

Hightower Trail
Orchestra
Handbook
2008-2009



Susan Brown, Director
Heather Kocevar, Asst. Director

Dear Orchestra Families,

Welcome to new and returning families of our orchestra program! Playing in the orchestra encourages creativity and helps young people learn discipline and focus. We hope each student will take advantage of the many opportunities available through the orchestra program and continue music as a life long pursuit.

We are enjoying the second year in our new room! Students will be assigned a new locker this year and the combination as well as the locker number will be located in the front of their agenda. Make sure that they do not lose this information.

This handbook serves as your reference for the activities we have planned this year. It also includes classroom policies and procedures. Please review the information and mark your home calendar with concert and activity dates. Assist your child in completing the attached student information form. It is very important to include your email address(es) on the student information form so that we can contact you regarding pertinent orchestra updates. If your e-mail address should change, please notify us immediately so that we can update our mailing list.

Parents are encouraged to be involved with the orchestra program. There are many areas that require assistance such as data entry, clerical, uniforms, chaperoning, and pre-concert assistance. Please consider volunteering and indicate your choice(s) on the student information sheet.

Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns about your child's progress in orchestra. It is best to reach us through school email but you can also call the number printed below. We look forward to an outstanding year of music learning and performance

Musically Yours,

Susan H. Brown
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Heather Kocevar
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MATERIALS

Music Storage – Students should purchase a black, ½ inch, 3 ring binder with approx 10 – 15 clear sheet protectors for music storage. Students will be assigned a locker to store their orchestra belongings.

Method Books:

Sixth Grade – Orchestra Expressions, Book 1 (Alfred Publishing/Warner Brothers)

Seventh Grade – Essential Elements for Strings, 2000, Book 2

Eighth Grade – Muller-Rusch, Book 3

Make sure you purchase the book with your instrument name!

Instrument Supplies:

Case, well identified with name and pod.

Rosin (Bass students must have rosin specifically for bass).

Soft cloth

Shoulder rest, violins and violas (You should try with your instrument before buying).

Extra strings, violins and violas

Endpin stop (rockstop), cellos and basses

Pencil

Music stand for home practice (folding wire stand)



Reminders

Instrument Storage:

Each student will be assigned an orchestra locker. Students will receive this assignment during the first week of school. Personal instruments and school instruments must be stored in the proper place. Students will lose participation points if they fail to put away materials.

- *Put your name on your case, book, shoulder rest, and endpin stop.*
- *Violins and violas keep a soft cloth in your case.*
- *Keep your case on the left side of your chair. Make sure it is closed!*
- *Cello and bass students should keep all materials in a small bag, **labeled with name and class**, in designated location.*
- *Each student is responsible for putting away his/her instrument and music at the end of class.*

Performance Attire

The Hightower Trail Orchestra performance attire consists of the following:

Sixth Grade Orchestra Shirts/Blue Jeans
(Shirt order form will be sent home at a later date)

Seventh/Eighth Orchestra Shirt (Shirt order form will be sent
home at a later date)
Black slacks (No skirts please)
Black socks (or black hose)/Black shoes
No white sneakers, white socks or black jeans!!



Orchestra concerts are considered formal events for our students and it is very important that students look their best for each performance. Please address uniform issues long before the concert date. Students who arrive for a concert without acceptable clothing will not be allowed to participate in the event. If you have a problem obtaining an outfit, please contact us immediately so we can work together to resolve this matter.

Performance Attendance

Students are expected to attend all performances unless a director has approved an acceptable excuse *two weeks prior to the performance*. Students who do not attend the performance must submit a recording of the concert music on the next school day following the concert. Students who fail to submit a recording will have points deducted from their participation grade.

Our performances are intended to showcase the orchestra students' hard work and are also designed to teach stage and audience etiquette. Therefore, students are expected to behave in a courteous and professional manner before, during, and after the performance.

*Performance attendance and make-ups are required for students attending any orchestra field trips. Students who do not meet these requirements will be asked not to participate in these special events. Field trips are a reward (and not a privilege) for the hard work and dedication these students put forth throughout the year.

Private Lessons

Students who are interested may choose to take private lessons. Private instruction can greatly enhance a student's orchestra experience. A list of private teachers is posted on the large bulletin board in the orchestra room.

Grading System

Grades will be based on both director's evaluation of each student's work in class and during performances, with emphasis on daily participation, preparation for performances, and general improvement in individual playing and ensemble skills.

Daily Participation – 40%

- Has instrument, notebook, method book, and pencil
- Actively participates in rehearsal and/or class activities
- Demonstrates correct playing position
- Strives to improve identified weak areas through daily home practice and in class rehearsals.

Performance Tests – 35%

- Scales and techniques
- Method book selections/Repertoire Excerpts
- Pass-offs (Sixth Grade students must perform assigned selections from the method book during morning and/or after school sessions. Selections will be listed on a Pass-off sheet. Pitch/rhythm accuracy, correct instrument position, and tone quality are evaluated before students can progress to the next piece.

Theory and Written Assignments – 15%

- Theory Workbook/Worksheets/assignments in Smart Music
- Rhythmic and Melodic Dictation
- Music Literacy/Essential Questions

Practice Record – 10%

- Students will be responsible for completing 2 practice charts per nine weeks grading period. Practice Records must have parent signature to receive credit. 100 minutes per week = 100%. **Practice records without parent signature will not be counted towards 9 weeks grade. Practice charts will also be available to download on the orchestra website.**

www.htmsorchestra.com

HOMEMADE PRACTICE CHARTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Consistent practice allows students to benefit more from class rehearsals. Practice should be considered as daily homework and will be reflected in **both daily and test grades. Sixth Grade Practice Records will begin the 2nd 9 weeks.**

**Grading scale is subject to change. Parents and students will be notified in writing 2 weeks prior to a new grading period if any changes should take place.*

Extra Help Sessions and Rehearsals

The orchestra room is open for extra help, pass-offs, and practice on designated mornings each week from 8:00am – 8:45am and afternoons from 4:15-5:00pm. Students should check classroom announcements and write times down in their agenda. Students may count this time on their practice records. Additional help sessions may be added as schedule permits. Seventh and eighth grade will have occasional sectional rehearsals on Tuesday and/or Thursday mornings as needed. Information will be sent home to notify parents and students of these rehearsals via email.

Music Department Behavior Management Plan

All school wide rules and expectations are in effect in the music classrooms and on any trip the students may take with the Hightower Trail Middle School Music Department.

Each music classroom exists to educate each and every child in the fundamentals of music on his/her instrument. For all students to receive such an education, the following expectations will set the classroom climate:

It is simply expected that all students listen at all times.

1. Follow Directions
2. Show respect.
3. Be prepared.
4. Stay on task.

Consequences

- 1st offense: Conduct demerit in Behavior Infraction Log; conference with teacher after class.
2nd offense: Conduct demerit in Behavior Infraction Log; conference with teacher after class, parents notified.
3rd offense: Parent called; intervention determined (detention, punishment at home, etc.).
4th & 5th offense: Student behavior turned over to the appropriate administrator.

Conduct Grade Determination

Conduct Grade will be determined as follows:

- | | | |
|--|-------------------|-----|
| 1 st and 2 nd offenses | Satisfactory | (S) |
| 3 rd and 4 th offense | Needs Improvement | (N) |
| 5 th offense: | Unsatisfactory | (U) |

Each student begins with no offenses each 9 week grading period.

Tips for Parents

- **Provide a quiet place, music stand and proper chair when your child practices**
- **Schedule consistent, daily time for practice.**
- **Encourage your child to make at least a two year commitment to orchestra.**
- **Keep your child's instrument in working condition.**
- **Provide tutoring by an accomplished musician, if possible.**
- **Show support by attending orchestra functions and concerts.**
- **Encourage your child to play for family and friends.**
- **Praise your child's efforts and accomplishments.**

What to do if your child loses interest

Occasionally, students may become frustrated with progress on an instrument...especially when the "newness" is over. It is important to guide your child through these situations.

- ◆ Discuss the situation with your child and determine why their interest is fading
- ◆ Discuss the situation with an orchestra teacher
- ◆ Encourage the child to continue for a specified amount of time
- ◆ Find an older student in orchestra to serve as a mentor

If, after consultation with an orchestra director, it is determined that a drop should occur, the following procedures should be followed:

- ◆ Students may drop orchestra within the first three days of school with a parent note
- ◆ At the end of a nine week grading period, students may drop orchestra if a parent/student/teacher conference has taken place. A parent note to drop orchestra is also required.
- ◆ If the decision to drop orchestra occurs, the scheduler and an administrator must be informed.



Hightower Trail Orchestra 2008 – 2009 Concert and Activity Calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
Sept. 3	Registration Deadline Solo and Ensemble, All-State	N/A	N/A
Oct. 11	Solo and Ensemble Festival	Astrey MS	All day+
Oct. 16	Eighth Grade Fall Concert*	HT Theater	7:00pm
Oct. 21	Sixth/Seventh Grade* Fall Concert	HT Theater	7:00pm
Oct. 25	District All-State Auditions	Pope HS	All day+
Dec. 11	Seventh/Eighth Grade Winter Concert	HT Theater	7:00pm
Jan. 17	Final All-State Audition	Westminster School	All day
Feb. 23	CODA Festival – 7 th Grade*	Dodgen MS	TBA
Feb. 24	CODA Festival – 8 th Grade*	Dodgen MS	TBA
Mar. 5-6	All State Orchestra	Savannah, GA	Inclusive
Mar. 12	Honor Orchestra Auditions	East Cobb MS	TBA+
Mar. 24	Sixth Grade String Jamboree*	Wheeler HS	7:00pm
April 16	Night of the Arts	HT	TBA
April 17-18	Honor Orchestra Event	McEachern HS	Inclusive
May 7	Sixth/Seventh Grade Spring Concert	HT Theater	7:00pm
May 11	Eighth Grade Spring Concert	HT Theater	7:00pm

***Required event for the orchestra listed + Individual audition times TBA**
Event times and places may change. Notices will be sent home with these changes.

HTMS Orchestra Student Information Sheet

Name _____ Instrument _____

*Instrument Serial number _____ *Brand _____

*(For student owned or rental instruments only. Students using school cellos or basses must complete additional form).

Parent(s) name(s) _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Email address _____

Alternate e-mail address _____

****If your contact information should change throughout the school year, please notify us so that we may be in contact with you!*

Other numbers where parents may be reached during the day:

Name _____ Cell _____ Work _____

Name _____ Cell _____ Work _____

I have read the HTMS Orchestra Handbook and I understand the behavior management plan and the expectations for successful participation.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

*****Please sign and return all forms by Friday, August 15th, 2008.**

Parent Volunteer Sheet

During the year, we will need assistance with different aspects of the orchestra program. Please check any areas where you are willing to assist!

Clerical _____

Hospitality _____

Fundraiser _____

Pre-Concert Assistance _____

Post-Concert Assistance _____

Chaperoning _____

Other _____

Parent Correspondence (for teachers only)

Date:	Type of Correspondence: _____	Notes: _____ _____
Date:	Type of Correspondence: _____	Notes: _____ _____
Date:	Type of Correspondence: _____	Notes: _____ _____
Date:	Type of Correspondence: _____	Notes: _____ _____
Date:	Type of Correspondence: _____	Notes: _____ _____
Date:	Type of Correspondence: _____	Notes: _____ _____

“BLANKET” PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN A SERIES OF SCHOOL SPONSORED FIELD TRIPS

I hereby request that (Student’s Name-PLEASE PRINT): _____
_____ be allowed to participate in athletic team, band, orchestra, chorus, and/or any series of field trips related to one particular area of study or activity. I understand that transportation may or may not be provided by the Cobb County School District (District). In the event transportation is not provided by the District, transportation will be the student’s responsibility.

Detailed trip information, including destination, date, time of departure, time of return, purpose, and supervision, should be given in writing to the parents at least two (2) weeks prior to each trip in the series.

The District does not or may not carry any insurance relative to the trip, including the cost of the trip, or for injuries to the student. I represent that the student has insurance either through the student accident insurance offered by the District or through my own insurance carrier.

If any emergency medical procedures or treatment are required by the student during the trip, I consent to the trip supervisor(s) taking, arranging for, and consenting to the procedures or treatment in his/her or their discretion.

I agree to release, indemnify, and hold harmless the Cobb County School District (District), its Board of Education, and its employees, agents, or assignees, as well as its approved adult trip supervisors (“District Indemnitees”) from and forever promise not to sue them on any and all claims, demands, rights, causes of action, liabilities, losses, damages, costs and expenses (including reasonable attorneys’ fees), whether known or unknown, that I, any other parent or guardian of the above-named student, or the student may have or may allege to have against the District Indemnitees or which may be brought against the District Indemnitees arising out of or in any manner relating to the student’s participation in the field trips, including but not limited to the rendering of emergency medical procedures or treatment.

NOTE: This form must be signed by student if the student is 18 years of age or older.

Name of Student (PLEASE PRINT)

Signature of Student Date

Name of Parent/Guardian (PLEASE PRINT)

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date