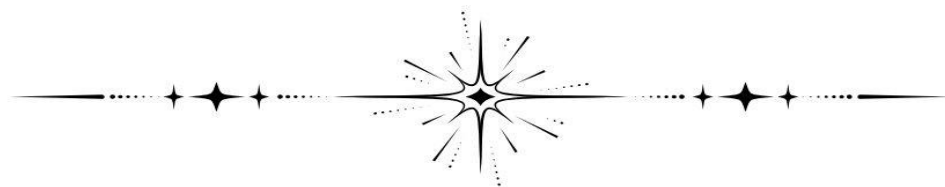




2025-2026

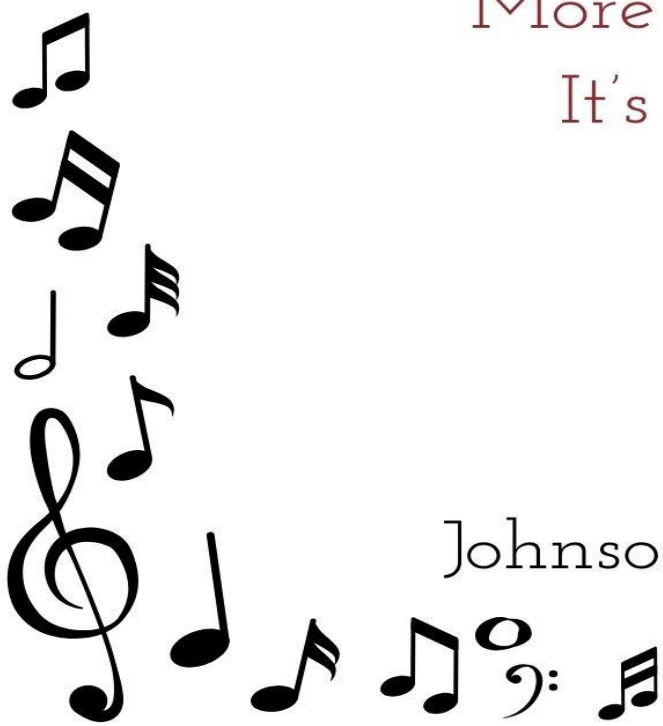


# Science Hill High School Orchestra

## Student Handbook

"More than Notes-  
It's a Journey"

Johnson City Schools



# High School Orchestra Handbook 2025-2026

## SCIENCE HILL HIGH SCHOOL

Susan Sterling Lambert, Orchestra Director • [sterlings@jcschools.org](mailto:sterlings@jcschools.org)

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[johnsoncityschoolsorchestra.com](http://johnsoncityschoolsorchestra.com)

### **COURSE SCOPES AND GOALS**

#### **Membership in the orchestra program**

The orchestra program is open to all students with prior experience playing a string instrument demonstrating the desire, ability, and proper attitude to be a member of the group. Each string student will have an equal and fair opportunity for participation in the orchestra program. Your membership in the orchestra carries with it certain expectations in order to build and maintain our high standard of excellence. To remain in the orchestra program string students are expected to give their best effort at every rehearsal and concert. The Science Hill High School Orchestra is committed to quality musical performances.

***Note:** String students must demonstrate that they can uphold their standing in orchestra class rehearsals both musically and behaviorally. If the string student is not successful, the student may be removed from the orchestra.*

#### **Goals of the orchestra program**

- To provide each string student the opportunity to explore music performance in a supportive, caring and encouraging environment that holds its participants to high standards and high levels of expectation of performance achievement.
- To expose each string student to a variety of literature, advanced performance techniques and musicianship, varied performance ensembles, and various performing situations.
- To develop each string student in music making abilities as string players and enable growth in sensitivity, group dynamics, and leadership skills as young adults.
- To further the string students' musicianship and playing skills through a variety of performance literature and musical styles.
- To provide greater performance opportunities through a variety of ensembles and performance situations.
- To provide the string student with suitable musical experiences that will further enrich and support their future work/ life/ hobby endeavors; either as an amateur or professional performing musician or teacher, participant in any facet of fine arts careers (music therapy, music business, music performance, music appreciation), community performance hobbyist, supporter and audience participant of community fine arts, or fine arts advocate.
- To develop and refine musical and technical skills.

## **GRADING PROCEDURES**

### **General expectations**

- Come to class/rehearsals prepared with instrument, bow, music, book, pencil, and accessories.
- Cooperate in rehearsal with appropriate effort, attitude, and conduct.
- Practice instrument regularly to make a personal improvement every week.
- Complete all required playing exams and written work.
- Attending scheduled performances prepared and dressed in the appropriate uniform.
- Keep a positive attitude, be willing to learn and have fun!!!

### **Grading**

A string student's grade will be determined by a combination of points that they have earned during the nine-week grading period. Points will be given in the following areas:

#### **1. Assessments**

- Performance evaluations are designed to individually assess improvement of the skills and techniques that are taught in class and in preparation for performances.
- Evaluations may consist of any combination of announced and unannounced playing tests given in-class (live) or recorded via audio or video (in-class or at home).

#### **2. Concerts & Performances**

Orchestra is a performance-based curriculum, and performances are a part of the string student's evaluation. Concert attendance is mandatory. String students will be graded on attendance, appropriate dress, arriving on time and behavior at each concert. Each string student is responsible for his/her own success!

- Arriving at the assigned call time, wearing proper uniform, displaying proper audience etiquette, and staying for the entire performance.
- Director's assessment of individual student performance and his or her ability to follow directions during assigned performances.

#### **3. Assignments**

- Assigned written class work, written homework assignments, written quiz, blog posts, and music folder checks. Any online form, paper form, or permission slip that must be completed, signed, and returned.
- Smaller performance evaluations are designed to individually assess improvement of the skills and techniques that are taught in class and in preparation for performances.
- Evaluations may consist of any combination of announced and unannounced playing tests given in-class (live) or recorded via audio or video (in-class or at home).
- In addition, string students may receive a grade based on the director's assessment of string student progress over a period of time.

#### 4. Participation & Life Skills

- Arriving to class and rehearsals on time; being respectful to the teacher, fellow orchestra members, or any guest; coming to class/rehearsal prepared; demonstrating proper rehearsal behavior and positive attitude.

#### 5. Final Exam

- A performance-based and/or written exam at the end of the semester.

#### *A note about home practice:*

*Practice is an integral part of orchestra class and learning to play any instrument. Every string student enrolled in the SHHS Orchestra program is expected to regularly practice all lessons, skills, techniques, concepts, and concert music taught in class. String students should plan on devoting time each day for home practice. Your level of mastery of the musical material determines the required amount of practice time. Every string student will be different; therefore, there is no set "number of minutes" requirement. Musical success any performing ensemble achieves is directly related to the quality practice time the individual member brings to that ensemble.*

#### 6. Academic Eligibility

All string students wishing to participate in extra-curricular (off campus) events must have, and maintain, at least a 2.0 GPA (C average) with no Fs in any class. Any string student failing to remain eligible shall be suspended from all extra-curricular orchestral activities until their academic status has been regained. However, this does not excuse the string student from attending orchestral functions, such as rehearsals and on-campus concerts. Academics always come first!

### **CLASS/REHEARSAL CONDUCT & OPERATING PROCEDURES**

#### **Class/Rehearsal Behavior**

- Rules are meant to ensure everyone has a safe and healthy environment in which to learn. No string student has the right to disrupt the learning environment of any other string student.
- Obey all school policies. School rules and policies are in effect at any time a string student is involved in an activity sponsored by or in the name of Johnson City Schools.
- Treat others and their property with **respect**.
- No talking, playing, or plucking while the director is giving directions or working with string students.
- Be in your seat, warming up, and prepared to play within three minutes after the bell rings.
- Always remain in your seat. Please raise your hand and wait until called on before talking. Hall passes will be issued sparingly.
- Bring your materials (instrument, book, music, pencil, etc.) to class/rehearsal every day.
- Do not touch equipment that does not belong to you.
- Put away your music and instrument after each rehearsal.
- Do not bring food, gum, or drinks (except water) into the orchestra room.

- No running or horseplay in the orchestra room, instrument room or hallways.
- Obey the SHHS Code of Conduct to include the Official SHHS Dress Code and policies on Bullying.
- No instrument in class? You will be expected to sit quietly in your section and follow along with the rehearsal. **No homework, reading, studying, or any other classwork from another class and your grade will be reduced in accordance with grading policy.**
- Restroom? You should take care of this before our class. If you must use the restroom once class has begun, always ask permission first. Once rehearsal begins, the answer will generally be “no.” Emergency use only.
- Hall pass/Medical clinic/Counselor pass-see the director. No late passes will be given, unless the class is let out late (i.e., after the bell rings).

### Cell Phone Policy

There will be no cell phones, no air pods, headphones, or any other wireless device I am currently unaware of. There will be no using the Chromebook unless you are instructed to do so.

**1st Offense** – I will ask you nicely to put it away.

**2nd Offense** – I will collect the piece of technology that is being used at the inappropriate time.

**3rd Offense** – I will take it to the office and contact your guardian.

Technology is great. It allows for so much positive progress when used the right way. Life happens away from these devices. You are in orchestra class learning to play your instrument. Listen, participate, be engaged... who knows you might actually like it!! (And yes, I can see you trying to hide devices, especially behind your hair or on your music stand!)

### Discipline

Following the class/rehearsal rules will lead to a greater enjoyment of orchestra and pride in personal and group accomplishments, and greater opportunities for orchestra members. Not following the listed rules will result in consequences including, but not limited to, the following:

- Director/orchestra member conference
- Reduction in grade
- Phone call to parent
- Office referral
- Removal from the Orchestra Program

**Note:** *If an orchestra member severely disrupts class to the extent that the educational process is disrupted (e.g., fight, etc.), they will be sent to the office IMMEDIATELY and may automatically receive a discipline referral.*

## **Attendance**

Orchestra members are required to attend all scheduled classroom rehearsals and performances in order to maintain an exceptional performance standard. As a co-curricular course, rehearsals and performances are part of the educational process. Absences and tardiness affect not only the individual who is absent but also the entire ensemble.

### **1. Unexcused Absence**

An unexcused absence from class/rehearsal or an extra rehearsal will count as zero for that particular day and the student may receive a lower participation grade. Unexcused absences may also result in a lower performance grade, being placed further back in the section, or not being allowed to perform in a given concert.

### **2. Excused Absence**

Absences are excused only in cases of emergency. In the case of illness, parents or string students should notify the director as early as possible. If an unanticipated absence occurs, a written request for excuse from a parent or guardian is due within two days of the absence.

### **3. Concert Attendance Policy**

Performances are mandatory and are classified as a major part of an orchestra member's grade. **Any** absence, except for an emergency, not brought to the director's attention for approval **prior** to the performance will be considered unexcused. Unexcused absences from performances will be counted as zeros. Requests for consideration to be excused from a performance must be turned in to the director, in writing from the parent or guardian, at least 14 days in advance of the scheduled performance date.

## **Tardy Policy**

String students must be on time for all assigned orchestra functions. Learning to be early will establish a lifelong habit that is critical to an individual's and this organization's success. Being on time is defined as follows: At the requested time, the string student is in his or her assigned seat with the instrument, bow, music, and a pencil. For all performances a call time will be assigned. Any student who is not present, or in place, by the assigned call time will be counted as tardy. This tardy will result in a lowered grade for that performance.

## **Conflicts With Orchestra**

Rehearsal and performance calendars are normally given out well in advance. While not always 100% preventable, every effort will be made to eliminate conflicts with other major school activities. It is the policy of the orchestra to assist string students when conflicts occur within the scope of orchestra policy. Conflicts should be brought to the director's attention **IN WRITING** as soon as the string student is aware of a discrepancy. A minimum of two weeks' notice should be given, but earlier is better. String students should not expect to automatically be excused because of conflicts.

String students are reminded that orchestra is a demanding activity and does require a commitment of time inside and outside of the school day. All orchestra concerts will take top priority over most school sports and other extra-curricular activities because orchestra is a co-curricular, academic class. Please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Lambert with questions.

### **Seating Assignments**

The goal of this orchestra is to work together to achieve musical goals. While the major determining process for seating will be playing tests and string student achievement, the director reserves the right to change seating assignments at any time deemed appropriate within the course of the year. To assign seating, the director may choose from several different processes. Please remember that it is not that important where one sits. It is more important to have an attitude and mindset of always giving one's best, funneling all effort toward the betterment of the ensemble.

### **Audience Etiquette**

Being a courteous audience member is as important as being a good performer. Proper audience etiquette shows respect for the performers and their work. Talking, whispering, or moving around is not acceptable during a concert. It is very distracting for the performers on stage and is also distracting for other audience members who are trying to enjoy the concert. If parents or other guests come to a concert late, please enter between musical selections so that you do not interrupt the performance. Audience etiquette will be reviewed prior to concerts.

### **Make-Up Assignments**

In the event a string student is excused from a performance, class or rehearsal, a make-up assignment will be given. The make-up assignment will require the string students to perform for the director, individually, all of the music from the missed performance plus additional material, which may include written work as deemed appropriate by the director.

### **Community Performances**

As a means of making a positive contribution to the city of Johnson City, the orchestra is called upon to give community performances from time to time. These performances could be during the school day, after school, evenings, or weekends. As these performances are essential to maintaining a positive relationship with these supportive communities, all orchestra students are required to take an active part in community performances. The director will make assignments for musicians for extra performances as may be necessary. Every effort will be made to give at least two weeks' notice for extra performances.

## **MATERIALS**

### **Required Materials**

- **All string students** need an instrument and bow in good playing condition with the following accessories: rosin, polishing/cleaning cloth, music stand, case tag labeled with string student's name, address, phone number, and email address.
- **Violin and viola students** must use a rigid (i.e., Everest, Kun, etc.) shoulder rest. The foam/sponge type of rests should be avoided.
- **Cello and bass students** must use a rockstop, especially when playing on wood or tile surfaces. Rockstops help prevent floor damage at school and at home.
- **Fresh, high-quality strings** – It is recommended that students (especially violin/viola) plan for the worst by keeping an extra set of quality strings on-hand. String students must change their strings at least once per school year. The “change it when it breaks” method for changing strings is not acceptable since strings lose their pitch and vitality long before they break. Using old or low-quality strings will make instruments sound thin, weak, and difficult to tune.
- **Metronome and chromatic tuner** – A metronome is an electronic device that helps a string student keep a steady beat. A chromatic tuner can aid string students as they learn to tune on their own. Most phones support free apps that suit this purpose. If this is not an option, most Korg models are acceptable.

***Note:** Johnson City Schools/Science Hill High School does not provide insurance to cover lost or stolen property. Please check with your homeowner's insurance company to inquire about string student instrument insurance.*

### **Instrument Care**

Stringed instruments and bows are very delicate. Always be careful when handling your personal instrument or any other instrument.

- It is required that all instruments are kept in good playing condition.
- When not in use, always place the instrument and bow securely in the case. Even if the instrument is stored securely, damage may occur if the case is not latched or jarred.
- Always loosen the bow before returning it to the case. Never over tighten the bow.
- Using a lint-free cloth, always wipe the instrument clean of dust and rosin build-up.
- Never touch the bow hair. Oil from the skin will ruin the horsehair.
- Be careful not to bump the pegs or bridge of the instrument.
- Do your best to wash your hands before you play your instrument.
- Keep instruments away from extreme heat, cold and humidity. Never leave your instrument in a car because heat can damage the instrument very quickly.
- Do not allow others to play your personal instrument.
- Only allow qualified string instrument technicians (a luthier) to attempt repairs.
- Make sure that your instrument case is labeled with your name and phone number.



### Local Music Stores

Baroque Violin Shop	865-322-9875	<a href="mailto:knoxvillebaroque@gmail.com">knoxvillebaroque@gmail.com</a>
Wilhite Strings	865-670-1888	<a href="https://wilhitestrings.com/">https://wilhitestrings.com/</a>
Music Doctors	423-246-6220	
Southwest Strings		<a href="http://www.swstrings.com">www.swstrings.com</a>
Shar Music		<a href="http://www.sharmusic.com">www.sharmusic.com</a>

### UNIFORM & DRESS CODE

#### Concert Uniform for Ladies

Ladies are required to have a specific long black gown and it is the responsibility of the family to order the dress.

This gown needs to be ordered from Formal Fashions Inc. by the end of August.

<https://formalfashionsinc.com/style-3755aa> 1-800-528-7909

Style number: 3755AA in Black Soft Performance Knit

The cost is \$75.00 plus shipping.

Use the online sizing information to choose the correct size.

The dress will need to be hemmed once it has arrived so plan for this.

**Please order by the end of August.** If a string student is not dressed appropriately, they will not be allowed to perform on stage.

This is a one-time purchase since this is the Concert Dress we use in the SHHS Topper Orchestra.

***If your student is on the Free/Reduced Lunch Program, please notify Mrs. Lambert in writing by August 9th if assistance is needed in obtaining the uniform.***

#### Concert Uniforms for Gentlemen

Gentlemen are required to wear a Tuxedo, and you may choose to provide your own or rent a Tuxedo from the SHHS Orchestra program.

Tuxedo Fee . . . . . \$50.00 (Due August 9, 2025)

Fittings for the Orchestra owned tuxedos will be during class time the first week of school. Complete the contract and pay the fee at <https://johnsoncityschoolsorchestra.com/tuxedos>.

If a student is not dressed appropriately, they will not be allowed to perform on stage.

Students need to purchase their own white tux shirt.

Maroon cummerbunds and bow ties will be included with the tuxedo.

Students will be responsible for the dry cleaning of the tuxedo after the final concert.

All Guild Owned Tuxedos Must Be Turned in No Later Than May 15, 2026.

Tuxedo Fee Must be mailed to JCSOG, P.O. Box 5854, Johnson City, TN 37602, brought to the fitting, or can be paid online at <https://johnsoncityschoolsorchestra.com/tuxedos>. Checks need to be made out to JCSOG.

***If your student is on the Free/Reduced Lunch Program, please notify Mrs. Lambert in writing by August 9th if assistance is needed in obtaining the uniform.***

### **Notes For All String Students**

**Acceptable items:** Stud earrings, fine or thin necklace with a single pendant, only one fine/thing precious metal bracelet, studs and cuff links for the formal shirt are optional.

**Unacceptable items:** Watches, large dangling or hoop earrings for any size, large flashy jewelry, plastic tube bracelets, flip-flops, two-toned shoes, white socks, sneakers (including black sneakers), or boots. String students need to have conservatively styled/colored hair and stage appropriate makeup.

## **CITIZENSHIP**

### **The Importance of a Positive Attitude**

The single factor that will determine the success of any individual or organization is attitude. It takes intense dedication to reach goals. String students should learn to discipline themselves to daily practice. These practice sessions should include a warm-up regimen, as well as solos and the whittling of their parts. Ideally, the "right attitude" accompanies sincerity, concentration, and dedication as the basic foundation. Such an attitude makes an artistic performance inevitable. It is a privilege to belong to an orchestra. Make the most of it in every rehearsal and performance.

### **The Importance of Discipline**

Due to the nature of the organization, discipline within the orchestra must be firm. Orchestra members and their parents must be willing to accept the ideals, principles, and rules of the organization. Orchestra members are constantly on display. Therefore, each member must always be aware of the importance of good behavior. Any misconduct casts a negative light on the orchestra, as well as Science Hill High School and Johnson City Schools. This may very well undo the hard work and good effort of many loyal string students. In addition, misconduct reflects on your community, and parents/guardians. Discipline yourself so you can be the best possible young man or woman.

### **The Importance of Pride**

I would like us to take pride in everything we do, not just in orchestra, but also in all our classes/rehearsals and actions. If you are going to do something, do it with PRIDE!

### **The Importance of Courtesy**

Courtesy to teachers, school employees, parents, chaperones, other students, and guests is very important. Each of us should strive to be considerate of all others.

## **MISCELLANEOUS (BUT IMPORTANT) ITEMS**

### **Private Lessons**

Although not required, private lessons give string students the opportunity to get more individualized attention on their instrument. With individualized instruction, a string student can build the technical skills necessary to become a very proficient performer.

### **Orchestra Website**

The orchestra has a website ([www.johnsoncityschoolsorchestra.com](http://www.johnsoncityschoolsorchestra.com)) that was created to increase teacher/student/parent communication and post important information.

## **Additional Performance Opportunities**

### **Solo and Ensemble Festival**

Every year, orchestra members have the option to participate in a Solo and Ensemble Adjudicated Event. These events provide individual assessment and motivation for many string students to perform as a soloist or in a small ensemble. They will perform for a judge, be evaluated on their performance, and receive written comments. More information will be made available closer to the event.

### **JUNIOR ORCHESTRA CLINIC (9<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS ONLY)**

This prestigious musical experience is designed for string students who have achieved considerable skill on their instruments. The clinic lasts two days (Nov 21-22, 2025), and string students who are accepted to participate are expected to be at all rehearsals on time with their music prepared. **String students must audition for this event (Auditions are on Saturday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025).** All string students will learn the necessary skills and music required for the audition. These festivals are very rewarding for those string students who participate, and string students are highly encouraged to audition. String students will work on the audition requirements for junior clinic during class. In addition, string students should use some of their practice time at home to work on the audition requirements. **There is a \$10 fee due October 3rd, 2025.**

### **SENIOR ORCHESTRA CLINIC (9<sup>TH</sup>-12<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS)**

This prestigious musical experience is designed for string students who have achieved considerable skill on their instruments. The clinic lasts 3 days (Feb 5 –7, 2026) in Gatlinburg, TN and string students who are accepted to participate are expected to be at all rehearsals on time with their music prepared. **String students must audition for this event (Auditions are on Saturday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026).** All string students will need to learn the necessary skills and music required for the audition from their private music teacher. These festivals are very rewarding for those string students who attend, and string students are highly encouraged to audition. **The deadline to sign up is October 17<sup>th</sup>. There is a \$10 fee due on the deadline.** Should a student try out and be accepted to either Sr. Clinic or All State the JCSOG will pay up to 25% of the cost for the string student to participate in these events.

### **ORCHESTRA TRIPS**

These are fun opportunities for string students to enjoy both educational and recreational activities outside the classroom. ***These trips are considered a privilege and must be earned by the string students.*** String students who wish to participate in this activity must have a good academic and citizenship record in every class. **String Students must earn a 2.0 minimum GPA (C average with no F's) and satisfactory behavior EVERY GRADING PERIOD.** String students who do not meet these requirements, have shown a record of discipline problems, or have missed any required orchestra activities will not be permitted to attend trips. **All decisions about the trip are at the discretion of the director.** Trips are usually scheduled in the spring and must pass school board approval.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS****Concert Dates**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
September 29, 2025	Fall Concert @ 7pm, SHHS Auditorium
December 8, 2025	Holiday Concert @ 7pm, SHHS Auditorium
December 13, 2025	Trans-Siberian Orchestra collaboration Concert @ 7pm, Freedom Hall
February 22, 2026	Winter Orchestra Concert @ 7pm, SHHS Auditorium
March 5, 2026	Knoxville Symphony side by side Concert @ 7pm, SHHS Auditorium
May 12, 2026	Senior Concert @ 7pm, SHHS Auditorium

Please write these dates in your calendar as soon as possible. The orchestra sometimes also performs at other events during the year, such as PTA events. Written notification will be sent home if any performances are added to the calendar at a later date.

**Estimated Trip Payment Schedule**

Orlando, FL March 11-15, 2026

The **estimated** Trip cost is \$813 per student and \$912 per chaperone. A \$100 deposit is due at the parent meeting on September 8, 2025. Second payment of \$300 is due by November 30, 2025. Balance of \$413 is due by January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

Trip payments will be accepted at the mandatory parent meeting and will be announced in writing and email once calculated. **Deposits must be made at the mandatory trip meeting.** Subsequent payments can be made online, or payments can be mailed to JCSOG, PO Box 5854, Johnson City, TN 37602. If mailed, payments must be postmarked by the due date. **All checks for trip related costs must be made out to JCSOG.**

**Clinic/Festival Dates**

<b>Clinic</b>	<b>Registration Deadline</b>	<b>Audition Date</b>	<b>Clinic Date</b>
Jr. Orchestra Clinic (9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Only)	\$10.00 Fee October 3rd, 2025	November 1st, 2025 Kingsport, TN	November 21-22, 2025 Johnson City, TN
Sr. Orchestra Clinic (9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grades)	\$10.00 Fee October 17, 2025	January 17, 2026 Bearden High School Knoxville, TN	February 5-7, 2026 Gatlinburg, TN
All State			April 9-12, 2026 Nashville, TN

**SENIOR SCHOLARSHIPS****Johnson City Schools Orchestra Guild Senior Scholarship Application**

April 1 of each school year, Seniors may apply for an Orchestra Scholarship that will be paid directly to the school of their choice and awarded at the Spring Science Hill Concert. String students must email the President of the Guild ([president@johnsoncityschoolsorchestra.com](mailto:president@johnsoncityschoolsorchestra.com)) to have an application emailed back to them for completion. There will be criteria, instructions, and a deadline for completion within the returned email. Please be thorough and complete with your responses to the questions within the application. A rubric scale will be used to score the application. There is no guarantee that the Guild will award scholarships each year. Awards are based on funds available each year.

## **JOHNSON CITY SCHOOLS ORCHESTRA GUILD**

JCSOG is the Johnson City Schools Orchestra Guild. Every family who has a string student in orchestra is a member. This non-profit organization serves as an advocate for our orchestra program and orchestra students in our community. *All JCSOG Meetings will be held in the Auditorium at Science Hill High School @ 6:00 pm unless noted below.*

### **Parent Meetings**

Monday, September 8, 2025 Trip information and deposits collected. (@ Science Hill High School Auditorium)

JCSOG Mailing Address:

PO Box 5854

Johnson City, TN 37602

[www.johnsoncityschoolsorchestra.com](http://www.johnsoncityschoolsorchestra.com)

Facebook: @JohnsonCitySchoolsOrchestraGuild

Instagram: jcsorchestraguild

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Please use the QR or this link to acknowledge reading and understanding the contents of this handbook.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc4uHHA7lCvY7ozEztXVNCH-BTkMLU8ghusB1Xrr5mEN7Ukw/viewform?usp=header>