

Deerlake Middle School Orchestra

2024-2025 Handbook



*“Music expresses that which
cannot be said and on which
it is impossible to be silent”.*
- Victor Hugo

Mr. Steve Mills, Principal
Mrs. Lisa Dollar, Orchestra Director

A Note from the Orchestra Director

Dear Parents and Students,

I am so excited about the orchestra classes at Deerlake Middle School! I am looking forward to a fun and rewarding year full of new and exciting activities and continuing traditions.

Please know each of my students is important to me. It is my pleasure to share the joy of music with them. My goals are to foster students' creativity and love for music; to provide my students with the vital technical skills they need, so there will be no obstacles to their progress; to teach them how to function as part of a musical ensemble, and to provide them with a wide range of musical experiences.

I hope that this handbook will be a welcome source of information for you. Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to read it. Please call or e-mail me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Lisa Dollar

School phone: 922-6545

E-mail: dollarl@leonschools.net

Course Descriptions

Orchestra 1 – Course Number 1302040

Students who have little or no experience on violin, viola, cello, bass, or harp explore high-quality music literature written or transcribed for string orchestra. Study includes the development of foundational instrumental ensemble techniques, performance skills, music literacy, and aesthetic awareness. Public performances may serve as a culmination of specific instructional goals. Students may be required to attend and/or participate in rehearsals and performances outside the school day to support, extend, and assess learning in the classroom. This course may also require students to obtain a musical instrument (e.g., borrow, rent, purchase) from an outside source.

Orchestra 2 – Course Number 1302050

Students who have some previous orchestral experience focus on the development of instrumental technique, musical literacy, performance skills, and increasing aesthetic awareness through study, rehearsal, and performance of a variety of high-quality orchestra literature. Public performances may serve as a culmination of specific instructional goals. Students may be required to attend and/or participate in rehearsals and performances outside the school day to support, extend, and assess learning in the classroom. This course may also require students to obtain a musical instrument (e.g., borrow, rent, purchase) from an outside source.

Orchestra 3 – Course Number 1302060

Students with previous orchestral experience demonstrate intermediate-level knowledge of instrumental techniques, musical literacy, ensemble performance skills, and related musical knowledge through study, rehearsal, and performance of a variety of high-quality orchestral literature. Public performances may serve as a culmination of specific instructional goals. Students may be required to attend and/or participate in rehearsals and performances outside the school day to support, extend, and assess learning in the classroom. This course may also require students to obtain a musical instrument (e.g., borrow, rent, purchase) from an outside source.

Parent Communication

Good communication between parent and teacher is a key element in the success of both your child and the orchestra program. Please don't hesitate to contact Mrs. Dollar if you have any questions or concerns. dollarl@leonschools.net

Class Rules

1. Arrive on time
2. Bring all your materials
3. Be respectful to yourself, your teacher, your classmates
4. Participate

Class Procedures

1. Keep the room tidy.

Students are responsible for picking up their playing area after each rehearsal. All music, instruments, books and materials must be put away at the end of each class.

*All chairs, stands, and other equipment may not leave the orchestra room without permission.

*All Instruments must be stored properly in a locker or on a shelf when not in use.

*Storage areas need to be kept clean from clutter, litter and personal items.

2. NO FOOD DRINKS OR GUM

3. Students may only leave the classroom with the teacher's permission. **Use the proper procedure for leaving the room.**

4. **All electronics must be put away at all times** unless directed otherwise by the teacher. (phones, laptops, etc.)

Discipline Plan

Discipline: Students are expected to follow all district, school and classroom rules and procedures and always conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.

Misbehavior will be dealt with in the following way:

1. Reminder
2. Verbal warning
3. Time out – Students will complete the Corrective Sheet
4. The Teacher-Student Conference Form will be sent home. It should be signed by a parent and returned. Parents will be contacted via e-mail or phone.
5. The student will be referred to the administration.

Severe Clause: Immediate referral to the administration will result in cases of fighting, defiance (refusing to do what you have been asked to do), or extreme disrespect to classmates or teacher.

Tardy Policy – Each grading period, parents will be contacted after the second unexcused tardy. A referral will be written for the third unexcused tardy.

Grading System

Grading Scale		Conduct Grading Scale
90-100	A	4 – no disciplinary issues
80-89	B	3 – 1 issue above a verbal warning
70-79	C	2 – 2-3 issues above a verbal warning
60-69	D	1 – 4 or more issues above a verbal warning
0-59	F	

*Grades will be posted on FOCUS and updated at least every two weeks.
Grades will be based upon the following:*

Pass-Offs/Tests/Concert Attendance 70%
Participation/Written Assignments 30%

What do I need to know about participation?

- Students are expected to have their instruments and supplies daily, and to remain on-task for the duration of the class in order to earn daily participation points. The highest level of performance can only be achieved through excellent rehearsals. Points will not be earned for inappropriate rehearsal behavior (excessive talking, not having instrument or music, etc...).
- Students who are well enough to attend school are expected to participate in class activities. If a student does not feel well enough to participate, he/she will be sent to the clinic.
- Parents who wish to excuse their child from participation in class due to an injury should notify Mrs. Dollar prior to the class they wish to have excused.
- Orchestra - Parents are responsible for having their child's personal instrument repaired. You may contact a local music store for information about repairs, if necessary.
- Please inform Mrs. Dollar prior to the class if your child's instrument is in the repair shop.

- Please take care of repairs as quickly as possible so that students may continue to progress with the class.
- Please note: In order to achieve the best possible sound, orchestra students should keep their fingernails trimmed. The fingertip should touch the string.

What do I need to know about written assignments?

Students will have some written assignments to complete such as definitions of musical terms, benchmark assignments, practice assignments, music theory and music history.

What do I need to know about progress?

The keys to progress include quality teacher instruction and correct repetition of that instruction. The most common hindrances to steady progress are lack of practice, practice with improper technique, and insufficient correct repetitions.

What do I need to know about practice?

Students should practice with a specific goal in mind. Students should use specific strategies to help them meet the goal. Goals and strategies will be covered in class.

What is a pass-off?

Students will “pass-off” selected sections of music – play the selection for Mrs. Dollar. In this way, the teacher can be sure that each student is receiving individualized instruction. Pass-offs should be completed on time for full credit.

What do I need to know about tests and concert attendance?

Playing tests will be given to evaluate students’ progress. These tests may include technique, scales, etudes and music literature. Written tests over musical terms, music theory and music history may be given. Since orchestra is a performance-based class, all performances will be mandatory, and will count toward the academic grade.

- The main performances will be: Fall Concert, Winter Concert, and Spring Concert.
- There may be additional concerts during the school year. All information concerning performances will be announced as soon as it becomes final.
- Attendance at all concerts, rehearsals, and sectionals is REQUIRED. These activities are considered co-curricular because they are extensions of daily classroom activities. Grades are given for these activities.

- No makeup assignment can substitute for the experience of participating in a live concert. This is the main focus of our class. Please make every effort to attend.
- If a student is absent from a concert due to illness, death in the family, or a family emergency, the absence will be excused.
- A letter from their parent should be submitted to Mrs. Dollar on the next school day the student is in attendance.
- Parents should fill out the "Notice of Absence Form" at least one week before the concert if their child will be absent for any other reason. You will find a copy of this form on Mrs. Dollar's website.
- If a student is absent from a concert with no excuse, they will earn a "0" for that concert grade.
- Students who have an excused absence from the concert must submit an alternate assignment to receive credit.

Examples of Unexcused Absences

I didn't know, I had too much homework, I can't get a ride, I forgot,
I had something else to do.

Concert Clean Up – Students are required to remain after the concert to help with cleaning up. Each student must sign out with the director before leaving. Participation in clean-up activities will count toward the students' grade for the concert.

Concert Etiquette

Concerts are very important to our students. They work very hard to prepare. It is important that students are allowed to perform in a true concert setting, and that parents are allowed to see and hear their child perform with minimal distractions. Therefore, we respectfully request that the audience (including students who aren't performing) observe the following:

- Please sit quietly through the entire concert, if possible.
- Please do not enter or exit the performance area while the orchestra is performing.
- Please do not talk or move around the room while the orchestra is performing.
- Please do not use cell phones during the concert.

- The appropriate way to show appreciation is clapping. Yelling and whistling are not considered polite.

Private Lessons

Private lessons taught by a specialist are highly encouraged. They are invaluable for working on fundamentals of posture, building technique, preparing for auditions, etc. In order for music instruction to be effective, it should occur regularly. The standard lesson time for beginners is 30 minutes. More advanced students need a minimum of 45-60 minutes per lesson. Please ask Mrs. Dollar for a list of instructors, if you are interested in private lessons.

Concert Attire

Black shirt, black pants (no jeans, no sweatpants, no yoga/stretch pants), black shoes

T-Shirts

If enough students are interested, we will order Orchestra t-shirts. These are optional. They may be worn on the day of each concert, on Fridays, for pep rallies, auditions, and any orchestra field trips.

Orchestra Field Trips

The orchestra may participate in various trips during the school year. Please note the following:

- All school rules apply on all orchestra trips (including dress code).
- Students must attend all mandatory concerts in order to go on any orchestra trip.
- Students must maintain a “B” average in orchestra and at least a “3” in orchestra conduct in order to perform on any orchestra field trip.
- If transportation is provided for an away performance, all students are expected to travel to and from the event on the transportation provided.
- Students are encouraged to leave personal electronic devices at home. However, they may bring them at their own risk.
- Students with a referral will lose the privilege of participating in trips and activities.
- All medications must be turned in with directions to the director. Students may not carry medications.

Money Collection

- There is no fee associated with the Deerlake Orchestra. Money will be collected for expenses such as application fees or transportation for a field trip. Please let Mrs. Dollar know if other arrangements need to be made due to financial hardship.
- Money which has been collected for an orchestra trip is not refundable after it has been submitted to the vendor.

Fund-Raising Activities

From time to time, fund-raising events will be scheduled to cover expenses such as student awards, sheet music, piano tuning, etc. Each orchestra member will be encouraged, not required, to participate. This money will be used to benefit our students. If more money is collected than is needed to cover expenses for this year, the balance may carry over to help with next year's expenses. Thank you for your support.

Instruments

Violins and Violas

All violin and viola students should rent or buy an instrument to be used at school and at home unless it is a financial hardship. There are a limited number of school instruments available to those who need them. Please let Mrs. Dollar know if you need to use a school instrument.

Violins and violas may be transported on a school bus, provided that students hold them on their lap.

There are a number of school violins and violas which may be used during class, if transportation is a hardship. Please fill out a "Usage Contract" if you would like to use one of these instruments. School instruments will be assigned on a first come – first served basis until all the instruments have been assigned. The privilege of using a school instrument will be revoked if a student is observed to be mistreating an instrument or treating it carelessly.

Cellos

Because of their relatively large size and fragility, the daily transportation of cellos from home to school and back may be a hardship in terms of inconvenience to students and risk to the instruments. **Therefore, all cello students are required to rent or buy an instrument to use at home, but they may use a school-owned instrument for class.** Please let Mrs. Dollar know if this is a financial hardship. Please fill out a "Usage Contract" if you would like to use one of these instruments. School instruments will be assigned on a first come – first served basis until all the instruments have been assigned. The privilege of using a school instrument will be revoked if a student is observed to be mistreating an instrument or treating it carelessly.

Basses

Because of their large size and fragility, the daily transportation of basses from home to school and back may be a hardship in terms of inconvenience to students and risk to the instruments. **Therefore, all bass students may use a school-owned instrument for class.** Parents may choose to rent a bass for their child to practice at home, or they may set up a practice time at school with Mrs. Dollar. Please fill out a "Usage Contract" if you would like to use one of these instruments. School instruments will be assigned on a first come – first served basis until all the instruments have been assigned. The privilege of using a school instrument will be revoked if a student is observed to be mistreating an instrument or treating it carelessly.

IMPORTANT: Students should pick up their personal instruments between the last two classes of the school day if they wish to take them home overnight. The instrument will serve as a pass to class.

Routine Instrument Care

Your instrument is very delicate and needs to be handled carefully. Do not let other students play or touch your instrument.

Loosen the bow after playing

Always wipe your instrument clean after playing

Avoid placing your instrument next to extreme heat or cold

Instrument insurance is recommended. If you are renting, contact the store to see if they have this option. If not, you may wish to contact your renters or home owner's insurance company.

Orchestra Instrument Maintenance

In order to sound their best, all instruments need regular maintenance. Here are examples of the recommended maintenance schedule.

The bow should be re-haired once a year. With cheaper bows, it may be more cost effective to replace the bow.

All strings should be replaced at least yearly.

Fine tuners need a touch of oil once or twice a year to make sure they continue to turn easily. Be sure not to get oil on the instrument.

Bridges need to be straightened. Check it daily.

Severely warped bridges need to be replaced.

Orchestra Instrument Storage/Lockers

School storage space is provided for the convenience of students; however, Deerlake Middle School and/or Mrs. Dollar will not be responsible for the personal property of students.

There are a limited number of instrument lockers available. They will be assigned on a first come, first served basis. Students wanting to use a locker need to bring a combination lock. The combination must be shared with Mrs. Dollar. Students are expected to keep their lockers free of trash.

Music Stores

Local music stores rent and sell instruments at various prices. A case and a horse-hair bow should be included. Rental programs vary. Some are less expensive, but do not include insurance. Be sure to ask about the features of the rental program and choose the one that is right for you. Here is a list of the stores in our area:

Beethoven and Co. (850) 894-8700

Music Masters (850) 224-6158

Playground Music (850) 320-6463

Please be sure to get a quality instrument. Students will feel more successful on a good instrument and are more likely to stay in the program. Also, a poor-quality instrument may need to be repaired more often at an added expense to you. One way to look for quality is to ask if the instrument meets the Music Educator's National Conference (MENC) specifications.