

North Allegheny High School Orchestra Student & Parent Handbook, 2021-2022

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Welcome to orchestra at NASH & NAI! We are excited for a great year with you! We hope that the information below will help us to have a successful year together.

Daily Procedures

Students will come to class prepared to learn. Please arrive on time with the materials needed for class (pencil, music, instrument, etc.).

Students will refrain from chewing gum and eating during all activities.

There will be no food or gum in class. You are welcome to bring a bottle of water.

Students are expected to participate. Completing homework for other classes, reading outside materials, and engaging in activities not related to the rehearsal are not permitted. You are expected to be in the orchestra room during your class period; please talk to your orchestra teacher before making plans to make up a test, gym class, etc. Cell phones are not permitted during rehearsal. If you are caught using a cell phone in class, your phone will sit in “cell phone jail” during class for 5 days.

Detention will be issued to repeat offenders.

Students are expected to practice. While we do not ask for you to keep practice records at the high school, we do expect you to practice the amount necessary to keep up with and encourage the progress we are making in class. If you are interested in taking private lessons to help with your progress, please ask Mrs. Lavelle/Mrs. Donato for a private teacher list!

Grading System

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 class participation, performance/dress rehearsal attendance, playing tests, and other assignments.

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.

Performance/dress rehearsal attendance

The success of the group depends on the participation and commitment of all orchestra members. Therefore, performance and dress rehearsal attendance is mandatory. The orchestra calendar is posted on Blackboard and on the NAOPA website, NAorchestra.org. 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/Mrs. Donato at least 2 weeks prior to the event to be considered. An event may be considered “excused” if there is a significant family responsibility (wedding, reunion, etc.) or an unavoidable academic or school related conflict at North Allegheny. Athletic games/practices are not an acceptable excuse. Tell 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, please email Mrs. Lavelle/Mrs. Donato or bring an excuse to the next rehearsal. Emergency absences are medical emergencies, personal illness, or death in the family.

Unexcused absences: An unexcused absence is an absence from an after school rehearsal or performance without granted permission or failure to report on time or leaving early from an event without permission. An unexcused absence from an orchestra performance or dress rehearsal will result in a drop of 10% in the course grade for the respective grading period.

Playing tests/written assessments

Playing tests and written assessments are used to assess a student's progress and help to determine the seating of the orchestra and playing test scores will contribute to a student's course grade during every grading period. Tests will consist of some of the following: major/minor scales, music excerpts given to students in 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

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, students may retake a playing test one or more times during the grading period in which the original test took place. You may retake the entire test or just a portion. If you fail to appear at your scheduled time for the re-test, your playing test repeat privilege will be revoked for the grading period. Please note: your seating placement will be based on your first score of the grading period.

Instruments

All instruments are to be placed in the instrument storage lockers/racks. Please take care of your instrument and respect the property of others. Do not move students' instruments to different lockers. Do not use other students' instruments without permission. *The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.* Please consider securing your violin/viola and music with a combination lock.

School instruments are sometimes loaned to students for use at home. An

Instrument Loan Form must be completed and returned to school before taking an instrument home. Students are responsible for the care and maintenance of these instruments.

Uniforms

Students wear a uniform for concerts (not dress rehearsals) and strolling events.

Uniform fittings for ninth graders and those needing a new size typically take place in September, but are not scheduled yet at this time.

Girls wear: the uniform black dress provided during fittings hemmed neatly (not stapled) to the top of the shoes, closed-toe black dress shoes (not Toms, canvas sneakers, or other casual shoes, optional hosiery (must be nude in color)

Boys wear: the black pants, jacket, tie, and cummerbund provided during fittings, a white tuxedo shirt with a winged collar and sewn pleats on the front (no cuffs with cuff links), black closed-toe dress shoes (no sneakers), black socks

Students are responsible for replacing lost/missing items. Replacement bow ties are \$5, cummerbunds are \$7.

Concert and Dress Rehearsal Etiquette

Please review the following policies; they will also be reviewed before each concert. Failure to adhere to the policies may result in detention or further consequence:

- Students must arrive on time and attend the entire event.
- Students must listen to instructions, report to the stage on time, and remain in the auditorium during other groups' performances.
- Students must use their own, personal instruments. This includes cellos and basses that are usually kept at home. If you do not have a personal instrument, you are responsible for providing a school instrument when necessary (for example, moving a bass from NAI to NASH).
- Students will not be permitted to have visible cell phones or other electronic games/devices during any part of a performance.
- At concerts, students must be prepared with complete uniforms, instruments, music and other necessary equipment. Failure to report with any of these items may result in a 10 pt. drop in your performance grade.

Golden Strolling Strings

All students in the orchestra program in grades 9-12 participate in the Golden Strolling Strings. The goal of this co-curricular activity is to enhance the orchestra program, provide unique performance opportunities for our students, and to provide unique entertainment throughout the community.

Structure

The orchestra is divided into 4 groups: A, B, C, and D. Each group will have representation of every instrument and grade level, and the directors and students will work together to determine each student's group placement. Golden Strolling Strings events are then divided between the groups so that each group has equal opportunity to perform. In special circumstances, events are opened up to volunteers or offered based on seniority.

Attendance

A strolling event assigned to your strolling group is a mandatory event. However, students are able to **trade events**. If you are unable to attend your event, we encourage you to find a "sub" to take your spot; students will often trade events with those in other groups to accommodate schedules. Students can post notes in the orchestra rooms and ask orchestra teachers to help find subs! An unexcused absence from a strolling event results in a drop of 5% in the course grade for the respective grading period.

Ninth grader participation

Ninth graders and new 10-12 graders will not be required to participate in Golden Strolling Strings events until December. Beginning December 1st, all 9-12 students participate in events assigned to their groups.

NAOPA (North Allegheny Orchestra Parents Association)

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 directors and students with fundraisers, concerts, the orchestra banquet, and by acting as chaperones on any trips we take throughout the year. More

information about this organization and meeting dates will be posted on the orchestra website, NAorchestra.org.

PMEA (Pennsylvania Music Educators Association)

PMEA sponsors several events throughout the year in which students can participate. Students must be enrolled in an orchestra class to participate and complete participation in the event is mandatory (students are not excused for taking SATs or attending other activities).

PMEA Honors Orchestra

This is a weekend-long festival that will take place this year on November 20-21 at Bethel Park High School. Auditions are open to 9-12 grade students and will be submitted through Submittable by September 20. More details coming soon.

PMEA District, Region, All-State Orchestra

Students in grades 10-12 are eligible to apply to participate in District Orchestra. Applications will be submitted in September or October. Please only apply if you are available for all of the following dates:

District Orchestra: January 13-15, 2022

Region Orchestra: February 24-26, 2022

All-State Orchestra: April 6-9, 2022