

Southside Elementary Orchestra Handbook 2017-2018



**Downers Grove
Grade School District #58**

El Sierra
Fairmount
Hillcrest
Indian Trail
Kingsley

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the District 58 Orchestra Program! We are confident that the rewards of participation in this exciting musical organization will be great.

Good practice habits need to be established at home in order to ensure your child's success with a musical instrument. As parents you can be a valuable **HELP**:

Help to set up the best possible practice environment. The practice area should be well lit and free from distractions. Violinists, violists, and bassists should stand to practice. Cellists need to sit on the front of a straight, sturdy chair that allows the student's feet to touch the floor. (The couch is not conducive to establishing proper posture!) All students need a music stand adjusted to eye level.

Establish a regular time and routine for practice sessions. Students should begin with warm-up exercises, and then move into the week's assignment. Sections that present difficulty should be isolated and worked out before the entire song is repeated. *Repetition* is the key to success. Songs should be played at least 3 times per day. Students should end the practice session with a few favorites.

Listen enthusiastically to your child's practicing. Recognize his or her efforts with comments such as "I really liked the sound of the low notes in that piece." You are the audience your child will most appreciate. Plan for your student to play a "living room concert" for you each week.

Participate in our three-way partnership: parent(s)/guardian(s), students, and teacher working together to make orchestra an enjoyable and worthwhile experience.

Enjoyment in playing an orchestra instrument and a desire to practice come with success; success is the result of dedicated practice. Together, we can guide your child on the path to those great rewards.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns, or if we may be of additional help.

Sincerely,

Ms. Lisa Rose
lrose@dg58.org
(630)719-5810 (Herrick)

Ms. Julie Spring
jspring@dg58.org
630-719-5815 (O'Neill)

Orchestra Directors

FORWARD

This handbook is designed to aid students and parents in understanding the policies, organizational structure and general functioning of the District 58 orchestra program. It is our sincere wish that we would have a successful and rewarding year together. Please read this handbook in its entirety and keep it in a handy place for future reference after discussing it with your parents/child.

MISSION

The mission of the District 58 Instrumental Program is to provide quality instrumental music education for our students. The program is dedicated to fostering aesthetic growth as an essential part of a child's total education, and to developing the highest possible level of musical achievement through a comprehensive curriculum. We strive to provide opportunities to help each instrumentalist improve their performance skills, expand their musical knowledge, and grow personally through music performance.

Orchestra Program

BEGINNING ORCHESTRA

Beginning Orchestra is the organization that lays the foundation for the entire instrumental music program. District 58 students have the opportunity to join orchestra upon reaching the 4th grade and need not have any prior musical training to participate in the beginning program.

Recruitment of new beginners is held annually in September. A registration open house is held for students and parents to meet with a music dealer regarding the rental of instruments and purchase of supplies needed.

Students in the beginning orchestra program receive one small group lesson per week during the school day. Pupils are to report to each small group lesson unless absent from school. Students are responsible for making up any class work that is missed due to orchestra lessons. Please contact us to find out what class work was missed. Small group instruction includes drill of fundamentals and sectional rehearsals for orchestra music.

Beginning orchestra students also meet as a large group once a week after school. These rehearsals provide orchestra members with large ensemble training and serve as the time to prepare for the two evening concerts. Attendance at rehearsals, lessons, and concerts is required for the success of both the individual student and the group.

**After school orchestra for beginners meets on
Mondays at O'Neill Middle School from
3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
1st Rehearsal: October 16 or 23**

INTERMEDIATE ORCHESTRAS

5th Grade Intermediate Orchestra consists of second year students who began playing a stringed instrument in the 4th grade.

6th Grade Intermediate Orchestra consists of third year students who began playing a stringed instrument in the 4th grade.

Intermediate orchestra students will continue their musical training as they strengthen and build upon fundamental skills previously learned. All intermediate students receive small group lessons once a week during the school day. Students are to report to each lesson unless absent from school. Students are responsible for making up any class work that is missed due to orchestra lessons. Please contact us to find out what class work was missed. Small group instruction includes drill of fundamentals, small ensemble playing, solo preparation and sectional rehearsals for orchestra music. In addition, each student studies one solo piece of music to be performed at the annual Solo Day in February.

Students in the intermediate program participate in after school orchestra rehearsals once a week. It is here that members receive large ensemble training and prepare for the two evening concerts. Attendance at rehearsals, lessons, and concert is required for the success of the individual as well as the group. Intermediate Orchestra meets according to the following schedule:

**5th Grade Intermediate Orchestra meets at
O'Neill Middle School on Tuesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
1st Rehearsal: Tues. Sept. 26**

**6th Grade Intermediate Orchestra meets at Fairmount
Elementary School on Mondays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
1st Rehearsal: Mon. Sept 25**

MIDDLE SCHOOL ORCHESTRA

Middle School Orchestra is the most musically advanced instrumental organization in the district. Proficiency for this group reflects three or more years of instrumental music instruction. The O'Neill Orchestra is a graded class that meets daily from 7:45 a.m. to 8:25 a.m. The group performs frequently as an orchestra, participates in District Orchestra Contest, and all students participate in Solo and Ensemble Day.

Learning How to Play our Instruments

ORCHESTRA LESSONS

Elementary lessons are given weekly at each school. Students are released from their classroom for a group lesson each week. Students are responsible for making up any class work that is missed due to orchestra lessons. Please contact us to find out what class work was missed. All students are to attend weekly lessons unless they are absent from school. If there is no school on a lesson day, lessons will not meet that day, and the normal lesson schedule will resume the following week. Homework for orchestra consists of daily practice at home and occasional written work.

THE FORGOTTEN INSTRUMENT

Students who forget to bring their instrument on the day of a lesson cannot be given a lesson. This is a serious problem because the student misses out on important material. The lesson group can suffer because the missing students may not be able to perform adequately with the group in the next lesson and will need to catch up. Students who forget their instrument will be given the material taught at the missed lesson and is expected to know the material by the next lesson. If the student is struggling with the new material, the student must contact the teacher for outside help. It is also expected that the student make a special effort to practice that week to keep up with the group.

PRACTICE

Establishment of a daily practice routine is essential in order for your child to be successful with playing an instrument. As a general rule, **beginners** should spend at least *20 minutes per day*, and **intermediates** should practice at least *30 minutes per day*. It may be beneficial to divide this time into two short practice sessions to avoid straining muscles not accustomed to playing an instrument. However, thorough and careful practice of the assigned material is more important than the amount of time spent.

DAILY practice is the key for reinforcement. Parental support in this area is critical. Students will need reminding and encouragement. Their success hinges on a commitment to a *regular* practice routine. Consider practice time part of their daily homework. (As a parent, you would not consider allowing other homework to be optional.) This is most effective if you take time to sit down with your child and help them determine a time and location that will be set aside for daily practice. Encourage your child to play a weekly concert for you! Proficiency will only be gained on a particular instrument when time and effort are invested.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Private lessons are strongly encouraged as students advance. Private lessons assist with further development of technical skills and allow for individual work on solo repertoire. By the intermediate or middle school level, it is highly recommended that all students begin private study on their instrument. Lessons are taught by instrumental specialists outside of school at times mutually agreed upon by the student and the instructor. A list of private teachers will be available from your orchestra director upon request.

STUDY BUDDIES

A list of middle school and high school “study buddies” will be coming home with students. Study Buddies are middle school or high school student musicians who currently participate in the orchestra program and take private lessons. Students on the list have offered to work with elementary students on a weekly basis for a small fee.

Performing

Concerts are one of the highlights of participating in a musical ensemble. We invite you and your family to join in hearing the progress your young musician has made. The elementary orchestras perform in two public concerts per year.

2017-2018 Concert Dates

Thursday, December 14th	5th and 6th Grade Winter Orchestra Concert O’Neill Gymnasium / 7:00 p.m.
Monday, December 18th	4th Grade and Chamber Strings Winter Concert O’Neill Gymnasium / 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 10th	5th and 6th Grade Spring Orchestra Concert O’Neill Gymnasium / 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 24th	4th Grade and Chamber Strings Spring Concert O’Neill Gymnasium / 7:00 p.m.

Concert dress for elementary students will be as follows:

Boys: White dress shirt, black dress pants, black socks, and black dress shoes.

Girls: Solid white shirt, long black skirt (below knees) or dress pants, black dress shoes.

SOLO AND ENSEMBLE DAY (Intermediate and Middle School Students)

Solo and Ensemble Day is held annually and provides an excellent opportunity for students to display individual ability and receive feedback from a professional adjudicator. All orchestra students in grades 5 through 8 participate in this unit of study. All orchestra participants will be required to have a piano accompanist for solo performances. Orchestra teachers will assist with finding an accompanist when this unit of study takes place.

An All-District Solo and Ensemble Day will be held on **Saturday, February 10, 2018 from 8:30am - 3:00pm at Herrick**. Many parent volunteers are needed for assistance on Solo and Ensemble Day. An email request for volunteers will be sent as the event approaches!

Equipment

All orchestra students are to bring their instrument, lesson book, orchestra music, signed practice card, and a pencil to every lesson and orchestra rehearsal. Violinists and violists must also remember to bring their shoulder rest to every lesson and rehearsal. Cello and bass students must remember to bring a cello endpin strap.

Instruments are to be taken to school on lesson days and after-school rehearsals days only and kept at home at all other times. Instruments may not be left at school overnight.

All orchestra members need a music stand to be used at home for practice, at after-school rehearsals, and at our concerts. Students do not need to bring stands to their weekly lessons.

INSTRUMENT CARE

It is the responsibility of each orchestra member to keep his/her instrument in top playing condition at all times. Please do not try to do your own repairs! If there is a problem with your instrument, bring it to the attention of your director or call the instrument rental company.

INSTRUMENT PURCHASE

Purchasing a stringed instrument can be a wonderful boost for students once they are ready for a full-size instrument, but it can sometimes be a daunting task for parents. We encourage you to contact us so that we can assist you with this important process. We can provide you with information about reputable dealers, help you determine the quality of a particular instrument, and even play-test several instruments to help you find one that your child will be able to play for years to come. The purchase of a stringed instrument should be viewed as a long-term investment for your child. We are committed to helping you make a quality investment.

BOOKS AND SUPPLIES

On occasion, students will need to buy the next instruction book or supplies such as rosin or a shoulder rest. Books and materials ordered through *K.R. Bachelder & Co.* (630-355-0008) will be delivered to O'Neill each week. In addition, many local music stores stock lesson books and string accessories where you can purchase them directly.

PROGRESS REPORTS

District 58 instrumental music students will receive progress reports twice during the school year, at the end of 2nd and 4th quarters. These will be sent home with classroom report cards. Progress reports are to be reviewed, signed and returned to the teacher.

WITHDRAWAL FROM ORCHESTRA

The orchestra program in District 58 begins in 4th grade and continues through middle school. Students may then participate in the District 99 orchestra program during high school. It is our hope as music teachers that students will make a commitment to music and that parents will support and encourage this decision. However, if for some reason a student chooses to discontinue participation in the orchestra program, the director must be notified by the parent. Appropriate times to withdraw from orchestra are at the end of the beginner trial period (at the completion of 3 months), or between school years. Parents are responsible for contacting the instrument rental company and making arrangements to return the instrument.



From the directors...

It is our pleasure and privilege to teach your children as orchestra directors in District 58. We will do our best to uphold the standard of excellence which has long been a tradition here in Downers Grove. We are looking forward to an exciting year!

Lisa Rose and Julie Spring
Orchestra Directors

If you have any questions please contact your school's orchestra teacher.

Ms. Lisa Rose	lrose@dg58.org	(630)719-5810 (Herrick)	ES, KG
Ms. Julie Spring	jspring@dg58.org	(630)719-5815 (O'Neill)	FA, HL, IT

Southside Orchestra Calendar

2017-18

- Monday, September 25 **First 6th Grade Orchestra Rehearsal**
Fairmount School Gym 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, September 26 **First 5th Grade Orchestra Rehearsal**
O'Neill Middle School Orchestra Room– 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.
- Thursday, December 14 **5th & 6th Grade Orchestra Winter Concert**
O'Neill Middle School - 7:00 p.m.
- Monday, December 18 **4th Grade Orch. & Chamber Strings Winter Concert**
O'Neill Middle School - 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, February 10 **Solo & Ensemble Festival**
Herrick Middle School - 8:30am - 3:00 p.m.
Note: ALL 5th and 6th grade orchestra students will participate in Solo Festival. Details will follow as date approaches.
- Tuesday, April 10 **5th and 6th Grade Orchestra Spring Concert**
O'Neill Middle School - 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 24 **4th Gr. Orchestra & Chamber Strings Spring Concert**
O'Neill Middle School - 7:00 p.m.

