

ELEMENTARY STRINGS HANDBOOK



LAKE OSWEGO SCHOOL DISTRICT
2009-10



PARENTS: Please go over this handbook with your child, sign and return this page to your child's string teacher.

Thank you.

(Cut along dotted line)

My child

and I have read and discussed this handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the string program in the Lake Oswego School District. We are proud of our staff and students and encourage you to become involved.

PHILOSOPHY

The primary goal of the string program is to develop musical literacy in our students, using a string instrument as the foundation of learning. Acquiring proficiency on a string instrument helps us to understand and enjoy the music we hear in everyday life as well as providing a vehicle for creative self-expression.

The elementary string program emphasizes the building of technique. The sequence of repertoire is carefully selected to introduce and develop specific skills.

The benefits of studying a string instrument are the following:

- ◆ Developing academic and socially oriented skills including self-discipline and concentration.
- ◆ Practicing learning to listen and follow oral and written directions.
- ◆ Working within a group toward a common goal.
- ◆ Learning a new language of written and spoken musical terms.
- ◆ Refining large and small motor skills and eye/hand coordination developed through daily repetition.
- ◆ Developing a joy and sense of satisfaction that comes from being a musician.

Music is found in every culture and is an important part of the human experience. A musical performance of high quality creates excitement, exhilaration, and satisfaction in a job well done. There are very few non-musical people, but there are many who have missed the opportunity to develop their inherent musicianship. Music is a lifelong creative activity with benefits transferable to many other areas of life.





STRING CLASSES

String classes meet Monday through Friday at Lake Grove Elementary School. Each student attends four days a week. Classes **begin** at 7:45 a.m. Buses will pick students up at 8:45 a.m. and return them to their elementary schools.

First-year students will be grouped by instrument. Second and third year students will meet as an orchestra with a special schedule to allow sectional rehearsals, as well.

CLASSROOM RULES

Guidelines are necessary to help a musical organization run smoothly and sound its best. We call these guidelines rehearsal skills. They are:

1. Be on time to class.
2. Come to every class.
3. Have the necessary supplies (instrument, pencil, music folder).
4. No gum, food, or candy.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend each class session. If absences are necessary, a written excuse is required. The excuse should be signed by the student's parent or guardian and brought to string class the first day after they return. Since excessive absences have a negative impact on students' progress, parents will be contacted should this occur.

GRADES

The grading system encourages individual growth and emphasizes group participation. The following criteria will be used to determine grades.

MUSICAL SKILLS:

- ◆ preparation of daily assignment
- ◆ tone quality/technical development

REHEARSAL SKILLS:

- ◆ brings materials to class
- ◆ is attentive and cooperative

Progress reports will be sent home three times during the year.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Private lessons are an excellent way to help a student reach full potential on an instrument. Please contact one of the string teachers for recommendations of excellent teachers in your area if you are interested.

PARENT / TEACHER COMMUNICATION

We hope this handbook has helped both students and parents become more familiar with our elementary string program. Please don't hesitate to contact us at Lake Grove Elementary if we can be of any assistance. HAVE A GREAT YEAR!!

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Kathie Reed 503-639-3795 | Brenda Liu 503-697-1856 | Ashley Peck 541-760-8853 |
| Cynthia Scott 503-655-7839 | Nita Van Pelt 503-245-5157 | |

MUSIC

Orchestra–The Lake Oswego School District provides books and sheet music for students' use. Each student will be given a music folder and is responsible for its contents. All students are expected to bring their folders to each class session. Sheet music is loaned to students and will be expected to be returned in good condition. Lost books will be replaced at the student's expense.

Beginners–Students need to provide a 1-inch 3-ring binder (not their school binder) in which they will keep their music and handouts. They are expected to bring the binder to class every day.

First-year students are given a CD of the year's repertoire. Lost CD's will be replaced at the student's expense.

CONCERTS

All string groups demonstrate their progress through concert programs. CONCERTS ARE THE FINAL EXAM for each trimester of the performance class. There will be three major concerts per year.

Attendance at concerts is mandatory. Every player is important to the success of the performance. If it is necessary to miss a concert, please give a written request to the string teacher in advance of the concert date. Illnesses or emergency situations, of course, are excused provided a note is sent to the next class session.

Students are asked to dress appropriately for performances. Ensembles are seen before they are heard; therefore, clothing appropriate to the occasion is required.

CONCERT DATES

November 12, 2009 – Elem. Orchestra – 7:30 p.m. at Waluga Gym
March 10, 2010 – Orchestra/Beg. Strings – 7:30 p.m. at LOJHS Gym
May 20, 2010 – District Orchestra Festival – 7:30 p.m. at LHS Gym

Students need to arrive by 7:00 p.m. for tuning and setup.

LATE SCHOOL START

In the event that school starts late due to inclement weather conditions or any other reasons, early morning string classes will not be held. All students should report directly to their regular elementary schools at the designated time. (Note: There will be class on early release days.)

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Good citizenship concern and respect for other people and their property, including other students' instruments, are basic values that are expected from all string students. All regular school rules are in effect during string class even though the students are in a different setting. Disruptive or inappropriate behavior may result in a parent conference to discuss the best course of action.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parental help and understanding are key elements in providing a successful musical experience for your child. Your love, help, and encouragement will do wonders in helping to overcome many of the frustrations that young musicians encounter as they begin to assimilate the skills needed to achieve success on their instruments. Parents need to provide a place and time for daily, uninterrupted practice. **Parents of beginning string students need to sign the weekly practice chart before it is turned in.** Parents are welcome to observe class any time. We also welcome volunteers to help with tuning, setup, and other tasks.

PRACTICE

The skills and musical techniques presented in class need to be reinforced at home to become habitual. Since habits are developed from repetition, practice is necessary to succeed in strings and is most effective when done on a daily basis. Practice should be established as part of a daily routine and should be done in a place without distractions. Several short blocks of time are more beneficial than one long session.

First-year violinists and violists are expected to stand during home practice in order to develop correct posture more easily. Cello students need a flat chair that allows the student to place the feet flat on the floor. Class tapes will be distributed to students for home practice. Once note reading has been introduced, the use of a music stand will do much to maintain good posture and, thereby, the sound. A metronome is helpful for improving rhythmical accuracy.

Parents can help by monitoring practice. A weekly practice “homework” sheet will be given to first-year students. Please review this sheet and sign it on a weekly basis. Orchestra students might use the following as a guide:

1-2 minutes

- warm-up (bowing on open strings)

2 minutes

- scales
- rhythm practice

10 minutes

- performance material

6 minutes

- review
- student’s choice

INSTRUMENTS

In most cases, students must supply their own instruments. There are numerous string instrument shops in the Portland metropolitan area with varying rental and lease arrangements, and most people obtain their instruments in this way.

If you have an older instrument at home, it should be evaluated as to condition and appropriate size so that necessary adjustments and repairs can be made as soon as possible.

In order to assure the students’ success, instruments must be kept in good repair. This includes replacing broken strings immediately and attending quickly to any other minor repairs.

Double basses will be provided from our school inventory for selected students. There is a small maintenance fee.

INSTRUMENT CARE

With proper care, your child’s musical instrument will last a lifetime. At the beginning of the year, students are shown the proper way to maintain and handle their instruments. When these directions are followed, only occasional, minor adjustments will be necessary to maintain the instrument.

String instruments are available in a variety of sizes. Students are measured for proper fit at the outset of the year. However, a growth spurt may necessitate a re-assignment. A string teacher will contact you if this is necessary.

EQUIPMENT NEEDS

The following equipment is required for all string classes:

1. pencil
2. cake of rosin
3. shoulder pads for violins and violas
4. soft cleaning cloth (preferably 100% cotton)
5. rock stops for cellos

All cases should be clearly labeled with the student’s name and school.