

Southwest Middle School Orchestra Handbook

Dear Orchestra Parents and Students:

Welcome Back! I am looking forward to another year of music making with the young musicians of the Southwest Guilford Orchestra! As we all take this next step on our musical journey together, I encourage you all to approach every task and challenge with hard work and a positive attitude. If we all commit to this, there is nothing we can not accomplish.

Class Purpose

The purpose of this class is for the students to learn and improve upon a variety of skills which include: mastering their own instrument, reading musical notation, playing expressively, and learning about music and how it fits into the course of our daily lives and shapes human civilization.

Rules/Expectations

1. Respect the teacher, your classmates, and yourself.
2. Be prepared for class. Bring your instrument, your music, and your pencil.
3. Be on time to class.
4. Raise your hand for permission to speak or get up.
5. No food, sweet drinks, or candy is to be consumed during a rehearsal.
6. If you have a cell phone, keep it off. If I catch you using it, I will confiscate it.
7. Keep your fingernails short.
8. Try your best!!!

Discipline Policy

If these expectations are not met, the following discipline policy will be enforced.

- 1st Incident- Verbal warning
- 2nd Incident- Student/Teacher Conference and phone call
- 3rd Incident- After-School Detention and phone call
- 4th Incident- Parent/Teacher Conference and phone call
- 5th Incident- Office Referral and phone call

Bathroom Policy

If a student needs to use the bathroom in my class, they should silently hold up three fingers. This serves to make me aware of your needs in a way that does not interrupt the class.. Students may not use the bathroom in the first or last ten minutes of class.

Southwest Middle School will be instituting a school-wide electronic hall pass in the next few weeks. And a new procedure regarding bathroom breaks and hall passes will be shared at that time.

Until that time students may use the bathroom twice per week.

Grading System

Your orchestra grade will be divided as follows:

- 25% Student Participation (weekly grades)
- 25% Practice Cards/Daily Grades
- 25% Performance Tasks
- 25% Concert Attendance

Participation

Students will receive a weekly participation grade. In order to receive a "100", students must follow the rules and expectations stated on the previous page. Any time a student fails to meet any of the expectations their daily grade will be adjusted accordingly.

Practicing

As with any activity, regular practicing is the best way to improve. Students are required to practice **60 minutes** per week outside of class. Practice time will be recorded on practice sheets (that I will provide) and be turned in every Monday. If a student fails to turn in their practice sheet, then they will receive a zero. I will not accept practice sheets over two weeks late.

Some advice on practicing...for younger musicians, practicing is far more effective when done in small 10-15 minute chunks as opposed to a 1 hour marathon session. Focusing for several hours is difficult and leads to unfocused practicing and can create bad habits.

Performance Tasks

Students will receive regular assessments to ensure that they understand the material that they are currently studying. Performance tasks will be assigned every one to two weeks. Students will be graded on various musical elements including tone, rhythm, tempo, intonation, accuracy, musicality, and technique.

Concerts

The Southwest Middle School Orchestra gives two concerts each year. Concerts are a celebration of all the hard work that students have put in over the course of a semester and are important milestones in their musical journey. Students are **REQUIRED** to attend all concerts; however exceptions can be made for extreme family emergencies. If you think that you will be unable to attend a concert, **please notify me with a written note as soon as possible**. No excuses will be accepted within two weeks of the concert date. In the event that any student misses a concert with a legitimate excuse, they will complete an assignment of my choosing to make-up for their concert attendance grade.

Concert dress will be a white blouse/collared shirt and black skirt/dress pants. Students choosing to wear a skirt need to make sure it is long enough to cover their knees when sitting down. Dark shoes are also required (**NO TENNIS SHOES**).

Dates to Remember

October 15- All-County Orchestra Auditions- Lincoln Academy
November 20 and 21- All-County Orchestra Clinic- Grimsley High School
December 17- Winter Concert
May 15- Spring Concert
May 9- Carowinds Trip (7th and 8th grade only)

All school concerts will take place at 7:00 pm in the Southwest Middle School Gymnasium.

Supplies Needed for Class

1. Instrument (4 fine tuners are preferable) and bow
2. Rosin
3. Shoulder rest (violins and violas only)
4. Rock Stop (cellos and basses only)
5. Soft cloth (for cleaning the instrument and the bow)
6. Extra set of strings
7. Pencil
8. Small three-ring binder
9. Music Method Book:
 - 6th Grade: Essential Elements for Strings (book 1)
 - 7th Grade: Essential Elements for Strings (book 2)
 - 8th Grade: Essential Techniques for Strings (book 3) **AND** Habits of a Successful Middle Level String Musician
10. Snark Clip-on ST2 Tuner
11. Metronome-There are plenty of free metronome/tuner apps.

Sixth grade students will need to bring their instrument in for inspection as soon as possible. If a student fails to purchase an instrument by Monday, September 11th, they may be removed from the class unless they are borrowing an instrument from the school. If you feel that you will not be able to provide an instrument by the specified date, please contact me, and I will work with you to find an instrument for your child.

Please take a few minutes to go over this information with your child. After doing so, sign the form on the back and return it to Mr. Wenger by Wednesday, August 30. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at (919) 931-1606 or wengerj@gcsnc.com.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to teach your child. If we work together, I am positive that we will have a wonderful and productive year.

Mr. Joel Wenger
Orchestra Director

RETURN THIS PAGE TO MR. WENGER

(Due by Wednesday, August 28)

I have read the enclosed information in the Southwest Middle School Orchestra Handbook and have discussed the contents with my child. By signing this document, I agree to abide by and accept the rules and expectations of this class.

PARENT SIGNATURE_____

STUDENT SIGNATURE_____

STUDENT NAME_____

DATE_____