



# Hightower Trail Orchestra

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## Handbook 2017 - 2018

Michael R. Tompkins, Jr., Director  
Paul O'Keefe, Asst. Director

Laura Montgomery, *Principal*  
Ruth Hesson, *Assistant Principal*  
Joni Myler, *Assistant Principal*

Dear Orchestra Families,

Welcome to the 2017-2018 HTMS Orchestra Program! We are overjoyed that you and your child have chosen to participate in this year's program. Playing in the orchestra encourages creativity and helps students learn discipline and focus. Statistics have proven that students who participate in music programs are among the academically elite in their schools. Students' adult lives are filled with successes often attributed to skills gained through the orchestra experience: self-discipline, work ethic, attention to detail, teamwork, and confidence. We hope each student will take advantage of the many opportunities available through the orchestra program and continue music as a lifelong pursuit.

This handbook serves as your reference for the activities we have planned this year. It also includes classroom policies and procedures. Please review the information and mark your home calendar with concert and activity dates. Assist your child in completing the student information form.

Parents are encouraged to be involved with the orchestra program. There are many areas that require assistance such as data entry, uniforms, chaperoning, piano accompaniment, and pre-concert assistance. Please consider volunteering and indicate your choice(s) on the student information sheet.

Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns about your child's progress in orchestra. It is best to reach us through school email but you can also call the number printed below. We look forward to an outstanding year of music learning and performance.

We encourage you to refer to the orchestra website often for up-to-date information:

<http://www.htmsorchestra.com>

Musically Yours,

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# Materials

## Method Books:

Sixth Grade – Essential Elements 2000 for Strings - Book 1

Seventh Grade – Essential Elements 2000 for Strings – Book 2

Eighth Grade – method books will be provided in class (no purchase necessary)

***Make sure you purchase the book with your instrument name!***

## Orchestra Supplies:

Case, well identified with name and pod.

Rosin (Cello and Bass students are required to bring in rosin for class use.)

Soft cloth

Shoulder rest, violins and violas (You should try with your instrument before buying).

Endpin stop (rockstop), cellos and basses- for concerts and home use only.

Black 1” hard cover 3 ring binder

Clear sheet protectors

50 sheets of lined notebook paper

Pencil

Metronome/Tuner-for home use only

Music stand for home practice/field trips (folding wire stand)



## Instrument Storage:

**Each student will be assigned a school locker. Students will receive this assignment during the first week of school. Personal instruments and school instruments must be stored in the proper place. Students will lose participation points if they fail to put away materials.**

- *Put your name on your case, book, shoulder rest, and endpin stop.*
- *Violins and violas keep a soft cloth in your case.*
- *Keep your case on the left side of your chair. Make sure it is closed!*
- *Each student is responsible for putting away his/her instrument and music at the end of class.*

## Locker Information:

All students are personally responsible for their assigned orchestra lock. Should this lock be lost or stolen, the student will be charged a lock replacement fee of \$7. Keeping your orchestra locker locked at all times should avoid any loss or theft.

Students are responsible for keeping their lockers locked at all times.

Only items for orchestra class should be kept in the locker (including music, instrument, instrument accessories and binder).

# Performance Attire



**The Hightower Trail Orchestra performance attire consists of the following:**

**Sixth Grade**                    Orchestra Shirts/Blue Jeans/Casual Shoes (no sandals)  
(Please circle shirt size on student info sheet)

**Seventh/Eighth**            Orchestra Polo Shirt (order form will be sent home at a later date)  
Boys: Black slacks, black belt, black socks, black dress shoes  
Girls: Black slacks, black hose, black ballet flats  
**No sandals, flip-flops, open-toed shoes, white sneakers, white socks or black jeans!!**

**Orchestra concerts are considered formal events for our students and it is very important that students look their best for each performance. Please address uniform issues long before the concert date. Students who arrive for a concert without acceptable clothing will not be allowed to participate in the event. If you have a problem obtaining an outfit, please contact us immediately so we can work together to resolve this matter.**

# Performance Attendance

**Students are expected to attend all performances** unless a director has approved an acceptable excuse *two weeks prior to the performance*. Students who do not attend the performance must submit a recording of the concert music on the next school day following the concert. Students who fail to submit a recording will have points deducted from their Playing Test grade.

Our performances are intended to showcase the orchestra students' hard work and are also designed to teach stage and audience etiquette. Therefore, students are expected to behave in a courteous and professional manner before, during, and after the performance.

Performance attendance and make-ups are required for students attending any orchestra field trips. Students who do not meet these requirements will be asked not to participate in these special events. Field trips are a reward (and not a privilege) for the hard work these students put forth throughout the year and their dedication to the orchestra program.

# Grading System

Summative Assessment - Playing Tests/Pass-offs	35%
Summative Assessment - Music Theory	15%
Formative Assessment - Rehearsal Participation	40%
Formative Assessment - Rehearsal/Performance Etiquette	10%

## **Summative Assessment: Playing Tests/Pass-offs**

- Scales and techniques
- Method book selections/Repertoire Excerpts (announced/unannounced)
- Pass-offs- Sixth Grade students must perform assigned skills/music. Requirements will be listed on a Pass-off sheet. Pitch/rhythm accuracy, correct instrument position, and tone quality are evaluated before students can progress to the next piece.

## **Summative Assessment: Music Theory Assignments**

- Theory Workbook/Worksheets
- Rhythmic and Melodic Dictation
- Music Literacy/Essential Questions

## **Formative Assessment: Rehearsal Participation**

- Actively participates in rehearsal and/or class activities.
- Has ALL class material for class each day. Each day a student is missing materials, 20 points are deducted from their weekly participation grade (100 points per week). Students with instruments in the repair shop should bring a signed note. ALWAYS ASK FOR A LOANER WHILE YOUR INSTRUMENT IS BEING REPAIRED. Generally rental programs provide this service at no extra cost.

## **Formative Assessment: Rehearsal/Performance Etiquette**

Students are expected to demonstrate the following qualities on a consistent daily basis; these qualities are expected at concerts as well.

Rehearsal/Performance Etiquette includes the following, but is not limited to:  
Proper posture, active listening, sincere attempt to demonstrate mastery, pleasant demeanor, receptive to instruction, proper response to class instruction and correction and silent actions while various groups are addressed which may not always include your child

# *Music Department Behavior Management Plan*

*All school wide rules and expectations are in effect in the music classrooms and on any trip the students may take with the Hightower Trail Middle School Music Department.*

Each music classroom exists to educate each and every child in the fundamentals of music on his/her instrument. Respect for school/individual property and each other is expected at all times. For all students to receive such an education, the following expectations will set the classroom climate:

1. LISTEN.
2. Follow directions.
3. Show respect.
4. Be prepared.
5. Stay on task.

## *Consequences*

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense: Student behavior documented in the Behavior Log; conference with teacher after class.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense: Student behavior documented in the Behavior Log; conference with teacher after class. Parent contacted by phone or email.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> offense: Student behavior documented in the Behavior Log; Parent contacted by phone or email, and intervention to be determined.
- 4<sup>th</sup> offense: Student behavior documented and turned over to the appropriate administrator.

## *Conduct Grade Determination*

Each 9 week grading period Conduct Grade will be determined as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> offenses: Satisfactory (S)  
3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> offenses: Needs Improvement (N)  
5<sup>th</sup> offense: Unsatisfactory (U)

*Parents will be notified by email in the event of a conduct infraction.*

## *Ingredients for Success in Orchestra*

- Provide a quiet place, music stand and proper chair when your child practices
- Schedule consistent, daily time for practice.
- Decide that you and your child have made a commitment to orchestra and stick to it.
- Keep your child's instrument in working condition.
- Provide tutoring by an accomplished musician, if possible.
- Show support by attending orchestra functions and concerts.
- Encourage your child to play for family and friends.
- Praise your child's efforts and accomplishments.

## *Private Lessons*

We encourage every student- 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade- to take private instruction from an accomplished musician. Private lessons make the most of your orchestra investment, allowing for individual attention and a specialist's advice. Furthermore, lessons typically raise your audition scores for Honor Orchestra and All-State; most students in these groups take private lessons. As an added benefit, private lessons help the orchestra improve. A list of private teachers is posted on the large bulletin board in the orchestra room and is also posted on our website. We will continue to update the list.

## *What to do if your child gets frustrated...*

Occasionally, students may become frustrated with progress on an instrument...especially when the "newness" is over. It is important to guide your child through these situations.

- ◆ Discuss the situation with your child and determine why their interest is fading
- ◆ Discuss the situation with an orchestra teacher.
- ◆ Encourage the child to continue for a specified amount of time. Most parents have their children agree to participate through 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- ◆ Find an older student in orchestra to serve as a mentor

If, after consultation with the orchestra directors, the determination is made to withdraw from the orchestra, the following HTMS Music Department Withdrawal Procedure must be followed:

1. A parent note must be submitted to the orchestra directors.
2. The parent note must be submitted by the end of the first 2 days of the school year.  
Withdrawal from orchestra at the end of each 9-week grading period is not permitted.
3. Once the parent note is received, a director/parent/student conference must be held to discuss the situation.
4. If, after the conference, the decision is made to drop orchestra, the orchestra directors will notify the appropriate administrator of the schedule change.

## *Extra Help Sessions and Rehearsals*

The orchestra room is open for practice most mornings each week from **8:00-9:00am** and most afternoons from **4:15-5:00 pm**. These are times for students to complete Pass-Offs with the director, get help on Solo & Ensemble music, All-State and Honor Orchestra auditions, concert music, Playing Test, or practice individually or with friends. Only students who are interested in practicing should come to these sessions. Homework and socializing can be done in other places. Students who abuse this privilege will be prohibited from attending future sessions.

## *Personal Instruments*

*Personal Instruments* are defined as instruments that belong to or are rented by an individual student's family from a community music store. These instruments are not owned or insured by Hightower Trail Middle School, Cobb County School District, or the State of Georgia. The student (and family) is responsible for maintaining the instrument in working order with the proper accessories. The orchestra directors will recommend repairs (when needed) as the student progresses through the program.

## *School Instruments*

*School Instruments* are defined as instruments that belong to Hightower Trail Middle School. These typically include larger instrument: Cello and String Bass. The school bears the responsibility of repair cost on these instruments. However, students are contractually obligated to treat them with special care so that needless and expensive repairs do not have to be made. Future students must be able to use these instruments. Obvious damage to school instruments will be considered vandalism and will be dealt with in the manner outlined by Cobb County Schools in the HTMS Student Handbook. To ease transportation and increase home practice, it would help you child if you could rent one of these instruments to keep at home.



# *Hightower Trail Orchestra*

## *2017-2018 Concert and Activity Calendar*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
Sept. 7	Registration Deadline Solo and Ensemble, All-State	Class	N/A
Oct. 3	Fundraiser Kick-off	HT Theater	Class
Oct. 4	8 <sup>th</sup> Orchestra Fall Concert*	HT Theater	7:00 pm
Oct. 14	District All-State Auditions	Kell HS	8:30 am – 3 pm
Oct. 21	Solo & Ensemble Festival	Sprayberry HS	9 am – 1 pm
Oct. 24	Solo & Ensemble Recital	HT Theater	6:30pm
Nov. 9	7 <sup>th</sup> Fall Concert*	HT Theater	6:30/7:30pm
Nov. 30	6-1 Fall Concert *	HT Theater	6:30pm
	6-2 Fall Concert*	HT Theater	7:30pm
Dec. 7	8 <sup>th</sup> Winter Concert	HT Theater	7:00 pm
January 6	Final All-State Audition	Westminster School	All day+
January 20	Honor Orchestra Auditions	Sprayberry HS	All Day+
Feb. 12-14	LGPE**-7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade*	Lassiter HS	TBA
March 3-5	All-State Orchestra	Athens, GA	Inclusive
March 19	Sixth Grade String Jamboree*	Pope HS	7:00pm
March 23-24	Honor Orchestra Event	McEachern HS	Fri 7-9pm/ Sat 8-3
April 24	Night of the Arts	HT Theater	6:00 pm
May 9	6-1/7-1 Spring Concert*	HT Theater	6:30/7:30pm
May 10	6-2/7-2 Grade Spring Concert*	HT Theater	6:30/7:30pm
May 15	8th Grade Orchestra/Band*	HT Theater	7:00pm

\*Required event for the orchestra listed + Individual audition times TBA  
 Event times and places may change. Notices will be sent home with these changes

\*\*Large Group Performance Evaluation

