

# Orchestra Syllabus

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## Teaching Philosophy

I find it important for me to express why I do what I do and what I want students to learn from their time in orchestra. I became a music teacher because I want to make the world a better place for everyone. I want to see people who are kind, respectful, and dedicated. In essence, I want to be in a world where people love one another. I believe that if I can help students learn how to love each other in the classroom, they will be better equipped for life as an adult. I also believe it is my charge as a teacher to help my students become the best person they can be so that they may be empowered to continually make the world a better place. I teach these important life skills through music.

I have heard the phrase, “music is the vehicle through which we teach life” many times as I prepared to become a teacher. I believe in this statement. In orchestra, students learn how to work with others, how to practice something consistently over time, and how to be resilient. Resiliency is the ability to fail at a task, reassess, and then try alternative methods to eventually succeed at the task. It is such an important life skill and it gets reinforced heavily through orchestra. These life skills are learned alongside of the content. Through the process of learning how to perform well on their instruments, students learn vital skills.

A music class would not be a music class without the music. We learn things in orchestra that no other class can teach. The act of making music with others fulfills a need to be creative as a community. Performing music is such a joyful and fun experience that I believe everyone deserves a high quality musical experience. It takes a tremendous amount of work but the end result is something truly amazing. I set a high standard of excellence for the music that we make together and I give students every support that they need to achieve that standard.

While music is a big focal point in my class, I put even more importance on how students treat other people. I believe that all humans deserve dignity and respect and strive to make both of them normal in my classroom. I have very clear expectations and contingencies for my classroom. When I redirect a behavior, it is because I care for that student and want them to make a better choice. I never redirect a behavior out of malice.

I have two main things that I want to teach students in my class. I want them to learn how to love music and how to love people. I teach both of these ideas through the music that we make in orchestra. I believe that if I can successfully teach these concepts, the students will be better equipped to change the world and I will have done my part in making the world a better place.

## Beginning of the Year To-Do List

There are a number of things that students should do at the start of the year to have a successful time in orchestra. Some things have to do with acquiring supplies, others have to do with servicing instruments. Please make sure to complete these things before the second week of school.

Item	Completed
Instrument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rent from shop</li> <li>School Instruments for students in free/reduced lunch program</li> </ul>	
Shoulder rest or rock stop	
Rosin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hill dark rosin for violin, viola, cello</li> <li>Pops rosin for bass</li> </ul>	
New strings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace at least once every year</li> <li>Violin and viola need synthetic core</li> </ul>	
Rehair the bow unless it is new <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Done at least once every year</li> </ul>	
Tuner and metronome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be a free app on a device</li> </ul>	
Cleaning cloth	
Essential Elements Book 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase correct book for your instrument</li> <li>Beginning Only</li> </ul>	
Music stand	
Concert clothes	

## Instrument Guide

Renting or purchasing an instrument is exciting. I have some things to keep in mind to have the best purchasing experience.

- Go to a trusted music store
  - Going to the right store will ensure that you get the best instrument for your money. Below are suggestions for reputable shops.
  - Manselle's Music Shop
    - 4808 S.E. Ina Ave, Milwaukie, OR 97267
    - 503-659-9817
    - <http://www.mansellesmusic.com/>
  - David Kerr Violin Shop (for viola and cello too)
    - 4451 S.E. 28th Ave, Portland, OR 97202
    - 503-238-4515
    - <http://www.kerrviolins.com/>
  - Pete's Upright Bass Shop
    - 4233 S.E. Boise St, Portland, OR 97206
    - 503-777-7027
    - <http://petesuprightbassshop.com/>
- Rent-To-Own
  - Rent-To-Own means that every monthly payment goes towards eventually purchasing the instrument outright. Essentially you are making payments to own the instrument.
- Avoid buying instruments online
  - Instruments that are sold online often times are of poor quality and won't last very long. To ensure that your student has a lasting instrument I highly suggest a music store.
- Check the material
  - Instruments should be made out of wood. Many student model instruments are made out of high pressure laminate, basically plastic. These instruments will play notes but the quality of sound suffers. They are not playable beyond the first few weeks of beginning orchestra.
- Ask Mr. Kwon
  - If you have any questions about the quality of a potential instrument or you just want another another set of eyes to check it out, please do not hesitate to ask me. I can even meet in person to help out if you would like. It is my goal to be a resource for you as you purchase an instrument.

## String Guide

These are the preferred strings for each instrument. There are higher quality or low cost suggestions available upon request.

Instrument	String Name	Brand	Winding	Gauge
Violin	G	Alphayue	Silver	Medium
Violin	D	Alphayue	Silver	Medium
Violin	A	Alphayue	Aluminum	Medium
Violin	E	Alphayue	Plain Steel	Medium
Viola	C	Alphayue	Silver	Medium
Viola	G	Alphayue	Silver	Medium
Viola	D	Alphayue	Silver	Medium
Viola	A	Alphayue	Aluminum	Medium
Cello	C	Helicore	Tungsten-Silver	Medium
Cello	G	Helicore	Tungsten-Silver	Medium
Cello	D	Helicore	Titanium	Medium
Cello	A	Helicore	Titanium	Medium
Double Bass	E	Helicore Orchestral	Nickel	Medium
Double Bass	A	Helicore Orchestral	Nickel	Medium
Double Bass	D	Helicore Orchestral	Nickel	Medium
Double Bass	G	Helicore Orchestral	Nickel	Medium

## Private Teachers

Having a private teacher in addition to orchestra class can be a very beneficial thing. Private lessons help students work on advanced concepts individually. They do cost money but they are well worth it with the right teacher. Below are some suggestions for teachers. I have more if needed.

- Violin
  - Maren Knopp: 503-720-8492
- Viola
  - Maren Knopp: 503-720-8492
- Cello
  - Madeline Altman: [altmanm@nclack.org](mailto:altmanm@nclack.org) (Very good cellist in the RPHS orchestra)
  - Corey Averill: 503-407-6256
- Bass
  - Chris Kim: 915-760-0306

## **Events**

See website

Extra-curricular rehearsals, fundraisers, and any additional performances are TBD and will be added when details are arranged.

## **Ensemble Descriptions**

### **Alder Creek:**

The Beginning Orchestra is designed to help students build a solid foundation learning to play their instruments. Non-performance concepts such as music theory and rhythms are introduced. There will be performance opportunities in the form of school concerts.

The Intermediate Orchestra is designed to help students become even more comfortable playing in a large ensemble. Technique building will be the main focus of the class with an emphasis on performance as a way of applying the learned techniques to actual music making. There will be performance opportunities in the form of school concerts.

The Advanced orchestra is designed to help students master the art of large ensemble playing. The class will focus on increased musicianship and performance skills. There will be performance opportunities in the form of school concerts, district festivals, and trips. There will be performance opportunities in the form of school concerts and possibly festivals.

### **Rex Putnam:**

The Concert Orchestra is designed to help students become even more comfortable playing in a large ensemble. Technique building will be the main focus of the class with an emphasis on performance as a way of applying the learned techniques to actual music making.

The Chamber Orchestra is designed to help students master the art of large ensemble playing. The class will focus on increased musicianship and performance skills. There will be performance opportunities in the form of school concerts, district festivals, and trips.



## Procedures and Behavioral Expectations

### Class Materials

These materials need to be brought to class everyday. They are important for having a productive rehearsal. Points will be deducted from "Classroom Performance" if these items are not present in class. Passes will not be given to retrieve items from locker. Please let Mr. Kwon know if you need assistance obtaining class materials so you may be assisted.

- Instrument
  - Shoulder Rest/Rock Stop
- Music
  - Sheet Music
  - Book
  - Flash cards
  - Warm-ups
- Pencil

### Beginning of Class

Students should plan to arrive before the bell as much as possible. This will maximize rehearsal time. The expectation is that students have tuned or are in the process of tuning when the bell rings.

1. Enter class
2. Spit out gum in garbage can
3. Store any food or drink other than water in a closed container at the sink counter
4. Find seat
5. Place music and pencil on stand
6. Unpack instrument including shoulder rest/rock stop
7. Rosin bow if needed
8. Place instrument on chair (violin/viola) or on side of chair (cello/bass) and bow on stand
9. Move case to somewhere outside the rehearsal space
10. Tune using a tuner
11. Bring the instrument and tuner to Mr. Kwon if you need help
12. When the bell rings, voice level is at zero

### End of Class

1. Wait for Mr. Kwon to say it is time to pack up, *hopefully* last 5 minutes of class
2. Take music, pencil, and instrument to case
3. Wipe off strings, body of instrument, and the wood part of bow using the cleaning cloth
4. Pack up instrument
5. Take instrument to locker in orchestra room

6. Line up at the door until the bell rings
7. Mr. Kwon will dismiss the class, not the bell

### **Tuning**

- Use fine tuners unless absolutely confident in ability to use pegs
  - Using the pegs improperly can result in snapped strings
- Make sure the tuner is set to “440”
- Always tune with the bow with steady weight and speed, no abrupt changes
- Play and make sure the name of the note on the screen matches
- Turn the fine tuner or peg to get the needle directly in the middle
- Go slow
- When tuning with a peg tune the note too low and then bring up gradually

### **A Typical Rehearsal Structure**

1. Tune as a group
  - a. One string at a time played by concert master
  - b. Listen to the note
  - c. Hum as a group
  - d. Listen again
  - e. Play on your instrument
  - f. Match the tuning pitch
  - g. C string will be played by principal cello
2. Warm-up
3. Rehearse
4. Recap the rehearsal at end
5. Pack up when given directions

### **A Successful Rehearsal**

- Come to class with a positive attitude
- Come ready to learn and work hard
- Come ready to have fun
- Come to class prepared
  - PRACTICE AT HOME!!!
- Be flexible
- Be responsive
- Be ready to discover
- Engage fully
- Get to know other students and Mr. Kwon
- Follow directions quickly and on the first direction
- Be respectful when someone else is talking
  - Mr. Kwon

- Another student
- Another adult
- Characteristics
  - Quiet
  - No extra talking or noise
  - No visual distractions
- Use respectful language and voice level
  - Racist, homophobic, xenophobic language, swearing, and put downs are not acceptable in the classroom
  - Yelling is not acceptable unless it is directed
- Raise hand to ask a question or to make a comment
  - Only quiet hands will be called on
    - No blurting out
    - Don't make noise to try and be called on first
- Find an appropriate time and place to argue or make suggestions
  - Usually this should happen before or after class in a private conversation
  - Rarely should this happen publicly in front of the whole class
- Cut-off quickly when signal is given
  - This means a quick direction will be given and right back to music
- Move quickly to the next activity or piece of music
- Use pencil to mark directions in music
  - Anything that is said about a section of music should be written in to be remembered
  - Write in your music even if it is not used on the stand
- Pack up when directed, not before

### **Practicing Effectively**

Practice at home is vital to making music. Students should plan on practicing at least 30 minutes every day. The amount of time is not as important as consistency. There are things to keep in mind to use practice time wisely.

- Find a quiet space
- Make sure you have enough room to play
- Find a good time of day
- Use notes in music to remember what was worked on in class
- Pretend like you are preparing the music for a solo
- Work on small sections of music
  - Can be a few lines, a measure, or even two notes
- Gradually add sections together to create larger sections
- Start the section and do not stop until you get to the end
  - Stop and look over the section making mental notes where mistakes occurred
  - Figure out what needs to be done to fix the mistake

- Try again
- Reassess
- Try again
- Repeat until the section feels comfortable
- Use metronome and tuner DAILY while practicing
- Practice strategies
  - Note by note
    - Break down the section into single notes
    - Good for learning hard notes or new notes
    - Eventually increase to two notes, four notes, etc.
  - Add a note
    - Start at the end of a section
    - Add the note directly before that note
    - Continue adding notes until the whole section is added
    - Good for fast runs
  - Add a rhythm
    - Play the section but with a different rhythm than on the page
    - Forces the brain to think of the notes in a different way
    - Good for continuous rhythm of notes

### **Concert Attendance**

- Attendance at concerts and performances are graded so make sure to attend
- Points will be given only if students stay for the entire concert not just their own group
- Make-up assignment
  - Perform all pieces for the concert
  - Done in class the next day
  - Each measure of music will be graded pass/no pass so that every measure with a mistake in it will be counted no pass
  - A percentage will be made and that is the grade given for the concert
- Stay afterwards and help put away chairs and stands as needed

### **Good Audience Behavior**

- Voice level at zero when lights dim
- Make sure electronic devices are off or silent and not used during concert
- Clap for the concert master of each group
- Clap when conductor enters the stage
- Listen quietly to each piece
  - No noise
  - No visual distractions
    - Ok to move with music as long as it is not distracting to others
  - Attention to the stage

- Clap when conductor's hands lower
  - No yelling or shouting
- Do not clap between movements of the same piece
- If you need to get up, do so in between pieces not during a piece
- Points for concert attendance may be partially or fully deducted for poor behavior
  - A student may be uninvited to the next concert if poor behavior is severe enough

### **Restroom Privileges**

- Raise a quiet hand to ask to use the restroom
- One student at a time
- Once per class period per student
- Abusing restroom privileges will result in a lunch detention

### **Electronics**

- Out of sight, touch, and sound
- If seen or heard, the device will be taken even if it falls out of a pocket
  - Should be no arguing or defiance when taken
    - Extra consequences for arguing or defiance
  - Goes to the office for the rest of the day
- After 1st time, triggers schoolwide electronics policy

### **Equipment**

- Treat all school equipment respectfully
- All equipment are used for the purpose in which they are intended to be used
- Students are responsible for maintaining their own instruments, even if it is a school instrument.
- Piano is off limits to students unless permission is granted

### **Consequences**

1. Verbal warning or correction
2. Email to parent and/or lunch detention
3. Face-to-face meeting with parent
4. School-level consequence
5. \*If severe enough, steps may be skipped
  - For example, using racial slurs in class or defiance
6. Please know that when a consequence is given, it is intended to change behavior and help the student. It is out of love and caring. The expectation for a student response is a meaningful apology and then a change in behavior. Arguing is not a correct response. Learning to accept responsibility and apologizing for actions, when warranted, are important life skills. Mistakes can easily be forgiven with these two things. Mr. Kwon will do his best to display them as well.

## **Academic Expectations**

### **In-Class Work**

Students will be assessed for their work in class by a Classroom Performance grade. Students have the opportunity to earn up to 10 points per week for having music and instrument ready and engaging fully in class. Listening activities will be assigned as needed. Students are expected to participate fully in every class.

### **Practice At Home**

The expectation is that students are practicing their instrument at home outside of class. Think of this as homework for orchestra as written homework is not assigned. Please plan on practicing at least 30 minutes every day. Practicing at home is the fastest way to improve performance skills and the only way to reinforce what we learn in class.

### **Tests**

Students will be assessed using playing tests. These tests will be done at home via video. Videos will be uploaded to Google Classroom. Videos turned in after the due date will be subtracted 10 points. Videos turned in one week after the due date will not be graded and will result in a zero. It is important that students turn in all playing tests to earn a good grade in the class.

### **Grading Scale**

Grades will not be round up. The grading scale is as follows:

- A: 100-90
- B: 89-80
- C: 79-70
- D: 69-60
- F(failing): 59-0.

Grades will be weighted using the following percentages:

- Classroom Performance: 30%
- Concert Attendance: 40%
- Play Test: 30%

## **Concert Dress**

No jewelry, items in pockets (especially phones), strong cologne or body spray. No gum.

Students in the top groups at each school will purchase their concert dress in a bulk order so that everyone matches. This will be done at the beginning of the year. Fundraising options will be available to students who need it.

### **Alder Creek:**

#### **Beginning**

Colored polo shirt, black dress pants, black socks, black dress shoes (heels must be less than 2")

#### **Intermediate**

White dress shirt, black dress pants or black dress (must cover below knees when sitting), black socks, black dress shoes (heels must be less than 2")

#### **Advanced**

Black dress shirt, black dress pants or black dress (must cover below knees when sitting), black socks, black dress shoes (heels must be less than 2")

### **Rex Putnam:**

#### **Concert**

Black dress shirt, black dress pants or black dress (must cover below knees when sitting), black socks, black dress shoes (heels must be less than 2")

#### **Chamber**

Men: Tuxedo, Tuxedo shirt, Tuxedo dress pants, cummerbund tie, black bow tie, black socks, black dress shoes

Women: Orchestra dress, black stockings, black dress shoes (heels must be less than 2")





## **Travel Policy**

There are opportunities for the ensemble to travel. While traveling, students represent the school, the orchestra, and the community. Students and chaperones will behave in a manner that brings respect to the school, the orchestra, and the community.

### **Expectations**

1. Listen to directions
2. Stay in groups of 3 at all times unless directed to stay with entire group
3. Be ready to move to the next activity quickly
4. Be respectful to chaperones, including Mr. Kwon
5. Have a good attitude
6. Lights out means lights are turned off and stay off. Room is quiet.
7. Additional expectations as needed on a trip by trip basis
8. If it is determined that a student is consistently unable to follow through with the expectations of the trip, the parent of the student will be contacted and must arrange for the student to be taken home
- 9. Listen to directions**
- 10. Listen to directions**

### **Awards**

Awards will be given out at the end of the Final Concert for ACMS Orchestras and at The Awards Night for RPHS Orchestras.

## Agreement of Expectations

Parents and students, please read the whole syllabus and make sure that you understand everything. If you have questions please email Mr. Kwon. If you agree with the expectations, please sign below and return only this page to Mr. Kwon by the start of Week 2. If you do not agree with one or more of the expectations, please email Mr. Kwon to set up a meeting to discuss why. An email will be sent out if there are updates to the expectations.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Print Full Student Name), agree to the expectations detailed in this syllabus and will follow them to the best of my ability.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sign Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Print Full Parent Name), agree to the expectations detailed in this syllabus and will follow them to the best of my ability.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sign Parent Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Print Full Parent Name), agree to the expectations detailed in this syllabus and will follow them to the best of my ability.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sign Parent Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date