



Monroe Middle School

Orchestra Handbook

2020-2021

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Monroe Orchestras! I am so excited that you have made a commitment to participate in the Fine Arts Program at Monroe Middle School.

During this unique time, orchestra class will look different than what we are used to. My goal this year is to provide each student with opportunities to perform virtually and (hopefully!) in-person as a soloist and member of large and small ensembles. Students will broaden their musical knowledge and skills by focusing on the following components: string technique, music theory, studying musicians and music history, listening to a variety of concerts, and performing for others.

This year, more than ever, we will be an orchestra that functions as a team. I ask each person to **commit to giving their best** to the group so that we can be greater than the sum of each individual. I will work my best to provide the best experience for you- I am a part of this team, too!

I look forward to navigating this new year with each of you. Let's make this a wonderful year of orchestra!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Kelsey Dewar

Table of Contents

Statement of Expectations	3
Concert Attendance	3
Classroom Requirements & Discipline Policy (In-Person)	3
Classroom Requirements & Discipline Policy (Virtual)	4
Grading Policy	4
Materials	5
Instruments	5
Private Lessons	6
Contacting Mrs. Dewar	6

Statement of Expectations

In orchestra, students are expected to learn and demonstrate a strong work ethic, professional and respectful conduct, and good communication skills. In class and especially in the community, students are expected to:

- Show up early to events
- Be prepared with the materials and attitude they need to perform their best
- Act with a respectful, responsible and positive demeanor toward themselves, each other and their teachers, parents and community members

Concert Attendance

Virtual

At this time, we do not know if or when we will be able to host in-person concerts this school year. Any concert dates added will be communicated with families well in advance. However, as this is a performance-based class, students will still be given opportunities to perform virtually. These performances will be required for a grade.

In-Person

Attendance is expected at all concerts except in the case of illness or family emergency. Please keep in mind that orchestra is a performance-based, academic class. Students will receive a grade based purely on their level of participation in each performance. It is expected that students stay for the entirety of each performance to receive full credit.

Written notice of any performance conflict must be provided two weeks prior to the performance for an absence to be considered excused, unless in the case of an emergency. Students with excused absences will do a concert make-up assignment for full credit. Students with unexcused absences will do a concert make-up for 80% credit.

Classroom Requirements & Discipline Policy (In-Person)

Below are the daily requirements that will help our rehearsals to run as smoothly as possible.

1. Students will show respect to the teacher and their peers.
2. Be on time to class and early to every rehearsal and performance. Students will be seated with their instruments and music out **two minutes** after the bell rings.
3. Bring the materials you need--your instrument, music and a pencil--and not the ones you don't: cell phones, work for another class, food/drink (this includes gum & candy!), or other distractions.
4. Students are productive in rehearsal. Speak or play **only** when you've been instructed to do so.
5. Students handle instruments with care. Label your instrument case and store it in your locker.

Students will be held to a strike system in class. Failure to meet the above requirements will result in one strike. A second strike will result in a discussion with the teacher and a reduction in participation points for the day. A third strike will result in a lunch detention. Any and all following offenses will result in an after-school detention and a phone call or email home to parents/guardians.

Classroom Requirements & Discipline Policy (Virtual)

Below are the daily requirements that will help our rehearsals to run as smoothly as possible.

1. Students will show respect to the teacher and their peers.
2. Be on time to all virtual class meetings. Students who are 10 minutes late will be considered tardy, per the District Remote Learning Handbook.
3. Bring the materials you need--your instrument, music and a pencil--and not the ones you don't: cell phones, work for another class, food/drink (this includes gum & candy!), or other distractions.
4. Students will remain muted unless asked to speak or play.
5. Students will handle instruments with care. Students will contact Mrs. Dewar if their instrument needs tuning or repairs.
6. From the District Remote Learning Handbook: "Students are encouraged to have the camera on for synchronous learning sessions. If a student chooses not to use their camera, a current photograph should be displayed. If a student needs to step away from their computer for a few minutes, they should inform the teacher through a private chat and turn the camera off."

Failure to meet the above requirements will result in a discussion with the teacher and a reduction in participation points for the day. If students continue to fail to meet requirements, parents/guardians will be notified.

Grading Policy

Student grades will consist of the following:

100 Points (per performance): Performance Tests & Concert Attendance

Students begin with a 100% in this area. A student's grade will only go down if there is an unexcused absence for a performance or a performance assignment is not completed.

10 Points (per week): Sectional Attendance

Students begin with a 100% in this area. A student's grade will be lowered if he or she is absent (unexcused) from their sectional and does not complete the makeup assignment.

20 Points (per week): Participation

Students have the opportunity to earn 4 points per day in this category. Students are expected to play each day to the best of their ability. Points in this category are broken down as follows:

Classroom conduct (See "Classroom Requirements"): 2 points

Preparedness for class (Materials: music, pencil, instrument): 1 point

On time for class (See "Tardiness Policy"): 1 point

25 Points: Practice Assignments & Reflections

Students are expected to practice at home 25-30 minutes a day 4-5 days per week.

50-100 Points: Playing Tests/Homework/Projects

Materials

Students will need the following materials:

- Instrument
- Rockstop or shoulder rest
- Pencil
- Music in 1-inch, 3 ring binder
- Sound Innovations book
- A Rhythm A Week book
- Rosin

Highly recommended for practice at home:

- Music stand
- Proper chair for practicing (for cellists)

Additionally, students must have the appropriate clothing for concerts:

- *Ladies:*
White or black blouses/fancy white shirts- $\frac{3}{4}$ sleeve or longer
Black skirts (knee length or longer) or pants down to the floor (no jeans or leggings)
Black close-toed shoes (No tennis shoes or flip-flops)
- *Gentlemen*
White or black button down shirt (preferred) or white long sleeve polo
Black dress pants, black socks, and black dress shoes (no jeans or tennis shoes)

Please remember Monroe's dress code when choosing concert attire. Students who dress inappropriately for concerts will be asked to change or will not be given the opportunity to perform.

Instruments

Students are responsible for having an instrument in good working condition. This includes a shoulder rest (for violins and violas), rosin, and rock stop (for cellos and basses). There are district owned instruments that are available for students to use while they are at

school. The rental fee is \$35.00 per year and checks should be made payable to “Monroe Middle School.”

Sectionals

All orchestra students will have a **rotating** weekly sectional with students of the same instrument. During Remote Learning and Hybrid Learning, students will have their sectionals virtually. Participation at each sectional will be required for a grade. If students are unable to attend their sectional for some reason, students will notify Mrs. Dewar via email.

Private Lessons

Private lessons are also highly recommended as a way for students to get one-on-one help and encouragement that they cannot get in the larger rehearsal setting. Every student I know who has taken private lessons has made great strides on their instrument, especially those students who love orchestra. If you are interested, please let me know—I would love to help you find a private teacher!

Contacting Mrs. Dewar

If at any time you have any questions, concerns, or information that would help me work with your child better, please send me an email: kelsey.dewar@cusd200.org.

Orchestra Handbook

Contract

Please review the Monroe Orchestra Handbook (available via email, Google Classroom or paper copy) and return this page to Mrs. Dewar by Friday, September 4, 2020.

By signing below, I affirm that:

- I have read and understand the policies stated in the Orchestra Handbook.
- By enrolling in the Monroe Orchestra, I agree to comply with these policies, procedures, and expectations.

Student Name

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date