# West Fargo High School
# Orchestra Syllabus 2026-2027

Ms. Sophia Pepple | Room 108C

spepple@west-fargo.k12.nd.us | 701-499-1832



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, Blocks 1A and 3B
- 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 for loan)
2. Folding stand for at-home practice
3. Shoulder rest for violins and violas
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"* by Christopher Selby & Scott Rush (red and black book)

## 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 for full credit. **Sports (unless a region/state competition) are not an excused activity. Flexibility will be provided for students to attend both events, if possible.** Students with an unexcused absence will be able to make up the concert for partial credit. 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, 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. Shoes must be black and close-toed (no flip-flops or slippers). **Jeans, sweatpants, and T-shirts are considered inappropriate concert attire.** 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, sectionals, and rehearsal points – 50%

Tests and Projects – 25%

Concerts – 25%



**Sectionals**

Every music student is required to attend 2 sectionals per concert cycle. Students will be requested for two WIN sessions to work with their peers and Ms. Pepple on specific concert pieces and playing skills. If a student misses a sectional, they will receive a grade of zero until they find time to make up the points with Ms. Pepple.

**Concert Schedule** – please look through carefully and add these events to your calendar:

| DATE | EVENT | LOCATION | TIME | WHO |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| October 8th | Fall Orchestra Concert | WFHS Auditorium | 7:30 pm | All Orchestras |
| December 14th | Holiday Orchestra Concert | WFHS Auditorium | 7:30 pm | All Orchestras |
| February 18th | Orchestra EDC Large Group Festival | Fargo North HS Auditorium | TBD | Philharmonia |
| Feb. 22nd – 23rd | WFPS Festival of Orchestras | Horace High School Auditorium | Rehearsals during school day, schedule TBD<br><br>Feb. 22nd – 7:00 pm individual concerts<br><br>Feb. 23rd – 7:00 pm combined concert | Sinfonia |
| March 1st | Pops Concert | WFHS Auditorium | 7:30 pm | All Orchestras |
| April 16th | Orchestra EDC Solo & Ensemble Contest | Olivet Lutheran Church | All Day | Participating students |
| May 10th | Packer Orchestra Concert | WFHS Main Gym | 7:00 pm | All Orchestras grades 6-12 |
| May 18th | Awards Concerts | WFHS Auditorium | 6:00 pm – Concert and Philharmonia Orchestras<br><br>7:00 – Sinfonia Orchestra | All Orchestras |
| May 30th | 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 2nd – 3rd, Minot High School. No audition required, free concert at 2:00 on Saturday the 3rd. $40 payment due early Sept (TBA)
- Concordia Honors Orchestra – November 6th – 8th, Concordia College. Nominations due Sept. 25th, registration due Oct. 9th.
- UND Honors Strings Festival – January 22nd – 24th, UND Campus. Audition dates TBA
- NDMEA All State Orchestra – March 21st – 23rd, Bismarck Event Center. Auditions held early January (TBA)

**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 CutTime program – more information will be shared later.

**Parents & Guardians**

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:

- Encourage them to practice outside of class
- Look through the concert and events schedule and add these to your calendar
- Challenge them to pursue orchestra opportunities outside of class

Thank you,

Sophia Pepple



# 2026-2027 WFHS Orchestras Syllabus Contract

Student Name_____ Grade_____

Circle Student's Orchestra: Concert Orchestra (1A or 3B) Philharmonia (4B) Sinfonia (1B)

By signing this contract, I acknowledge that I have read through and understand the information in this syllabus, including the following:

- Classroom and Rehearsal Expectations
- Grading Policy and Sectionals
- Concert Schedule, Attire, and Attendance Policy

If you have any questions, concerns, or need any further clarifications about the contents of this syllabus, please contact Ms. Pepple – spepple@west-fargo.k12.nd.us

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Parent/Guardian Email(s)

_____

_____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

**Please tear off this page from the syllabus and return to Ms. Pepple no later than Friday, September 11th, 2026.**