

Dodgen M.S. Orchestra Handbook 2026-2027

**Ashley Culley and Evelyn Champion,
Directors**



ORCHESTRA AWARDS

Orchestra students are recognized for their achievement throughout the year. Awards are presented during the last week of school. Below is a list of the awards that will be given. One of the criteria for each award is perfect attendance at all concerts. Attendance at all concerts is expected.

- Outstanding Student for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade
- Most Improved Players for 6th, 7th and 8th grade
- Citizenship Award for 6th, 7th and 8th grade
- All-State Orchestra Awards

PRIVATE LESSONS

Students are encouraged to take part in private lessons. Lessons will enhance what is learned in school rehearsals and will provide very individualized work for each student. A list of local private teachers is available on the orchestra website. www.dodgenorchestra.org.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parents are an integral part of a strong Orchestra program. Without Parent support, the Orchestra cannot function smoothly. Parents are needed to assist in the following areas: chaperones for trips, helping with fundraisers, help at concerts, and help with the G.M.E.A. Orchestra Festival. Please visit the orchestra website and click on “Volunteers” to see ways to help the Dodgen Orchestra program.

PHILOSOPHY

Music has been identified as both a separate intelligence and a distinct learning style. Music education must be related to the present needs and interests of the students and yet be future-centered so they can function now and, in the future, as both consumers and producers of music. A well-diversified music program including general music, technology, music theory, composition, listening, music history and performing skills will make this possible as they participate in the Orchestra program.

The students will gain a musical sensitivity while performing within an ensemble and as a soloist. The students will also learn music reading skills, music history, music theory, and performance skills on their chosen instrument.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

6th- There is no previous music study necessary for this course. Students are required to rent / buy their own instruments for practice / rehearsal and will be given a list of materials for the course. Basics of string instrument performance in a group and in solo situations will be studied. There are 3 performances per year.

7th- Prerequisite: one to two years of string instrument study privately and/or in a school orchestra program. Second-year performers will develop and continue the study of the bow and intonation techniques. There are 4 performances per year at school. Extracurricular and audition opportunities are also available.

8th- Prerequisite: two years of string instrument study privately and/or in a school orchestra program. Students will focus on development and continuation of bow and intonation techniques for the third-year performer. There are 5 performances per year at school. Extracurricular and audition opportunities are also available.

GRADING PROCEDURE

50% Daily Participation and Rehearsal Techniques

Students will receive 100 points on Monday of each week. Points will be deducted for the following:

Missing instrument: 20 points

Missing music: 10 points

Missing Shoulder rest/sponge: 5 points

Missing rosin: 5 points

Missing pencil: 5 points

Lack of attention: 10 points

30% Performance tests (completed during class time)

20% Written work (theory, quizzes, worksheets and music journal entries)

CONDUCT POLICY

To provide the best possible instruction for your student, discipline will be dealt through the following plan. It is important to encourage positive behavior so every student will have the best possible experience in the classroom.

When class expectations are not met, the following consequences will result:

1st Offense: Warning

2nd Offense: In class isolation (seat change) and parent contact through email

3rd Offense: 30-minute morning detention and parent phone contact

4th Offense: Parent Contact and Office referral

* The 4th offense will only be used after all other possibilities and options have been exhausted.

STUDENT RECOGNITION PROGRAM

The Dodgen Orchestra program has many outstanding musicians, and the following are a few ways they are recognized:

GMEA ALL-STATE ORCHESTRA

Every year the Georgia Music Educators Association sponsors the Georgia All-State Orchestra in Athens, GA. Any sixth-, seventh-, or eighth-grader in Georgia is eligible to audition at the district level and if accepted can audition at the state level to advance to being a member of the 2027 Georgia All-State Orchestra. The audition involves scales, sight-reading and prepared excerpts. Please see the Orchestra calendar for audition dates.

GMEA DISTRICT 12 MIDDLE SCHOOL HONOR ORCHESTRA

In March, GMEA sponsors the GMEA District 12 Honor Orchestra, which is open to all sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. There is an audition in early February, and if accepted, there will be rehearsals and a performance at Wheeler High School. The audition involves scales and excerpts, and the dates can be found on the orchestra calendar.

GMEA SOLO & ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL

This is an opportunity for string players to form their own small groups of 2-4 people or perform solo before a judge for a rating and comments. Judges rate each group's performance and give comments and suggestions for improvement. Students performing at Solo & Ensemble Festival are graded numerically and can earn medals.

CONCERT ATTENDANCE

Students work very hard in class to prepare for their concerts to give the best performance possible. The orchestra functions as a team, and each of us depends on every member to be present for concerts. Unless there is a **last-minute** family *emergency*, **students are expected** to be at all concerts. Please bring students to the concerts, and plan to stay and hear what they have accomplished. **If a student misses a concert, a note is required the day after and will be dealt with on an individual basis.**

CONCERT ATTIRE

A detailed letter about the orchestra uniform will be sent home with students during the first week of classes.

ORCHESTRA CALENDAR

The calendar for the 2026-2027 can be found on the orchestra website (www.dodgenorchestra.org). Please put these dates on your calendar immediately! If you need a hard copy of the calendar, please email the directors. Ashley.culley@cobbk12.org
Evelyn.champion@cobbk12.org

CONDUCT GRADE RESULTS

Students will receive an (S) in conduct if there are no behavior issues during the nine week grading period. Students will receive an (N) if they receive classroom detention. Students will receive an (U) if they receive any office referrals or receive three or more classroom detentions. At the end of each nine-week period, the student's accumulation of citations will start new.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

BEFORE CLASS

1. Bring instrument and music to the Orchestra storage room and place them in the appropriate area between 8:45 and 9:05 AM.
2. If you are in the music area for morning practice, you must rehearse. Do not loiter.

DURING CLASS

1. Enter class quickly and quietly. Do not visit with friends on the way to your seat.
2. Go directly to the storage area to get your instrument and music before reporting to your assigned seat.
3. Unpack your instrument at your seat and place the case on the left side of your chair.
4. Be prepared and seated on time. Students should be in their seat with all materials needed for class within one minute of the tardy bell.
5. Follow the directions on the board so you are prepared for class to begin.
6. Be focused and attentive during tuning and class. Absolutely no talking during tuning.
7. If the director is working with another section, silently practice fingerings or bowings.
8. Respect the right of others to learn.
9. Play only when directed to do so.
10. Raise your hand to ask/answer questions or to become involved in teacher directed discussions.
11. Talking and conversation is not acceptable during a rehearsal.
12. Follow verbal and written instructions.
13. At the end of rehearsal, clean off instrument, loosen bow, slide in endpins, and return equipment to their storage area or numbered spot. Please do not visit with friends at this time.
14. Straighten up your area (chair, stand, and trash).
15. Write down any homework assignment or reminders before leaving.
16. Leave the room only after the director has dismissed you.

AFTER CLASS

1. Return at the end of the day to pick up your instrument and music for home practice if you are able to do so.
2. Practice as much as possible outside of school rehearsals on all assigned music.

OTHER

1. If an instrument cannot be brought to school due to repairs, a note will need to come to school the day the instrument is unable to be brought.
2. Have all supplies in class every day, including instrument, book, music and PENCIL.

BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL REHEARSALS

The orchestra room will be open for early practice or for rehearsals from 8:15AM -9:00AM Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings.

Before school rehearsal time may be set up with Mrs. Culley or Mrs. Champion ahead of time. These times are set aside for anyone who needs individual help or would like extra time on a skill or technique. Any time Mrs. Culley or Mrs. Champion are not available for rehearsals, a sign will be posted in front of the room the day or days before.

MATERIALS

Many of these items you may already possess from previous years of performance. Please check their state to make sure they are in working condition.

- ✓ Instrument
- ✓ Shoulder rest (violins and violas)
- ✓ Pencil
- ✓ Rosin
- ✓ Soft cloth for cleaning
- ✓ Extra Strings

✓ Method Books:

6th – Essential Elements for Strings, Book 1

7th – Essential Elements for Strings, Book 2

8th – Habits of a Successful Middle Level String Musician