

Dr. Phillips High School  
Orchestra Member Handbook



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# Welcome to the Dr. Phillips High School Orchestra Program!

This handbook has been written to provide orchestra members, parents and other interested persons with information concerning the Orchestral Activities at Dr. Phillips High School. It is not possible for this handbook to answer all questions that may arise. All orchestra members and parents are urged to read this handbook carefully in order to avoid conflicts with the policies stated. It will also give the reader an idea of what is expected of each student.

School rules and policies are in effect any time a student is involved in an activity sponsored by or in the name of Dr. Phillips High School. School policy shall have priority over orchestra policy in the event of any conflict.

*The orchestra director has the authority to suspend or amend any policy at any time deemed necessary to maintain the integrity of the orchestra program.*

## Membership Requirements

The orchestra program is open to all students demonstrating the desire, ability, academic eligibility and proper attitude to be a member of the group, provided the student has AT LEAST one CONSECUTIVE year of playing experience (a student that plays in elementary or middle school, skip grades, then wants to join our orchestra program may only do so at the discretion of the director). Students with no playing experience are not eligible to join. Each student will have an equal and fair opportunity for participation and advancement in the orchestra program. Students will be placed in an orchestral ensemble at the discretion of the director based upon audition results, behavior in and out of the classroom, punctuality, rehearsal preparedness, and any other factors deemed necessary by the director.

All students entering the program must have and maintain at least a 2.0 GPA. Students may be asked to show the director their grades in order to verify that they are following this rule. Any student failing to remain eligible shall be suspended from all orchestral activities until their academic status has been regained. However, this does not excuse the student from attending orchestral functions. These functions include, but are not limited to, regularly scheduled class periods, after school rehearsals and concerts. Students who are ineligible from performing may be assigned an alternative project to offset the loss of points at the director's discretion.

## Orchestra Class Descriptions

### *Beginning Orchestra (Orchestra 1)*

Beginning Orchestra is for students who would like to learn a string instrument and have either never played before, or have very limited musical experience. In this class, students will learn the basics of music note reading, music terminology, and develop rudimentary, foundational skills of playing a string instrument!

### *Sinfonia Orchestra (Orchestra 3, 4, 5H, 6H, Instrumental Techniques 1)*

Sinfonia Orchestra is for players who have mastered the fundamentals and are ready for more intermediate techniques. This is also an ensemble where students can learn a secondary instrument. This full-sized string ensemble performs in several concerts during the school year. In addition, Sinfonia Orchestra participates in Music Performance Assessment at the district level. Members of this class are strongly encouraged to participate in District Solo & Ensemble.

### *Philharmonia Orchestra (Orchestra 3, 4, 5H, 6H)*

Philharmonia Orchestra is an ensemble for players who already have a solid set of intermediate skills. It is devoted to strengthening & advancing players' skills and ensemble playing techniques to a more advanced level. Philharmonia Orchestra participates in Music Performance Assessment at the district level. Members of this class are strongly encouraged to participate in District Solo & Ensemble.

### *Chamber Orchestra (Orchestra 3, 4, 5H, 6H)*

Chamber Orchestra is the first of two advanced ensembles. Students in this orchestra have mastered both fundamental, intermediate, & early advanced skills and techniques, and are ready to learn or improve skills like shifting and vibrato in higher levels of repertoire. Chamber Orchestra participates in Music Performance Assessment at the district level. Members of this class are required to participate in TWO of the three following activities: District Solo & Ensemble, auditioning for OCPS All-County, and/or Florida Orchestra All-State. Students may complete all three if they desire.

### *Premiere Orchestra (Orchestra 3, 4, 5H, 6H)*

The Premiere Orchestra is the second of two advanced ensembles. Music selection for this ensemble includes advanced string literature, from the standard orchestral repertoire to contemporary compositions. Premiere Orchestra participates in Music Performance Assessment at the district and state level. Members of this class are required to participate in TWO of the three following activities: District Solo & Ensemble, auditioning for OCPS All-County, and/or Florida Orchestra All-State. Students may complete all three if they desire.

## VPA Magnet Program

The Visual and Performing Arts Magnet is a special program offered at Dr. Phillips High School. This program is intended to give students with a serious interest in music extra opportunities to develop and explore their art on the highest level. Students participate in and attend monthly recitals to enhance their learning opportunities. Students can apply for VPA after their eighth or ninth grade year. It should be remembered that VPA students are HIGHLY ENCOURAGED to take private lessons, AND participate in District Solo & Ensemble *if it occurs*.

\*\*\*Please make sure that you register for the correct VPA in addition to orchestra each year:

- 9<sup>th</sup> grade- Keyboard I
- 10<sup>th</sup> grade- Music Theory I
- 11<sup>th</sup> grade- Music Technology
- 12<sup>th</sup> grade- AP Music Theory

## The Importance of Discipline

Due to the nature of the organization, discipline within the orchestra must best be strict. Orchestra students and their parents must be willing to accept the ideals, principles and rules of the organization.

Orchestra members are constantly on display. Therefore, each member must always be aware of the importance of good behavior. Basic values are a requirement. Any misconduct casts a negative light on the orchestra, as well as Dr. Phillips High School. This may very well undo the hard work and good effort of many loyal students. In addition, misconduct reflects on your community and parents/guardians. Students should discipline themselves in order to be the best possible person. Students who are repeatedly disciplined by school authorities for violation of school policies are a liability to the program, and are subject to dismissal.

## The Importance of Responsibility

*Attendance Makes Progress Possible!!!!*

- Be at all rehearsals and performances on time...which means early! There is a difference between being present and being ready.
- Being absent from a rehearsal or performance is not like missing a class such as English or History. When even one member of a performing ensemble is gone, the total musical experience is diminished for all. There is no possible way to make up the experience of a missed rehearsal or performance.

*Respect, Respect, Respect!!!*

- Take care of your personal and school equipment and do not touch what is not yours.
- Respect the right of others to learn, and the teacher to teach by not causing an interruption to the rehearsal. There are times to work and times to play...do not get the two confused.
- If you cannot say something positive, do not say anything at all. We are here to build people up, not tear people down.

\*\*\*Students who are found engaging in harmful, racist, disparaging, harassing, abusive, homophobic, or intolerant actions or communication will receive consequences in accordance with the OCPS Student Code of Conduct, which includes *possible dismissal* from the orchestra program. The orchestra room, and our program, is a place where ALL are welcome and should feel safe from fear of bullying. Students who actively try to hurt another human being, in any capacity, are the only ones not welcome into our community. Be kind, always.

\*\*\*In accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, which is in effect at all times while a person is on campus, the use of drugs, alcohol, illegal substances AND smoking/vaping is STRICTLY PROHIBITED in the orchestra room, practice rooms, PAC, and on school-sponsored field trips. Students found using these substances will automatically receive a level 4 referral, and will be subject to dismissal from the orchestra program.

## The Importance of Communication

Communication Is KEY!!!!

- Call 407-355-3200 ext. 6052667, text via Remind or email ([96000@ocps.net](mailto:96000@ocps.net)) IN ADVANCE if you are going to be absent.
- Know your calendar and work out schedule conflicts well in advance of the event.
- If you would like extra help, just ask. If I can't help you, I'll find someone who can.
- If you are ever troubled or unsure about something that has to do with this program, please come talk to me first. My door is always open.

The orchestra director will maintain communication in a variety of ways. It is suggested that students check the following resources DAILY in order to stay informed.

- CANVAS: Posting assignments & messages through Canvas.
- EMAIL: Weekly email newsletters. Please provide your contact information in this Google Form: <https://forms.gle/Y9EUccHKBqvZGm2k8>
- FACEBOOK: Updates from the DPHS Orchestra Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/DPHSOrchestras/>
- INSTAGRAM: Updates from the DPHS Instagram account: [@dphsorchestras](https://www.instagram.com/dphsorchestras)
- TALKING POINTS: Messages will be sent to both parents and students through the OCPS-approved messaging system, Talking Points. Per OCPS policy, beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, no other messaging system will be used for communication between the director and students.
- MUSIC SCANS- Scans of our current orchestra music will be available for you to view and practice from on our Canvas homepage.

# Performing Arts Department Rules

No Food, Gum, Candy or Drink in the orchestra rehearsal, ensemble, practice or keyboard rooms, with the exception of bottled water that has a screw-cap lid.

The orchestra building will be kept clean. This includes hallways, restrooms, classrooms, ensemble and practice rooms, keyboard room and lockers. Any personal items left outside of a locker or designated area in the orchestra room will be considered abandoned and will be discarded after being placed in the "Lost and Found" for a period of one week.

Students must have all materials present for rehearsal in order to receive full credit for participation. Students are expected to have an instrument, pencil and music every day.

## Uniforms

Uniforms must be clean and presentable for all performances. Students who are not dressed properly will lose points from their grade for that performance.

### Pants Uniform

- Black dress pants, \$23:  
<https://sepapparel.com/flat-front-cavalier-pant-men-choir.html>
- White dress shirt, \$20.50:  
<https://sepapparel.com/dress-shirt-men-choir.html>
- Black tuxedo coat, \$75:  
<https://sepapparel.com/legacy-suit-coat-men-choir.html>
- Royal blue necktie, \$9.95:  
<https://www.bows-n-ties.com/Solid-Necktie-in-Bright-Azure-Blue.html>
- Black dress shoes, \$32.99 (matte or shiny finish is acceptable):  
<https://tinyurl.com/4rj82x4x>
- Black socks

### Gown Uniform

- Laurel Dress Scoop Neck Extended Tank Sleeve Gown, \$60 (choose your pants size as the gown size):  
<https://sepapparel.com/laurel-concert-choir-dress.html>
- CLOSED-TOE shoes in BLACK, \$39:  
<https://sepapparel.com/capezio-character-shoes.html>
- Black stockings

# Attendance Policy

In a performance class, attendance is crucial. Missing even one day is almost impossible to make up. It is imperative to attend every rehearsal and performance.

## *After school events*

Orchestra (and most other “fine arts” classes) are classified by the district as “co-curricular”, meaning that instruction- and therefore graded assignments- can and do take place outside the normal school hours of 7:20am-2:20pm. After school events are mandatory when they are indicated to be required; non-required after school events are purely optional and will not impact a student’s grade. All REQUIRED after school events will be listed in the calendar at the end of this handbook, and any changes will be communicated two weeks in advance. This allows student’s work schedules to be changed and transportation arranged. In the event of a student conflict with another school function, it is the student’s responsibility to talk to both faculty members in order to work out a compromise. This must be done at least one week in advance. If you give Mrs. Allen an excuse, written or otherwise, less than 5 days before an after school event, the chances of it being excused are greatly diminished. Another school event does not excuse the orchestra member from an event. Participation in extracurricular activities is encouraged, but in the event of conflict, a graded class takes priority over an extracurricular activity. Students should be picked up immediately after events end.

## *Performances*

Concerts are mandatory. Because music is a performing art, and concerts are a culmination of many hundreds of hours of work from many people, failure to perform at a concert will result in a severely lowered grade. In the event of a student conflict with another school function, it is the student’s responsibility to talk to both faculty members in order to work out a compromise. This must be done at the earliest possible time. Another school event does not excuse the orchestra member from the concert.

Whenever a concert is scheduled to take place in the DPHS Performing Arts Center, it will ALWAYS follow the schedule listed below. Changes to this schedule will be avoided whenever possible, and should changes need to be made, they will be communicated well in advance.

## *Concert schedule*

*\*Uniforms will be inspected at check in- students can be dismissed if they are out of uniform, resulting in a lowered grade.*

6:15pm- Digital check-in DRESSED IN CONCERT UNIFORM; place instruments in designated areas and proceed to designated seating assignments per orchestra leadership.

6:30pm- DOORS OPEN. Students are to be in their places by this time (Sinfonia on stage warming up, all others in their seats in the audience).

### *Concert grading policy*

There are four parts of a student's concert grade:

1. On-time arrival (check-in by 6:15pm)
2. Proper uniform
3. On task participation in performance
4. Staying and observing fellow students' performances

Students who do not complete one of these items will see their grade negatively impacted. Please make sure you communicate with the director *in advance* if something will prevent you from completing these items on concert day.

## Grading Policy

All students will be graded fairly based on their own individual accomplishments. The grading policy will be clearly defined in this handbook, specific to the course in which the student is enrolled. The county grading scale of 90-100 = A, etc., will be used:

### State Grading Scale:

- A 90-100%
- B 80-89%
- C 70-79%
- D 60-69%
- F 59% and below

The following articles are used to determine a students' final grade in orchestra.

\*\*\*The director reserves the right to lower or raise a students' final grade to reflect behavior, participation, or accomplishment as necessary. These grade changes can be provided with an explanation upon request, but that will not necessarily change the final grade.

Rehearsal Preparation/Techniques (20%) – Students will be graded on their ability to successfully achieve the learning goals of each rehearsal and master necessary techniques during each rehearsal.

Formative Items (35%)- Playing tests/Personal Critique recording projects will be given at the director's discretion. All will be announced beforehand. Fingernails that are too long to accommodate proficient posture & left hand formation categories of the playing tests will result in a low test grade. Written or electronic tests or quizzes may also be given as appropriate to the material being studied, some of which may be unannounced.

Summative Items (35%) – Concerts and MPA Performances are a large part of the student's grade.



# Absence Policy

UNEXCUSED – These situations are automatically unexcused except in extreme circumstances at the discretion of the director.

Work

Detentions (Orchestra students are expected not to get detentions)

No ride home/parent did not provide needed transportation

“I forgot” (this includes I forgot my instrument)

Club meetings

EXCUSED – Submit a detailed parent note the next day the student is present.

These situations are automatically excused.

Extreme personal illness – provide note from Doctor

Medical appointments, which were scheduled prior to rehearsal schedule

Family emergency (please provide a note from your parent)

Religious activities

MAY BE EXCUSED – Submit a note prior to the absence and clearly state the situation. The decision of unexcused/excused is according to the director’s discretion.

Conflicting school activity (sports, honor organizations)

Tutoring

\*\*\*Do not assume that an absence is excused. Any situations not covered in the lists above will be handled at the discretion of the director. Any absence for which there is no parent note submitted are automatically unexcused.

Parent Notes – in order for an absence to be given consideration for “excused” status, a detailed parent note is required. The note must include the following:

-Date of absence

-Detailed reason for absence (“personal reasons”, “family matters”, etc. are too vague

to be considered a valid excuse and will be unexcused if not clarified.)

-Contact number for parent/guardian submitting the note

-Parent/Guardian signature

# Seating

Seating is determined entirely by the director. Factors such as individual strengths and overall balance of the ensemble are taken into consideration when seating individuals within the orchestra. That means that at some point this year, you might have to sit in a seat/section you don’t like. Students should remember that regardless of where they sit, they have the same expectations as everyone else, and that the most important thing is to lead from where you are, regardless of where that is. The best place for your ego in this classroom is at the door when you come in.

## Concerts

There will be 4 concert performances this school year: the Fall Concert, Winter Concert, Pre-MPA Concert, and the Spring concert. As stated in the grading section, concerts are mandatory. Please check the calendar of this handbook for tentative dates. Students will be required to arrive at the announced time before the start of each concert. Parents are encouraged to attend these concerts. Students are not permitted to leave before the end of a concert.

## Music Performance Assessments (MPA)

Beyond the traditional concerts, the orchestra will participate in several other events. These events could involve missing classes. Students are still responsible for missed class work. These performances will require special meeting times, which will be determined closer to those events. Dress code follows the concert guidelines. Participation in MPA is mandatory and a large part of students' grades.

### *Florida Orchestra Association District MPA*

This performance involves presenting a concert for three judges. The judges will rate the performance on many standards. This event takes place in Orange County. Quality performances at District MPA allow the group to attend State MPA.

### *Florida Orchestra Association State MPA*

This performance involves presenting a concert for three judges. The judges will rate the performance on many standards. This event can and does take place outside of Orange County.

## Other Performance Opportunities

Individuals will also have many other performance opportunities, both on the local and state level. Participation in these events is highly encouraged for some, and required for others; check the course descriptions.

- *Florida Music Educators Association Orchestra All-State (Honors, 9-10, 11-12)*

Student players from around the state of Florida form these ensembles. To be a member of these groups, a student must audition for admission. Auditions normally take place in September for the January event. All-State Orchestra takes place annually in Tampa, Florida.

- *Solo and Ensemble MPA* (participation required for those with private lessons, VPA students, and Chamber & Premiere students who choose this as two of their three events.)  
Students can form small ensembles and/or prepare solos. At Solo and Ensemble, the individual or group performs for a judge, and is rated on several performance standards. Solo and Ensemble MPA occur at district and state levels. Students who participate in S&E are required to do two things: provide proof of a practice schedule, and secure a pianist if the piece requires it. Mrs. Allen will provide a pianist if the student does not already have one, but it is then the responsibility of the student to pay them.
- *Orange County All-County Orchestra* (Audition required for Premiere.)  
Student players from around Orange County form these ensembles. To be a member of these groups, a student must audition for admission. Auditions are recorded and are normally due in September for the November event.
- *Brookdale Assisted Living Facility Recitals*  
Each month, students may volunteer to perform at Brookdale Assisted Living Facility. Recitals take place on the 2nd Thursday of each month. Students may earn EITHER community service hours, or Tri-M points, but NOT BOTH.

## Orchestra Leadership Council

In order to facilitate a smoother running organization, leadership council members are appointed by the director. Holding one of these positions will not affect a student's grade, and should be considered a service to the orchestra program. Students in these positions must maintain a minimum overall GPA of 3.0. At no time will council members dictate classroom procedures or music selection. The director reserves the right to dismiss any member for justifiable reasons.

## Instruments

Students are encouraged to have their own personal instruments. Dr. Phillips High School does have violins, violas, cellos and basses that can be used. However, should you decide at any time during the school year to purchase your own instrument, please consult the director before purchasing anything. The director can point you in safe directions. Under no circumstances should an instrument be purchased from Ebay or over the internet!!! The likelihood of getting a very poor quality instrument through these venues is extremely high. Price alone does not dictate quality. A reputable vendor will allow you to have the instrument examined by your teacher before it is purchased. Be very suspicious of a vendor who is not willing to do so.

Instruments will be issued for class use first to students who do not have an instrument at all. Remaining instruments may be issued to students who have issues in transporting larger instruments back and forth from home. During the time of usage, the student is expected to treat the instrument and its accessories with the utmost of care. If it is discovered that a student is mistreating an instrument, the student will lose the privilege of using it, thus forcing them to procure their own or to not participate, which would lead to a poor grade due to lack of participation. Possible financial/legal proceedings will take place depending on the damage. The director has strings available in the event a string breaks during class.

### *Signing an instrument out/Borrowing school instruments*

Instruments can only be signed out and taken home at the discretion of the director.

## Miscellaneous

### *Student Valuables*

Students are not to bring large amounts of money, personal electronic devices, cameras, etc. to the orchestra. If worn, glasses, watches and any other jewelry is the students' responsibility to keep track of them. Students are responsible for their personal items in the rehearsal area. While not in their hands, instruments should be locked in a secure and labeled case. The Orange County School System does not have insurance or any plan to cover damage, theft or loss of privately owned equipment. If that equipment is to be covered, it must be through the parent's personal insurance, such as homeowner's policy, etc. The director, Dr. Phillips High School and Orange County Public Schools are NOT responsible for missing or damaged property. This includes instruments.

### *Storage*

There is an instrument storage area where all students are expected to keep their instruments. Students will be able to choose the location of their instrument storage spot during the first week of school, and it will be labeled for easy access. Lockers will be available on a 1st come, 1st served basis.

## Fair Share, Fundraising and Trips

The Dr. Phillips High School Orchestra Program is an expensive program to run. Although we do receive a small amount of funding from the county, this amount is not nearly enough to cover our yearly expenses. Like other campus organizations, we must raise enough money to keep our program in top shape. Students enrolled in orchestra must participate in the “Fair Share” program. Each year, each orchestra student is responsible for \$100.00, contributed as his or her “fair share.” This money is used for music, entry fees in festivals, orchestra room supplies, and group transportation costs. On average, one new piece of music costs between \$40 and \$120; we generally purchase 2-3 new pieces *per concert cycle*. Entry fees plus transportation costs for district AND state MPA average over \$3,000. These are just a few examples of our costs. Fair Share payments will be made through <https://www.schoolpay.com/>

\*\*\*OCPS now strongly encourages all monetary transactions requiring a receipt to be completed through this website; therefore, cash & check Fair Share payments will no longer be accepted. Please plan on paying your child’s Fair Share via SchoolPay by the first Friday of October.

### *How does fundraising fit in with “fair share”?*

Some families do not have an extra \$100. For this reason, students are provided the opportunity to participate in fundraising activities, like our annual online fundraising campaign, this year through InstaRaise.

### *What if we don’t want our students to have to fundraise?*

No student is forced to fundraise, but each student is responsible for a contribution to the program of \$100. If students do not make arrangements with the director to pay their \$100 Fair Share, then that amount will be added to their obligations. If you feel your family qualifies for a Hardship Exception, please contact the director at [96000@ocps.net](mailto:96000@ocps.net).