



LMHS String Orchestra Handbook

2025-2026 School Year

Mrs. Leah Oakes | LOAKES@LMTSD.ORG

Introduction

Welcome to String Orchestra class at Lower Moreland High School! Please read the following packet thoroughly and make sure to contact me with any questions you have. String Orchestra is a place where you will make music, express your musicianship creatively, grow as an individual musician and ensemble member, and work hard towards a common goal. Through all performances, rehearsals, and events, my primary goal is that you develop a lifelong love of music and engage in meaningful music making on a regular basis. We have lots of fun together while working to become the best musicians we can be! We are so happy to welcome you to our orchestra family.



Sincerely,
Mrs. Leah Oakes

Preparation/Materials

It is incredibly important to come to each orchestra class prepared with the following items! Having these items consistently counts towards your participation grade.

- Chromebook
- Instrument!
 - ◆ You may use the instrument storage closet on a daily basis.
 - ◆ Violins and violas always need to use their own instrument.
 - ◆ Cellos & basses: You may use school cellos and bases for class but will need to bring your own instrument for performances. Make sure you do have a personal instrument, whether you use it for daily rehearsals or keep it at home for practicing.
- Instrument Accessories
 - ◆ Rosin
 - ◆ Cleaning cloth
 - ◆ Rock stop (cello & bass)
 - ◆ Shoulder rest!!!! (violin & viola)
- Pencil (on your stand!)
- Music folder (will be provided)

***Email me if you need information about purchasing, renting, or repairing your instrument!

Performance Attire

Orchestra members are expected to look professional at all public performances. Your concert attire should help you feel unified with your fellow musicians. Please review the guidelines below and check that you have clothing/shoes that would work. Please reach out if you need any questions or have financial concerns with obtaining these items; I am always here to help!

LMHS music ensembles have a uniform concert attire requirement! Click [HERE](#) to view the document, or look in Canvas under the module "Important Info." Please consider this well before our first concert as you may need time to order new concert attire/shoes!

Concert/Rehearsal Attendance

The orchestra performs a large-scale concert each semester and smaller performances throughout the year. There will be about one, sometimes two, after-school full-orchestra rehearsals each month.

Attendance is mandatory for all after school rehearsals and concerts. Students will receive a participation grade of 50/50 for their attendance at each rehearsal/concert and will receive a grade of zero if the event is missed. If a conflict arises with a *rehearsal*, the student and parent are to contact Mrs. Oakes (email: LOAKES@LMTSD.ORG) at least three days in advance to receive an alternate assignment; if you become ill or have a last-minute emergency situation, please just let me know as soon as possible. Acceptable conflicts for *rehearsals* may include: trips out of town, important family events (such as a wedding), illness, sports games. Students will not be excused for work, parties, homework, or lack of a ride. **Concerts are also mandatory and should not be missed for any conflict, unless it is something major and approved far in advance; concerts are graded at 100/100 points.** Each situation will be decided on a case-by-case basis, which is why it is helpful if you reach out to me in advance so we can discuss whether or not the conflict would be excused. We provide you with the rehearsal schedule in advance to give you time to plan accordingly!

At Lower Moreland High School, all ensembles are expected to support each other! Therefore, at each concert, you are expected to be a polite audience member. Please be prepared to stay for the entirety of concerts, no matter the concert order. Good behavior and support is expected when watching other group's performances.

Communication

Communication is key for ensemble groups such as orchestra! There is a lot of information about rehearsals, trips, etc that you will need to know. Students are expected to read information on....

1. Email: LOAKES@LMTSD.ORG
2. Canvas
3. Remind App (join via class code: @lmhsor)

**Parents/guardians should check email for major updates, but are also welcome to check Canvas/Remind if desired.*

2025-2026 Important Dates/Calendar

(Note: As mentioned above, after-school orchestra rehearsals and concerts are required for all students in orchestra. Please check Canvas and emails for all assignment due dates and any updates to the schedule below).

Click [HERE](#) to view our full orchestra calendar for the year, including rehearsals, concerts, events, activities, and other performance opportunities.

Click [HERE](#) to view a list of required rehearsals and concerts only.

*Note: Rehearsals/field trips may be changed or added throughout the school year. Please keep up with our communication methods (Canvas/email/Remind app) so you know what is going on! All rehearsals/events will take place in Rm 207 at the new high school or the LMMS (old high school) auditorium.

2025-26 Music Department Trip: Chicago!

We are so excited to announce that the LMHS Music Department will be traveling to Chicago from May 25th-30th, 2025! The trip is open to any and all students who are enrolled in band, orchestra, and choir programs at school.

We will schedule an info meeting and send out a website for the trip soon. We look forward to another great LMHS Music Department experience!

Grading

Your String Orchestra grade is a reflection of your effort and development in the following areas:

- Weekly Participation/Preparation (5 pts/week)
 - Full points are earned by:
 - Getting to class on time with all required materials (see 1st page).
 - Be an active learner who shows independence, asks questions when needed, works well with others, and shows productive practice skills. DO YOUR BEST!
 - Give 100% Effort!
 - Points may be deducted for lateness, cell phone use during class, or lack of participation.
- Formal Assessments (50 points each)
 - We will have periodic “playing test” videos on our orchestra repertoire and techniques. Practice/study your music throughout the semester so you are prepared for these!
 - Demonstrate progress and ability on our orchestra music, scales, chord knowledge, note-reading, etc.
- Projects/Homework
 - Demonstrate learning and application through a variety of projects.
 - Most of our assignments will be completed during class. There will be an average of two “homework” assignments due each month that you may need to complete outside of class. If you are absent from class, you may need to complete missed classwork at home.
- Concert and after-school rehearsal grades (50-100 points each)
 - Full points are earned by:
 - Arriving on time with all materials (instrument, music, etc) and staying for the entirety of the concert.
 - Doing your best and showing professionalism as a performer.
 - Being silent and polite while other groups are performing, as well as applauding in between performances.
 - Appropriate concert attire (see section above).
 - No cell phone use while performing or being in the audience.

*Check Canvas for all information about assessments, projects, worksheets, etc. Grades will be posted on eSchool. Reach out to Mrs. Oakes with any questions about grades!

Responsibility

Orchestra students should show good responsibility! This looks like:

- Promptly reading any emails or Canvas announcements.
- Checking in with Mrs. Oakes when absent.
- Adding important rehearsal dates (see section above) to your calendar to check for any conflicts ahead of time.
- We are a team and need everyone to do their best! If you are struggling with the concepts or music we are learning in orchestra, reach out to me for help! I am happy to help you myself or pair you up with another orchestra student who can help. Take responsibility for staying on top of your progress!

*****Communicate with me! Although I value holding all students to the expectations laid out in this document, I understand that life/school can be challenging to navigate and stressful. We are all human beings and can struggle with balancing our personal lives, school, mental health, and other commitments. If you make time to have a conversation with me, I am happy to help you navigate those challenges, whether it might be asking for help or an extension on an assignment, or even with something non-orchestra related. I am always here to support you and help you succeed :)*

Orchestra Statement

In orchestra, we are a team and a family! We are here to make music together, share life experiences together, and support and encourage each other. Always spread kindness and positivity to help make our orchestra community a better place. Every musician is capable of great things and great talent with hard work, dedication, and passion for music. Please know that my #1 goal is to support you, not only as a musician, but also as a human being. If you ever feel like you are struggling in this class (or in life!) please do not hesitate to reach out. While I want to push you to learn new things and expect you to do your best, I want you to feel comfortable asking for help with anything at all. I am here for YOU! Let's have an amazing year together!!!

Contact

Mrs. Leah Oakes, LMHS Room 207

LOAKES@LMTSD.ORG

Website: <https://sites.google.com/lmtsd.org/leah-schick-lmhs/home>

***See next page for other orchestra/music opportunities!

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

Chamber Strings (Honors Orchestra)

Chamber Strings is an auditioned, after-school orchestra program! Come learn more songs with your orchestra friends! Rehearsals will take place on Wednesdays from 2:30-4:00 PM. Information is on Canvas.

LOMOSO Council

The LOMOSO Council is the student leadership team for the HS orchestra. If you are interested in serving on the orchestra council, look out for more information about auditions and signing up in the first few weeks of school!

PMEA District 11 Orchestra Auditions/Festival

Click [HERE](#) for Information.

Montgomery County Honors String Orchestra

By invitation only.

Student-Led Chamber Groups/Bands

Get together with your orchestra friends to learn music of your choosing, on your own! Think of this like a rock band experience with strings and possibly other instruments. I can provide you with a practice space during open periods or after school and would be happy to help, if needed. Your group would be welcome to perform at events such as Notes of Hope, Soulstice, Java Jam, etc.