quarter, 2 detentions, and/or a grade below a C at the end of a quarter, will result in a conversation with the student and their parents/guardians, by which decision may be reached to drop the student from the program.

LESSON POLICY

Like home practicing, lessons are critical to a student's development. The importance of lesson attendance, therefore, is accordingly stressed to students. Students **MUST** report to their regularly scheduled class, from which they are going to their lesson, to (1) notify/remind their teacher of their scheduled lesson (they are encouraged to ask politely to be excused!), and (2) find out what work they will miss before going to their lesson. It is the student's responsibility to complete all classwork and homework missed. If a student has a test, quiz, presentation or field trip in their regularly scheduled class, they are excused from their lesson (provided they notify Mr. Hakim), and encouraged, but not required, to make it up. If a student simply forgets to attend their lesson, they are required to make it up. It will be recorded as a "0" on Powerschool Unified Classroom until it is made up. All missed lessons must be made up before the end of the quarter in which the lesson was missed. Students must see Mr. Hakim to schedule a make-up time.

Champlain Valley District III Orchestra Festival

Seventh and Eighth grade students have the additional opportunity to audition for the Champlain Valley District III Music Festival. The Vermont Music Educators Association District III teachers collaborate year-round to hire excellent guest conductors and organize the festival. Combining students from more than 15 area schools, this festival brings together some of the most motivated young musicians from Chittenden County. More information regarding this opportunity will be given throughout the fall semester, and is also available at the District III Music Festival website, <http://vtdistrict3music.org/>.

Instrument Maintenance & Care

Keeping an instrument playing well is a very important aspect of our daily rehearsals and daily practice. Students will learn how to properly maintain, play, and clean their instrument. Proper maintenance and care will avoid losing vital instruction and practice time.

Instrument Maintenance & Care Tips:

- String instruments and bows must be handled with care.
- Avoid letting someone other than the student play the instrument.
- Apply rosin lightly over the entire length of the bow as necessary.
- When the practice or rehearsal is finished, loosen the bow, and wipe any rosin from the bow stick and surface of the instrument with a soft cloth. Store the instrument and bow securely.
- Avoid touching the bow hair.
- Store the instrument away from heating and cooling vents, and away from direct sunlight.
- Avoid leaving a string instrument in the car when it is very hot or very cold for extended periods of time. Either extreme could cause damage.
- String instruments need a certain amount of humidity in the air. Without humidity, the wood dries and shrinks. When it cannot shrink any more, the wood cracks. You may consider using a humidifier.
- A crack in the instrument, or an open seam where two pieces of the instrument have come unglued, often causes a “buzz” when played. Take it to a qualified instrument repair technician. DO NOT attempt to glue it yourself.
- Keep a record of the instrument’s serial number (look inside the f-holes). Be sure the instrument is covered by your homeowner’s insurance.
- Attach a name tag to the case.
- If a peg is slipping so the string will not stay in tune, please inform Mr. Hakim.
- If the instrument needs a string replaced, please ask Mr. Hakim for assistance.

Please contact Mr. Hakim with any questions or concerns:

Email: mhakim@bsdvt.org
Phone: 802-864-8486

Please note that this handbook, and much more important and interesting information (including schedules, documents and recordings) and updates about the program can be found on the EMS Music Department website, under “Orchestra”:

<https://sites.google.com/a/bsdvt.org/ems-music/orchestra>

Please see the orchestra program agreement on the next page



Burlington School District/Edmunds MS
ORCHESTRA PROGRAM 2019-2020

ORCHESTRA PROGRAM AGREEMENT

I, _____ (print student's name), have read the Burlington School District/Edmunds Middle School Orchestra Handbook, and I agree to contribute to the best of my ability. I understand that Orchestra is different than other subjects in many ways, and I agree to be responsible for maintaining respect and cooperation within the group. There are many aspects to playing a musical instrument with success, and I agree to comply with all of the rules and expectations.

Student Signature

Date

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

Parent(s) Email Addresses: _____

Please check one:

☐ I currently have, or have access to an instrument. I will ensure that the instrument is in good working condition and will have it inspected by a professional.

☐ I wish to rent an instrument from the Burlington Violin Shop (Vermont Violins). Contact information is listed in this handbook, and rental rates accompany or are attached to this handbook.

☐ I wish to rent an instrument from Ellis Music. Contact information is listed in this handbook, and rental rates accompany or are attached to this handbook.

☐ I request to use a school-owned instrument. (Availability not guaranteed.)

*****Please return this contract to Mr. Hakim by Monday, September 10th.***