

ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK

2021-2022

COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 94



<https://sites.google.com/site/communityhighschoolorchestra/> email: awojciechowski@d94.org

Please read this handbook thoroughly and carefully and return the last page, complete with signatures and dates by Monday, August 23rd, 2021 to Mrs. Wojciechowski. *All students and parents are responsible for knowing the information in the Community High School Orchestra Handbook.*

DESCRIPTION

ORCHESTRA

The CHS Orchestra Program is for students that wish to further their musical studies and excel in orchestral performance through extensive focus on technique, tone, theory, and musical communication. It is also for the musical student that wishes to be a dedicated member of an ensemble and team. As a valuable member of the ensemble, each student is required and expected to practice on a regular basis—EVERYDAY—to promote the progress of the entire group as a whole. Expect to practice at least 35 minutes daily.

“An ensemble is only as strong as its weakest player.”

TECHNIQUE CLASS

While our *orchestral* ensembles meet within the typical school day, *Technique Class* meets during zero hour.

ORCHESTRA STUDENTS are required to participate in a weekly technique classes at their scheduled time during zero hour. For Concert and Symphony Orchestra students, Technique Class is grouped by instrument type, so violins may have a zero-hour technique class on Tuesday as violas have another on Friday,

and so on and so forth. This way, each string student has orchestra every school day, but a technique class once a week. String Orchestra students do NOT have zero hour technique class, but are encouraged to sign up for Technique Class; if they choose to commit to the class, attendance will impact their grade. There will be exceptions were some concert orchestra students will join symphony orchestra students for balance purposes.

Technique class focuses on the particular mechanical/motor development of muscles and musicianship that is specific to each string instrument. Students will learn how to tune, care, position the instrument, shift, use vibrato, etc. for their instrument type through the use of various method books, etudes, finger drills, and solo repertoire. On the rare occasion, a technique class may be used as a traditional sectional. This year, students may perform etudes, as a homogeneous instrumental group on concerts. **REMEMBER: TECHNIQUE CLASS IS FOR STUDENTS IN SYMPHONY AND CONCERT ORCHESTRAS!**

FULL ORCHESTRA

Full Orchestra refers to when the ensemble rehearses with the winds and percussion—as in symphony orchestra. String players are also required to attend certain zero hour periods that will be used for full orchestra rehearsal. Therefore, in total, string students may be required to have two zero-hour classes for orchestra a week.

SOLO & ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL

Chamber Ensembles will be assembled for the Solo/Ensemble festival in February. During the preparation for Solo/Ensemble, all students will be assigned to perform with a small group by the orchestra director. Students who want to be a part of a small ensemble on a regular basis are encouraged to do so and to speak with the orchestra director for further coaching and access to chamber repertoire. For the festival, it is encouraged that students also prepare a solo piece with their private teacher, or Mrs. Wojciechowski, which can be judged by the clinician of the festival. Solo repertoire is given out at the beginning of the year for uses in technique class. This music can be the repertoire used for the Solo/Ensemble Festival.

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA (Honors Ensembles)

The *Chamber Orchestra* is an ensemble that earns the professional gigging experience. Accepted students practice common gigging repertoire, learn the proper bow and vibrato technique for this repertoire, and embraces chamber music communication. After so much experience, students should be able to perform (unaffiliated with District 94) for compensation. This ensemble will perform on concerts.

HIGH STRUNG ENSEMBLES (Honors Ensembles)

The second type of extra-curricular option is the *High Strung Ensembles*. These groups will focus on repertoire that is alternative to the typical classical music we play in orchestra class. Students will explore the styles of rock, pop, jazz, folk, Celtic, ambient, etc. along with their respective techniques. These ensembles include *Cello Choir* and student-organized chamber groups, and they do perform on concerts.

CLASS MATERIALS

Students must have all of the following materials present at each class session:

- Instrument & Bow:
 - Students should have an instrument in playing condition with all the functions working properly (pegs and fine tuners easily adjustable, bridge unwrapped, wood of the bow curved, no cracks or splits in the instrument, etc.)
 - If you need to use a school instrument, see Ms. Wojciechowski to get an Instrument Rental Form.
 - Feel free to ask Ms. Wojciechowski about any concerns when renting or purchasing an instrument or bow.
- Rosin:
 - Students need rosin for everyday use. Please see Mrs. Wojciechowski if you have any questions on which type to use for specific tones.
- Mutes:
 - All string students should have a tourte or rubber mute for their instrument. Ms. Wojciechowski has mutes for \$1-\$5.

- Chin-rests (Violin/Viola only):
 - Chin-rests to be attached and snug to instruments with a layer of cork between the piece and the instrument face.
- Shoulder-rests (Violin/Viola only):
 - Shoulder-rests are necessary to prevent back injuries. Individual preference should guide a student's choice in selecting a shoulder-rest. However, I must suggest that students use a shoulder-rest with more than one point of adjustment to ensure proper positioning and back health.
- Rock-Stops (Cellos and Basses only):
 - Lower string players should have rock-tops to hold their endpins in place.
 - Recommended are strapped rock stops for cellos, so students may anchor the endpin to the chair. Bass players could use rubber rock stops.
- Pencils
- Orchestra binder (plain and clean black one-inch binder)
 - Must be black (preferable matte finish and not glossy).
 - No stickers, drawings, or cover pages on the binder.
 - Students should write their name inside the binder in the top left hand corner.
 - Follow the table of contents (given to the student in the first week) for your binder's organization. There will be binder checks!
 - Place sheets of staff paper and notebook paper in the back.
- Provided Music
 - Each student will receive concert repertoire, exercises, scales, etc. This music is to be practiced daily at home and brought to class each day. If a student loses his/her copy of music, he/she must print it off the website.
- **Chromebook**
 - **Students will need their Chromebooks (charged) for completing online assignments and recording themselves for playing tests. Students will video record themselves on Chromebooks and upload to a private YouTube channel that only the director and student (and student's parents/guardians if requested) have access.**

FUNDRAISING

There will be several fundraisers throughout the year in support of the orchestra program. An individual student may have a percentage of the sales set aside for himself/herself for certain fundraisers that they may use later for approved orchestra expenses (field trips, private lessons, etc). These fundraisers will directly aid in hiring sectional coaches, guest artists, uniforms, instrument supplies (bows, rosin, etc.), social events, and more.

PERFORMANCES

Please understand that students work very hard each school day during class time. However, the orchestra is not merely a class, but an entire *program*. It takes the dedication from every student and support from every family to make the Community High School Orchestra a successful program. Students have great opportunities to showcase their talents and efforts to their families, friends, and community members during these performances. Therefore, it is essential that every student participate in all required performances. These events are not optional. They are part of a curricular class. Moreover, each orchestra member is a part of the program and without one it is unfair to all other members of the program who have put in the time and dedication necessary. Please do not plan vacations or outside school events during performances. If there is a direct conflict with another school activity during a performance time, it will be worked out between the orchestra director and the other event's teacher or

sponsor. If an emergency arises please contact Mrs. Wojciechowski prior to the event if at all possible at (630) 876-6491.

In the event of an excused absence (an excused absence is one turned in no later than two weeks prior to a performance and approved by Ms. Wojciechowski, or an absolute emergency) to an outside of school rehearsal, performance, or other required event students are required to complete a Concert Report. The guidelines for a Concert Report are as follows:

- If it is an expected excused absence, the student must see Ms. **Wojciechowski at least two weeks prior to the absence** to discuss the concert report. If it is an emergency excused absence, the student must see Mrs. Wojciechowski the first day you are back in school following your required event absence. Mrs. Wojciechowski will suggest some upcoming CHS concerts of other areas (band/choir).
- The student must decide which concert he/she will attend and get it approved by Mrs. Wojciechowski prior to submitting a Concert Report.
- The concert report must include a program from the actual concert, must be at least two pages typed, double-spaced, and 12-point Times New Roman font.
- A Concert Report is to be written similar to a newspaper review. The writer should include musical elements that were positive, things that could have been improved upon, and overall reactions and ideas to the event.
- All Concert Reports are due no later than two weeks after the excused absence.

An unexcused absence to any of the required performances will result in zero credit for that event. Further consequences may occur depending on the situation. *A student cannot receive a term grade higher than a C if they miss a performance. Lateness will also greatly affect their grade for the performance or dress rehearsal.*

CONCERT ATTIRE

All orchestra students are required to perform in the appropriate concert attire and dress code. Failure to follow the dress code may result in removal of the performance with an unexcused absence.

Symphony Men: Black tuxedo provided by CHS. Male students must also have a white tux shirt and black bow tie (clip on is fine and recommended). Black dress shoes and black socks are a must!

Symphony Women: Black dress provided by CHS. Female students must also have conservative black shoes and minimal jewelry. Undergarments should be black or skin-tone.

Concert and String Men: All black professional-wear clothing with black dress shoes and black socks. Black button down and pant dress pants are ideal.

Concert and String Women: All black professional-wear clothing. If skirts or dresses are worn, they must be floor length. Shoes must be black and preferably closed-toe. Jewelry is minimal and the apparel is very modest and covering. No black jeans or leggings worn as pants.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Daily attendance, ***timeliness*** to class, and participation will positively affect your grade. There is no substitute for the classroom experience that is gained by regular attendance and participation in all class activities.

Conversely, unexcused absences, repeated tardiness, and truancies can only have a negative affect on your overall classroom experience, and therefore, on your grade. *You* are accountable for *your* grade. *Your* effort, attendance, punctuality, and participation are elements that *you* control.

Weekly technique classes will be assigned at the beginning of the school year. If a student misses a zero-hour, they will lose the fifteen points that would have been earned had they participated. If a student is tardy to a sectional, the points deducted will be proportionate to the amount of the class that they missed. Students must find a way to zero hour classes—even on late start school days. This is expected of all band and orchestra students.

If a student is tardy to class rehearsal, they will lose at least one point. There are two points possible per day.

Appropriate language is expected at all times—not just in the orchestra classroom. Any use of inappropriate language will result in ONE-HOUR DETENTION WITH MRS. WOJCIECHOWSKI PER INAPPROPRIATE WORD.

Gum is not allowed in the classroom. It affects proper playing position, and may be damaging to instruments, equipment, and the facilities. **Similarly, fingernails, must be cut! Proper playing position is IMPOSSIBLE with long nails.** Students will receive a warning about their nails and it will be expected that the nails are cut by the next day. If a student does not cut their nails following the warning, there will be a reduction in points.

Finally, it's all about attitude! Come to class with a positive outlook and a smile! You're mindset affects the entire ensemble and your overall wellbeing! Make everyday the best day!

DEPARTMENT CELL PHONE POLICY

As a department, the faculty has decided to enforce a NO-SCREENS policy. Aside from distractions, we believe that it is important for students to be fully unplugged and therefore, must put away their phones and keep them out of sight until authorized by the teacher. We want students to be focused on working collectively as a team. Their time should be socially relevant and meaningful with mostly tactile objectives.

RUBRIC

The points earned for your assignments and responsibilities will be organized into the following categories:

PARTICIPATION: Daily ethic, attendance, effort, preparation

LAB: Sectionals attendance and related effort and preparation

HOMEWORK: Homework (Practice) and outside assignments on Chromebooks

ASSESSMENT: Playing exams, progress lessons, and auditions

PROJECTS: Orchestra Service Hours

GRADING SCALE

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%

SCHEDULE

EVENT	ATTENDANCE	TIME	DATE	LOCATION
IMEA Auditions	Auditioning students	Cutoff is 7:00am	October 5; Tuesday	Online Submissions to Directors.
Fall Concert Dress Rehearsal	All orchestra students	5:30pm	October 19 th , Tuesday	Auditorium
Fall Concert *PERFORMANCE*	All orchestra students	7:00pm	October 19 th , Tuesday	Auditorium
IMEA District Festival	Auditioned students	In-Person Festival	November 13 th , Saturday	Dundee Crown High School
Music Honor Society Induction Ceremony	Accepted students	Call time TBD; ceremony begins at 7:00pm	TBD	TBD
Holiday Concert *PERFORMANCE*	All orchestra students	7:00pm	December 9 th ; Thursday	Auditorium
All-State Music Festival	Auditioned students	All day	January 26-29, 2022; Wednesday-Saturday	Peoria, Illinois for auditioned students
February Fiddle Fest!	All orchestra students	7:00pm	February 24 th ; Thursday	Auditorium
Music Boosters Pancake Breakfast	Specific ensembles	8:00am-11:00am	Saturday, March 12, 2022	CHS Commons
Spring Musical	Pit orchestra members only	Call times TBD	April 27-29; Thursday-Saturday	Auditorium
Spring Concert Dress Rehearsal	Specific ensembles	TBD	May 12 th ; Thursday	Auditorium
Spring Concert *PERFORMANCE*	All orchestra students	7:00pm	May 12 th , Thursday	Auditorium
Honors Night *PERFORMANCE*	All orchestra students	Call time at 5:45pm; performance begins at 6:45pm	TBD	TBD



CONTACT INFORMATION

Students and parents should feel free to contact me with any questions they might have. The best way to reach me is by email at awojciechowski@d94.org or by phone (630) 876-6491. Please view our website at <https://sites.google.com/site/communityhighschoolorchestra>.

Final reminder about Concert and Dress Rehearsal attendance:

Concerts and Dress Rehearsals (same day) are REQUIRED! If a student has an unexcused absence to a dress rehearsal or concert, they cannot receive a grade higher than a C for that semester—just like band and choir students.

Excused absences include:

1. Serious illness—you must have a doctor’s note.
2. Death in the family
3. Car accident—provide a copy of the police report or ticket issued.
4. **IHSA State Athletic Competition (Playoffs, etc.)—you must be playing in this competition.******

Unexcused absences include:

1. Work
2. Couldn’t get a ride
3. Birthday party or other related function
4. **Pre-season or conference game******
5. Any other excuse that is not listed in the “excused” category.

Due Date: Monday, August 23rd, 2021

We have read and understand all contents of the Community High School Orchestra Handbook for the 2021-2022 school year. I, _____
(**PRINT NAME**), agree to follow all rules and regulations on a daily basis as set by Community High School and the Orchestra Department and the Orchestra Handbook. I understand the consequences that will occur if these rules and regulations are not followed.

(**Parent Signature**)

(**Date**)

(**Parent Email-for Orchestra email list serve**)

(**Parent Home Phone**)

(**Student Signature**)

(**Date**)