William Hopkins Middle School
Orchestra Handbook
2026-2027



Mr. Jackson Bores, Band and Orchestra Director

William Hopkins Middle School

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Hopkins Music Program Philosophy and Mission

The William Hopkins Middle School Instrumental Music Program aims to provide students with high-quality musical experiences that inspire joy and creativity. It also aims to instill students with lifelong skills, including developing skills in responsibility, confidence, collaboration, and a lifelong appreciation for art & music.

It is our belief that every student is capable of growth, and that growth produces excellence. That growth comes from consistent effort, and knowing that the only way to succeed is together, as a team. Every student plays an important role in our musical community; so we believe that music is for everyone. We are better with you!

As members of the Hopkins Band Program, we commit to creating a classroom that creates **MUSIC**:

- **M** - Make good choices
- **U** - Use instruments with care
- **S** - Show respect
- **I** - Insist on excellence
- **C** - Consider others - be kind, courteous, and supportive

Every rehearsal is an opportunity to help someone else, learn something new and create something that wouldn't be possible without the other people in our band. We can make someone else's day by sharing kindness and music with our community and beyond.

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Hopkins MS Orchestra Course Sequence:

Beginning Orchestra:
Beginning Orchestra is the first course in the comprehensive orchestra program at Hopkins MS and Mission San Jose HS. It offers an introduction to orchestra instruments such as violin, viola, cello, and double bass. Members of the beginning orchestra will learn the basics of music literacy, performance on string instruments, and ensemble music skills.
Beginning Orchestra is a performing group and students are expected to participate in all performances.
Beginning Orchestra is a year-long course and must be taken both semesters.

Intermediate Orchestra:
Intermediate Orchestra is the second course in the comprehensive orchestra program at Hopkins MS and Mission San Jose HS. It is an intermediate level performing class. *Intermediate requires some previous playing experience on a string instrument or director's approval.* Students in this class will continue building strong tone, rhythm, music reading, and ensemble skills through the performance of complex orchestra music.
Intermediate Orchestra is a performing group and students are expected to participate in all performances.
Intermediate Orchestra is a year-long course and must be taken both semesters.

Advanced Orchestra:
Advanced Orchestra is the third course in the comprehensive orchestra program at Hopkins MS and Mission San Jose HS. It is an advanced level performing class, and consists of the most proficient orchestra musicians in the school. *Advanced Orchestra requires 2 years of previous playing experience on a string instrument, an audition, or director's approval.* Students in this class will continue building strong tone, rhythm, music reading, & ensemble skills through performance of complex orchestra music.
Advanced Orchestra is a performing group and students are expected to participate in all performances.
Advanced Orchestra is a year-long course and must be taken both semesters.

Music and Equipment Responsibility

Each member of the ensemble will receive a music folder and will be responsible for keeping all music in good and orderly condition. *(This is a part of your rehearsal etiquette grade!)*

Each student's instrument case must be marked with their own name and kept in the proper storage area. Students are expected to treat their own instrument with care and respect and are **never allowed to touch or play another student's instrument**, even if another student says that permission has been given.

*** Students and family members **should not** attempt to fix broken instruments on their own. Instrument experts will be available to help diagnose and recommend repair services as needed***

2026 – 2027 Hopkins Middle School Orchestra Concerts & Trips

Performance	**Date & Time**	**Location**	**Ensemble**
Halloween Lunch Performance	Friday, October 30th, 2026 @ lunch	Hopkins MS	AO
Winter Orchestra Concert	Tuesday, December 8th, 2026 @6:30pm	Hopkins (MUR)	BO, IO, AO
*Hopkins @ Disney Trip	Friday, April 9th- Monday, April 12th, 2027	Anaheim, CA	AO
CMEA State Band & Orchestra Festival	Friday, April 30th, 2027	Sonoma State University	AO
CMEA Bay Band & Orchestra Festival	Saturday, May 8th, 2027 - Time(s) TBD	Irvington HS	IO, AO
Spring Orchestra Concert	Tuesday, May 20th, 2027 @6:30pm	Hopkins (MUR)	BO, IO, AO

Please note the location and start time for each concert. ***Students are to arrive at least 45 minutes early to set up and be in their seats for the start of the performance.***

Students are required to attend every performance for their ensemble. Every student has an important musical role. Students work hard for months at a time to prepare music to share with our audience, and missing just one or two musicians can affect the sound of the entire group. As such, the ensemble depends on every member being present.

**(For Advanced Orchestra, the Disney trip is not graded and therefore not required, but still highly recommended for all students)*

Missed performances may only be excused for the following reasons:

- Serious illness or family emergencies.
  - Mr. Bores must receive communication from a parent on or before the concert date. Illness/emergencies will not be excused without notice from a parent/guardian .
- Academic/Athletic obligation sponsored by Hopkins Middle School
  - Mr. Bores must receive an e-mail from parents, coaches, or other sponsoring teacher *at least 2 weeks before the date of the performance* detailing the reason for absence.

Performance Make-Up Assignments (Excused Absences Only):

Eligible students will be given an alternate assignment that will be due no later than one week after the missed performance. Assignments vary depending on student grade level and time of the year. They can include any of the following - research essay, advanced reflection assignment, recorded performance for family, or other as deemed appropriate.

At-Home Practice Requirements:

Individual practice is essential to the personal development of reading & performance skills. We improve even if we practice just a little every day! Students in Beginning Orchestra are asked to practice 15 minutes each day. Students in Intermediate Orchestra & Advanced Orchestra are asked to practice 25 minutes each day. As Mr. Bores always says, *"Practice makes progress!*

Classroom Expectations:

- Be set up, and ready to make music within two minutes after the bell rings.
    - Instruments set up, music/books on your stand, and reeds soaked!
- Encourage those around you. **All of us** are welcome to create music.
- Do not touch an instrument or piece of equipment that you do not have permission to use.
- Always give your best effort.
- Help clean up after every rehearsal, leave the room better than you found it.
- No food, drinks, or gum in the music rooms, except for water.

Performance Expectations:

- For every performance, attendance is required & graded for each student in the ensemble.
- All classroom expectations apply to performances, both while you are ***on and off-stage.***
- Make sure you have all the materials you need for a successful performance
    - This includes instrument, accessories, sheet music, and concert attire!
- Stay for the entire performance *(even if your ensemble finishes first)*.
- Help clean up & return equipment after every performance.
- Each performance will have a "call time" before it begins. This time is for students to get ready, warm-up, and receive instructions before we go on stage. Please, plan on being early to call time. Attendance will be taken at call time, not start time.

"To be early is to be on time, to be on time is to be late…"

Music Room Attendance Policies:

Students entering the band/orchestra room after the bell has rung will be marked as tardy. In addition, *students who are not set up and ready to begin with the class* by 2 minutes after the bell will be marked tardy.

Students who miss a significant number of rehearsals may not be adequately prepared to perform. If attendance becomes a concern, the director will work with families to determine the best course of action for performance eligibility.

Instrument Cubby Policy:

Students enrolled in a band or orchestra course will be assigned a cubby to keep their instrument in during the school day. The locker room will be open by 7:50am, and close at 2:35pm. Students should plan accordingly to drop off/pick up their instruments, and may NOT drop off instruments during other class periods.

Please be sure that you are using YOUR cubby, and not someone else's. Every instrument used by students should be labelled with their class's color tag, and student information.

Concert Attire:

Each student is responsible for wearing the proper attire for each performance. Wearing matching concert attire helps us present ourselves as one unified ensemble and allows the audience to focus on our music, rather than our appearance.

Option 1: Solid black button-up, collared dress shirt, solid black dress pants/slacks, solid black socks *(crew length or longer),* solid black dress shoes. *(Please, no suit jackets)*

Option 2: Solid black full-length or below the knee dress, with covered shoulders, solid black dress shoes *(wedges or flats preferred),* solid black or skin-tone stockings.

- If students are electing to wear a straight tie or bow tie with their concert attire, it should be solid black.
- Students wearing cultural/religious garments, please ensure they are solid black.

- Students *are not permitted to wear* headphones/earbuds, hats, beanies, sunglasses, or excessive jewelry during performances.
- Clothing items that are **not considered** concert attire include, but are not limited to: *T-shirts, polo shirts, tennis shoes, sandals, jeans (even if black), leggings/yoga pants, or sweatpants*

If purchasing attire presents a financial hardship, please reach out to me **during the first 3 weeks of school**. We want to support **all** students in looking their best and being a part of the ensemble

Buying/Renting Instruments:

It is recommended that students rent their own instrument through a music store in the area. Students benefit immensely from going through a retailer, many offer guaranteed maintenance and replacements when instruments start to wear. Many stores have rental plans for all instruments offered at Hopkins Middle School. Options include Allegro Music, Kamimoto Strings, and more.

If you are planning on purchasing an instrument outright: ***Please refrain*** from purchasing an "instrument-shaped object" (low-quality instrument). Although that phrase is meant to be comedic, it is a fitting descriptor for "cheap" instruments bought from Amazon, Walmart, Temu, or any similar mass-retailer. These instruments tend to be poorly made and will fall apart very easily. Speaking from experience, you will spend more on needing to repair these instruments than buying a proper instrument. Online retailers may be good for buying your books and maintenance supplies (rosin, swabs, grease, etc.), but not the instruments themselves.

Please reach out to me if you need further assistance with purchasing/renting an instrument.

Private Lessons:

Private lessons can make an extremely rewarding impact on a student's musical abilities and individuality. Students are strongly encouraged to take private lessons, especially if they are playing a new instrument! Private lessons allow students to learn instrument-specific techniques from a specialist, and give students more musical opportunities (like solo & ensemble, recitals, performance opportunities, etc.) These achievements can also lead to academic opportunities in the future such as scholarships, additions to college resumes, and more! Mr. Bores can assist you if you need help selecting a private teacher.

Seating and Section Leaders - *Advanced Orchestra only*:

Assignments:

Each student enrolled in Advanced Orchestra will participate in a seating assessment at the beginning of the school year. Assessment materials will be provided and rehearsed in class. Students will then be seated according to their results (i.e., first chair, second chair, etc.) This assessment will occur twice during the school year, once at the beginning of 1st semester and once at the beginning of 2nd semester.

Section Leaders (Principals):

Students who would like to be a principal *(typically, leaders are first and/or second chair)* will be asked to complete your seating audition in front of the class. This is due to the fact that as a section leader, you may be playing out for the class often to help the orchestra.

Section leader responsibilities include:

- Leading in-class sectionals
- Demonstrating musical & behavioral leadership for your peers
- Helping others with fingerings
- Helping others with stickings & organizing instrument transitions *(percussion)*

Seating Challenges:

If you would like to move to the next seat up in your section before the new semester, you may challenge for the next seat up. Section challenges will occur during lunch, or after school during a scheduled appointment. Students may choose to either play an excerpt from the method book, or a current piece of music we are learning. Mr. Bores will select the specific excerpt for the students to play. If the student who is being challenged does not wish to participate in the challenge, they **forfeit** their seat to the challenger. *Section Leaders may not be challenged.*

Grading:

WHMS Grading Scale: -

A	93-100%	**B-**	80-82.9%	**D+**	67-69.9%
A-	90-92.9%	**C+**	77-79.9%	**D**	63-66.9%
B+	87-89.9%	**C**	73-76.9%	**D-**	60-62.9%
B	83-86.9%	**C-**	70-72.9%	**F**	Below 60%

15% – Daily Rehearsal Etiquette

Rehearsal points come from students showing up to class prepared with their instrument, music, pencil, and other necessary materials; and are earned through engaged participation & positive contribution to the ensemble. Points may be deducted for students demonstrating disruptive behavior, consistent forgetfulness of materials, or lack of in class rehearsal participation. Rehearsal Etiquette grades will be updated at the end of each month.

20% - Performance Check-Offs/Skill Checkpoints

Students will be formally assessed throughout the quarter to track progress and evaluate areas of growth. These assessments will be selected from the method book, scale sheets, or from music currently being rehearsed. Students will be checked individually or in groups during class time, or as an at-home recording assignment. Late submissions may result in grade deduction of 10% per day.

25% - Assignments

Students will on occasion be given worksheets or assignments in class to assess knowledge of music theory, literacy, instrument technique, reflection of their performance/musicality, as well as weekly practice logs. These assignments will count towards the student's grade. Late assignments may result in grade deduction of 10% per day

40% - Concerts & Performances

This portion of students' grades is determined by behavior and attendance at our performances.

- Students earn performance credit by
  - ✔ Arriving on time
  - ✔ Wearing appropriate concert attire
  - ✔ Bringing your instrument, sheet music, and any other necessary materials.
  - ✔ Demonstrating professional on-stage & audience behavior.
  - ✔ Staying for the entire concert.

If you can do all of those things, you will receive full credit for the performance! If one or more of these expectations are not met, your performance grade will lose points.

Orchestra students may earn extra credit by attending the band concert on Wednesday during concert week.

Required Materials:

ALL ORCHESTRA STUDENTS:

1. An instrument in good, working condition.
2. Chromatic tuner w/ clip & metronome *(Korg TM-40 or TM-50 preferred)*.
3. A pencil with an eraser ***on your music stand at all times***.

Violin/Viola Supplies

-Hopkins does not have a supply of violins to loan to students. Violin students must provide their own violin.

-Hopkins does have some violas available for students, but it is recommended that students rent their own viola.

1. Violin/Viola Rosin
2. Soft cloth for cleaning
3. Shoulder Rest
4. Chin Rest
5. Mute *(Intermediate & Advanced Orchestra only)*
6. One extra of each string *(required)*
    - Violin - (G, D, A, E)
    - Viola – (C, G, D, A)

Cello Supplies

-Hopkins has a supply of cellos for students to play in class, however these instruments may not be taken home. Cello students must rent their own cellos for at home practice.

1. Cello Rosin
2. Soft cloth for cleaning
3. Rock Stop
4. Mute *(Intermediate & Advanced Orchestra only)*
5. One extra of each string *(required)*
    - (C, G, D, A)

Double Bass Supplies

-Hopkins is able to provide bass students with in school and home practice instruments upon request.

1. Pop's Bass Rosin
2. Soft cloth for cleaning
3. Rock Stop
4. One extra of each string *(required only if using your own instrument)*
    - (E, A, D, G)

Sign & Return This Page

☐ **We will be able to provide our student with their own instrument this year**

☐ **We would like to borrow a school instrument this year**

School-Provided Instrument needed: _____

By signing below, we acknowledge that:

☐ We have read the Hopkins Orchestra Handbook and understand the policies of the orchestra program.

☐ We understand that concert attire and performance attendance is required for all orchestra students.

☐ We understand what students will be graded on in this class, and how behavior, accountability, and performance dates will affect that grade.

☐ We have noted all current performance dates for our student(s) on the appropriate family calendar(s).

Student Name (Print): _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent Name (Print): _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____