

Big Sky High School Orchestra



Student Handbook 2025-2026

Welcome to Big Sky High School Orchestra	3
Class Descriptions	3
Intermediate Orchestra	3
Advanced Orchestra	4
Seating and Chair Placement	4
Grading & Evaluation	4
Participation: 50%	4
Attendance and Absences from Rehearsal	5
Performances: 30%	5
Performance Expectations	5
Dress Code	5
Concert Black	6
Orchestra T-Shirt	6
Projects and Other Assignments: 20%	6
Instruments & Equipment	6
Required Equipment	6
Rental of school owned instruments	7
Private Lessons	7
Lettering	8
Orchestra Sponsorship	9
Big Sky High School Orchestra Calendar 2025-2026	11
BSHS Orchestra Handbook Acknowledgement	13

Welcome to Big Sky High School Orchestra

Instructor : Mrs. Angelica Kalasz

Email: akalasz@mcpsmt.org

Phone: 728-2400 X 8676

Welcome to Big Sky High School Orchestra! I am so thrilled to begin another year of connecting and collaborating through music! I care about you and your happiness and success at Big Sky, and look forward to getting to know each other as individuals. My goal is for you to have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to make music a meaningful part of your life whether it is a part of your career or an enjoyable lifelong hobby! Please communicate with me if there is anything I can do to help you/your student to be successful in orchestra this year!

I will use a combination of technology to communicate with students and families this year:

Infinite Campus: view your attendance and grades

Google Classroom: announcements, access to digital assignments and resources

Staff Webpage: concert calendar available to the public

Blackboard: email/text messages with news updates and announcements

MCPS Gmail: individual communication; if you have a question or concern please email me! I will endeavor to respond within 24 hours during the work week!

I strongly encourage all families to check that their email and phone numbers are up to date in the Infinite Campus Portal to ensure that they receive all important communication from Big Sky!

Class Descriptions

Intermediate Orchestra

Intermediate Orchestra is open with no audition to any student with previous string instrument experience. In general this orchestra is composed of 9th and 10th grade students, however students of all grades are welcome. Students are required to perform in multiple evening performances each year and participate in the large ensemble portion of the annual district music festival. Other in class performances and opportunities may also be made available.

Advanced Orchestra

Advanced Orchestra requires an audition for entrance. This ensemble works at a fast pace and is required to complete more performance obligations each year. In general this orchestra is composed of 11th and 12th grade students, however, 9th and 10th grade students are welcome to audition. Students are required to perform in multiple evening performances, participate in the annual AA Orchestra Festival, and participate in the large ensemble portion of the annual district music festival. Additionally, students are required to prepare a small ensemble for the annual district music.

Seating and Chair Placement

Students will rotate within their instrument section for each concert and sometimes between pieces of repertoire. In general more experienced students are asked to serve as section leaders, but this responsibility will rotate as well. Students' attendance to orchestra class will have an affect on their placement. Example: unexcused absences could result in chair movement. If a student must be absent from class for a school related event or excused absence that student is required to send me an email directly notifying me of the absence. I put a lot of thought into placing students into a seating chart that will help the ensemble achieve our most excellent sound as a whole. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Grading & Evaluation

Orchestra is a process based learning experience. The work we do together everyday is important to our growth as musicians and is necessary to create a polished final product. Therefore it is important to be present in rehearsal and actively participate in the learning process.

Participation: 50%

Students have the opportunity to earn 4 participation points for each day of class rehearsal. This grade will be entered weekly. Students will be graded on the following standard:

4-Excellent	3-Adequate	2-Needs Work	1-Unacceptable
• Demonstrate kindness and respect towards your teacher and classmates • Be fully prepared for class with instrument, sheet music, pencil, all other	• Missing equipment, sheet music, Occasionally unprepared • Occasional	• Frequently unprepared to participate • Disregard for sheet music, equipment	• Unprepared with regard sheet music, equipment • Negative attitude • Unwilling to participate/Negative participation

equipment • Focused and attentive to the learning process during class • Ask questions and participate in discussion • Mark your music with pencil as needed • Use cell phone as an appropriate tool	lack of focus or participation • Minor disruptions to the class rehearsal • Minor cell phone infraction	• Frequently negative, disruptive, or unprepared • Excessive cellphone infractions	• Excessive cellphone infractions
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Attendance and Absences from Rehearsal

Orchestra is a performance-based class and the process of our in class rehearsals is the key factor in building musical skill and giving successful performances. However, I am aware that orchestra students are some of the most well-rounded students at Big Sky and frequently have absences related to athletics and activities, as well as illness or family matters. It is generally expected that students practice outside of class to perform their part well, however this is of added importance when a student has been absent.

Performances: 30%

Performances are worth 50 - 100 points depending upon the length and formality of each event. Orchestra is a performance-based class. Our concerts are the equivalent of a Final exam and need to be attended without exception! We are a team and your classmates need you to be there. Please communicate with Mrs. Kalasz ASAP if you will miss a performance due to illness, family emergency, or other extenuating circumstances.

Performance Expectations

Students receive full credit by:

- ☐ Arriving on time (generally 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance)
- ☐ Dressing appropriately (concert black, orchestra t-shirt, or other if announced)
- ☐ Having instrument, sheet music, and all other necessary equipment
- ☐ Performing with their ensemble to the best of their ability
- ☐ Attending the entire performance and showing support for other ensembles on the program
- ☐ Assisting with set-up/tear down as requested

Dress Code

There are two primary uniforms for BSHS Orchestra Performances: concert black and orchestra t-shirt.

Concert Black

Our goal is to look unified and not stand out as an individual while we are presenting our ensemble's hard work!

Top: Solid Black

- No T-Shirts Please; Elbow Length or Longer; Conservative Neckline; Comfortable for Playing
- Ties of any color may be worn if desired

Bottom: Solid Black

- Dress Pants; Dress or Skirts past the knee
- Black Socks/Stockings/Tights
- Black Dress Shoes: not tennis shoes or flip flops

Orchestra T-Shirt

An Orchestra T-Shirt is included in the \$25 supply fee for class. We will wear our orchestra t-shirts with jeans/solid colored pants/shorts for informal performances such as visiting other schools or performing at a senior living facility.

Projects and Other Assignments: 20%

A variety of written work including music theory, listening, music history/appreciation, composition, and self evaluations will take place throughout the school year. Instructions will be made available through Google Classroom and/or through paper handouts depending on the nature of the work. These assignments are meant to complement and enhance your skills performing on your instrument.

Instruments & Equipment

Required Equipment

- Instrument & spare strings
- Sheet Music (keep organized in a binder or folder)
- Pencil
- Rosin

- Shoulder rest/sponge for violin/viola players
- Rock stops for cello/bass players

Having a spare set of strings for your instrument is part of being a responsible musician. If a string breaks, I am happy to help you replace it!

Rental of school owned instruments

If you don't own your own instrument, you can either rent one from a local music store for \$25-\$50 per month or rent one from BSHS. The fee for a BSHS instrument for September through June is \$75 (about \$8.33 per month). Please fill out the rental form on Infinite Campus and either make a payment online (added to your orchestra course fee) or make a check out to MCPS Arts Education. If necessary you can pay a deposit of \$20 by September 8th and pay the rest later. Please contact me if you could benefit from assistance with your instrument rental fee. **Rental contract and fee/down payment are due by September 6th, 2024.**

Repairs due to damage caused by the student will be charged to the student.

Private Lessons

One of the best ways for students to grow as young musicians and to develop a deeper appreciation for their instrument is through weekly lessons. Each instrument requires a unique set of skills and the best way to master these is through help from a private instructor. Lessons are a wonderful investment that will enhance student learning in all areas. Consider contacting a private teacher to get started now!

Violin/Viola Teachers

Heidi Martin: 406-549-4167

Jason Bell: 406-830-8343, or
missoulaviolinist@gmail.com

Sylvia Allen Oman: 406-370-5625

Madeleine McKelvey: 406- 728-6751

Cello Teachers

Jessica Catron: 406-493-4533
Marley Ball: 406-598-6890

Bass Teachers

Mike Johns: 239-5691

Lettering

Lettering is a way to celebrate the efforts and achievements of students who commit themselves to becoming better musicians outside of class and being of service to the community.

To be eligible for a letter in orchestra students must be passing orchestra with a B level or higher grade; cannot have any unexcused absences for curricular performances; and must accumulate at least 250 points through the following activities:

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| ☐ All State Recorded Audition (Completed Spring 2023) | 25 points |
| ☐ Missoula Youth Symphony (Full Year) | 200 points |
| ☐ MT All State Orchestra | 100 points |
| ☐ District Small Ensemble Performance | 50 points/entry |
| ☐ Receive a Superior on District Small Ensemble | add 25 points |
| ☐ District Solo Performance | 75 points |
| ☐ Receive a Superior on District Solo | add 25 points |
| ☐ Private Lessons | 10 points/lesson |
| ☐ Attend a live music performance | 5 points/performance |
| ☐ Attach a ticket/concert program/verification | |
| ☐ Music/Service Activity (subject to director approval) | 10 points/hour |
| ☐ (This could include community or church performance, optional BSHS school performances, volunteering with Missoula Symphony, service hours for the Big Sky Orchestra program, other? check with Mrs. Kalasz) | |

A digital copy of the lettering application will be available in Google Classroom. Physical copies will also be available. It is recommended that students start a running list of their activities in the fall to keep track as the year progresses.

Orchestra Sponsorship

If you or your business are able to donate to the Big Sky Orchestra program, please do so! These funds will be used to help scholarship students who cannot afford supply or travel costs, replace old instruments and help to pay for extra coaches and clinicians. Any amount is appreciated, but we suggest \$10, \$25, \$50, or \$100+. Your generous contribution will be listed on the orchestra concert programs for the year. If you give over \$100 we will include a logo on the program; please email the logo to Mrs. Kalasz (akalasz@mcpsmt.org)

Please make checks out to Big Sky Orchestra. The school district is a non-profit. EIN 81-0504312. Your gift may qualify as a charitable deduction for federal tax purposes. Thank you!

☐ Contribution Amount \$ _____

☐ Pledge Name & Address:

☐ Name as it is to appear on the Program:

☐ Logo?

If you would like to direct your donation to a specific need please indicate below:

- ☐ Scholarship fund for student fees/ concert attire
- ☐ Guest Coaches and Clinicians
- ☐ Orchestra Sheet Music
- ☐ Use as most needed

Turn in fees and donations to Mrs.Kalasz or mail to:

Angelica Kalasz, Big Sky Orchestra
3100 South Avenue West
Missoula, MT 59804

Thank you!

Big Sky High School Orchestra Calendar 2025-2026

Please add these important dates to your calendar! Dates in **BOLD** are events for **ALL** orchestra students. Print out this page and save!! Students will be informed ASAP of any changes. Additional performances may take place during class/the school day! These will be announced in class and updated on the BSHS Website

Date	Time	Event	Location	Notes
October 27, 2025	7 pm concert, arrive by 6:30	BSHS Orchestra Concert	BSHS Auditorium	All orchestra students
October 16-18, 2024	PM on the 16th, all day 17th-18th	All State Honor Ensembles	Great Falls, MT	Students selected by Audition
December 15, 2024	7 pm concert, arrive 6:30	BSHS Orchestra Concert with CSP Fly-up	BSHS Auditorium	All orchestra students, CS Porter 8th graders
January 12, 2026	7:30 pm- brief performance, arrive at 6:00	"A Night with Big Sky Orchestra"	BSHS Auditorium	All orchestra students, Target Range/Hellgate 8th graders
February 2-3, 2026	All-Day, exact times TBD	AA Orchestra Festival	Kalispell, MT	Advanced Orchestra Students only
March 31, 2026	7 pm concert, arrive 6:30	BSHS Pre-Festival Orchestra Concert	BSHS Auditorium	All orchestra students
April 18, 2026	Exact times TBA	District Music Festival-string solos and ensembles	Big Sky	Required for Advanced Orchestra, encouraged for Intermediate
May 1-2, 2026	All day	State Music Festival	TBD	Optional for students who earn a superior at District Festival
May 18, 2026	7 pm concert, arrive 6:30	FINAL BSHS Orchestra Concert	BSHS Auditorium	All orchestra students

BSHS Orchestra Handbook Acknowledgement

Please return this page by September 8, 2025

We acknowledge that we have read the BSHS Orchestra Handbook. We understand and agree that:

- ☐ Important information and announcements (email/texts) will be sent out through Blackboard and is available on the MCPS website.
- ☐ Students will be graded on a combination of daily rehearsal participation, performances, and a variety of written/recorded work.
- ☐ Students will rotate seating to achieve our best possible group sound.
- ☐ There are curricular performances in the evening which the student is required to attend. We have reviewed the dates and made note of them. We are a team, and it is unfair to your classmates to be absent.
- ☐ The formal concert dress code consists of solid black (tops, bottoms, shoes, socks). The informal concert dress code consists of the 2023-24 BSHS Orchestra t-shirt
- ☐ A \$25 supply fee is requested to cover the cost of student t-shirts and supplies for events. Please make checks payable to BSHS Orchestra.
 - ☐ If you would like to sponsor the supply fee for another student who is unable to please indicate here
- ☐ (if applicable) In order to rent a BSHS instrument, I need to fill out a rental contract and make a payment on Infinite Campus for \$75. **Contract, fee or down payment are due by September 9, 2024.**

Student's Name: _____ Student signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Parent/Guardian signature: _____

