



West Fargo High School

Orchestra Syllabus 2025-2026



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Welcome to the WFHS Orchestra family! I'm very excited to get to know everyone and start making music together. I'm looking forward to seeing all the progress we'll make over the next year, as well as celebrating our growth and successes at each concert! Please take a moment to read through the following information, which includes our concert schedule, concert attendance policy, grading policy, and other orchestra opportunities.

Course Description

The WFHS Orchestra Program is home to three ensembles and one extracurricular group:

- ❖ Concert Orchestra - 9th grade only, Block 2.2B
- ❖ Philharmonia Orchestra - 10th-12th grade, non-auditioned, Block 4B
- ❖ Sinfonia Orchestra - 10th-12th grade, auditioned, Block 1B
- ❖ Chamber Orchestra – open to all orchestra students, meets 7:30-8:15 am Tues/Thurs

These courses will focus on strengthening technical and emotional playing skills through performance of a wide variety of genres and styles. Musicians will explore repertoire from underrepresented composers to diversify their orchestral experience, foster their appreciation of the arts, and learn about the value of teamwork in an ensemble setting.

Classroom Expectations

1. Respect *yourself* and *your* property
2. Respect *others* and *their* property
3. Keep the orchestra room, practice rooms, and instrument lockers looking better than you found them. Please pick up after yourself.
4. Keep gum, food, and drinks out of the music wing (water is okay). Food and drinks in the orchestra room are only allowed at Ms. Pepple's discretion.

Rehearsal Expectations

1. Always have a pencil - use it often!
2. Play with proper posture – this is essential to making good sound
3. Stay focused and on task - do not work on homework or study for other classes during orchestra.
4. Come to class prepared and ready to learn – this means practicing outside of class!
Taking the time to work on your individual parts at home or in your private lessons gives us more class time to improve as an ensemble.

Materials

Students are required to provide the following:

1. Instrument in good, working condition (school instruments available to borrow)
2. Folding stand for at-home practice
3. Shoulder rest/rock stop
4. Rosin and a soft cloth for cleaning
5. Mute – I have some available in class
6. Method Book:
 - a. Concert and Philharmonia Orchestra - “*Habits of a Successful Middle Level String Musician*” by Christopher Selby & Scott Rush (purple book)
 - b. Sinfonia Orchestra - “*Habits of a Successful String Musician, Second Edition*” by Christopher Selby & Scott Rush (black book with multicolored spotlights)

Concert Attendance Policy

Orchestra is a performance-based class. Our rehearsals are spent preparing for our concerts, which are equivalent to summative assessments and graded as such. Concert performances also connect students with the community and allow us to celebrate their hard work and musical progress. Therefore, **it is mandatory for orchestra students to attend all concerts.** In the case of illness or family emergencies, a student’s absence will be excused, and they’ll have an opportunity to make up the points. **Sports (unless a region/state competition) are not an excused activity. Flexibility will be provided for students to attend both events, if possible.** An unexcused absence from a concert will result in a grade of zero. Please contact me as soon as you know there’s a scheduling conflict with a concert so we can plan accordingly.

Concert Attire

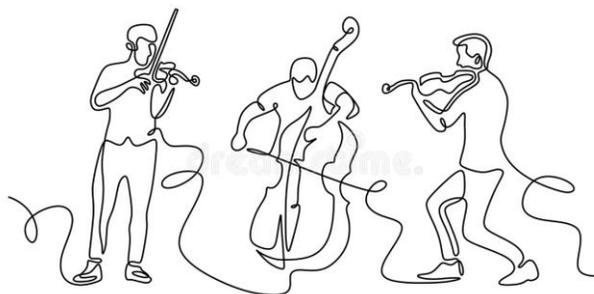
Unless there is a special dress code announced, **all performers should wear concert black from head to toe,** including tights/socks. Tops must have sleeves (no tank tops), bottoms must be mid-calf length or more, with no high slits. Musicians can choose to wear pants, a skirt, or a dress, but keep in mind how it will affect playing posture (it can be tricky to play cello in a dress!). Shoes must be black and close-toed (no flip-flops or slippers). **Jeans, sweatpants, and T-shirts are considered inappropriate concert attire and are not allowed.** If you have any questions or concerns regarding the concert attire, including financial concerns, please contact me as soon as possible. I am happy to help you find concert clothing.

Grading Policy

Homework, lessons, and weekly points – 50%

Tests and Projects – 25%

Concerts – 25%



Lessons

Every orchestra student is required to have a minimum of 1 lesson per quarter with Ms. Pepple. If you already take lessons privately, you are exempt from this requirement – please share this information asap. Students are responsible for signing up for their own lessons with Ms. Pepple – a sign-up sheet will be available by the first full week of school.

Concert Schedule – look through carefully and add these to your calendar.

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME	WHO
October 9th	Fall Orchestra Concert	WFHS Auditorium	7:30 pm	All Orchestras
December 15th	Holiday Orchestra Concert	WFHS Auditorium	7:30 pm	All Orchestras
February 9th	Pops Concert	WFHS Auditorium	7:30 pm	All Orchestras
February 10th	Orchestra EDC Large Group Festival	Horace High School Auditorium	TBD	TBD
Feb. 23 rd -24th	WFPS Festival of Orchestras	WFHS Auditorium	Rehearsals all day, schedule TBD Feb. 23 rd – 7:00 pm individual concert Feb. 24 th – 7:00 pm combined concert	Sinfonia Orchestra
April 17th	Orchestra EDC Solo & Ensemble Contest	Olivet Lutheran Church	All Day	Open to all orchestras
May 4th	Packer Orchestra Concert	WFHS Main Gym	7:00 pm	All Orchestras grades 6-12
May 12th	Awards Concerts	WFHS Auditorium	6:00 pm – Concert and Philharmonia Orchestras 7:00 – Sinfonia Orchestra	All Orchestras
May 24th	Graduation	Scheels Arena	TBD	TBD

Other Opportunities!

These are great options for playing higher level music with other orchestra students from all over, or alongside collegiate/professional orchestras. More information will be shared in class, please contact Ms. Pepple with questions.

- ND State Strings Festival – October 10th-11th, Jamestown High School. No audition required, free concert at 2:00 on Saturday the 11th. \$40 payment due early Sept, more information coming soon.
- Concordia Honors Orchestra – November 7th-9th, Concordia College. Nominations due Sept. 29th, registration due Oct. 17th.
- UND Honors Strings Festival – January 23rd-25th, UND Campus. Auditions Oct. 27th - Nov. 1st.
- NDMEA All State Orchestra – March 26th-28th, Bismarck Event Center. Auditions held at WFHS in early January, date TBA.
- Minot State University Orchestra Festival – February 5th-7th, Minot State University Campus. More information coming soon.

Chamber Orchestra

Chamber Orchestra is our extracurricular group! We meet at 7:30 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays to play fun music outside of regular orchestra class. This is open to all orchestra students, grades 9-12. More information regarding auditions will be shared later.

Fundraising

Multiple fundraising opportunities will be available throughout the year, and information will be shared once they are finalized. All student profits will be added to their personal orchestra account, and can be used for audition/festival fees, orchestra merchandise, music department trips, etc. Funds cannot be withdrawn for personal use. This year we will begin tracking funds through the Cut Time program – more information will be shared later.

Parent/Guardian(s)

Thank you so much for being part of your student's musical journey! Your student and our music program could not do any of this without your continued support. If you have any questions or concerns about anything, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. Here are a few things you can do at home to help your student succeed in orchestra:

1. Encourage them to practice outside of class
2. Follow our social media pages and spread the word about our concerts!
3. Look through the concert and events schedule and add them to your calendar
4. Challenge them to pursue orchestra opportunities outside of class

Thank you!