

Peachtree Ridge High School

2014-2015

Orchestra Handbook



Victoria Enloe, Director of Orchestra
Bernadette Scruggs, Director of Orchestra

Dear Orchestra Students and Parents,

Welcome to the 2014- 2015 school year. The Peachtree Ridge High School Orchestra Program is so happy for you to join us! Our program includes the following orchestra ensembles:

Beginning Orchestra- This class takes a non-player through basic technical skills until students are ready to join at the next level.

Concert Orchestra- This class includes the concentrated study of basic technical skills.

Symphonic Orchestra- This class includes the concentrated study of basic technical skills and more in-depth performance skills.

Philharmonic Orchestra- This class includes more in-depth technical and performance study skills.

Chamber Orchestra- This is a performance-based class which includes advanced technical study and literature. *It is recommended that students in Chamber Orchestra participate in private lessons.*

PRHS Small Ensembles- Each class will have the opportunity to form small ensembles for performances in various venues at school and in the community.

Please Read This Handbook Carefully. It contains information about the coming school year, including a calendar, guidelines and expectations. Both you and your parent will need to sign the orchestra contract (given in class) and provide contact information. Contracts need to be returned by Friday, August 8th. Please have all required materials by Tuesday, August 12th.

Orchestra concerts, which take place in the evening, are a required part of each student's grade. Prompt attendance and appropriate dress at these concerts is mandatory in order for each student to receive the best possible musical experience. Both prompt attendance and appropriate dress will be reflected in each student's orchestra grade. Students are expected to arrange timely transportation to and from each performance. (This is a Gwinnett County Policy.)

The success of our program centers on the support of our students and their parents. We encourage you to note the important dates in this calendar on your home calendar and make plans to attend the scheduled programs. Parents, it will help our program and your child if you encourage daily practice and advise your child to participate in orchestra each semester. **It is scientifically proven that students who participate in instrumental music programs score higher on standardized tests such as the SAT. And, most colleges prefer to admit students with four years of a fine arts class rather than those with only academic backgrounds.**

Parent Responsibilities

1. Provide your child with the best instrument possible so that he/she will be proud to perform with it. Provide extra strings to keep in the instrument case for emergencies. If you are able, get a metronome and music stand for at home practice. These will really help your child!
2. Communicate with Dr. Scruggs or Mrs. Enloe as soon as a problem develops. We can be reached most quickly by e-mail at bernadette_scruggs@gwinnett.k12.ga.us or victoria_enloe@gwinnett.k12.ga.us. You may also reach us at the orchestra office phone number: 770-495-5413.
3. If you have the time, volunteer to help at concerts, on trips and with other orchestra events. We ask for a \$65 orchestra fee from each student which should eliminate the need for any fund-raising during the school year. This fee will help with music purchases, festival fees, student awards, master classes, maintenance of instruments, orchestra awards, music office supplies, etc. Please know that we do not believe in fund-raising or large orchestra bank accounts- only in providing your child with the best possible program. Students who pay fees will be awarded a ticket to our annual orchestra party. **We will keep extra strings, shoulder pads and rosin on hand for all students who contribute to the program to save you an emergency trip to the music store.**
4. Turn in all written communications and required monies on time. We will send e-mail reminders with these dates to the email address you provide on your orchestra contract.
5. Try to take time to attend the concerts. It is our pledge to always prepare programs that “leave you wanting more” rather than frustrate you with their length. Our orchestra students work very hard and your presence at concerts makes a difference and will mean a lot to us.
6. Please pick up your student on time after rehearsals, concerts and events. Please do not wait until your student calls you after these events. Please plan ahead for these activities.

Many thanks for all you do to enrich our program!

Course Information

Course Outline

The following skills and concepts, including the Gwinnett County AKS, will be introduced and or, developed, by means of orchestral and chamber literatures appropriate to the needs and abilities of the students:

1. Correct posture and position
2. Tone production and vibrato
3. Rhythm
4. Pitch perception
5. Scales
6. Shifting and advanced positions in various keys
7. Bow techniques
8. Dynamic, tempo and articulation markings
9. Blend, balance and rhythmic precision in an ensemble
10. Musical expression and interpretation
11. Basic concepts of music theory
12. Music history- particularly that which relates to compositions performed
13. Basis conducting skills
14. Chamber music skills
15. Competence in rehearsal and performance

*****Please note the list of Gwinnett County AKS skills for your student's level, located at:
<http://publish.gwinnett.k12.ga.us/gcps>**

Behavior

Each student will:

- Treat classmates, director and all others with courtesy and respect.
- Unpack and set up immediately upon arriving in class. "On time" means to be in your seat with rosin on your bow and music and pencil on your stand.
- Cease all talking and playing when the instructor, concertmaster, student leader, or student conductor stands on the podium or is asking for your attention.
- Remain absolutely quiet during tuning.
- Keep our beautiful orchestra room clean. NO food, gum, or drinks (except water) allowed.
- Remember that team spirit means more "we" and less "me". The orchestra is about each of us working toward a common goal. It is not an individual effort. Be supportive and helpful with the others in your class as well as giving 100% during rehearsals. Please keep personal conflicts outside the orchestra room and let your director know if there is a serious problem.

Materials- Due in class by Tuesday, August 12th

Having your materials each day is a part of your grade. Please label all items clearly with your name. Each student will need to obtain the following items:

1. An instrument and a bow in good playing condition.
2. A pencil on your music stand every day.
3. Accessories: Rosin (the community cake of rosin, passed around the classroom does not count!), soft cloth for cleaning your instrument, a comfortable shoulder rest for your instrument if applicable, rock stops for cellists and basses (you will need to bring yours from home for concerts).

School Instrument Loans

Those cellists and bassists wishing to use school instruments during class will be asked to pay a fee of \$35 per year for upkeep of these instruments. Of course, you may bring your own from home if you would prefer to use it. Cellists and bassists using school instruments will be responsible for any repair work due to negligence. ***You may not play a school instrument unless it is assigned to you.*** No violins or violas will be provided for student use during class.

Personal Equipment Policies

Gwinnett County Public Schools are not responsible for stolen or damaged instruments that are owned, rented or borrowed by students. Instruments storage rooms are not secure and schools cannot be responsible for anything left in them, either during the school day or overnight. Students are expected to take their instruments home each night to practice and those who leave their instruments in storage rooms during the school day are strongly urged to lock their cases in some manner. Students should never leave their instruments in practice rooms, classrooms, buses, hallways, etc., during the school day, evenings, weekends or vacations. To minimize damage, never touch another student's instrument or allow others to handle your instrument. The school and teacher are not responsible for instruments that are damaged as the result of a student loaning his or her instrument to another student. **NOTE: A student found to be touching or using another student's instrument without their knowledge will receive an administrative referral.** Each person should take care not to leave their instrument unattended in a precarious position (hanging on music stands, on the floor, or in an open case). Cellos and basses should always be returned to their rack when not in use- never left on the floor. Instrument cases must not be used as foot rests or stools, as these uses can impair their ability to protect the instrument inside from damage.

Grading Procedures

Each student's orchestra grade will be based on evaluation of class work and rehearsal participation. Assessments will include playing and written tests, graded daily assignments, and performances. Emphasis is placed upon daily preparation of skills and general improvement in instrumental performance. This includes mastery of the AKS. Progress reports will be emailed every Thursday and will include the categories listed below.

1. Daily Preparation of Skills- Students will earn up to 100 points per week by demonstrating the following rehearsal competencies: having all necessary class materials, being in rehearsal on time, turning in all written communication, and active, cooperative participation in class and rehearsals. A student will lose points by being late to rehearsal, failing to have materials, not fully participating in class activities or by choosing not to follow rehearsal guidelines.

2. Tests- This includes performance and written tests. If time allows, students will be allowed to retake a test. Retakes will be scheduled at the convenience of the teacher and do not apply to chair challenges or final exams.

3. Concert Performances- Concerts have two major purposes. One purpose is for the students to experience the interpreting of music for and with an audience. Students will display technical growth and the expression of the musical language. The other purpose is to allow the student to experience music with an educated ear. Listening is important to the playing of music. A student who listens with a trained ear will hear with greater depth. *After performing their concert, students are expected to stay and listen to the next orchestra class that performs.* Most performances will be required and will be weighted as two or three test grades. Tardiness will lower the grade. Students are required to remain for the duration of the program, maintain proper concert behavior, and help with clearing the stage afterwards to receive their full performance grade.

Orchestra Grading Policy

Classroom Assessments (quizzes, daily work, theory, homework)	35%
Summative Assessments (playing tests, performances, written tests)	45%
Final Exam (10% performance, 10% written)	20%
Total:	100%

Uniform

Students in concert, symphonic and philharmonic orchestras wear black dress pants, black dress shoes, black socks or hose and a black, long-sleeved shirt that is ordered through the orchestra at the beginning of the year. No skirts may be worn. If you have any questions about your uniform, please ask well in advance of the concert so you have time to obtain proper clothes. ***Students who do not follow the uniform policy may be penalized on their concert grade.***

Gentlemen in chamber orchestra may either wear the above uniform or a black tux, black bow tie, and black dress shoes and socks. Ladies may also either wear the above uniform or may dress in formal black attire such as a floor-length black dress or black dress slacks and black blouse with black dress shoes.

Attendance Policy

Attendance at all orchestra concerts is required and very important for the overall success of the program. Student absences from concerts pose problems for the group because they create a hole in the section and weaken the performance of the whole orchestra. ***An unexcused absence will jeopardize a student's grade, chair and qualifications for orchestra awards.*** All absences require a note from a parent within 24 hours of the event. **Parents, please schedule appointments on non-concert dates.** Excused absences include personal illness, religious holidays, close family wedding or funeral, or college interviews. Unexcused absences include doctor or dental appointments, work scheduling conflicts, school club meetings, driver's tests or any other absence.

Performances

Each orchestra class will perform four major concerts per year. There will be a fall program (orchestra only), a winter fine arts program (may include full orchestra), large group performance evaluation (in February or March), and a spring concert. The directors, with the understanding that ample advance notice is given to all orchestra members, may add concerts. See the calendar included in the handbook for any dates that are already determined for the year.

Solo and Ensemble Performance Evaluation will be held in May of this school year. Students are encouraged to participate in this festival. Participants perform solos or ensemble pieces that they have prepared for a judge, who is an experienced music educator, and will be given a rating on the performance. This is an important learning experience because the comments given by the judge are directed to the individual performer. There will be a minimal fee charged for judge and medals. Students may perform in no more than three events. **Students are expected to hire their own accompanist and to provide judges with the original of the selection being performed.** Medals will be awarded to ensembles or soloists for a rating of "Superior" or "Excellent". All students rated "Superior" or "Excellent" can earn credit toward their orchestra letter by participating in this event.

Extracurricular Performance Opportunities

All State Orchestra is open to all orchestra students. After the district and statewide audition process, students are selected to participate in a three-day clinic in Savannah in early March. These students rehearse with a nationally known conductor or composer. Students who are selected are required to provide their own transportation, hotel and adult chaperon for the entire weekend. Students must order and pay for their own music (second audition only, unless excerpts are provided by the state) and are required to perform this prepared material as well as sight-read (both auditions) and perform scales (first audition only). A private teacher is recommended for those students who wish to audition.

The **PRHS Concerto Competition** is open to all orchestra students enrolled for both semesters of the school year. The competition will be held in late September and the winner will perform with the orchestra at a special winter concert. Information for those wishing to participate is located on the orchestra bulletin board.

County-wide Performance Opportunities

Gwinnett County offers two county-wide extracurricular honor orchestras that rehearse and perform throughout the year. Audition requirements for these groups will be provided out during the first week of school. Please see Dr. Scruggs if you wish to audition.

The **Gwinnett County Youth Symphony** is open to 6th through 12th grade orchestra students and rehearses at Peachtree Ridge High School from 7 PM until 9:00 PM each Monday night. Membership is mostly high school-aged string, wind, brass, and percussion students.

The **Gwinnett County Kendall Honor Orchestra** is a string orchestra open to 6th through 9th grade orchestra students and rehearses each Monday night from 7 PM until 8:30 PM at Peachtree Ridge High School.

Orchestra Letters and Service Bars

An orchestra letter demonstrates involvement in music related activities. Any student enrolled in a full year of orchestra may earn points toward their letter through participation in orchestra and related activities. For a list of these activities and a point worksheet, see Dr. Scruggs or Mrs. Enloe's website. To letter, students need to accumulate 50 points (students earn 20 points for being in year-long orchestra). We suggest keeping track of points throughout the school year so you are not scrambling to remember your orchestra-related activities at the last minute. NOTE: Point worksheets are due on Friday, April 3th.

Graduation Honor Cords

The Orchestra Honor Chord is an important award that seniors wear with their robe on graduation day. It represents outstanding commitment to the PRHS orchestra program, service to the PRHS community, and excellence in instrumental music performance. Every orchestra senior who has met the following criteria will be awarded an orchestra honor chord:

- Participate in 8 semesters of orchestra
- Maintain a 90 cumulative average in orchestra
- Pay orchestra fees
- Be a member of Tri-M Music Honor Society
- Complete one community service project per grade level
- Attend all dress rehearsals and concerts
- Participate in Large Group Performance Evaluation
- Consistently exhibit strong work ethic, superior rehearsal and stage etiquette, and demonstrate the qualities of a team player
- Demonstrate excellence in character by exhibiting behaviors outlined in the handbook and by having a clean discipline record. *See "Behavior" section of handbook.*

PRHS Orchestra 2014- 2015 Important Dates

August 8th- Please return all contracts/contact information by this date.

August 12th- Please have all required supplies by this date.

August 23rd- GCYS/Kendall Auditions- Hull MS

August 29th - **Fee deadline for All-State Orchestra Audition** (\$20 audition fee)

September 25th- Fall Concert (Times TBA)

October 18th - All-State Orchestra District Auditions at Brookwood HS

November 15th - Georgia State University Orchestra Invitational (Philharmonic only)

November 18th - GCYS and Kendall Concert at PRHS

December 11th & 12th - Winter Fine Arts Showcase (Times TBA)

January 10th - All-State Final Audition at Westminster School (make-up date: Jan. 17th)

January 23rd - 25th - PRHS Dance Show with Chamber Orchestra

February 7th - Violapalooza (violists only) at Bay Creek Middle School

February 26th – 28th - All-State Orchestra in Athens

March 6th - 7th - Large Group Performance Evaluation at PRHS

March 31st - Kendall/GCYS Spring Concert at PRHS

April 28th - Outdoor Concert at Duluth Amphitheater

May 14th - Orchestra Spring Concert and Banquet: Symphonic & Concert Orchestras at 5:30;
Philharmonic and Chamber Orchestras at 7:15

*** The orchestra instructors reserve the right to add dates or update the syllabus during the course of the school year.**