

Highland Lakes

5th & 6th Grade Orchestra

Participant Handbook

Now is the time for students to reacquaint themselves with their instruments & begin rehearsals in Orchestra. 5th & 6th Grade Orchestra is for students with 2+ years of experience playing their instruments. Students participating in this orchestra will increase their level of musicianship by focusing on ensemble skills, note reading skills, musicality & rehearsal skills. Students in this ensemble play VIOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO, or BASS.

School Lessons: Orchestra is a yearlong commitment during which students will meet with Mrs. Schrade for rehearsal at least twice a week. Class times will be during the school day & before or after school. Attendance at rehearsals is VERY important as the students learn to play as an ensemble. Success in Orchestra depends on the effort put forth by each student. Therefore, the grading system rewards the following:

- Achievement – as measured through written assignments, playing tests, & performances.
- Citizenship (Pride) – as measured by preparedness for class/concerts, attentiveness during rehearsal/concert, and following class rules & expectations.

Rule of thumb: “*To be early is to be on time; to be on time is to be late; to be late is unacceptable.*”

Finding an Instrument: You will need to buy or rent an instrument for your student. There are many stores in our area. I would recommend calling a few to compare prices. Attached and on my teacher website, you will find a “Stringed Instrument Checklist,” which includes:

- A recommended brand name list
- A list of recommended questions to ask the vendor for collecting information on the instruments and rental plans.

The instrument should possess certain markers of quality, such as: working fine tuners, pegs & fingerboard made of ebony wood, & bow hair made from real horsehair. Additionally, the instrument should be of natural wood color. Painted instruments are novelty instruments and usually don’t sound good.

Instrument Repair: All instruments, regardless of quality, will need routine maintenance. Parts of instruments can break & accidents may happen. It is important that students first take the instrument to Mrs. Schrade if an instrument needs attention. **NEVER try to repair an instrument at home.** A student who does not have an instrument in class due to inaction on a repair may experience a loss in daily points for attending class unprepared.

Supplies: Students participating in 5th & 6th Grade Orchestra are responsible for bringing the following items to EVERY rehearsal & concert:

- An instrument (violin, viola, cello, bass)
- A method book (**Essential Elements 2000 for Strings, Bk. 2**)
- Rosin & soft cleaning cloth
- A rock stop (cellos & basses)
- A shoulder pad (violins & violas)
- A pencil (no pens!)
- A folder or binder for the music
- A Tuner

Highland Lakes will be hosting a Rental Night on **Tuesday, August 8th, at 4:30-6:00**. This would be a great opportunity for parents & students to talk to a music store representative about all of your instrument & accessory needs.

Please also consider the at home practice space. Do you have a music stand? Do you have a space to designate as practice space? Is there a particular time of day that is best for practicing? Taking the time to set-up the practice space at home will really help with the success of your student!

Additional Suggestions: The following items are not required, but would be beneficial.

- Private lessons provide the opportunity for one-on-one instruction & are encouraged for all students playing a musical instrument.
 - During a private lesson, a skilled musician shares his or her knowledge and expertise with a student who plays the same instrument. Since lessons are one-on-one, the teacher tailors instruction to your child's unique & specific strengths & weaknesses. During the weekly lesson, the private teacher will assist the student, introduce new skills & concepts, & assign exercises for practice during the week. Although the material is taught during the lesson, your child is responsible for mastering the skills & exercises at home through daily practice. When the student does his or her part at home, the private teacher can build upon that foundation at the next lesson. In order to get your money's worth, it's important that your child understands that daily practice is part of the agreement.
 - There are many private instructors throughout the valley. A list of private teachers can be found on my teacher website. Feel free to call them to find out about their background, teaching experience, & rates. Most students will benefit from a 30-minute lesson once per week. You can expect to pay around \$20 - \$30 per lesson. Should you decide that lessons are right for your child, I am happy to help you find one.
- A Metronome can be purchased for around \$20.00 & is a great tool for developing a steady beat. A great metronome website is: www.metronomeonline.com
- A Chromatic Tuner is great for developing a sense of intonation. These can be purchased for around \$20.

Concerts: Orchestra is a performance-based course. Performances are an essential part of musical development & are graded. Concert dates are listed below as well as on my website. Emails & fliers will be sent home with concert information as concert dates approach.

➤ **Concert Dates: 12/5/23, 6 pm** **5/2/24, 6 pm**

It is essential to write the dates on your calendars immediately so scheduling conflicts will not occur. As mentioned before, concert performance is included in the grade the students earn for this class. Please contact Mrs. Schrade about scheduling conflicts. Below are examples of reasons that would be considered for excused absences:

- Medical Emergency
- Death in the family
- Religious Holiday
- Excused school absence
- Family event such as a wedding (Must be approved in advance by the director)

Excused absences are granted at the discretion of the director. All absences require communication between the parent & the director. Verbal excuses from students are not acceptable. Unexcused absences from either rehearsals or concerts will alter a student's grade as well as jeopardize eligibility for orchestra field trips.

Concert Dress Code: Concert dress code is conservative. Visual distractions on stage distract from the audio performance. All musicians are to wear the following attire:

- The Highland Lakes Performing Arts polo shirt
- Black slacks (no leggings)
- Black socks & black closed toe shoes.
- Long hair must be combed & tied or pinned back

Information about ordering music shirts will be available in August. Walmart and Target have cost effective black shoes and socks options for under \$10.

Students who choose to be “out of uniform” for performances risk one of the following: losing points, being asked to not perform, or having to call their parents/guardians for appropriate attire to be brought. **Uniform is part of the district instrumental ensemble curriculum.**

Tax Credit: It is highly encouraged for parents to participate in the Arizona State Tax Credit Program through the Deer Valley Unified School District. This tax credit money can be donated to the orchestra program, and parents receive 100% of the money back through taxes returns dollar for dollar. We have a limited budget to purchase instruments, music & supplies. Tax credit donations make it possible to purchase these items & more.

Communication: It is crucial that teachers, parents, & students maintain open lines of communication. Contact information is provided at the end of this handbook for questions or concerns.

Students with a positive attitude, personal responsibility, & self-discipline will have a quality learning experience. Each student will feel the satisfaction of accomplishment through regular attendance, good conduct, care of school property, & preparation of music/assignments during class. Most students are able to achieve these expectations without difficulty.

- **Asking for help** – It is important to be prepared & not wait until the last minute for help. You may not know how to perform something the first time, or even after many times during practice. It is fantastic when you ask Mrs. Schrade for help in a timely manner, as this shows a true ownership of your education & performance skills. This also shows true care for your teammates. Mrs. Schrade is available most days, before school at 8:00am (after school by appointment) to help answer any questions & to retake tests for a higher score.
- **Loss of Materials** – If you lose any materials passed out in class, you or your parents may always ask again for the information, as it is important that we are all on the same page. Many times, the information is already available to you either through Canvas or on my teacher website.
- **Music** – The first copy of music is provided free of charge. It is the student’s responsibility to keep up with & take care of music. Students must have their own music in class each day. If the 3 ring binder containing music is lost please inform Mrs. Schrade.

My phone number and email are listed below. I am looking forward to speaking with you soon!

Holly Schrade

Highland Lakes Orchestra/Music Teacher

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Holly.Schrade@dvusd.org

<https://www.dvusd.org/Domain/3028>

The Highland Lakes Performing Arts polo shirt can be purchased for \$20.00 through an online payment (instructions are attached & on the Highland Lakes website). The shirt order form is part of the Orchestra Contract that is attached to this handbook. This form is also available on my teacher website.