



Harper's Choice Middle School Orchestra

2016-2017 Orchestra Handbook



Parents and students should read through this entire handbook.
Please make note of the events on the Orchestra Calendar and record them on your family calendar.

Return the Orchestra Contract by Friday, Sept. 9, 2016
(or complete it online at www.hcmsmusic.com)

How to contact Mrs. McKay:
Email: amanda_mckay@hcpss.org (best option); Phone: 410-313-6929

Orchestra Events 2016-2017 All mandatory events are noted in bold.

Sept. 15	Back to School Night, 6:30pm
Dec. 7	7th/8th Grade Winter Concert James Rouse Theater at Wilde Lake High School, 7:00pm
Dec. 13	6th Grade Winter Concert Cougar Café at Harper's Choice Middle School, 7:00pm
Jan. 28	Howard County Solo and Ensemble Festival Mt. Hebron High School (Snow date: Sat. 2/4)
Feb. 2	Wilde Lake String Fling James Rouse Theater at Wilde Lake High School Field Trip, 10:00am-1:00pm Evening Concert, 7:00pm (Snow date: 2/7)
Mar. 6 or 7 Exact date TBD	7th/8th Grade - Howard County Orchestra Assessment at Reservoir High School <i>* ALL 7th/8th Orchestra students are required to attend. This is our County Assessment!</i>
Mar. 8	6th Grade - Howard County Orchestra Adjudication at Reservoir High School <i>* ALL 6th Grade Orchestra students are required to attend. This is our County Assessment!</i>
Mar. 14	Sweet Serenades
April 19	6th Grade Music Department Trip - Toby's Dinner Theatre
May 17	7th/8th Grade Spring Concert James Rouse Theater at Wilde Lake High School, 7:00pm
May 23	6th Grade Spring Concert Cougar Café at Harper's Choice Middle School, 7:00pm
May 31	7 th /8 th Grade Music Department - NYC Broadway Trip

Course Description

The primary emphasis of orchestra classes will be on developing individual playing skills and ensemble skills, and on learning repertoire for concerts and for the Howard County Orchestra Assessment and Adjudication.

Student Expectations

As a musician in one of the orchestras, students are expected to:

1. **Be Respectful** to Mrs. McKay, other students and all instruments and music.
2. **Be Responsible** for yourself, your instrument and music, and your actions.
3. **Be Prepared** for class with all materials, a positive attitude and willingness to learn.

Instrument Storage

Students may bring their instruments into the Orchestra room before they go to 1st period. Cello and bass students may use school instruments for sectionals and rehearsals. These students should have their own instrument at home for practicing and for concert use.

INSTRUMENTS MUST BE TAKEN HOME EVERY DAY!

Grading Policy

Points Earned/Possible Points = Final Grade %

1. **Rehearsal Participation and Effort, 10 points per week:** Students will lose points if they are unable to fully participate because of forgotten materials or if their behavior is not positively contributing to the learning environment of the classroom.
2. **Sectionals, 10 points:** Full points will be given for attendance, preparedness and behavior.
3. **Performance Assessments, 10-50 points:** Students will be given playing quizzes and tests each quarter to assess preparedness and progress. Unannounced quizzes will be given as Mrs. McKay sees appropriate. Consistent "C" work or below on performance assessments is unacceptable. Students who receive a "C" or lower on any assessments will be asked to come in for extra help and/or retest until a "B" is achieved.
4. **Class work, 5-20 points:** Worksheets, Theory book, written quizzes and other
5. **Concert/Assessment Performances, 50 points each:** Performances include the Winter and Spring Concerts, Wilde Lake String Fling, and the Howard County Orchestra Assessment and Adjudication.
6. **Extra Credit Opportunities, 10 points each:**
 - a. Audition for the Howard County GT Orchestra
 - b. Audition for the Junior All State Orchestra
 - c. Participation in the Howard County Solo & Ensemble Festival
 - d. Participation in the State Solo & Ensemble Festival
 - e. Take private lessons. (Students should bring in a signed letter from their private teacher each quarter to receive extra credit.)
 - f. Attend a live music concert. Bring in a program or ticket stub from the concert attended and a short paragraph on the performance.

Sectional Classes

Orchestra is a graded academic class, where participation is required on a regular basis. Sectional pullouts will follow a rotating schedule ensuring that no student misses the same class more than twice per quarter.

- Students are expected to attend all scheduled sectionals. The only exception is when a student has to take a **test** or **county assessment**.
- Students are responsible for making up any missed work from their other classes.
- Students are to first report to their classroom teacher in order to turn in homework, record homework, pick up worksheets, and check in for attendance. After checking in, students will then report to their scheduled pullout within 5 minutes of the late bell.
- If a student must miss sectionals, they **MUST SIGN OUT FROM SECTIONALS BEFORE THEY MISS CLASS**. If students have not signed-out from sectionals before class they will be marked as unexcused and receive a zero for that day's Sectional grade.

Students will be given a copy of the sectional schedule each quarter. Students are required to carry this schedule with them, as it will serve as their hall pass. Schedules are posted on the Orchestra room door and extra copies are available in the Orchestra room. Students have **NO EXCUSE** for not knowing when to come to sectionals.

Rehearsal Seating

Although chair placement in middle school orchestras is not of utmost importance, it is recognized that musical performing ensembles need a set of hierarchical parts to function correctly. Seating placements will be given to all students based on his or her performing ability, comfort level with the difficulty of the part, and the immediate needs of the ensemble. Student placement within a section may change as the student develops his or her musical skills. Mrs. McKay will reassign seating at any time for the good of the ensemble and its members. Mrs. McKay's decisions on this matter are final.

Concert Dress

Having a uniform concert dress will give the ensembles a professional and classy appearance. The goal of a concert is to showcase the group as a whole and visual distractions take away from the performance. The concert dress for all Harper's Choice musicians will be as follows:

Boys: black dress pants, black dress shoes, black socks, white collared dress shirt.

Girls: black skirt (must be ankle or floor length) or black dress pants, black nylons, black dress shoes, white shirt with sleeves

****PLEASE NOTE:** Flip-flops are not acceptable for performances. Shirts, pants, and skirts with a contrasting color pattern should be avoided.*

Concert Attendance

As a member of the orchestra, each student is a valuable part of the ensemble and the ensemble cannot exist without each of its members. Therefore, it is crucial that **all** members perform at **all** concerts and performances. By concert time, students will have put forth a great deal of effort into individual practice and ensemble rehearsal. Concert dates are scheduled at the beginning of the academic year and every effort is taken to ensure that parents are informed of concert dates so that planned absences can be scheduled around concerts.

Howard County Public Schools recognizes the following reasons for an excused absence: 1) Severe illness, 2) Death in the family, 3) Court appearance, 4) Religious Observance. If an absence is to be excused, students and parents are responsible for notifying Mrs. McKay **in writing** as soon as they know they will be unable to perform. An alternative assignment will be given to those students who do not perform.

Students are expected to stay for the duration of each concert. Although it is strongly discouraged, if for any reason the student has to leave prior to the conclusion of the performance, **written notice** must be given to Mrs. McKay at least one day before the performance.

Required Materials * Please have all materials by September 2nd!

- A correctly sized instrument** in good working condition. ***A nametag must be on the instrument case at all times.*** Cello and bass students may use school instruments at school, however students must provide their own instrument for home practice.
- Rosin:** you should NEVER scratch your rosin. This will only break it apart and render it useless. If you need help getting new rosin started, Mrs. McKay can assist you.
- Soft cloth** for cleaning rosin off of your instrument. (A cleaning kit is not necessary.)
- Shoulder rest** for violins/violas.
- Rock stop** for cellos/basses.
- 2 Pencils** should be kept in the folder at all times. ***NO PENS!!***
- Music folder** with all music provided by Mrs. McKay.
- Method book or Technique book:**
 - 6th Grade Orchestra: Essential Elements, book 2
 - 7th/8th Orchestra: Essential Technique, book 3
- Music stand** for home practice.
- Metronome and Chromatic Tuner** for home practice. There are several models available at local music stores. (A Korg-50 or something similar.)

String Instrument Supply Resources

The following stores are recommended places to rent or buy instruments, take instruments for repairs and purchase strings and accessories. Buying an instrument is an important and sometimes difficult purchase. If you are in need of assistance in choosing an instrument or are unsure about the quality of an instrument, please feel free to contact me. I am happy to help you find an instrument that will best suit your student. **DO NOT** buy an instrument 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. **The best place to get a musical instrument is from a music store!** The stores that are marked with * specialize in string instruments.

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

* **Potter's Violin Shop** - 4706 Highland Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 652-7070, www.pottersviolins.com

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

Music & Arts Centers - 11200 Scaggsville Rd., Laurel, MD, (240) 568-0600,
- 9210 Baltimore National Pike, Ellicott City, MD 21042, (410) 461-1844
www.musicarts.com

Mike's Music - 4872 Montgomery Road, Ellicott City, MD
(410) 465-0700, www.mikesmusicmd.com

* **Shar Music** - www.sharmusic.com

* **Southwest Strings** - www.swstrings.com

Orchestra Assessment & Adjudication

The Howard County Orchestra Assessment and Adjudication are afternoon and evening events at Reservoir High School in which every Orchestra student must participate. Parents and students will be notified as soon as HCMS has been assigned a specific date to attend.

Please do not schedule any activities for the afternoon and evening on the given dates.

Private Lessons

Although it is not required, it is strongly 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 recommended local private teachers is available on the Orchestra Website and in the Orchestra Room.

Sweet Serenades

This event is a showcase of the music department students sponsored by the Harper's Choice Music Boosters. It is an evening for our musicians to demonstrate their skills in small ensembles or a solo in an intimate cabaret setting, complete with delicious desserts. Students who wish to participate will have the chance to audition for the music faculty in February.

HCMS Orchestra Contract

Return this form by Friday, Sept. 9, 2016

Or complete it online at www.mckayorchestra.weebly.com

Student Information

Student's Name _____

Primary Instrument _____ In what grade did you start playing this instrument? _____

Secondary Instrument _____ When did you start playing this instrument? _____

Do you take private lessons? _____ Private Teacher's Name _____
On which instrument do you take private lessons? _____

Tell me something about your child that you'd like me to know.

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

Music Events

Please check off any activities that you are interested in helping with this year. You will be contacted before the event to confirm your availability.

___ 6th Grade Winter Concert

___ 6th Grade Spring Concert

___ 7th/8th Grade Winter Concert

___ 7th/8th Grade Spring Concert

___ Wilde Lake String Fling, chaperone or concert help

___ Sweet Serenades

___ Orchestra Assessment/Adjudication Chaperone

HCMS Music Boosters

All parents are welcome to be involved with the HCMS Music Boosters!

Would you like to be contacted about how to be involved with the Music Boosters?

___ Yes ___ No

Student Agreement

By signing this form I am verifying that I have read the HCMS Orchestra Handbook, understand the expectations and agree to follow the policies that Mrs. McKay has established.

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

Parent Agreement

By signing this form I am verifying that I have read and discussed the HCMS Orchestra Handbook with my son/daughter, understand the expectations, and have reviewed the calendar and recorded the dates on the family calendar. I will assist my child in adhering to the policies that Mrs. McKay has established.

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE