

# Jefferson Middle School Orchestra Handbook 2022-2023



Suzanne Shelton, Director

[shelton\\_s@aps.edu](mailto:shelton_s@aps.edu)

(505) 255-8691 ext. 20532

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Blank practice record  
Orchestra Calendar is now on the website!

Please keep this handbook in a safe place!

Most questions you may have can be answered by referring to the Orchestra handbook!

### Jefferson Orchestra Principles

The Jefferson Orchestra program is based on more than just musical excellence. We obviously take great pride in how well we perform as musicians, but our true reward comes with the way in which we conduct ourselves on a daily basis both in and out of the Orchestra classroom or on stage. It is in the way we treat ourselves, each other, as well as those outside the Orchestra program, that make the Jefferson Orchestra the best program it can be at all times!

Here are several key guidelines we try to live by that keep these values in place:

1. **Attitude** – “Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you choose to react to it.” Approach every situation with a positive attitude.
2. **Responsibility** – Evaluate yourself honestly, and always strive for improvement, pushing yourself to do your best in everything you do.
3. **Respect** – Treat other in a kind and caring way. “Do unto other as you would have others do unto you.” (The Golden Rule)

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4. **Generosity** – Share the talents you have been given unselfishly with others.
5. **Integrity** – Always do the right thing in every situation, even when no one is looking.
6. **Walk the Talk** – Actions speak louder than words. If you say you are going to do something or help someone, make sure it gets done.
7. **Always think ahead.**
8. **Trust** – It takes a lifetime to develop, and only seconds to break it down.
9. **Commitment** – The ability to begin a task and follow it through to its full completion.

Through positive attitudes and actions, we try to affect the world around us in the most positive way possible. Through music, we hope to bring enjoyment to those for whom we perform. This is one of the true rewards for all of our diligent work.

**You represent the Jefferson Orchestra at all times!  
Please do so in a positive manner!**

## *JMS Music Department Goals for Learning*

Music Students Will Learn:

1. How to hear music and how to DISCERN.
2. Hear, sing and play the melodic and rhythmic patterns that make up music.
3. Make a beautiful SOUND.
4. How to READ music.
5. Play in TUNE.
6. How to PRACTICE.
7. How to LISTEN and how to APPRECIATE music of various styles and cultures.
8. How to PLAY WITH OTHERS.
9. How to use the IMAGINATION and how to develop CREATIVITY.
10. How to MAKE THEIR OWN MUSIC.

**Our national standards are at: [www.NationalArtsStandards.org](http://www.NationalArtsStandards.org)**

### *How to contact Ms. Shelton*

I will always try to make myself as easy to contact as possible, because clear and open communication is key to the success of any organization. If you develop a concern please contact me! Most issues turn out to simply be a misunderstanding. I also understand that with many things, time is of the essence. I will make every effort to return messages as quickly as possible, within 24 hours when possible. **In most instances e-mail is the best way to get ahold of me.**

**E-mail: [shelton\\_s@aps.edu](mailto:shelton_s@aps.edu)**

**Jefferson phone: (505) 255-8691 ex.20532**

## **Grading Procedures**

**1. 60% - Rehearsal Skills, Daily Grades, Playing Tests** – this includes homework, music theory quizzes, class work, sectionals, **Preparedness For Class(!)**, and rehearsal skills. Every week there will be a playing test. This will be made known to the students the week before the test is to be taken, giving them one full week to practice the material. Students can and should retake playing tests to improve their grade to the desired average.

IF NECESSARY, I WILL REINSTATE WEEKLY PRACTICE RECORDS IF TEST SCORES DROP BELOW A “B”.

**2. 40% - Concert performance, assessment of the audio of our concerts, post-concert self-reflections-** The concert performance grade is composed of several parts: the student’s attendance and behavior at the concert, and the day after every concert, orchestra students will watch a video of their performance and assess their group and individual performance.

### **1. Practice!**

The only way an Orchestra program is going to improve as quickly as possible is if everyone involved does their part to make it the best it can be. The time in class is very important for learning new concepts and getting a few repetitions on that new concept. These concepts then need to be explored and internalized by the student at their own pace in their own practice time outside of the school day. I will be going over practice techniques in class.

**This year we are not doing weekly practice records. However, I might reinstate them if students are not practicing on their own at home. Here is how they work:**

These are to be turned into the wire basket at the beginning of the class period. These are due **Friday**. To earn 100% for these every week, Intermediate and Advanced students must practice a minimum of **100** minutes per week. (20 minutes per day, 5 days a week.) **Beginners practice a minimum of 75 minutes per week to earn 100%.** (15 minutes a day, 5 days a week.)

If a student is absent on the day the practice record is due they may turn it in on the following school day. **A stack of blank Practice Records will in the Orchestra room at all times.**

The following playing times can also be used as practice time:

- \*Private lessons on instrument played in Orchestra – **All**
- \*Private lessons on another instrument (piano, ect.) - **Half**
- \*Outside rehearsals (such as AJO, AJS) – **Half**

**A blank practice record is at the back of the handbook.**

## **How to Practice! *Identify, Isolate, Improve, And Integrate!!!***

**1. Identify:** Choose a “work place,” a section of music that makes you hesitate, stop, or just doesn’t sound right.

**2. Isolate:** Work on only that part. Don’t play a piece all the way through, over and over!  
Economize/focus!

**3. Improve:**

- **Slow down!** Find a mistake-free tempo. You’ll probably need to slow down more than you think.

- **Set your tempo!** Use a metronome or go to [www.metronomeonline.com](http://www.metronomeonline.com) to keep your tempo in check. Yes, there is also an app for metronomes!
  - **Determine what in the section needs work.** Is it a left hand/intonation issue? Is it a right hand/bow issue? String crossings? Is your posture affecting your intonation? What makes this section hard? Pick it apart!
  - **Play the work place at least five times in a row mistake free.** The optimal number of times depends on the nature of the challenge, but five times in a row is a great place to start.
  - **Inch forward.** Increase difficulty and tempo in small steps. Remember it takes effort to change your thinking and body movements. You are teaching your mind and body! Don't be in a hurry. Give it time.
  - **Leap back.** Sometimes you have to decrease the level of difficulty to jump-start correct repetition.
- 4. Integrate: Put the work place back into the music.** Play the work place with the measures before and after it. Adjust as needed.

## **1.2 Rehearsal Skills, Participation, and Daily Grades**

Students will be graded daily to make sure that adequate progress is being made as well as to ensure that everyday the rehearsal goes as smoothly as possible.

### **a.) Performance on their instrument:**

If a section is having a difficult time with a passage in the music and a great deal of time is taken out of rehearsal to address this, it takes time away from other students and this is not optimal. In these cases Ms. Shelton will show the students how to break it down, students will be responsible for practicing it on their own, and the passage will be assigned as a quiz. This grade will be a part of their daily grade.

### **b.) Daily rehearsal conduct and quality of effort:**

The success of the Orchestra depends on the entire student body being on the same page and wanting to improve together. Orchestra is not about individuals but about the overall product and sound. To get to this point there are some in class guidelines to make sure we achieve our goal of making the best and finest music possible.

#### **The following are ways students can lose daily rehearsal skills points:**

Not having instrument, shoulder rest, etc.

Not having a pencil

Not having music

Playing without permission

“Horse play” type conduct (this can also lead to a Jet Card infraction or a phone call home)

Other poor behavior will be assessed a penalty at the discretion of the director.

### **c.) Weekly Performance Test/Quiz**

Every week students will be tested on their ability to perform a short passage or music or to show their progress on a particular technique of string performance (such as vibrato). Some of these tests will be done in front of a video recorder. An example of a grading rubric is below:

Criteria for individual in-class playing test  
Orchestra Test

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Points: \_\_\_\_\_

# of Songs: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>POSITION, POSTURE, LEFT HAND, RIGHT HAND</b>	SLUMPED OVER, INCORRECT RIGHT AND LEFT HAND POSITIONS	SITTING UP STRAIGHT, BACK OF CHAIR, SOME PROBS. WITH HANDS	CORRECT POSTURE, MINOR PROBLEMS WITH BOTH HANDS	CORRECT POSTURE, LEFT OR RIGHT HAND CORRECT	CORRECT POSTURE, LEFT AND RIGHT HANDS CORRECT
<b>INTONATION (IN-TUNE)</b>	RIGHT HAND IN WRONG POSITION, NEVER CORRECTED	RIGHT HAND IN WRONG POSITION, CORRECTED ONLY ONCE	RIGHT HAND IN CORRECT POSITION, 50% OF NOTES IN TUNE	RIGHT HAND IN CORRECT POSITION, 75% OF NOTES IN TUNE	RIGHT HAND IN CORRECT POSITION, 75-100% OF NOTES IN TUNE
<b>RHYTHM</b>	UNSTEADY TEMPO, INCORRECT RHYTHM	STEADY TEMPO, INCORRECT RHYTHM	CORRECT RHYTHMS 50% OF THE TIME	CORRECT RHYTHMS 75% OF THE TIME	CORRECT RHYTHMS 75-100% OF THE TIME
<b>BOWING, UP AND DOWN WHERE MARKED</b>	INCORRECT BOWINGS IN EVERY SONG PLAYED	A FEW INCORRECT BOWINGS, NO ATTEMPT TO CORRECT	A FEW INCORRECT BOWINGS, ATTEMPT TO CORRECT	75% OF BOWINGS FOLLOWED AS MARKED	75-100% OF BOWINGS FOLLOWED AS MARKED

**2. Performances (Both on and off campus)**

Orchestra members should behave in a manner that reflects well on themselves and the Jefferson Orchestra program at all times. An individual's actions, whether good or bad, speak for the entire Orchestra.

**Cell Phones and other electronic devices should be turned off during concerts!**

When we have an on campus concert the format will be as follows:

- 1) The student will report to the Orchestra room in concert attire to pick up their instruments, music, and any supplies that they need for the concert.
- 2) The student will either take a seat in the student seating section or sit in the stage area, depending on which Orchestra they are in.
- 3) **All students are expected to stay and support their peers until the concert is over!**
- 4) At the completion of the final performing group, students will first put their instruments away.
- 5) After the instruments are put safely away, students will have a job to do. These will be assigned on a section by section basis and will be posted clearly around the gym and Orchestra room. **All students must stay and do the job assigned to their section!**

**"Many hands make light work"**

**-John Heywood, English Playwright and Poet, c. 1497- c. 1580**

**Concert Clothing/Uniform:** If you need assistance with clothing, please let me know several weeks in advance of the concert!

- Black pants (all black) or black skirt (knee length or longer)
- White dress shirt (I prefer a nice blouse or a button up shirt tucked in)
- Shoes: all black

## **Concert Attendance**

**Each student is a very important and valuable member of his/her Orchestra and is expected to attend and participate at every public appearance of their ensemble. Orchestra is a performing art course!**

### **Concert attendance and participation are REQUIRED!**

An unexcused absence from a performance will result in your overall grade for the quarter being lowered up to **two** full letter grades.

I understand that many students are very active in other activities both with and outside of the school such as basketball, hockey, baseball, cheerleading, karate, gymnastics, and so on. I support them doing any of these activities whole heartedly, and just as I would never ask them to miss a game or meet for a rehearsal, I expect that they NEVER miss a concert for a practice. If there are issues with another activity these need to be communicated with me (Ms. Shelton) at least two weeks in advance. **I will support your child to do as much as they do during this important time of exploration in their lives.**

### **EXCUSED absences from a concert**

- Serious Illness (with a doctors note)
- Death in the immediate family
- Pre-arranged conflict (basically a “once-in-a-lifetime”) Must be cleared through Ms. Shelton two weeks in advance.

### **UNEXCUSED absences from a concert**

- Forgetting that there was a concert
- Not having a ride to the concert (car pooling is a great tool)
- Trips made in total disregard to the Orchestra concert
- Any other conflict not cleared at least two weeks in advance with Ms. Shelton

The make up assignment for an ***excused*** absence from a concert will be based upon the level (Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced) of the student.

## **Orchestra Room Rules**

1. Do not do anything to get in the way of your learning.
2. Do not do anything to get in the way of the learning of other students.
3. Do not do anything to get in the way of my teaching.

### **Consequences:**

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> time: Verbal Warning

3<sup>rd</sup> time: Jet Card Signing or a phone call home

**Tardy Policy:** Two minutes after the bell, students should be in their seats with their instruments set up, ready play, and have all supplies necessary for Orchestra class to be considered on time. Consequences for repeated tardiness is handled as needed.

### **Orchestra Room Expectations/Procedures:**

- 1) **Attitude-** It is of the upmost importance that the environment we work in is a positive one that will allow each student to succeed according to their abilities. Every student should have a positive approach and helpful attitude with regard to their Orchestra class. This attitude should spill into their other classes and their daily lives.
- 2) **Listening-** Each student should work to be an **Aggressive listener**. Listening is a valuable tool in the classroom as well as life. Students should make good eye contact with anyone who is addressing them. They should focus on fully understanding each instruction or concept presented to them. If understanding is not reached, they should ask appropriate questions at the appropriate time.
- 3) Orchestra students will always follow directions the **First** time they are given. If directions are not understood they should ask for clarification.
- 4) When you walk into the Orchestra room for class, quickly get your materials out and be ready to begin class within two minutes after the bell rings. Once you are set up feel free to practice! Do not chat with your friends.
- 5) Backpacks should be kept Under Your Chair.
- 6) **\*\*Don't do work from other classes. Practice instead!!!**
- 7) Cell phones and other portable music players: **If I see or hear them they will be dealt with according to Jefferson's policies in the student Agenda.**
- 8) During class students who are not playing their instruments should be practicing silently/ shadow bowing ***or listening to others.***
- 9) Students will take **Good** care of their instruments, so that they will be able to play as much as possible. If your instrument needs repair please bring it to Ms. Shelton.
- 10) I will take good care of my music and have it at every rehearsal. Please do not share music. Sheet music will be returned in a clean, undamaged condition. In the event that music is seriously damaged or lost you will be charged for a replacement part.
- 11) **I understand that Orchestra is a full year class and agree to fulfill this commitment.**
- 12) As per APS policy, hats are not to be worn in the building. Neither are hoods.
- 13) Substitutes are to be treated with the upmost respect at all times.
- 14) Bathroom use should take place between classes. Plan your time wisely. In the case of an **emergency**, bathroom passes will be issued one at a time.
- 15) Students should remain quiet during class, raise their hand, and wait to be acknowledged.
- 16) **Orchestra students will be respectful of others.** Always speak in a courteous tone; keeping hands, feet, and objects to themselves; and allowing a quiet classroom atmosphere at all times.

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- 17) When dropping off or picking up your instrument, please be aware of people working in the room and do not disturb them.
- 18) All Orchestra students are encouraged to use the Orchestra room after school for practicing.
- 19) Orchestra members will keep the room neat and clean. The chairs and music stands should be kept in place, and any trash needs to be **thrown away**. It is the responsibility of everyone to keep our Orchestra room clean and neat.
- 20) When getting your instrument from your locker, take your case to your chair to take out your instrument. **Do not stand around the lockers trying to get ready together**. There is not enough room or time.
- 21) For your health and well-being (and that of the instrument and room), absolutely **NO** gum, candy, or food is allowed in the Orchestra room. Bottled water is the only acceptable beverage.
- 22) No one shall hold, play, or otherwise operate or handle another person's instrument. This is for health reasons as well as instrument repair reasons. **If it doesn't belong to you, don't touch it!!**  
**Each Orchestra student is responsible for his/her own instrument.**
- 23) Only Orchestra students are allowed in the Orchestra room. This is for security and traffic flow concerns. Friends may wait outside the doorway for you.
- 24) Instrument lockers are to be used to store musical instruments only. Please keep them clean. Lockers are to be kept closed and locked at all times. You must use a **COMBINATION LOCK** on your locker. There will be a secure record kept of all locker combination by Ms. Shelton.
- 25) It is suggested that all personal instruments have the proper insurance coverage. Non-Jefferson Instruments ARE NOT insured by Jefferson Orchestra or APS.
- 26) Orchestra students should play their instruments in class and at Orchestra functions only when asked to by the director.
- 27) Students are **not** allowed to leave their instrument unattended at any time. **There will be consequences for any student whose instrument is brought to me be another student, teacher, etc. – Whether it is found on or off school property.**
- 28) All students are encouraged to wear their Orchestra T-shirt to school on Fridays. Student pride is a key player in the success of any program.
- 29) Although the Orchestra office is meant for business, it is not “off limits” to students as long as there is a teacher (Mr. Kouri or Ms. Shelton) present. If the door is open please feel free to come ask questions. If the door is closed please respect the work being done. If it an emergency please knock.

### Class supplies:

- **All students: a binder for music, handouts, notes, compositions, etc.**
- **All students need a pencil.**
- **An instrument. If you need to rent one from Jefferson, the fee is \$20 for the year. If you are not able to pay this, please come see me.**
- **4/4 Violins and full sized violas need to get their own shoulder rest.**
- **A quiet place at home (with no distractions) where you can practice!**
- **A combination lock for the violin/viola lockers. One student per locker.**
- **Room supplies gleefully accepted!!!! Kleenex, hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, etc.**

# Jefferson ORCHESTRA Practice Record

Intermediate and Advanced: 100 minutes (20 minutes x 5 days)

Beginning: 75 minutes (15 x 5 days)

Day	Date	Minutes	What music did you practice? Title of piece, measure numbers, or specific technique, etc.
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			
Mon			
Tues			
Wed			
Thurs			

Total minutes: \_\_\_\_\_ Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date you are turning it in: \_\_\_\_\_

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