

2010-2011



FENWICK  
HIGH SCHOOL



STRING  
ORCHESTRA  
HANDBOOK

# **String Orchestra**

The String Orchestra class is open to all students with previous experience playing the following instruments: violin, viola, cello, double bass. No audition is necessary to participate in the String Orchestra. At the beginning of the year, orchestra students will audition to determine their seating placement within the group. Students will be arranged in their sections based on skill level. If a student is not satisfied with his/her placement, the student will have a chance to challenge a member of their section at any point throughout the school year. String Orchestra will meet Monday through Friday during the school day. There may be a week night rehearsal to combine the strings with wind players if needed for the concert. Grades (see grading section for specifics) are based on preparedness, playing exams, daily performance evaluation, and attendance at performances (see below).

\*String Orchestra is a skill-based class similar to other classes at the high school level. Playing tests and quizzes are an important part of a student's grade.

**Rehearsals and performances are an integral part of the class. Any unexcused absences from performances will result in the lowering of a quarter grade by one letter (ex. A to B).**

**In addition if a student misses more than one performance in a quarter FOR ANY REASON his/her grade will be lowered one letter grade.**

**\*Please refer to the section on ABSENCES for a listing of excused absences.**

*In case of school- related activity conflicts, please give at least 2 weeks notification so that parts can be covered or reassigned.*

# Sectionals

In addition to regularly scheduled rehearsals/performances, “special help” sectionals will be called before and after school to help those sections in need of more individualized attention. I strongly encourage participation in sectionals and realize that school related activities may conflict. The goal of sectionals is to help insure that every student will have a successful musical experience. Each section will have at least one named student section leader who is available for extra help sessions with individuals.

## **Practice/Performance Absence Policy**

I feel that each student involved in the Fenwick String Orchestra is an important member of our team. Absences from performances/practices will severely hinder the progress of the whole group. Listed below are EXCUSED ABSENCES, which are acceptable. If one of these events happens, please give the band director a written notification at least two weeks in advance. (In the case of an emergency, notify me as soon as possible.)

Note: unexcused absences from a rehearsal/performance will result in a student's grade being lowered one letter grade.

## **Excused Absences**

**ILLNESS** – Absent from school that day

**DEATH IN THE FAMILY**

**SCHOOL RELATED CONFLICTS** – I realize that there will be conflicts between band and other school activities. When this situation occurs, the sponsors will meet to see if a resolution can be reached. Parents will be consulted to see if transportation from one activity to another is possible so that the student can participate in BOTH activities. This has worked well for Fenwick students in the past! All I ask is to be notified at least two weeks in advance in order to give me time to work out a solution. Please remember that band is a class in which you receive a grade.

# Uniform Policy

**Females** – will need a black concert dress to be ordered at the start of the school year. They will also need black hose and black dress shoes. (Orders will be taken the 1<sup>st</sup> week of school)

**Males** – will need a white tuxedo shirt (the kind with the pleats in the front), black dress pants, black dress shoes, black socks, and black bow ties. This should be purchased on their own. *In the past, students have had great luck at Value City or Burlington Coat Factory, which usually sell the tux shirt and bow ties as a package for a very low price.*

# Grading Policy

The following explains the system I will use for grading the String Orchestra. Every rehearsal (this includes in-class rehearsals, after school rehearsals, rescheduled rehearsals, or any other mandatory rehearsal) will be worth 10 points. Any type of performance (concert, contest, etc.) is worth 20 points. If the student comes well prepared and is productive, he/she will receive all 10 points for a rehearsal. Here are some actions that will lower a student's grade:

Coming without an instrument	-7
Coming without music	-5
Coming without music and instrument	-10
Coming without pencil	-1
Coming without mutes, bows, or anything else that might prohibit the student from playing their part to the best of their ability	-2
Behavior that interrupts the rehearsal	-2 (per infraction)

Other grades given for things such as playing tests or quizzes will be based on a total points system and students will be made aware of the value of each assignment before they complete it.

## Final Exams

The orchestra final is given in class before final exam week. The content of the exam will be announced at the beginning of each semester.

# Equipment

## Lockers

We are very fortunate that the music room at Fenwick was designed with instrument storage in mind. Each student upon entering the high school music program will be issued a locker for his/her instrument(s). After being assigned a locker, we ask that the student put on a FENWICK combination lock and then give the combination to the director. There will be periodic locker cleanings to insure good upkeep of the lockers and their contents!

## Folders

The director will issue folders (some ensemble members will have their own folders, others will have to share). These are top quality folders, and we would like to keep them in good condition. A student is welcome to take his/her music home. All I ask is that if a student shares a folder and is not in school that day, his/her music folder **MUST** be brought to school so that his/her stand partner will have music for that day's rehearsal.

***\*\*NOTE: COST FOR A LOST FOLDER WITH MUSIC IS \$10.00!!! PLEASE TAKE CARE OF THE FOLDER AND MUSIC!***

## Instruments

Violin and viola players are responsible for coming with their own instruments every day we have class. Full size cellos and basses will be provided in school for students who play those instruments. Cellos and Basses may not be removed from the music room; it is expected that those students have their own instrument at home on which to practice. As a student's musical skills progress, he/she may be asked to purchase new bows, strings, and possibly a more "professional" or full sized instrument. I only suggest "needed" instruments and will discuss this in length with the student and the parent. By the time students reach the high school level, they generally have outgrown their beginning instruments. Step-up instruments can range anywhere from semi-professional to professional models. These can then be used all the way through their collegiate and post collegiate musical experiences.

Please detach this sheet and mail to  
Ms. Wsol at Fenwick by August 27, 2010.

I have read the Fenwick String Orchestra Handbook and have  
discussed it with my child.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent Email** (this is my primary communication with parents please print neatly)

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Instrument

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date