



hightower trail
ORCHESTR[^]TRA

Handbook
2022-2023

Michael R. Tompkins, Jr., Director
Paul O'Keefe, Assistant Director

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Eric Gray, *Assistant Principal*

WELCOME

Dear Orchestra Families,

Welcome to the HTMS Orchestra Program! We are very happy that you and your child have chosen to be a part of our program. Playing in the orchestra encourages creativity and helps students learn discipline and focus. Statistics have proven that students who participate in music programs are among the academically elite in their schools. Students' adult lives are filled with successes, often attributed to skills gained through the orchestra experience: self-discipline, work ethic, attention to detail, teamwork, confidence, and leadership skills. We hope each student will take advantage of the many opportunities available through the orchestra program and continue music as a lifelong pursuit.

We truly believe that music education makes us better humans. You can support your child's music education by: asking them about class; establishing a daily practice routine; establishing a routine of bringing an instrument home; saying only POSITIVE comments about their playing and involvement; seeking out [private lessons](#); and communicating with the directors if you notice frustration.

Please feel free to connect with us anytime, and check the Orchestra Website often for updates:

<https://www.htmsorchestra.org>

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Orchestra Handbook Form

The purpose of this handbook is to provide each orchestra family with an understanding of the policies and procedures that govern the Hightower Trail Middle School Orchestra Program. These guidelines exist to ensure success for all, and to serve as a resource for students and parents. Both students and parents should take the time to thoroughly read this handbook. When finished, please complete the required Orchestra Handbook Form: [htmsorchestra.org](https://www.htmsorchestra.org)

Conduct

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. Respect for school/individual property and each other is expected at all times. For all students to receive such an education, the following expectations will set the classroom climate:

1. LISTEN.
2. Follow directions.
3. Show respect.
4. Be prepared.
5. Stay on task.

Students begin each grading period with an “S” (satisfactory) in conduct.

1st offense: S behavior documented; parent contacted.

2nd offense: S behavior documented; parent contacted, plan made.

3rd offense: N behavior documented; parent contacted, and intervention to be determined.

4th offense: U behavior documented and turned over to the appropriate administrator.

Materials

Orchestra Instrument:

Make sure the store's repair shop provides loaner instruments for students in orchestra class.

Method Books:

Sixth Grade – Essential Elements Interactive for Strings - Book 1

Seventh Grade – Essential Elements Interactive for Strings – Book 2

Eighth Grade – method books will be provided in class (no purchase necessary)

Make sure you purchase the book with your instrument name!

Orchestra Supplies:

Case, well identified with name and pod.

Rosin

Soft Cloth

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

Endpin stop (rock stop) for cellos and basses-**for concerts and home use only.**

Black 1” hardcover 3 ring binder with pockets

Clear sheet protectors

20 sheets of lined notebook paper.

Pencil-keep in your case, binder, or locker

Music stand for home practice/field trips (folding wire stand)

Metronome/Tuner-for home use only

Instrument Storage



Reminders

Each student will be assigned a school 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!*
- *Each student is responsible for putting away his/her instrument and music at the end of class.*

Locker Information:

- All students are personally responsible for their assigned orchestra lock. Should this lock be lost or stolen, the student will be charged a lock replacement fee of \$7. Keeping your orchestra locker locked at all times should avoid any loss or theft.
- Students are responsible for keeping their lockers locked at all times.
- Only items for orchestra class should be kept in the locker (including music, instrument, instrument accessories and binder).

Personal Instruments

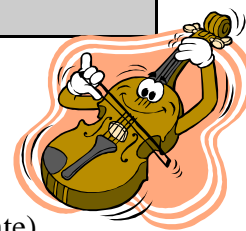
Personal Instruments are defined as instruments that belong to or are rented by an individual student's family from a community music store. These instruments are not owned or insured by Hightower Trail Middle School, Cobb County School District, or the State of Georgia. The student (and family) is responsible for maintaining the instrument in working order with the proper accessories. The orchestra directors will recommend repairs (when needed) as the student progresses through the program.

School-Owned Instruments

School Instruments are defined as instruments that belong to Hightower Trail Middle School. These typically include larger instruments: Cello and String Bass. The school bears the responsibility of repair costs on these instruments. However, students are contractually obligated to treat them with special care so that needless and expensive repairs do not have to be made. Future students must be able to use these instruments. Obvious damage to school instruments will be considered vandalism and will be dealt with in the manner outlined by Cobb County Schools in the HTMS Student Handbook. To ease transportation and increase home practice, it would help your child if you could rent one of these instruments to keep at home. We encourage school instrument users to contribute to the Orchestra Fundraiser and pursue private lessons.

Performance Attire

Sixth Grade Orchestra Shirts/Blue Jeans/Casual Shoes (no sandals)
(Please indicate shirt size on student info form)



Seventh/Eighth Orchestra Polo Shirt (order form will be sent home at a later date)
Boys: Black slacks, black belt, black socks, black dress shoes
Girls: Black slacks, black hose, black ballet flats
No sandals, flip-flops, open-toed shoes, 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 Playing Test 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 these students put forth throughout the year and their dedication to the orchestra program.

National and Georgia Standards for Music Education

Creating

- Improvise, compose, and arrange music within specified guidelines.

Performing

- Sing alone or with others
- Perform on instruments through a varied repertoire of music, alone and with others.
- Read and identify elements of notated music.

Responding

- Listen to, analyze, and describe music.
- Respond to music and music performances.

Connecting

- Understand relationships between music, other arts, other disciplines, and daily life.

Grading

Rehearsal Participation	50%
Rehearsal/Performance Etiquette	10%
Playing Assessment (Playing Test/Pass-offs)	40%

Rehearsal Participation

- Actively participates in rehearsal and/or class activities.
- Has ALL class material for class each day. Each day a student is missing materials, 20 points are deducted from their weekly participation grade (100 points per week).
- Students with instruments in the repair shop should bring a signed note. ALWAYS ASK FOR A LOANER WHILE YOUR INSTRUMENT IS BEING REPAIRED. Generally rental programs provide this service at no extra cost.

Rehearsal/Performance Etiquette

- Students are expected to demonstrate the following qualities on a consistent daily basis; these qualities are expected at concerts as well.
- Rehearsal/Performance Etiquette includes the following, but is not limited to:
- Proper posture, active listening, sincere attempt to demonstrate mastery, pleasant demeanor, receptive to instruction, proper response to class instruction and correction and silent actions while various groups are addressed which may not always include your child.

Playing Tests/Pass-offs

- Scales and techniques
- Method book selections/Repertoire Excerpts (announced/unannounced)
- Pass-offs- Sixth Grade students must perform assigned skills/music. Requirements 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.

Private Lessons

We encourage every student- 6th, 7th, and 8th grade- to take private instruction from an accomplished musician. Private lessons make the most of your orchestra investment, allowing for individual attention and a specialist's advice. Furthermore, lessons typically raise your audition scores for Honor Orchestra and All-State; most students in these groups take private lessons. As an added benefit, private lessons help the orchestra improve. A list of private teachers is posted on the large bulletin board in the orchestra room and is also posted on our website. We will continue to update the list.

Extra Help Sessions and Rehearsals

The orchestra room is open for practice most mornings each week from **8:00-9:00am** and most afternoons from **4:15-5:00 pm**. These are times for students to complete Pass-Offs with the director, get help on Solo & Ensemble music, All-State and Honor Orchestra auditions, concert music, Playing Test, or practice individually or with friends. Only students who are interested in practicing should come to these sessions. Homework and socializing can be done in other places. Students who abuse this privilege will be prohibited from attending future sessions.

Orchestra Fundraisers

Our Orchestra Fundraisers provide enhancements to students' education not provided by CCSD. These include: Clinicians (professional musicians), Accompanists, Buses, Recruitment, Pope Transition Activities, Evaluation Fees, Recording Fees, Website Maintenance, Music Commissions, and Professional Development.

Trips

Traveling with the Orchestra requires great conduct, digital citizenship, and academic integrity. When we travel, our students represent the Orchestra program and the school. Students with administrative referrals may be removed from trip rosters. Absences from concerts and rehearsals may lead to loss of privilege to attend certain trips.

What to do if your Child becomes frustrated.....

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. Most parents have their children agree to participate through 9th grade.
- ◆ Find an older student in orchestra to serve as a mentor

If, after consultation with the orchestra directors, the determination is made to withdraw from the orchestra, the following HTMS Music Department Withdrawal Procedure must be followed:

1. A parent note must be submitted to the orchestra directors.
2. The parent note must be submitted by the end of the first 2 days of the school year. Withdrawal from orchestra at the end of each 9-week grading period is not permitted.
3. Once the parent note is received, a director/parent/student conference must be held to discuss the situation.
4. If, after the conference, the decision is made to drop orchestra, the orchestra directors will notify the appropriate administrator of the schedule change.

Awards & Achievements

Orchestra Program

- GMEA Music Program of the Year (2019)
- GMEA Exemplary Performance Award (2015, 2022)

8th Grade and Chamber Orchestra

- GMEA In-Service Conference in Savannah & Athens (2013, 2019)
- ASTA National Orchestra Festival in Atlanta (2018)
- Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago (2004)

Hightower Trail Orchestra

2022-2023 Concert and Activity Calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
Aug. 29 th	Fundraiser Kick-off	HT Theater	Class
Sept. 2	Registration Deadline Solo and Ensemble, All-State	Class	N/A
Oct. 8	Solo & Ensemble Festival	Osborne HS	8:30 am – 3 pm
Oct. 12	8 th Orchestra Fall Concert* With Mark Wood	Pope PAC	7:00 pm
Oct. 15	District All-State Auditions	Pope HS	TBA
Nov. 3	7 th Fall Concert*	HT Theater	7:00pm
Dec. 1	6-1 Fall Concert * 6-2 Fall Concert*	HT Theater HT Theater	6:30pm 7:30pm
Dec. 7	8 th Winter Concert	HT Theater	7:00 pm
January 14	Final All-State Audition	Westminister	All day+
Feb. 11	Honor Orchestra Auditions	Palmer MS	All day+
March 2-4	All-State Orchestra	Athens, GA	Inclusive
March 8-10	LGPE**-.7 th and 8 th Grade*	Harrison HS	TBA
March 21	Sixth Grade String Jamboree*	Pope HS	7:00pm
March 24-25	Honor Orchestra Event	Kell HS	Fri 7-9pm/ Sat 8-3
April 20	Night of the Arts	HT Theater	6:00 pm
May 11	6 th /7 th Grade Spring Concert*	HT Theater	7:00pm
May 17	8 th Grade Orchestra*	HT Theater	7:00pm

*Required event for the orchestra listed
Performance Evaluation

+ Individual audition times TBA

**Large Group

Event times and places may change. Notices will be sent home with these changes