

Langley High School Orchestra

Classroom Policies

Dr. McCormick

scott.mccormick@fcps.edu

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The Orchestra Room

After several years of exile during the renovation period, the orchestra is proud to move into a beautiful new space – Room 1004. This attractive rehearsal space is equipped with state of the art acoustics, sound equipment, and storage lockers. It is important to me that the room should be a place where orchestra students feel comfortable to gather and spend time together.

However, be aware that this is not a spacious room and there must be no additional obstacles to music-making in the rehearsal area. **Chairs** will be set in a specific formation for rehearsal, should not be moved without permission and should always remain set up for the next class. **Backpacks** will be stored in the instrument lockers when instruments are used for rehearsal.

Instruments

The **safety of our fragile instruments** is the top priority of the orchestra that must be reinforced at all times. In this smaller space, students will need to be mindful of stowing backpacks and unpacking instrument cases. Do not bring non-music related materials to store in the orchestra room and please be mindful of keeping access for student movement around the formation in order to prevent accidents.

Every student is expected to have an instrument to play for rehearsal. Violin and viola players must bring their own instruments to school. Cellos and basses may rent school equipment (see required materials and fees). Any student who does not bring their instrument will not be given a holiday from rehearsal, but will instead be permitted to sign out a school instrument that is available for emergencies (aka “Instruments of Shame”) Repeated use of these instruments will greatly affect your rehearsal process grade.

Storage

All violin and viola students will be assigned a personal storage **locker** in the storage room behind the rehearsal space. You may register a combination lock with the director if you want additional security for your instrument. It is your responsibility to keep the locker neat and secure for storage use.

Students who use school cellos and basses are responsible for their safe return to the case or rack for the next class at the conclusion of each rehearsal. They will be responsible for any damage that occurs while the instrument is in their care.

Set Up

Each student will be expected to be inside the classroom as the bell rings for their designated class. Repeated tardiness will not only lower your participation grade, but will also bring disciplinary action from the school administration. The first few minutes of each class will be essential to setting the tone for a productive rehearsal. Students will be expected to retrieve their music and to set up instruments to play (tune) within the **first 5 minutes of class**.

Music

Every student will be assigned a **folder** in which they will keep music that will always stay in the rehearsal room in the numbered slots of the folder rack. Additional practice copies will also be available for students to take home and use outside of class.

Cell Phones

Positive use of technology is encouraged at the start or end of a class period for reminders or for retrieving information when prompted (such as looking up a skill-testing question). However, the **use of cell phones while the orchestra is rehearsing will not be tolerated** -- it is not only distracting to the flow of rehearsal but also a sign of disrespect to the director and fellow musicians. Distracted students will suffer consequences in their rehearsal participation grade, and repeat offenders will need to surrender their phones during rehearsal.

Practice expectations

The key to successful instrumental performance is that each member of the orchestra is committed to executing their part. This ability will be demonstrated in playing tests and may involve a different amount of time for students with different learning styles and musical background. However, students should be encouraged to practice regularly and to take pride in their preparation and mastery of our literature.

Private Instruction

Although not mandatory for participation in the orchestra, private lessons can make an enormous difference to the musical experience of string students. With large, energetic classes, it is very difficult for one teacher to respond to the specific needs of each individual to develop technique. The combination of an effective private instructor and an ambitious performing ensemble is an ideal recipe for musical growth. Please do not hesitate to ask me for recommendations (FCPS private teacher list or student honors mentors) if you are looking for additional help.

Student Mentors

Younger students may also find support through the student tutoring initiatives of the Tri-M Honors Society, where upperclassmen are seeking opportunities to earn service hours in mentorship. Please contact the director if you would benefit from a pairing with a more experienced player who may be available to help during Saxon time or after school.

Sectional Coaches

Every year, we have been fortunate to gather professional clinicians who have agreed to come in and share their expertise with our students. These experts also allow us the opportunity to break out by instrument type and focus more directly on the challenges of each section. . Students should recognize what a privilege it is to work with these distinguished musicians and will be expected to treat them with utmost respect.

Seating

I believe that teamwork is the most important ingredient for a successful orchestra and for that reason I discourage direct competition through 'challenges' in my classes. My seating order reflects a combination of factors: tone production, rhythmic reliability, rehearsal attitude, ability to perform under pressure, maturity, and leadership. I ask students and parents alike to trust my expertise as I determine the most successful formation for the good of the group. I will also make an effort to pair students on a stand who work effectively together and enjoy each other's company, so long as they do not abuse that privilege

Leadership

Students who wish to make their way to the front stands of our large orchestral classes need to realize that this comes with some additional expectations – there is more required of a successful principal player than just executing their own part. Instead, these players need to make a larger investment in the success of the entire group. They should make it a priority to connect with every member of their section, to mark their parts and share bowings and fingerings, and to lead by example and to make an impact on each rehearsal.

Tri-M Honors Society

As students become upperclassmen, they will also find opportunities to display this type of leadership through their participation in the Tri-M Honors Society. The initiative of this group is to demonstrate a 10-hour service commitment in mentoring, outreach, concert support, or publicity while maintaining standards of academic and musical excellence.

They will also be charged with curating an orchestra Facebook site, which will be an opportunity for students to express themselves and promote the orchestra through social media.

Saxon Time

The orchestra will be able to take advantage of the flexibility of Saxon time for additional rehearsal opportunities. Students who wish to display their leadership and service to the orchestra are strongly encouraged to attend, as are students who want a little extra help preparing for playing tests are concerts. The schedule will be as follows:

Monday – As needed

Tuesday – Full Orchestra

Wednesday – Special Chamber Projects

Thursday – Full Orchestra

Friday – Freshman/Sophomores (Freshman Friday is especially for those not in 7th Period)

Concert Expectations

The culmination of our musical journey is achieved while sharing the results of our learning with an audience. Wearing appropriate concert attire is an essential component of performance as it sets a professional atmosphere and shows respect for the great tradition of classical music. Each string player is required to dress in appropriate concert attire in order to perform on our stage (see syllabus course materials and fees) Be sure to care for your attire (keeping it clean and wrinkle-free and without tears) so that you can make your best impression on stage. Also be mindful that the audience does not want to see chewing gum, cell phones, or other distractions.

Spirit Wear

One of the goals of the orchestra is to teach the value of self-advocacy through active participation and promotion of the arts. We are proud to offer a clothing line (designed by orchestra students) as a method of creating awareness for our program and build our brand. We would like to encourage our members to proudly display the burning violin logo, particularly on the day of concerts and orchestra events. Every student will be required to purchase a T-Shirt and a polo shirt for informal performances (see syllabus required materials and fees) but there are also bumper stickers, lanyards, sweats, hoodies, and quarter-zips available for order.

Communication

Orchestra students are advised to consult the orchestra website at www.langleyorchestra.org for information pertaining to calendars, performances, and announcements.

Students will also have the opportunity to join a Remind system which will send helpful texts with important orchestra announcements.

Every family should have email contact with the Langley Orchestra Society which will send messages about upcoming events.

Students may also find the Tri-M Facebook group to be a useful source for reminders and suggestions about orchestra activities.

List of local music dealers:

Potter's Violin Shop*
4706 Highland Avenue
Bethesda 301.652.7070
www.pottersviolins.com

Brobst Violin Shop*
5584 General Washington Dr.
Alexandria 703.256.0566
www.brobstviolins.com

Day Violins*
14221A Willard Road Suite 500
Chantilly 703.391.9444
www.dayviolins.com

Maley's McLean Music
6224-A Old Dominion Drive
McLean 703.532.4009

Foxes Music Company
416 S. Washington Street
Falls Church 703.533.7393

Music and Arts, McLean
1388 Chain Bridge Road
McLean 703.356.9394
www.musicarts.com

Music Masters
8455 Tyco Road, #H
Vienna VA 22182
(703)848-9403

**Specialize in stringed instruments*

Helpful websites for purchasing strings and other equipment:

www.sharmusic.com
www.swstrings.com