

**Orchestra Handbook 2023-2024**



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**Course Overview**

Welcome to the Swanson Orchestra! This year you will enhance your musical foundation through the study of orchestral performance. I take great pride in being a part of the orchestra program at Swanson and it is very important to me that you also take pride and enjoy our program. We all have the opportunity to put forth our best effort and get the most out of our time together in orchestra. It is my hope that this is just the beginning of your lifelong musical journey and that through orchestra you will:

* Advance your understanding of musical concepts
* Develop performance skills to play your instrument with a beautiful tone
* Improve music literacy
* Practice cooperation and self-discipline

**Materials**

| **REQUIRED**:   * **Instrument**   + ​Students must have a properly sized instrument to participate in the orchestra, and are encouraged to rent an instrument from a local music store (see list of local music stores).   + There are a limited number of school instruments available to rent. ***Priority will be given to students who qualify for financial assistance.***   + Cello and Bass students may use a school instrument so that they don't need to bring their own instrument to school every day, but must have an instrument at home.     - ***School instrument rental fee:***       * ***$100.00 – Standard rate***       * ***$25.00 – Free/Reduced Lunch rate*** * **Accessories:**   + [Rosin](https://www.amazon.com/DAddario-VR200-Natural-Rosin-Light/dp/B0002OP0WC/ref=sr_1_5?crid=3TVAH5A0SHAV3&keywords=violin%2Brosin&qid=1660527118&sprefix=violin%2Brosin%2Caps%2C84&sr=8-5&th=1)   + [Violin/Viola: Shoulder Rest or Sponge](https://www.amazon.com/Everest-EZ4A-Violin-Shoulder-Rest/dp/B0775Z5443/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2HXN0REJEUVPJ&keywords=everest+violin&qid=1660527089&sprefix=everest+violin%2Caps%2C82&sr=8-1)   + [Cello/Bass: Endpin anchor](https://www.amazon.com/Adjustable-Protective-Resistant-Instrument-Accessories/dp/B09WYGX7JD/ref=sr_1_9?crid=2BKHF2J09H2M0&keywords=endpin+anchor&qid=1660527022&sprefix=endpin+anchor%2Caps%2C74&sr=8-9)   + [Music Stand](https://www.amazon.com/ChromaCast-CC-MSTAND-Folding-Music-Stand/dp/B00KMF11BA/ref=sr_1_6?crid=2QYUFLMFV6C79&keywords=music+stand&qid=1660526991&sprefix=music+stand%2Caps%2C89&sr=8-6)   + [Metronome/Tuner](https://www.amazon.com/AmazonBasics-in1-Metronome-Tuner-Designed/dp/B081W37RZW/ref=sr_1_6?crid=36VR56H2MJVDT&keywords=metronome%2Btuner&qid=1660526910&sprefix=metronome%2Btuner%2Caps%2C77&sr=8-6&th=1)   + Pencil (provided in class)   + Soft Cloth | |
| --- | --- |
| \*Please contact Ms. Levy about information pertaining to instrument rental or purchase from a local music store if you have any questions. It is recommended that students change the strings on their instrument and re-hair the bow before the start of each school year to keep their instrument in good playing condition. | |

Local Music Stores

| **Foxes Music Company**  416 Washington St.  Falls Church, VA 22046  <https://www.foxesmusic.com> | **Day Violins**  14221A Willard Rd #500  Chantilly, VA 20151  [https://www.dayviolins.com​](about:blank) |
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| **Brobst Violins**  5584 General Washington Dr.  Alexandria, VA 22312  [https://brobstviolinshop.com](https://borbstviolinshop.com) | **Potters Violins**  7711 Eastern Ave NW.  Takoma Park, MD 20912  [https://potterviolins.com​](about:blank) |

Online Music Shops

| **Shar Music**  2465 South Industrial Hwy  Ann Arbor, MI 48104  1-800-248-7427  [www.sharmusic.com](http://www.sharmusic.com/) | **Johnson String Instrument**  11 John Street  Newton Center, MA 02459  1-800-359-9351  [www.johnsonstring.com](http://www.johnsonstring.com/) | **Southwest Strings**  1721 S. Cherrybell Strav  Tucson AZ, 85713  1-800-528-3430  [www.swstrings.com](http://www.swstrings.com/) |
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It is not necessary to buy an instrument. In fact, I recommend that you rent an instrument until you are certain your child has made a long term commitment and is ready for a full-sized instrument. **Your child must be measured by your teacher or at the music store to be fitted for the correct sized instrument.**

If you are considering purchasing an instrument from another source, please contact me to assist you. **EBAY and PAWNSHOPS are NOT reliable sources** and often sell defective or simply unplayable instruments. **The #1 reason students lose interest is due to an instrument of poor quality that is difficult and frustrating to play**.

**Grading Policy   
Student grades reflect student achievement and not student behavior.**

| Rehearsal Technique (formative) | 20% |
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| Tests, Quizzes and Assignments (formative) | 20% |
| Performances (summative) | 60% |

**Rehearsal Technique**

Students will earn 10 points per week for their participation in class. Students earn points by having all their materials, coming to class on time, following appropriate rehearsal protocol, and playing their instrument with the orchestra. Students who are not able to play because of long fingernails or inappropriate clothing (cellists!) will not earn their weekly participation points.

Our classroom rules are as follows:

1. Listen and follow directions

2. Use hand signals

3. Stay on task

4. Keep your hands and feet to yourself

5. Respect your classmates, school, and teacher

**Every time**  a classroom rule is broken, a consequence is given. Our classroom consequences are as follows:

1. Redirect (a verbal warning)

2. Side Line (break in a specific area in classroom)

3. Break and reflection time (in the hall or counseling room)

4. Letter Home (letter home to parent that must be signed and returned)

**Quizzes and Tests**

* **Performance Test**

**​**Performance tests will be held once per quarter and will be used to determine seating placements. Performance tests will include excerpts from the concert music. Tests are worth 20 points

* **Fundamentals Quizzes**

Fundamentals are instrumental skills learned during orchestra class and include left hand and right hand techniques. Students will practice fundamentals during class and will be assessed on these skills during class time. Each fundamentals playing quiz is worth 10 points.

* **Music** ​​**Literacy Assignments**

Students will be responsible for completing written music theory and literacy assignments. Literacy assignments will be explained during class but completed for homework. Each unit culminates with a written literacy quiz given during class time. Literacy quizzes are 20 points.

**Performances**

**​**Students are required to attend all concerts and dress rehearsals. Students should arrive on time and in concert attire to receive full credit. Be sure to mark all concert and rehearsal dates in your calendar well in advance, and let Ms. Levy know if you have an unavoidable conflict. An alternative assignment must be completed to receive credit if performances are missed.



| ***Formal Concert Attire (Winter Concert, Assessment, Spring Concert)***   * White Shirt * Black dress pants or long black skirt (no leggings or jeans) * Black dress shoes   ***Informal Concert Attire (In-school performances, Field Trips)***   * Swanson Orchestra T-Shirt * Jeans (no holes) * Sneakers (no crocs)     **Swanson Orchestra Tee Shirts:**  Available in sizes XS - XL  $11.00  If you need financial assistance please contact Ms. Levy |
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**Field Trips**

Each spring the orchestra tries to participate in Music at the Parks. This is an all day field trip to a Theme Park where students have the opportunity to perform as an orchestra for judges to receive a rating and feedback. Students will also have time to enjoy the park with their friends. More information about this will be coming soon. Parents chaperones are needed for this trip so save the date!

**Private Lessons**

Students who enjoy their instruments and who are interested in improving their performance may consider taking private lessons. Private instructors teach one on one, at the student's pace, and help each student develop technical and musical skills specific to their instruments. These skills can be well applied in an orchestra setting, and in most cases, students who work with a private instructor progress much faster than those who do not. Teacher fees vary and are generally between $60 to $100 an hour. Lesson lengths may also vary - 30 mins is recommended for 6th grade, 45 minutes is recommended for 7th/8th grade. If you are interested in getting instruction see the [PRIVATE TEACHER LIST](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/12cDv9GWxhF0HWX6ZJZ6AJYiL-91R0BjDb_lNZSa5hSg/edit?usp=sharing).

**APS Junior Honors Orchestra**

This is an honor orchestra for APS students in 4th - 6th grade by audition. Students accepted into this ensemble rehearse weekly from January through March and perform in the honors concert. The audition for Junior Honors Orchestra will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 8. More information can be found on the Orchestra Canvas pages.

**APS Honors Orchestra**

This is an honor orchestra for APS students in 7th - 8th grade by audition. Students accepted into this ensemble rehearse Jan. 24-27 in the evening and perform in an honors concert on Saturday, Jan. 27. The audition for Junior Honors Orchestra will be held on Wed, Nov. 8. More information can be found on the Orchestra Canvas pages

**Junior District Honors Orchestra**

Junior District Honors Orchestra (JDHO) auditions will take place on Tuesday, November 14th. The Junior District Honors Orchestra Event will be held Friday – Saturday January 12-13, 2024. Students in grades 7-8 interested in auditioning for JDHO must apply. Applications and fees will be due on or about September 16, 2023.

**Solo and Ensemble Festival**

Solo and Ensemble Festival will be held Fri-Sat, Apr 19-20 at Carson Middle School this year. Students who would like to participate prepare a solo or ensemble piece to perform for a judge who will give feedback and a rating. Students who are interested should register and pay the fee on or about March 1, 2024.

  
2023-2024 EVENT CALENDAR  
**Dates in Bold are Required Attendance**

**Fri. Oct. 27, 6:00 pm Halloween Concert   
Fri. Oct. 27, 7:00-9:00 pm Masquerade Party (Band, Choral and Orchestra Students) - SMS Cafeteria**Wed, Nov. 8, 4:30-7:30pm APS Honor Orchestra Auditions - Kenmore MS\*  
Tues, Nov. 14 Jr. District Honors Orchestra Auditions - Thoreau MS\* (7 & 8th grade only)  
**Weds. Dec 13, 7:00pm Winter Orchestra Concert**Tues, Jan. 9 - Mar. 12 APS Jr. Honors Orchestra - Kenmore MS\*  
Fri-Sat, Jan 12-13 Jr. District Honors Orchestra Event - Langley HS\*  
Wed-Fri, Jan 24-27 APS Honor Orchestra Rehearsals - Kenmore MS\*  
Sat, Jan 27, APS Honor Orchestra Concert - Kenmore MS\*  
**Tues, Feb 13, 7:00pm Orchestra Pyramid Concert - YHS**Fri-Sat, Apr 19-20, District 12 Solo and Ensemble Festival - Carson MS\* **Fri-Sat, Mar, 8-9, TBD Middle School Orchestra Assessment - Kenmore MS**  
Sat. May 4 Possible Spring Trip for Prelude Ensemble  
Sat. May 11 Possible Spring Trip for Admiral’s Orchestra   
**Weds. May 29, 7:00pm Spring Orchestra Concert**

**Swanson Orchestra Agreement**

**Reminder!**

**​**Students are required to attend all concerts and dress rehearsals. Students should arrive on time and in concert attire to receive full credit. **Be sure to mark all concert and rehearsal dates in your calendar well in advance**, and let Ms. Levy know if you have an unavoidable conflict. An alternative assignment must be completed to receive credit if performances are missed.

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I confirm that:

* I have read and understand the policies stated in the Orchestra Handbook.
* I agree to comply with the class rules, procedures and expectations.
* I have a calendar of this year’s orchestra events. I understand that scheduled events may be changed as this year progresses, and safety/health will be the priority. Parents will be notified immediately of any changes.
* I understand the financial obligation to the orchestra program. No student will be denied participation due to financial concerns. Contact Ms. Levy for assistance.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_