



**Swansfield Elementary School Orchestra**  
5610 Cedar Lane, Columbia, MD 21044 ~ 410-313-6907



August 29, 2016

Dear 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Parents and Guardians,

Greetings from the Instrumental Music Department! I am writing to you to let you know about a great opportunity for your student. Beginning in third grade, your child has the opportunity to begin playing an instrument in the Orchestra. Studies have shown that students who are involved in music perform higher in their academic subjects due to the discipline they learn from studying an instrument.

<b>Benefits of Participation</b>	<b>Student's Responsibility</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives children a creative outlet</li> <li>• Promotes team work</li> <li>• Provides self confidence</li> <li>• Teaches time management skills</li> <li>• Refines small motor skills and hand-eye coordination</li> <li>• Gives them a chance to learn about other cultures</li> <li>• So much more!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a year-long commitment</li> <li>• Take care of and maintain an instrument</li> <li>• Practice regularly at home</li> <li>• Make-up work missed in other classes</li> <li>• Attend ALL concerts</li> <li>• Parents will need to help by getting an instrument, book, and supplies, and by facilitating practice at home.</li> </ul>

Later this week, your child will see a demonstration of the String instruments offered at school, and will be asked to choose which instrument they are most interested in playing. Many students decide they want to play the violin, however, there is always a shortage of students wishing to play the viola, cello or double bass. These instruments are just as crucial to the orchestra as the violin! I urge you to help your child choose an instrument where performance opportunities will be greater (viola, cello or double bass) and which maintain an equal balance of instruments in the orchestra.

Please read through the enclosed **Orchestra Handbook** and discuss whether your child is willing and capable of adhering to all of the requirements of being in Orchestra. If you are interested in having your student participate in Orchestra, complete the attached **Orchestra Registration Form** and return it to school by **Tuesday, September 6. Please DO NOT get an instrument yet!** I will meet with the students individually to size them for their instrument choice next week and you will receive information about how to get an appropriate instrument for your child. Beginning Orchestra classes will begin on **Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>**.

Please join us for Back to Music Night for all Orchestra and Band parents on **Wednesday, September 7, 2016 at 6:30pm** in the Cafeteria. (Translators will be available for Spanish speaking families.)

I look forward to working with you and your students this year!

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Amanda McKay, SES Orchestra Teacher



# Swansfield Elementary School Orchestra Handbook 2016-2017



## Schedule

Orchestra classes will be held on **Tuesday, Thursday and Friday** every week. Classes rotate between different times in order to minimize the impact on other classes. Students will receive a monthly calendar of when their classes will be held. **It is very important that students take responsibility for making up any class work missed while attending Orchestra.**

## Performances

Performing in front of an audience is an important part of the Orchestra curriculum; therefore, **attendance at school and evening concerts is required of all Orchestra Students.** Please record these important dates on your calendar. It is County Policy that students enrolled in a performing group are expected to participate in all performances.

<b>Thurs., December 15, 2016</b>	<b>Advanced and Intermediate Band and Orchestra Winter Concert</b> (snow date: 12/21) <i>*Required for all 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Orchestra students*</i> 2:15pm and 7:00pm, SES Cafeteria
<b>Thurs. January 19, 2017</b>	<b>Beginning Band and Orchestra Winter Concert</b> (snow date: 1/25) <i>*Required for all 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Orchestra students)</i> 2:15pm and 7:00pm, SES Cafeteria
<b>Wed. Feb. 1 &amp; 2, 2017</b>	<b>Wilde Lake String Fling</b> Wed. 2/1- Field Trip      Thurs. 2/2 - Concert For 4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Orchestra Only
<b>Sat., April 1, 2017</b>	<b>HCPSS Elementary Solo &amp; Ensemble Festival</b> <i>*Optional - More information will be coming in February</i>
<b>Mon. June 5, 2017</b>	<b>Orchestra and Band Spring Concert</b> <i>*Required for all Orchestra students*</i> 2:15pm and 7:30pm, SES Cafeteria

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Be Responsible** by attending all Orchestra classes. This means remembering the day and time, communicating with the teacher whose class you are leaving, and making up any missed work.
2. **Be Respectful** of our class time together and focus on achievement while in class. We have very little time together each week, so we must use it carefully.
3. **Be Prepared** for class with all of your materials. This means you must have your instrument and music folder with your book, music, pencil, and other handouts from class.
4. **Practice** carefully at home. You won't be able to play well without practicing!

## **REQUIRED SUPPLIES**

**\*Please have all materials by:**

Tuesday, September 13 - 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Tuesday, September 20 - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

**Students will need the following materials for participation in Orchestra:**

**Instrument** that is the correct size, in good-working condition. A nametag should be on the instrument case at all times. ***Beginning students should NOT handle instruments until their first Orchestra class.***

**Method Book**

- Essential Elements for Strings, book 1 (for your instrument)

**Required Accessories**

- Soft cloth to clean instrument after use.
- Rosin
- Violin/Viola students will also need a shoulder rest or sponge. Kun is the recommended brand for shoulder rests.
- Cello students will also need: rock stop or endpin stop.
- Music Stand: Students should have a music stand for home practicing. Proper use during practicing will promote good posture and playing position.

**Concert Dress**

The goal of a concert is to showcase the group as a whole and visual distractions take away from the performance. **Our uniform concert dress is:**

- black shoes and socks, black pants/skirt, and white shirt/blouse.

\* Students will need to wear this concert dress for **both** the day **and** evening concerts.

## **MUSIC STORES**

The following stores are recommended places to rent instrument, take instruments for repairs and purchase strings and accessories. Please contact Mrs. McKay if you need help. Please RENT an instrument from a **MUSIC STORE!** Do **NOT** buy one from Amazon, Costco, BJs, eBay or a "music" website that has *low* prices. They are poor quality and sometimes completely unusable. Your child will become extremely frustrated playing on an instrument that was not made correctly. If a price seems too good to be true, there is probably a good reason for it. RENTING IS THE BEST OPTION. As your student grows they will need to switch to a larger instrument. **The best place to get a musical instrument is from a MUSIC STORE!**

**Gailes' Violin Shop** - 10013 Rhode Island Ave., College Park, MD  
(301) 474-4300, [www.gailesviolin.com](http://www.gailesviolin.com)

**Music & Arts Centers** - 11200 Scaggsville Rd., Laurel, MD, (240) 568-0600, [musicarts.com](http://musicarts.com)  
- 9210 Baltimore National Pike, Ellicott City, MD, (410) 461-1844

**Mike's Music** - 4872 Montgomery Road, Ellicott City, MD  
(410) 465-0700, [www.mikesmusicmd.com](http://www.mikesmusicmd.com)

**Perrin & Associates** - 1 E. Lexington Street, Ste 401, Baltimore, MD 21202  
(410) 539-0043, [www.perrinviolins.com](http://www.perrinviolins.com)

## **PRIVATE LESSONS**

Although it is not required, it is encouraged for students to take private lessons. Many students thoroughly enjoy taking private lessons and the one-on-one private instruction can help to further a student's progress immensely. A list of private teachers is available on the SES Orchestra website, <http://mckayorchestra.weebly.com>.

## **HOME PRACTICE**

In order for students to make progress and be successful, it is expected that students practice their instrument at home on a daily basis; 20 minutes, 5 days a week is the recommend amount. Beginners may practice a little less than this at first, but establishing a regular practice time from the beginning will help it become part of their daily routine. As a parent, you can be a great help to your child by encouraging, observing and enforcing daily practice. Please consider your child's extracurricular activities to guarantee that there is enough time to fit proper practicing into their schedules.

## **HOW TO HELP AT HOME**

1. Make practicing a regular part of your child's daily homework routine. (Homework is not finished until practicing is done!)
2. Help your child keep his/her music folder organized with all required materials (method book, music, schedule and practice log.)
3. When possible, watch your child when he/she is practicing to help keep him/her on task and keep up with his/her progress.
4. Encourage careful repetition. It helps to improve tone quality, posture and accuracy. Playing through something only one time is never enough!
5. Make sure your child practices in a quiet place that is well lit without distractions (such as the TV or siblings.)
6. Make sure your child is spending the most time practicing music that he/she has trouble with, not just the songs they like the best.
7. Be positive! As long as they keep practicing I promise they will gradually sound better and better!
8. Attend concerts at the local Middle and High Schools, or even community or professional orchestras. It is important for young players to see what to strive for.
9. Listen to classical music whenever you can. Buy music of professionals playing the same instrument as your child so they can get the correct concept of sound in their head.

# Orchestra Registration Form

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM (or complete it online at <http://mckayorchestra.weebly.com>) BY **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2016**

**\* Please do not get an instrument until after your child has been sized and you have received additional information on how to obtain an instrument.**

**\* Students who return their forms quickly are more likely to receive their first choice of instrument.**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Instrument Choice** (Violin, Viola, Cello or Bass)

**1<sup>st</sup> Choice** \_\_\_\_\_ **2<sup>nd</sup> Choice** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. We are prepared to rent an instrument from a music store for the entire school year.**

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No *\*Please contact Mrs. McKay if you are unable to rent*

**3. By signing this form, we accept that enrollment in the Orchestra program requires:**

- Regular daily practicing at home
- Attending ALL classes with an instrument and music
- Making-up ALL missed class work
- Attending ALL school AND evening concerts
- Commitment to playing in Orchestra for the **entire** school year.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

**4. Is there anything you would like me to know about your child?**

*Previous musical experience, personality traits, strengths, weaknesses, hobbies, etc.*

---

---

---

**5. Do you (parent) have any musical experience that could benefit the students at SES?**

*For example: play an instrument, play piano, can tune a violin, etc.*

---

---

---

**6. Parent Volunteers**

Please indicate any events you may be interested in helping with this year. You will be contacted before the event to confirm your availability.

\_\_\_ Winter Concert \_\_\_ Spring Concert \_\_\_ Wilde Lake String Fling (4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> gr. only)

# FORMULARIO DE INSCRIPCIÓN ORQUESTA

POR FAVOR REGRESE ESTE FORMULARIO (o completar electrónicamente en <http://mckayorchestra.weebly.com>) ANTES DE **6 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 2016**

**\* Por favor no obtenga un instrumento hasta que reciba más información.**

**\* Los primeros estudiantes en devolver este formulario tendrán más oportunidad de recibir el instrumento de su primera opción.**

Nombre del Estudiante: \_\_\_\_\_ Nombre de la Maestra o Maestro \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre de los Padres \_\_\_\_\_

Email de los padres: \_\_\_\_\_

Numero Telefónico \_\_\_\_\_ Hablo ingles \_\_\_\_ Hablo solo español \_\_\_\_

## 1. Escojan uno de estos instrumentos (Violin, Viola, Cello, Bass)

Primera opción \_\_\_\_\_ Segunda opción \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Nosotros podemos rentar un instrumento.

\_\_\_ Sí \_\_\_ No *\*Por favor, escribe una nota a Sra. McKay*

## 3. Al firmar este formulario nosotros entendemos que la participación en la orquesta requerirá:

- Practicar diariamente en casa
- Participar en las clases y traer TODOS los materiales
- Realizar todo el trabajo
- Participar en TODOS los conciertos durante el día y por la noche
- Comprometerme a participar en la orquesta durante **todo el año escolar.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del Padre o Guardián

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del Estudiante

## 4. ¿Hay algo que le gustaría que yo supiera acerca de su hijo/a?

*Experiencia musical anterior, rasgos de personalidad, fortalezas, debilidades, intereses, etc.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 5. ¿Tiene usted alguna experiencia musical que podría beneficiar a los estudiantes de SES? *Por ejemplo: tocar un instrumento, tocar el piano, puede afinar un violín, etc.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Padres Voluntarios

*Por favor, indique cualquier evento que pueda estar interesado en ayudar con este año. Nos comunicaremos con usted antes del evento para confirmar su disponibilidad.*

\_\_\_ Concierto de Invierno \_\_\_ Concierto de Primavera \_\_\_ Wilde Lake String Fling (4/5 gr.)