

North Allegheny School District

High School Orchestra Student & Parent Handbook

2009-2010

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We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit. ~Aristotle

Welcome to orchestra! North Allegheny has a long-standing tradition of excellence in the orchestra program, and I look forward to continuing that tradition with you this year and many years to come. I will set high standards for everyone and in turn ask that you strive to achieve your best at all times. You will find that we will be as great as the efforts we put into our work. I hope the results will be greater than we could imagine!

~ Mrs. Lavelle

National Standards for Music Education

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specific guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Student Expectations and Daily Procedures

1. **Students will come to class prepared to learn.** Each orchestra member will be allowed **two minutes after the bell** to get to their seats with instruments and all materials needed for class (music, pencil, etc). If you're not in your seat and ready, **YOU ARE LATE!**
2. **Students will be attentive and respectful.** When the conductor (or another designated individual) is at the podium, there will be no talking except by the conductor. Students should raise their hands and address all major questions to the conductor instead of discussing things amongst themselves.
3. **Students will refrain from eating and chewing gum during all orchestra activities.** There will be **NO** eating or chewing gum during class. Chewing gum disrupts your internal sense of pulse! Please get into the habit of getting rid of it as you enter the classroom. The only permissible drink is water: please make sure bottles and containers **DO NOT** remain in the room after you leave or this privilege may be revoked.
4. **Complete participation is expected in class.** Completing homework, reading outside materials, and engaging in other activities not related to the rehearsal will not be permitted. When you have a rest or do not play in a specific selection, you are expected to stay involved in what is happening in class.
5. **Paperwork:** If you have a field trip form, pass, etc. that needs Mrs. Lavelle's signature, please place it in the designated basket at the beginning of class and return for it at the end of class.

** As long as you are in school, you are not permitted to be anywhere in the building during your orchestra class period other than the orchestra room without permission granted in advance. **DO NOT** make plans to make up a test, gym class, etc. without permission.

Care of Instruments

All instruments are to be placed in the instrument storage lockers/racks. Please respect your own property and the property of others while using our facilities. **DO NOT** move other students' instruments to different

lockers. DO NOT use other students' instruments without their prior permission. Leave your instruments in or outside the orchestra room at your own risk; the school is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Please consider protecting your instrument and music by placing a combination lock on your locker.

Concert Etiquette

Students must arrive on time and attend the entire event. Students must get rid of GUM and be prepared with complete uniforms, instruments, music, and any other necessary equipment. At concerts and dress rehearsals, students must listen for instructions, report to the stage on time, and remain in the auditorium during other groups' performances. Policies about acceptable auditorium behavior will be discussed before each concert and failure to adhere to these expectations will result in a detention.

When at a Strolling Strings event, students should be prepared to help carry equipment, keep buses clean, refrain from talking during the performance, and remain attentive and ready for instructions.

Concert/Golden Strolling Strings Uniforms

Ladies must wear: uniform black dress hemmed neatly to hit the top of the shoes (stapling is not acceptable). When selecting your dress, remember that you need *room to move*: it should not be tight against the skin. Please provide nude or black hosiery and CLOSED-TOE black dress shoes. Ladies will also need to wear the provided gold headband or hair ribbon as part of the uniform.

Gentlemen must wear: uniform pants, jacket, tie, and cummerbund. Shirts must be tucked in and cummerbunds must be worn at the waist. Gentlemen must purchase and wear white tuxedo shirts with winged collars and sewn pleats in the front (no cuffs with cuff links), black closed-toe shoes and black socks. Black tennis shoes are NOT permitted.

New students/students in need of a different size: Uniform fitting dates will be announced shortly after the start of the school year.

Golden Strolling Strings

Mission Statement: The mission of the North Allegheny Golden Strolling Strings is to enhance the school orchestra program, provide learning and performance opportunities for students, and bring recognition to the orchestra program and school district in the community.

Ensemble Structure: The orchestra will be divided into three groups: A, B, C. The director and the orchestra members together will decide placement in each group; each group will have representation of all instruments, representation of all playing abilities, and representation of all grade levels. Groups A, B, and C will then rotate participation in Strolling Strings performances. (For example: group A will perform at one event, group B will perform at the next event.) In the event of special circumstances, the following selection systems may also be utilized: Seniority: the director may open an opportunity up to 11th and 12th graders only; Volunteers: the director may open an opportunity up to all interested student volunteers.

Absences: See the policies in the "Grading" section for absences. When missing a Strolling Strings performance, you are responsible for finding a replacement from one of the groups not participating. When you sub for another student, you may choose to trade a performance or simply add the performance to your schedule. However, all students must participate in the Golden Strolling Strings program.

Ninth graders and new orchestra members will not be required to participate in any Strolling Strings events until December.

Uniform Management: At the beginning of the school year, the uniform coordinators will select evenings for new member fittings. Once fittings have taken place, all needed uniforms will be ordered. Students are then responsible for the care and maintenance of their uniforms throughout their participation in the Golden Strolling Strings program. Upon leaving or graduating from the program, students are responsible for dry cleaning and returning all materials belonging to the program *with the dry cleaning receipt* to the director or uniform coordinators. *See uniform descriptions above.*

Grading

Our grading system is as follows: 90-100=A, 80-89=B, 70-79=C, 60-69=D, 59 or below=F

Grades will be based on evaluations of class participation, after school rehearsal and performance attendance, playing tests, and other assignments.

Grades will be given in the following areas:

1. *Musical Progress*: this includes playing tests, in-class performance quizzes, music listening evaluations, and written tests and assignments.
2. *Class Participation*
3. *Performances (concerts, Golden Strolling Strings events) and Dress Rehearsals*

Musical Progress: Playing Tests

A student's playing test scores and leadership abilities will determine placement in the orchestra. However, the director will assume great flexibility in seating the orchestra: seats will rotate and change throughout the year based on what creates the best sound and result.

Playing tests

Auditions (playing tests) will be held several times throughout the school year. Students will be able to sign up for an audition time the week before the tests take place. Students will often have two options when scheduling:

- Live playing test: students may schedule a playing test during a 5-minute slot after school. Students will work one-on-one with the director.
- Video playing test: students may choose to play their excerpts for a video camera during the class period. If necessary, the director may coordinate another time to hear an excerpt played live.

Auditions will consist of some or all of the following: major and minor scales, orchestral excerpts that are given to the student during class, Golden Strolling Strings repertoire, and sight-reading. Students will be evaluated on: intonation, rhythmic accuracy, tone production, musical expression, musical style, and memorization.

Playing test Repeats

Please note: PLAYING TEST SCORES ARE NOT FINAL UNTIL THE GRADING PERIOD ENDS. Students are encouraged to further their progress after a playing test is over; therefore, they may retake their playing tests as many times as they want during the grading period in which the original test took place. The procedure is as follows:

1. You may redo all scales and excerpts or just pick and choose what you want to redo.
2. Playing test repeats must take place live at a scheduled time with the director.
3. If you fail to appear at your scheduled time, your playing test repeat privilege will be revoked for the respective grading period.

Please note: Your seating placement will be based on your FIRST score of the grading period.

Class Participation

Students are evaluated on class participation on a weekly basis. Points are earned for bringing materials (instrument, pencil, music) to class, actively engaging in class activities, and following daily procedures (see first page).

Concert/Golden Strolling Strings Performances and Dress Rehearsal Attendance

The success of the group is based on the participation and commitment of all orchestra members. Therefore, concert and dress rehearsal attendance is mandatory. Orchestra event calendars will be posted on the orchestra website (www.NAorchestra.org/calendar.html) and will be updated immediately upon notification of any changes. **All students are responsible for reading and knowing the calendar.**

Excused absences

There are occasions when absences cannot be avoided. Excuses written by a parent must be submitted to Mrs. Lavelle at least 2 weeks prior to the event and will be accepted at her discretion. There are 2 dress rehearsals and 2 concerts for the entire school year; it's very important that you are there. This also applies to Strolling Strings events. Your assigned Strolling Strings events are mandatory unless you find a sub. An absence may be considered "excused" if:

1. You have a significant family responsibility (wedding, reunion, etc.).
2. There is an unavoidable academic or school related conflict at North Allegheny High School. Again, this must be presented to the director at least 2 WEEKS PRIOR for consideration. **ATHLETIC EVENTS (practices and games) ARE NOT AN ACCEPTABLE EXCUSE.** Tell your coaches about the dates at the start of the season so they are aware of them.

Emergency Absences

Only excuses for emergency situations will be accepted after an event. If an emergency occurs the day of an event, please call the orchestra office (724-934-7919) and leave a message, send an email to the director (slavelle@northallegheeny.org), or bring an excuse written by a parent to the next rehearsal. An absence will be considered "emergency" if:

1. You have a medical emergency. Parent note must be accompanied by a physician's note.
2. You have a personal illness.
3. There is a death in your family.

Unexcused absences

An unexcused absence from a *school orchestra concert or dress rehearsal* will result in a drop of 10% in the course grade for the respective grading period. An alternative assignment may also be assigned. An unexcused absence from a *Golden Strolling Strings activity* will result in a drop of 5% in the course grade for the respective grading period. An unexcused absence is defined as:

1. Absence from an entire after school rehearsal or performance without granted permission.
2. Failing to report on time or leaving early from an event without granted permission, at the director's discretion.

Music and Music Folders

Music should be marked with a pencil only, no pens. Please always bring your own music in case your stand partner is absent. Markings and notes that are made during rehearsal are expected to be in all parts (not just one part per stand).

NAOPA

Working in the background to make many of our activities possible is the North Allegheny Orchestra Parents Association (NAOPA). This group is made up of parents with children in the orchestra program, grades 9-12. The job of the NAOPA members is to assist the director and students in such things as fund-raisers, concerts, the orchestra banquet, and by acting as chaperones on any trips that we may take during the year. Typically, our meetings are on the third Thursday of each month in the NAI Orchestra Room at 6:45 PM and last for about an hour. More information about this organization can be found on our website, www.NAorchestra.org/NAOPA0910.html. Here, you will find a complete schedule of our meetings, meeting agendas and minutes, contact numbers for our officers, and our bylaws. I urge you to join this worthwhile organization and support your child's musical experiences and education and throughout their years in high school. **Our first meeting will be Wednesday, September 16, 2009 in the NAI Orchestra Room at 6:45 PM. Executive board members are to be there at 6:00 PM.**

PMEA Honors Orchestra

PMEA Honors orchestra is an opportunity for students in grades 9-12. Students *must be enrolled* in an orchestra class to be eligible. Students must audition to participate in this event. Audition repertoire was used for the NA Chamber Orchestra auditions for this year. PMEA Honors Orchestra auditions will take place on **September 14, 2009**. The festival will take place from November 14-15, 2009. NA provides transportation to auditions and rehearsals. *Please do not plan on auditioning unless you are able to make the complete time commitment. SATs and youth orchestra rehearsals are not acceptable excuses from PMEA events.*

PMEA District, Regional, and State Orchestra

Students in grades 10-12 may apply to participate in District Orchestra. Students *must be enrolled* in an orchestra class to be eligible. Applications will be submitted in November, and the cycle of festivals (District, Regional, and State Orchestra) will begin in January. See the website, www.NAorchestra.org/calendar5.html for exact festival dates; students who apply for District Orchestra **MUST** be available to participate in all three festivals. A committee of PMEA members decides who will participate; PMEA guarantees only one student's participation per school district. *PMEA has strict participation policies. You **MUST** be at all rehearsals and concerts; SATs and youth orchestra rehearsals are not acceptable excuses from PMEA events*

*Participation in these festivals is a privilege, not a right. Please apply *only if* you are comfortable with the time commitment required to prepare for *all three festivals* and best represent your school.

*If you are invited to participate in an event, you are expected to participate. *If you withdraw, you must refund all monies that the school district has paid for your participation.*

Practicing

In the music world, “practice” is another word for “homework.” At minimum, students are expected to practice *the amount necessary to keep up with and encourage the progress we are making in class*. As stated earlier, you will find that we will be as great as the efforts we put into our work.

Private Lessons

Outside of orchestra, students may choose study privately. String teachers are available in the area. Please see Mrs. Lavelle for a list of teachers whom you may then contact directly to schedule a lesson.

Section Leaders

Leadership is very important in an orchestra setting. Section leaders must be prepared to make decisions that will benefit their sections. They must meet with other section leaders in making decisions for the ensemble, work more closely with the director, and assume greater responsibilities than other members. Students who demonstrate leadership and responsibility will be placed in these positions.

Spring Trip

Each spring, the orchestra travels and performs; pending board approval, this year’s trip will be to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Participation is not mandatory. Please note the following:

- Students must be enrolled in an orchestra class to participate.
- Students who choose to participate must follow the entire itinerary with the group (students may not fly if the group is driving, students may not leave early or arrive late, etc.).
- If a student is caught with or found using any alcoholic beverage, drugs, or tobacco product at any orchestra function, he/she will lose the privilege of traveling on the spring trip, regardless of any nonrefundable payments that have been made.

Student Contract and Ensemble Agreement

Must be returned by Friday, September 11, 2009.

To be signed by the Student:

I have read the Orchestra Handbook, understand the contents, and will do my best to meet the standards and requirements of this ensemble. I assume responsibility for my attendance at all rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and concerts.

Name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

To be signed by the Parent/Guardian(s):

I have read the Orchestra Handbook and understand the contents. I understand that performance on a musical instrument is a personal commitment on the part of my son/daughter that extends beyond the classroom. As a parent, I will support my child in his/her participation in musical activities this year.

Signed: _____ Date: _____



North Allegheny School District MEDICAL INFORMATION AND RELEASE FORM

Student's Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____

Grade _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

FAMILY INFORMATION

Home Phone # _____ Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Cell # _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Names _____

Work Phone #s _____

Family Physician _____ Office Phone # _____

Please list the name and phone number of two parties who may be called if the parent/guardian may not be reached:

Name _____ Phone # _____

Name _____ Phone # _____

STUDENT MEDICAL INFORMATION

All health concerns of the above named student, past and present, which may limit physical activity, be aggravated or worsened by physical activity, and/or must be known in the treatment of illness or injury must be indicated below. All students' medical information will be kept in strict confidence by the orchestra nurse and school district staff. Please check below if the above named student has or has had any of the following:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic knee problem | <input type="checkbox"/> Food allergies | <input type="checkbox"/> Hyperventilation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic ankle problem | <input type="checkbox"/> History of epilepsy | <input type="checkbox"/> Asthma |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic back problems | <input type="checkbox"/> History of diabetes | <input type="checkbox"/> Heart related problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic foot problems | <input type="checkbox"/> GI disorder/problem | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug allergies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic cough | <input type="checkbox"/> Metabolic/thyroid | <input type="checkbox"/> Bee sting allergy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | | |

If any of the above items have been checked, please provide a complete explanation. Attach a separate page if necessary.

* PLEASE TURN OVER *

PLEASE LIST ALL MEDICATIONS YOUR CHILD IS CURRENTLY TAKING ON A REGULAR BASIS:

Medication _____ Dosage _____

When taken (time of day) _____ Physician Prescribing _____

Medication _____ Dosage _____

When taken (time of day) _____ Physician Prescribing _____

Medication _____ Dosage _____

When taken (time of day) _____ Physician Prescribing _____

Date of student's last tetanus shot _____

Medical Insurance Company _____ Agreement # _____

Insurance Company Address _____

****Please attach a copy of both sides of your medical insurance card and a photograph of your child.****

OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATION LIST:

I give permission to the orchestra nurse to provide for my student the following OTC medications and/or treatments to be offered at the nurse's discretion or by my direction:

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Antihistamine i.e. Benadryl | <input type="checkbox"/> Decongestant i.e. Sudafed | <input type="checkbox"/> Aleve |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acetaminophen i.e. Tylenol | <input type="checkbox"/> Ibuprofen i.e. Advil/Motrin | <input type="checkbox"/> Tums |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Antacid i.e. Pepcid, Tagament | <input type="checkbox"/> Premenstrual tablet i.e. Midol | <input type="checkbox"/> Cough drops |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No OTC medications are to be given | | |

I understand that no OTC medications will be offered to my student if I have not given my consent no matter the degree of discomfort.

I/We hereby authorize representatives of North Allegheny School District to act as my/our agent to secure medical emergency treatment for the above-named student. I/We further agree to hold the North Allegheny School District and its representatives harmless for exercising its judgment in authorizing such emergency medical treatment, and said representatives are specifically authorized to sign any required emergency hospital treatment forms on our behalf.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WITH A STUDENT PHOTO AND COPY OF YOUR INSURANCE CARD TO THE ORCHESTRA DIRECTOR BY **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2009.**