

Table of Contents

Cedar Shoals High School Orchestra

Student/Parent Handbook



2026-2027

Dr. Makeba Clark, Principal

Mr. Ryan Lopez, Director

Phone: (706) 546-5375 Ext. 21344

Website: www.cedarshoalsorchestra.org

Planning Period: 4th Block // 2:05-3:35

Cedar Shoals High School Student/Parent Handbook

Table of Contents

Welcome to the Cedar Shoals Orchestra Program! page 3

Getting to Know Your Director... page 4

Syllabus

I. Course Scopes & Goals page 5

- A. Membership in the Orchestra Program 5
- B. Course Description 5
- C. Goals of the Cedar Shoals Orchestra Program 5
- D. Orchestra Ensembles 5

II. Grading page 6

- A. General Expectations 6
- B. Grades 6
- C. Weights 6
- D. Late Work Policy 8
- E. Home Practice 8
- F. Performances and Retreat Participation 8
- G. Recorded Submissions 9
- H. Rehearsal Skills 9
- I. Written and Electronic Assignments 9
- J. Final Exam 10

III. Classroom Conduct & Operating

Procedures page 10

- A. Class Behavior 10
- B. Daily Class Procedure 10
- C. Classroom Discipline 11
- D. Classroom Rewards 11
- E. Attendance 12
- F. Tardy Policy 13
- G. Conflicts with Orchestra 13
- H. Seating Assignments 13
- I. Audience Etiquette 14
- J. Make-up Assignments 14
- K. Community Performances 14
- L. Student Leaders 14
- M. Orchestra Leadership Duties and Responsibilities 15
- N. Academic Eligibility 16

IV. Materials page 16

- A. Required Materials 16
- B. School Instrument Use 17
- C. Instrument Storage 17
- D. Instrument Care 17
- E. Repairs 18
- F. Music Library 18
- G. Uniform & Dress Code 18

V. Citizenship page 19

- A. Positive Attitude 19
- B. Discipline 19
- C. Pride 19
- D. Courtesy 19

VI. Miscellaneous (But Important) Items

page 20

- A. Private Lessons 20
- B. Website 20
- C. Additional Performance Opportunities 20
- D. Orchestra Trips 21
- E. Varsity Letter 21
- F. Fine Arts Diploma Seal 22

VII. Calendar of Events page 23

VIII. Parental Involvement page 23

- A. Benefits 23
- B. How You Fit In 23
- C. To Maintain Your Child's Interest 23
- D. What to Do 24
- E. What to Avoid 24
- F. Parent Volunteers and Chaperones 25

IX. Handbook Acceptance Form page 25

Welcome to the Cedar Shoals Orchestra Program!

This handbook has been compiled for the parents and students of the orchestra program at Cedar Shoals High School. It is designed to acquaint the orchestra members and parents with the requirements, expectations, and procedures in orchestra class.

The CSHS Orchestra program is part of a long tradition of excellence in instrumental music instruction and performance within the Clarke County Schools. I am very honored to be the director of this fine program and look forward to working with all of you this year!

To avoid conflicts with the stated policies, all orchestra members and parents are urged to read this handbook so that the student and parent expectations are understood.

When the handbook has been read entirely, please complete the **information form** and **handbook contract**. This will indicate a basic understanding of the material presented in this handbook.

To the Students: Welcome to the CSHS Orchestra family! I am very proud to be your director, and I hope you are ready for a successful and musical year. I know that you will enjoy the experience of being involved in a group that includes students who have outstanding citizenship, a strong, committed community, and strive for musical excellence. There is a lot of hard work that will be required of you during this year, and by trying your best and keeping a positive attitude, you will reap all the rewards that will come because of your effort.

My responsibility to each of you is to accept you for what you are NOW, not what you will be or what you have been, and to demonstrate to the best of my ability that music is a way of expression, a way of working together, a way of sharing and understanding ourselves and each other better. Let's have some fun!!

To the Parents: As the director, I am here not only to help the student, but also to work with each of you in achieving a quality education in music for your child. If it were not for your support, encouragement, and approval, the quality of your child's education would suffer. For more information on your role in your child's education, see the section of this handbook entitled Parent Involvement.

Communication is key in any partnership and extremely important when dealing with the amount of information that your child receives at school. I will do my best to help keep the [website](#) current and send periodic email newsletters that will help keep you up to date with important news and upcoming events.

A successful music program is the result of a unified partnership between parents, students, and the director. When you have read the handbook completely, please complete the CSHS Handbook Acceptance Form.

Also, please plan to attend the **Parent Meeting/Open House** scheduled for **Thursday, August 13 at 6:00 pm** in the **Orchestra Room**.

If I can be of any assistance, or if you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Musically,

Mr. Ryan Lopez
Director of Orchestras
lopezl2@clarke.k12.ga.us

Getting to Know Your Director...



I am incredibly proud to be the Director of Orchestras at Cedar Shoals High School! After an amazing first year with this program, I'm excited to continue building on the tradition of excellence, community, and musicianship that makes Cedar Shoals such a special place.

Originally from Albuquerque, New Mexico, and I've been playing the violin for over 12 years. As a student, I performed with the Albuquerque Youth Symphony Orchestra (AYSO) and performed with the New Mexico All-State Orchestra. It was my high school orchestra director who truly inspired me to pursue music education. Her impact on my life showed me how powerful music can be—not just as an art form, but as a source of connection, growth, and purpose. That experience is a big part of why I teach today.

I earned my Bachelor of Music in Music Education from Kennesaw State University, where I studied violin, performed with the KSU Symphony Orchestra, and served as President of the university's chapter of the American String Teachers Association (ASTA). Before joining Cedar Shoals, I taught private violin and piano lessons, coached middle school orchestra students, and completed my student teaching at Pope High School.

My teaching philosophy centers on creating a classroom where every student feels challenged, supported, and valued. I believe orchestra should be a place where students develop not only strong musical skills, but also confidence, responsibility, teamwork, leadership, and lasting friendships. Music has the power to shape lives, and I strive to help every student discover their own potential through the orchestra experience.

Outside of teaching, I enjoy hiking, watching movies, and spending time with friends and family. It is a privilege to be part of the Cedar Shoals community, and I look forward to another incredible year of making great music, celebrating accomplishments, and creating lasting memories together.

Welcome to the Cedar Shoals Orchestra family, and as always...

Go Jaguars!

I. COURSE SCOPES AND GOALS

A. MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORCHESTRA PROGRAM:

The orchestra program is open to all students demonstrating the desire, ability, and proper attitude to be a member of the group. Each student will have an equal and fair opportunity for participation in the orchestra program. Students will be placed in an orchestral ensemble at the discretion of the director based upon the student's achievement from the previous year, an audition, and/or recommendations of previous instructors.

B. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The Cedar Shoals Orchestra classes are designed to allow students to explore music through performance on a string instrument. Students will explore the melody, harmony, rhythm, form, expression, and style of music. Students will develop both individual and ensemble skills that follow the national and state standards for Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Mastery Orchestra, including performance posture and technique, music reading, notation skills, singing, composition, improvisation, and movement. It is the aim of this course to not only foster a greater appreciation for music, but also to develop students' leadership abilities, self-discipline, and problem solving skills so they can be lifelong learners.

This is a performance based course. Students will be expected to play daily as well as participate in periodic public performances. Students will also be required to submit periodic video playing assessments. Students will be expected to care for their instrument responsibly and learn to tune independently. In Class Participation is crucial to a performance ensemble class. Any absence of more than 2 class periods in one week will require a make-up assignment to earn that week's weekly grade. A list of assignments will be posted on Google Classroom at all times.

C. GOALS OF THE CEDAR SHOALS ORCHESTRA PROGRAM

1. To participate in the performance of music and learn the technical skills of playing an instrument, which will result in a positive learning experience.
2. To attain a mastery of the instrument and feel the satisfaction of achieving something worthwhile through concentrated effort, in both small and large groups.
3. To awaken a sense of creativeness and provide an avenue for self-expression.
4. To develop performance skills necessary for independence as a string player.
5. To elevate students to achieve and surpass the National Music Standards and State Benchmarks set forth by the National Association for Music Education, the American String Teachers Association, and the State of Georgia.
6. To identify and authentically perform various musical styles which developed throughout history.

7. To develop attitudes enabling students to continue participating in musical experiences throughout their life.

D. ORCHESTRA ENSEMBLES

Concert Orchestra, 2nd period, is an intermediate level orchestra that continues instruction after middle school. The content of this course includes instruction in performance techniques with emphasis placed on technical and musical skills through the study of rudimentary exercises and mainly grade 2-3 string orchestra repertoire. Individual practice outside of class time is necessary for successful mastery of performance standards. [Course Name: Beginning Orchestra 1.] *Prerequisite: Previous orchestra experience in middle school and/or teacher recommendation.*

Camerata, 3rd period, is an advanced level orchestra. This course includes advanced instruction in performance techniques with emphasis placed on technical and musical skills through the study of mainly grade 4-5 string orchestra repertoire. Individual practice outside of class time is necessary for successful mastery of performance standards. [Course Name: Intermediate Orchestra 1] *Prerequisite: Audition*

Note: *Students must demonstrate that they can uphold their standing in their respective orchestra class both musically and behaviorally. If the student is not successful, the student may be reassigned to a different orchestra class at the director's discretion.*

II. GRADING

A. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

- Come to class prepared all materials.
- Cooperate in rehearsal with appropriate effort, attitude, and conduct.
- Practice your instrument regularly to make a personal improvement every week.
- Complete all required playing exams and written work
- Attend scheduled performances prepared and dressed in the appropriate uniform
- Keep phones and other technology silenced and in your backpack during rehearsals
- Keep a positive attitude, be willing to learn, and have fun!!!

B. GRADES

A student's semester grade will be determined by a combination of points that they have earned during the 18-week semester.

C. WEIGHTS

Points will be given in the following areas:

1. Formative Assignments - Assignments FOR Learning - Count as 30% of course average

a. Rehearsal Skills & Daily Preparation

- Arriving to class and rehearsals on time; being respectful to the teacher, fellow classmates, or any guest; coming to class prepared with all materials; demonstrating proper rehearsal behavior & positive attitude.
 - Students are expected to have their music, pencils, and instruments at every class. If you do not have an instrument, please contact Mr. Lopez to see if arrangements can be made to borrow one.
 - *In Class Participation is crucial to a performance ensemble class. A Weekly Performance and Preparation Grade is awarded based on in class participation. If a student misses more than 2 days of class in a week, a written listening/practice assignment must be completed to earn this weekly grade. (One week can be missed without a make up assignment, subsequent weeks will need to be made up with written work.)*
 - Refer to the **Attendance** section for more details.
- Students are expected to keep their nails low (not passed the fingertip) at all times. Students with longer fingernails will receive a 50% deduction of their daily participation credit.
 - Exception: Week of Homecoming and Prom
- Phones are NOT permitted during class!
 - 1st Warning: Students will be asked to put their phone away. Daily participation grade reduced by 50%
 - 2nd Warning: Students will be asked to put their phone away, and parents will receive an email. Students will receive a ZERO for their daily participation grade.
- In addition, students may receive a grade based on the director's assessment of student progress over a period of time.

b. Written and Electronic Assignments

- Assigned written class work, written homework assignments, written quiz, reflection, online post, practice vlog or chart, or music folder checks. Any online form, paper form, or permission slip that must be completed, signed and returned.

2. Summative Assignments - Assignments OF Learning - Count as 50% of course average

a. Performances & Retreats

- Orchestra is a **performance-based class**. Students are required to attend all concerts and in-school retreats detailed on the calendar. It is to your advantage to address any time conflicts immediately. Make-up work will be given if the absence is excused.
 - Concerts are a major part of this grade and may carry a 2X grade calculation multiplier.
- Phones are NOT permitted during concerts/performances. Students will receive a ZERO for the concert if they have their phone on stage.

b. Tests

- Tests are an important part of your grade, so preparation is vital. Students will perform playing tests either virtually (via recording) or live (during class). *Virtual playing tests will be due 2 days prior to the live playing test.* Students will be given excerpts from current pieces on the day of the test. Their grade will be based on preparation, performance, and respect.
 - Performance evaluations are designed to individually assess improvement of the skills and techniques that are taught in class and in preparation for performances.
 - Evaluations may consist of any combination of announced and unannounced playing tests given in-class (live) or recorded via audio or video (in-class or at home).
 - Shorter performance evaluations or playing checks that are designed to individually assess improvement of the skills and techniques that are taught in class and in preparation for performances.
- Scale Tests
 - Students are required to play 9 scales each semester. (6 major, 3 melodic minor) They may submit videos online, or play live in class. Whichever scales students do for one semester, they cannot do for the next semester. By the end of the year, students will complete 12 major scales and 6 melodic minor scales.
- Auditions
 - Students currently in Camerata are **highly encouraged** to audition for Camerata Auditions. Students who wish to move up to Camerata from Concert Orchestra are **required** to audition. *Auditions are Optional (and extra credit)*
 - GMEA All-State Orchestra Auditions and participating in Solo/Ensemble Festival are *optional (and extra credit)* but **highly recommended** for Camerata students. *Optional (and extra credit) for Concert Orchestra.*

3. **Final Summative Exam - count as 20% of course average**

- The Final Exam will be a written exam covering all material from the semester.

D. LATE WORK POLICY

Submitted work will be accepted late for a reduced grade. Any late assignment can earn a maximum grade of 80%. *Work will only be accepted late within each of the grading periods.* Deadlines will be announced ahead of time and will be strictly enforced. Once the next grading period begins and the late work deadline has passed, work from the preceding grading period will not be accepted and missing assignments will turn to permanent zero grades for that semester.

Missing Assignments: *work not completed; not subject to student absences*

E. HOME PRACTICE

Practice is an integral part of orchestra class and learning to play any instrument. Every student enrolled in the Cedar Shoals Orchestra program is expected to regularly practice all lessons, skills, techniques, concepts, and concert music taught in class. Students should plan on devote time each day for home practice. The required amount of practice time is determined by your level of mastery of the musical material. Every student is different, therefore there is no set “number of minutes” requirement. Musical success any performing ensemble achieves is directly related to the quality practice time the individual member brings to that ensemble.

F. PERFORMANCES AND RETREAT PARTICIPATION

There are typically 2 to 4 concerts per semester and one retreat each semester. All concerts are GRADED EVENTS and are considered co-curricular. Students are required to participate in the entire concert. A very important part of developing as a musician is listening to and critiquing live performances. Additionally, we are a Cedar Shoals Orchestra team, and we support each other out of respect for our program and respect for the hard work involved in preparing and performing for our school and community. Students start with a ‘100’ for their performance grade based on attendance, timeliness, following procedures, and performance etiquette.

Points will be deducted from the grade for the following infractions:

- **Leaving Performance Without Permission** (-50 points) – A ‘performance’ begins with the 1st piece of the first ensemble and ends at the conclusion of the last piece of the last ensemble. There are only 4 concerts a year that require all ensembles to listen to each other: Fall Concert, Winter Concert, Pre-LGPE Concert, and Spring Concert. PARENTS: PLEASE MAKE NOTE OF THIS.
- **Uniform Infraction** (-10 points) – any missing/incorrect pieces or the uniform
- **Out of Uniform** – This infraction will result in the student being removed from the ensemble and receiving a grade of ZERO.
- **Tardy to ‘Call Time’** (-20 points) – It is standard practice to arrive 15 minutes prior to each performance or rehearsal ‘call time’.
- **Missing Equipment/Music** (-10 to -15 points) – Any missing instrument accessory, shoulder rest, sheet music, etc.
- Behavior Issues will be addressed by the director and deduction/disciplinary action applied accordingly.

Fortunately, we rarely have issues warranting deductions and understand that emergencies happen. The Director will work to alleviate uniform, instrument, music, transportation, etc. issues brought to their attention, however it is YOUR JOB to prepare in advance and remember that you are a part of the orchestra team and your team needs you on time and ready to go!

G. RECORDED SUBMISSIONS

Students will submit recorded assignments on Google Classroom. These assignments include basic musical fundamentals such as scales, arpeggios, etudes, and excerpts. For students without a phone or are having technical issues, “lack of a device” or “technical difficulties” is not grounds for a deadline extension, so please do not wait until the last minute to submit your recordings.

H. REHEARSAL SKILLS

The Rehearsal Skills grade is determined by a student’s ability to be prepared and have all necessary materials (instrument, music, pencil, etc.) and to take part in all in-class activities, as this is “common practice” for music ensembles. Other areas of focus are posture, instrument position, bow hold, and left-hand shape. *Important: Fingernails must be short enough to play with the proper left-hand shape.* In addition, a student’s rehearsal etiquette is included in this grade. No food, beverage, or gum is to be permitted in the orchestra room during rehearsal. Exceptions will be made for those without a lunch period. Bottled water is permissible.

A partial list (but not limited to) of rehearsal competency:

- Attendance; on time to class and in seat 3 minutes after bell ready for tuning
- Helping with set-up if needed
- Remaining in seat while instruction is going on
- Keeping attentive without talking, cell phone (leave in backpack), and/or playing/noise disturbance
- Participation and following directions with a good attitude and effort
- Having materials: Instrument/bow in good playing condition, music, pencil, rosin, mute, extra strings, and notebook
- Proper fingernail length (THIS IS A MUST!)

I. WRITTEN AND ELECTRONIC ASSIGNMENTS

Class assignments (i.e., critiques, music theory, concert reflections, music terms, history, etc.) are primarily assigned electronically through Google Classroom or other methods. Please ask the director if you need assistance.

J. FINAL EXAM

All students will be graded at the end of each semester through a written exam. This exam will be given during the scheduled final time listed in the CSHS calendar.

III. CLASSROOM CONDUCT & PROCEDURES

A. CLASS BEHAVIOR

Students will find that some of the policies in the orchestra handbook are similar to those in the school handbook.

1. Obey all school policies. School rules and policies are in effect at any time a student is involved in an activity sponsored by or in the name of the Clarke County Schools.
2. Treat others and their property with respect.
3. No talking, playing, or plucking while the director, a guest, or student leader is giving directions or working with students.
4. Be in your seat, warming up, and prepared to play within three minutes after the bell rings.
5. Always remain in your seat. Please raise your hand and wait until called on before talking. Hall passes will be issued sparingly. If possible, use the restroom prior to the class bell.
6. Bring your materials (instrument, book, music, pencil, etc.) to class every day. Cellular phones and other personal electronic devices must remain silenced and, in your bag, or on the charger in the back of the room during class.
7. Do not touch equipment or instruments that do not belong to you.
8. Put away your music and instrument after each rehearsal.
9. Do not bring food, gum, or drinks (except water) in the orchestra room. Exceptions will be made only for those without a lunch period.
10. No running or horseplay in the orchestra room, instrument room or hallways.

B. DAILY CLASS PROCEDURE

With few exceptions, the daily procedure will be as follows:

BEFORE SCHOOL

1. Bring your instrument and music to the orchestra room and place it in the appropriate storage area as soon as you arrive to school. Please do not leave your instrument in the hallway, or in the main room.
2. You are welcome to practice or rehearse until the first bell. 😊
3. While in the Orchestra Room, be respectful of those rehearsing. BE QUIET if you are in the main room during rehearsals or sectionals.
4. PLEASE THROW OUT YOUR GARBAGE before leaving our “orchestra home” and if you move chairs or stands, please put them back in the set-up before you leave.

DURING CLASS

1. Arrive to class on time, seated in your assigned seat ready to tune 3 minutes after the tardy bell.
2. Leave your backpack and personal belongings in the designated area in the back of the classroom.
3. Take your seat and get your instrument out and place your instrument case closed in the designated area.
4. Check the announcement screen: have all necessary materials (instrument, music, tuner, book, pencil, shoulder rest, rosin, etc.). Have materials you may need BEFORE class starts. While tuning, please be silent. Noise during tuning interferes with the tuning process.

5. Practice passages taught in class that day before the next rehearsal. If you reinforce what you just learned, you'll be surprised how quickly you master the skills. Mark passages that need practice during rehearsal. When you neglect practice, you slow down the progress of the class and yourself.
6. Be attentive during class and follow directions the first time they are given. This saves time and will make progress fast and effective!
7. Pack up your instrument and music and return it to its appropriate space. Cello and Bass players must loosen bows and put in endpins and return their instrument to the appropriate space on the racks.
8. Return to the orchestra room at the end of each day to pick up your instrument and music. If you have trouble catching the bus, the director can help you figure out a way to get your instrument.
9. NEVER touch an instrument that does not belong to you (another student's or a Cedar Shoals instrument). Ask Mr. Lopez if you have an issue with your instrument.
10. Director dismisses the class (not the bell).

C. CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

If you are unable to comply with the classroom rules, you will be dealt with accordingly.

1st infraction: Verbal Warning and a teacher / student discussion after class

2nd infraction: Phone Call Home

3rd infraction: Office Referral and Phone Call Home

4th infraction: Conference with parent, student, teacher, and administrator.

* **Note:** If a student severely disrupts class to the extent that the educational process is disrupted (e.g. fight, etc.), they will be sent to the office IMMEDIATELY and may automatically receive a discipline referral.

D. CLASSROOM REWARDS:

- Praise (may include a high-five!)
- Positive notes/phone calls to parents
- Free time / social time
- Fun stuff!

E. ATTENDANCE

Orchestra members are required to attend all scheduled classroom rehearsals and performances to maintain an exceptional performance standard. As a co-curricular course, rehearsals and performances are part of the educational process. Absences and tardiness affect not only the individual who is absent but also the entire ensemble. The complete list of CSHS events is published on our [website](#) and on Google Classroom at the beginning of the year.

All after-school rehearsals and concerts are considered part of the class requirement. Good communication between the director, student, and parents can prevent misunderstandings. It is

imperative that students be at all after school rehearsals and performances. Please read the following expectations carefully and contact the director with any questions.

WRITTEN NOTICES FROM PARENTS ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL ABSENCES OR SCHEDULE CONFLICTS. Email is preferred. VERBAL OR WRITTEN EXCUSES FROM STUDENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.

1. **CONCERT ATTENDANCE POLICY:** Performances are mandatory and are classified as a major part of a student's grade. Any absence, except for an emergency, not brought to the director's attention for approval prior to the performance will be considered unexcused.
2. **EXCUSED ABSENCE:** Requests for consideration to be excused from performance must be turned in to the director, in writing from the parent or guardian, at least 14 days in advance of the scheduled performance date. Conflicts with individual religious beliefs are considered excused, given advance notice. Please notify the director with a written note as soon as you are aware that a conflict exists. There will be a make-up assignment to make up the grade. The directors will assign the parameters and topics.
3. **EXCUSED ABSENCE MAKE-UP GRADE:** To receive a grade for an EXCUSED absence from a rehearsal or performance, it is the student's responsibility to see the director to make up the missed rehearsal/ performance. This assignment can be (but not limited to) a report, a project, or recording submission.

NO ASSIGNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER TWO WEEKS FROM THE DATE OF THE MISSED REHEARSAL OR CONCERT. THE STUDENT WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THE GRADE IF IT IS LATE. PLEASE COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH MR. LOPEZ IF THERE ARE INDIVIDUAL OR UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MAY BE A PROBLEM.

4. **UNEXCUSED ABSENCE:** An unexcused absence from class or an extra rehearsal will count as zero for that day and the student may receive a lower participation grade. Unexcused absences may also result in a lower performance grade, being placed further back in the section, or not being allowed to perform a given concert. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES RESULT IN A LOSS FROM THE PERFORMANCE AND/OR REHEARSAL COMPETENCY PART OF A STUDENT'S GRADE AND MAY RESULT IN REMOVAL FROM THE ENSEMBLE.

Unexcused absences from concerts include, but are not limited to: homework, appointments, lack of transportation, club meetings, baby-sitting, birthday celebrations, oversleeping, shopping, sports practices or games, meetings, work, and vacation. These will not be accepted as valid excuses for missing a concert. Absences are excused only in cases of emergency. In the case of illness, parents or students should notify the director as early as

possible. If an unanticipated absence occurs, a written request for excuse from a parent or guardian is due within two days of the absence

5. **EMERGENCIES:** In the case of illness and/or family emergency, the parent should send a written notice to the orchestra director as soon as they are aware that such a situation exists. If it is an emergency (i.e., something that happens 30 minutes before the rehearsal is to begin) it may be impossible to get in touch with the director. Therefore, please follow this up with a written note as soon as possible after the fact. **THIS IS THE ONLY CATEGORY WHERE ABSENCES WILL BE EXCUSED THE SAME DAY, OR AFTER THE EVENT.**

F. TARDY POLICY

Students must be on time for all assigned orchestra functions. Learning to be early will establish a lifelong habit that is critical to an individual's and this organization's success. Being on time is defined as follows: At the requested time, the student is in his or her assigned seat with the instrument, bow, music and a pencil. For all performances a call time will be assigned. Any student who is not present, or in place, by the assigned call time will be counted as tardy. This tardy will result in a lowered grade for that performance. Habitual tardiness will be handled in accordance with the policies listed in the Cedar Shoals HS student handbook.

G. CONFLICTS WITH ORCHESTRA

Rehearsal and performance calendars are normally given out well in advance. While not always 100% preventable, every effort will be made to eliminate conflicts with other major school activities. It is the policy of the orchestra to assist students when conflicts occur within the scope of orchestra policy. Conflicts should be brought to the director's attention **IN WRITING** as soon as the student is aware of a discrepancy. A minimum of two weeks' notice should be given but earlier is better. Students should not expect to automatically be excused because of conflicts.

Students are reminded that orchestra is a demanding activity and does require a commitment of time inside and outside of the school day. All orchestra concerts will take top priority over most school sport and other extracurricular activities because orchestra is a co-curricular, academic class. Please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Lopez with questions.

H. SEATING ASSIGNMENTS

The goal of this orchestra is to work together to achieve musical goals. While the major determining process for seating will be playing tests and student achievement, the director reserves the right to change seating assignments at any time deemed appropriate within the course of the year. To assign seating, the director may choose from several different processes. Students begin their "audition" the first day of class by being prepared for class, showing outstanding class participation, and showing competency on their instrument. Section leaders need to exemplify positive leadership behavior and may

be responsible for helping the director with marking student music and keeping their section in line both musically and behaviorally. **** Please remember** that it is not that important where one sits. It is more important to be of an attitude and mindset of always giving one's best, funneling all effort toward the betterment of the ensemble.

I. AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

Being a courteous audience member is as important as being a good performer. Proper audience etiquette shows respect for the performers and their work. Talking, whispering, or moving around is not acceptable during a concert. It is very distracting for the performers on stage and is also distracting to other audience members who are trying to enjoy the concert. If parents or other guests come to a concert late, please enter between musical selections so that you do not interrupt the performance. Audience etiquette will be reviewed prior to concerts.

J. MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS

In the event a student is excused from a performance, class or rehearsal, a make-up assignment will be given. The make-up assignment will require the students to perform for the director, individually, all the music from the missed performance plus additional material, which may include written work as deemed appropriate by the director.

K. COMMUNITY PERFORMANCES

As a means of making a positive contribution to the local community and Clarke County, the orchestra is called upon to give community performances from time to time. These performances could be during the school day, after school, evenings or weekends. As these performances are essential to maintaining a positive relationship with these supportive communities, all orchestra students are required to take an active part in community performances. The director will make assignments for musicians for extra performances as may be necessary. Every effort will be made to give at least two weeks' notice for extra performances.

L. STUDENT LEADERS

The student leaders may be asked to assist with some of the everyday operations of the orchestra. Any student assigned to a leadership role must remember that the position comes with a great deal of responsibility.

The **concertmaster** is the first chair in the first violin section. This person will be appointed after several playing exams are completed. Concertmasters are the student leaders of the orchestra. They may be held responsible for daily tuning and warm-up procedure and to help keep all the rehearsals progressing by communicating with the members of the 1st violins and all of the other section leaders as well.

Section leaders are the people who lead the other individual string sections, usually the first chair of each section. If the section leader is not holding up the responsibility, the instructor has the right to reassign this position to another orchestra member. A good-strong section leader always displays a positive attitude. Communication between all section leaders, concertmaster and director is vital.

M. ORCHESTRA LEADERSHIP DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership goes above and beyond the call of duty. Responsibilities and duties of leadership begin with being leaders not only during rehearsals and performances, but 24/7. During rehearsal time, leadership is expected to be participating in the rehearsal. Duties that require extra time must be executed outside of rehearsal time except when the duty is directly related to the rehearsal itself.

President (1 total): The General Manager of the orchestra presides over all officer meetings of the orchestra, leads the orchestra in fundraising events, organizes social events, oversees duties and responsibilities of all other orchestra officers, and manages the CSHS GroupMe (for students). The President must be a senior or junior. [***Executive Board**; Represents the CSHS Orchestra Program*].

Vice President (1 total): Assists the President with all their duties. Leads and organizes all orchestra recruitment strategies, assists and helps design the yearly CSHS Orchestra T-Shirt. The Vice President must be a senior or junior. [***Executive Board**; Represents the CSHS Orchestra Program*].

Communications Coordinator (1 total): The Communications Coordinator is responsible for updating orchestra communications within the classroom and school community. This includes managing the orchestra information board, posting upcoming events, important deadlines, concert information, monthly newsletters and other announcements that help keep students informed and organized. The Communications Coordinator may also assist with creating flyers, concert programs, banquet materials and other communication-related projects as needed. The Communications Coordinator must be a senior or junior. [***Executive Board**; Represents the CSHS Orchestra Program*].

Secretary (1/class): Takes notes of any meetings that occur and keeps these items well documented. Assists with attendance during concerts, retreats, and any other out-of-class events. Assists with in-class announcements. The Secretary must be a sophomore, junior, or senior. [***Class Officer**; Represents the Orchestra Class Enrolled*].

Historian (1/class): Assists the Director with in-class announcements. Additionally, the Historian will introduce each piece their orchestra plays at a concert. The Historian must be a sophomore, junior, or senior. [***Class Officer**; Represents the Orchestra Class Enrolled*].

Librarian (1-2/class): The Librarians are responsible for the issue, collection, and filing of all music, accomplishing library work, and keeping the library facilities neat and orderly. The Librarian can be in any grade. [***Class Officer; Represents the Orchestra Class Enrolled***].

Orchestra Ambassador (1/class): Serves as a positive leader within the ensemble and helps set the tone for rehearsal each day. This student leads warm-ups and tuning as needed, models strong rehearsal habits, and helps maintain a focused and respectful environment. The Ambassador also supports fellow students, helps welcome new members, and represents the orchestra program in a positive and professional way. This role requires consistency, initiative, and strong leadership. The Orchestra Ambassador must be a sophomore, junior, or senior. [***Class Officer; Represents the Orchestra Class Enrolled***].

Stage Managers: Stage Managers are responsible for logistics at concerts and events. These individuals will also help set up and tear down concert events, including any middle school concerts they are able to attend. They must arrive at least 30 minutes prior to call-time for each concert. Stage Managers can be in any grade. [***Program Operations; Represents the CSHS Orchestra Program***].

- **Orchestra Operations Manager:** Works closely with the Director and Executive Board to coordinate all stage logistics for performance and major events (like LGPE). This student helps lead the Stage Management team and ensures events run efficiently and professionally.

N. ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

All students wishing to participate in extra-curricular (off campus) events must have, and maintain, at least a 2.0 GPA with NO failing grades in any class. Any student failing to remain eligible shall be suspended from all extra-curricular orchestral activities until their academic status has been regained. However, this does not excuse the student from attending orchestral functions, such as rehearsals and on-campus concerts. Academics always come first!

IV. MATERIALS

It is necessary that you have the items below by the second week of school. Most music stores in the area will have these items in stock but it's best to call to confirm before you make the trip. Having these materials in class is necessary to participate. Please let a director know if you have questions or concerns about class materials.

A. REQUIRED MATERIALS

1. **All students** need an instrument and bow in good playing condition with the following accessories: Rosin, Polishing/cleaning cloth, Music stand, Case tag labeled with student's name, address, phone number, and email address.
2. **Violin and viola students** must use a rigid (i.e. Everest, Kun, etc.) shoulder rest. The foam/sponge type of rests should be avoided.
3. **Cello and bass students** must use a rockstop, especially when playing on wood or tile surfaces. Rockstops help prevent floor damage at school and at home.
4. **Music Folder** (provided) and **Pencil** for marking music. Please do not use a pen.
5. **Fresh, High-Quality Strings** – It is recommended that students (especially violin/viola) plan for the worst by keeping an extra set of quality strings on-hand. Students must change their strings at least once per school year. The “change it when it breaks” method for changing strings is not acceptable since strings lose their pitch and vitality long before they break. Using old or low-quality strings will make instruments sound thin, weak, and difficult to tune.
6. **Metronome/Chromatic tuner (App)** -- A metronome is an electronic device that helps a student keep a steady beat. A chromatic tuner can aid students as they learn to tune on their own. Most phones support free apps that suit this purpose. Tonal Energy Tuner and SoundCorset are fantastic and include a metronome.
7. **CSHS Orchestra T-Shirt** – The T-shirt is required as it will be worn during informal performances throughout the year. ***Orchestra T-Shirt costs \$15. Online payments are preferred, cash and checks (written out to Cedar Shoals High School Orchestra) will also be accepted.***

B. SCHOOL INSTRUMENT USE

Orchestra students become eligible to use school-owned cellos and basses in class, pending availability, by submitting an **Instrument Agreement Form**. Students are expected to maintain good condition of these instruments and will accept responsibility for any damages other than normal use. The director will determine all fines based upon repair appraisals. Cello and bass students must have an instrument that stays at home for home practice. All cello and bass students must bring their personal instruments from home for all concerts and combined rehearsals.

Note: *A limited quantity of school instruments are available and will be checked out on a **first come first served basis**.*

Instruments are expensive to maintain and repair. It is so helpful if each student using a school instrument contributes a fee of \$25 that will go towards keeping our instruments in excellent condition.

Cash or checks (payable to Cedar Shoals High School) are accepted. Please consider paying this fee as you are able.

C. INSTRUMENT STORAGE

All students will be able to store their personal instruments in the orchestra room when not in use. Please do not store food, shoes, gym clothes or other items not related to orchestra in the storage rooms. **Note:** *CSHS and Clarke County Schools do not provide insurance to cover lost or stolen property. Please check with your homeowner's insurance company to inquire about student instrument insurance.*

D. INSTRUMENT CARE

Stringed instruments and bows are very delicate. Always be careful when handling your personal instrument or any other instrument.

- It is required that all instruments are kept in good playing condition.
- When not in use, always place the instrument and bow securely in the case. Even if the instrument is stored securely, damage may occur if the case is not latched or jarred.
- Always loosen the bow before returning it to the case. Never over-tighten the bow.
- Using a lint-free cloth, always wipe the instrument clean of dust and rosin build-up. Never touch the bow hair. Oils from the skin will ruin the horsehair.
- Be careful not to bump the pegs or bridge of the instrument.
- Do your best to wash your hands before you play your instrument.
- Keep instruments away from extreme heat, cold and humidity. Never leave your instrument in a car because heat can damage the instrument very quickly.
- Do not allow others to play your personal instrument.
- Only allow qualified string instrument technicians (a luthier) to attempt repairs.
- Make sure that your instrument case is labeled with your name and phone number.

E. REPAIRS

If your instrument needs repair, please request the repair shop to provide you with a loaner instrument that you may use while your instrument is being repaired. This is critical so that you may continue to receive credit for participating in daily class rehearsals.

F. MUSIC LIBRARY

The school's music library consists of arrangements, transcriptions, and original works. Here are some guidelines concerning the music library:

- Only the official librarians are allowed to pull music from the orchestra library. Others are allowed only with the director's permission.

- Students will be assigned a folder for the use of storing music. The student will be responsible for returning all class orchestra music and folders that have been assigned. Failure to do so may result in a replacement charge to the student.

G. UNIFORM & DRESS CODE

Formal Uniform

Concert attire is dressy black. This means black pants or long skirts and nice plain black tops. Black polo style, collared, button down, or any plain black top is acceptable. **Please no sleeveless tops or tank tops.** Pants and skirts should be long, **no shorts or skirts above the knee.** No jeans, jeggings, leggings, ripped or torn clothes. No hats, hoodies or tank tops can be worn during performances. Examples for acceptable concert attire are posted here: [Cedar Shoals Orchestra](#)

Notes For All Students:

Acceptable items: Stud earrings, fine or thin necklace with a single pendant, a single, thin, precious metal bracelet.

Unacceptable items: Watches, large dangling or hoop earrings of any size, large flashy jewelry, plastic tube bracelets, flip-flops, two-toned shoes, white socks, sneakers (including black sneakers), or boots.

Casual Uniform

The casual uniform is the Cedar Shoals High School Orchestra t-shirt and usually blue jeans. T-shirt information and orders occur at the beginning of the year. The t-shirts are worn during group activities and for 'less formal' concerts. ***Orchestra T-Shirt costs \$15. Online payments are preferred, cash and checks (written out to Cedar Shoals High School Orchestra) will also be accepted.***

V. CITIZENSHIP

A. THE IMPORTANCE OF A POSITIVE ATTITUDE:

The single factor that will determine the success of any individual or organization is attitude. It takes intense dedication to reach goals. Students should learn to discipline themselves to daily practice. These practice sessions should include a warm-up regimen, as well as solos and the whittling of their parts. Ideally, the "right attitude" accompanies sincerity, concentration, and dedication as the foundation. Such an attitude makes an artistic performance inevitable. It is a privilege to belong to an orchestra. Make the most of it in every rehearsal and performance.

B. THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLINE:

Due to the nature of the organization, discipline within the orchestra must be firm. Orchestra students and their parents must be willing to accept the ideals, principles, and rules of the organization. Orchestra members are constantly on display. Therefore, each member must always be aware of the importance of good behavior. Any misconduct casts a negative light on the orchestra, as well as Cedar Shoals High School and Clarke County Schools.

C. THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIDE:

I would like us to take pride in everything we do, not just in orchestra, but also in all our classes and actions. If you are going to do something, do it with PRIDE!

D. THE IMPORTANCE OF COURTESY:

Courtesy to teachers, school employees, parents, chaperones, other students, and guests is very important. Each of us should strive to be considerate of all others. Discourtesy and rudeness will result in disciplinary action as set forth in the Cedar Shoals HS Student Handbook. Serious violations may result in dismissal from the orchestra.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS (BUT IMPORTANT) ITEMS

A. PRIVATE LESSONS

Although not required, private lessons give students the opportunity to get more individualized attention on their instrument. With individualized instruction, a student can build the technical skills necessary to become a very proficient performer both as a soloist and orchestral player. It's amazing to see what students can accomplish with private lessons! Every student in the CSHS Orchestra program is encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to study privately.

B. ORCHESTRA WEBSITE

The orchestra has a [website](#) that was created to increase teacher/student/parent communication and interaction. On the site there is important information for parents, students, and visitors. In addition, there will be media files available to download and playback on your own technology that will assist with student practice and listening skills.

C. ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Heart Youth Orchestra: The Heart Youth Orchestra is a community youth symphony for students grades 8-12; rehearses at First Baptist Church on Sundays 2:00-4:00 pm; audition video; scholarships available - I encourage ALL of you to apply! There will be 2 ensembles this year, intermediate and advanced.

Solo and Ensemble Festival: Every year, orchestra members have the option to participate in a Solo and Ensemble Adjudicated Event. These events provide individual assessment and motivation for many students to perform as a soloist or in a small ensemble. They will perform

for a judge, be evaluated on their performance, and receive written comments. Students who are interested in being involved in this activity are strongly encouraged to have the additional help of a private teacher. Students in **Camerata** are *highly encouraged* to participate during the Spring semester. More information will be made available closer to the event.

District Honors Orchestra: Each year, students may audition to participate in the Honors Orchestra. This event brings together our most advanced students from all CCSD high schools to rehearse and perform challenging music. Additional rehearsals and performances are required. A special guest clinician works with the honors orchestra each year. More information will be made available closer to the event.

North Georgia Honors Orchestra: Each year, students may be nominated by their orchestra director to participate in the North Georgia Honors Orchestra at Kennesaw State University. This event brings together the most talented string instrumentalists in and around North Georgia to focus on developing advanced technical and musical skills under the guidance of the exceptional KSU Bailey School of Music faculty. The two-day event includes orchestral rehearsals and sectionals, a faculty recital, and other activities, culminating in a performance by the orchestra in KSU's renowned Morgan Concert Hall. Students participating will also get the opportunity to perform with the KSU Symphony Orchestra. More information will be made available closer to the event.

GMEA All-State Orchestra: The All-State Orchestra is formed each year to bring the top musicians from the state together to perform a concert. There are four high school orchestras: 9/10 string and full orchestra and the 11/12 string and full orchestra. Auditions are held in two rounds, usually October and January, and the event takes place in early March. Students in **Camerata** are *highly encouraged* to audition.

D. ORCHESTRA TRIPS

These are fun opportunities for students to enjoy both educational and recreational activities outside the classroom. *These trips are considered a privilege and must be earned by the students.* Students who wish to participate in this activity must have a good academic and citizenship record in every class.

Students must earn a 2.0 minimum GPA (with no failing grades) and satisfactory school behavior EVERY GRADING PERIOD. Students who do not meet these requirements, have shown a record of discipline problems, have missed any required orchestra activities or owe money to the orchestra will not be allowed to participate. **All decisions about the trip are at the discretion of the director.** Trips are usually scheduled in the spring and must pass school board approval.

E. CSHS VARSITY LETTER IN MUSIC

The CSHS Varsity Letter in Music, awarded at the Cedar Shoals Orchestra's annual banquet, is intended to recognize, and reward those students who demonstrate and maintain musical excellence in the classroom and beyond. The 3 types of letters one can receive at Cedar Shoals are: Music, Academic,

and/or Athletic. All music students can "Letter" at Cedar Shoals. The Music Awards publicly acknowledge musical achievement of students who earn a set number of points during an academic year. Students can earn a Music Letter plus yearly Star/Bar Merits during their four years of high school.

F. FINE ARTS DIPLOMA SEAL

The Cedar Shoals Fine Arts Department was selected by the Georgia State Board of Education to be awarded the Fine Arts Diploma Seal Pathway. Music students who select this distinctive pathway AND meet the criteria listed below may apply for this honor in the spring of their senior year. Students will be awarded the Fine Arts Diploma Seal at graduation.

Students will:

- Complete 4 years (8 semesters) as an enrolled student in orchestra. Audit students are not eligible for this honor. Transcripts will be verified.
- Participate in 2 orchestra-related extracurricular (outside of regular school hours) activities. This means activities associated with your specific subject area that require extra commitment and effort.

Examples of these types of activities include:

- All State Ensembles
- Orchestra Retreats
- Community Event Performances
- District Honor Ensembles
- Orchestra Leadership Officers
- Tutoring Middle School and Fellow High School Peers
- PTSA Reflections
- Private Study
- Touring Ensembles
- Complete 20 hours of community service related to music over the four-year period at Cedar Shoals. Concerts and rehearsals beyond the school day are considered community service hours. Students must account for the minimum of 20 hours verified by parent and teacher.
- Present a 3/5-minute capstone video presentation focusing on your experiences in the orchestra program at Cedar Shoals. You will include statements and explanations about how the Orchestra Program has impacted your life and predict how your involvement in the arts will impact your future self. Application and video submission deadlines will be published in early spring. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Lopez.

VII. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Cedar Shoals Orchestras will perform several times throughout the school year. The concert dates are on the orchestra calendar, but please remember that the calendar is subject to change. If there are changes, you will be notified, and all updates will be shown on the orchestra [website](#).

Please mark your calendars now so that you reserve these important concert dates and other deadlines.

VIII. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

CONGRATULATIONS!!

Your decision to provide your child with a quality education in music is an investment in your child's future. In making it possible for your child to continue to play a musical instrument, you are providing the opportunity for self-expression, creativity, and achievement. Numerous studies indicate that parental attitude, support, and involvement are important factors in a child's ability to successfully learn to play and enjoy music. Like any skill, interest counts far more than talent. With strong support from you, playing music will become a natural part of your child's life.

Should there ever be any doubt in your mind about any phase of your child's participation in the orchestra program, I am always willing to talk with you. Feel free to call, set up a meeting, or e-mail anytime!

A. BENEFITS:

For the student, music participation enhances: Problem solving, goal setting, physical coordination, self-confidence and esteem, poise, teamwork, self-expression, memory skills, concentration, and much more!

For the family, music participation offers opportunities for shared family experiences, including musical event attendance, family music making, 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.

B. HOW YOU FIT IN:

Always keep in mind that your support is an essential element in your child's success with music study.

Schedule Practice Times: Music achievement requires effort over a period of time. The time in orchestra rehearsal is limited. New concepts learned at school need daily personal practice time by your child at home for these new skills to be developed. You can help your child by:

- Providing a quiet place in which to practice
- Remaining nearby during practice times as often as possible
- Scheduling a consistent daily time for practice

C. TO MAINTAIN YOUR CHILD'S INTEREST:

- Talk with your child if his or her interest begins to decline
- Increase your enthusiasm and involvement in your child's playing

D. WHAT TO DO:

- Remind your child to bring instrument and music to orchestra class
- Encourage your child to play for family and friends
- Offer compliments and encouragement regularly
- Expose your child to a wide variety of music, including concerts and recitals
- 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
- Make certain that your child is on time for all school rehearsals and performances
- Encourage your child to make a commitment to his or her music studies
- If possible, obtain private lessons with a qualified instructor
- Get to know your child's teacher

E. WHAT TO AVOID:

- Using practice as a punishment
- Insisting your child play for others when he/she doesn't want to
- Ridiculing or making fun of mistakes or less-than-perfect playing

F. GET INVOLVED WITH THE CSHS ORCHESTRA:

The orchestra is always looking for parents to help with fundraisers, concerts, receptions, photography, video recording, etc. Additionally, the orchestra is always looking for chaperones for orchestra retreats and trips. If you are available to volunteer, please contact Mr. Lopez.

IX. HANDBOOK ACCEPTANCE FORM

Parents and Students: Once you have read this handbook in its entirety, please complete the [CSHS Orchestra Handbook Acceptance Form](#) together.

Completing the form acknowledges that you have read and understand the policies of the Cedar Shoals High School Orchestra. The form also provides Mr. Lopez with your T-shirt size and contact information for the student and parent(s).

[*Google Forms - Student/Parent Orchestra Handbook 2026-2027*](#)