
ATHOLTON ORCHESTRA

Atholton High School Orchestra Handbook 2015-2016

Mr. James Woomert, Director of Orchestras
james_woomert@hcpss.org (preferred method)
(410) 313-7075 (Music Office)
www.atholtonmusic.org
Twitter: @AtholtonOrch

<http://ahs.hcpss.org/>

Dear AHS Orchestra Students and Family,

Welcome to Atholton High School Orchestras! Please read the following handbook carefully, and refer to it throughout the year. I want all students to succeed and do their personal best. If students follow the guidelines provided in this handbook and put forth their personal best effort, all students will be successful. I look forward to getting to know all of our wonderful orchestra students and supportive parents. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I am looking forward to another exciting school year!

- Mr. James Woomert
Director of Orchestras

METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

Website - <http://www.atholtonmusic.org>

- The music department website will be utilized as the “PR” tool of the program. In addition, important announcements and links to registration forms (All-State, Solo & Ensemble, etc.) will be posted here. **It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the program to frequently check the website.*

Charms - Access via the website (instructions are located at the back of this handbook)

- Charms is the “Members Only” area of our website. Each student has a personal ID (use your HCPSS Student ID) to grant access. Here forms such as Permission Slips, Medical Forms, Music, and other resources will be stored for your access. In addition, *make sure your individual student AND adult contact information is always up to date.* If your information is out of date, you may not receive important emails from the Music Department.
- The Charms Student Information Handout is at the end of this handbook. *Please follow directions to update information BEFORE signing and returning your Syllabus Acknowledgement Form.*

Canvas - HCPSS Learning Management System (LMS)

- Canvas is a new initiative of the HCPSS. Canvas replaces ASPEN and is a mix of ASPEN, Blackboard, and Edmodo; all students will be using Canvas for all classes. Canvas contains your grades and attendance records. **NOTE:** The Canvas calendar is *not* our official calendar (which is on the website). The Canvas calendar *only shows Homework Assignment Due Dates*. All **EVENTS** for the Orchestra/Music Department are on the website calendar. (www.atholtonmusic.org)

Twitter - @AtholtonOrch (please follow us!)

- Frequently updated with “what’s happening in orchestra,” as well as reminders about big events and announcements.

COURSE MATERIALS

Everyday Materials (factored into participation grade)

Instrument, other equipment relating to the instrument (rosin, extra strings, peg compound, etc.), your OWN copy of any music being studied, and pencils (no pens, please). Failure to bring all above listed items will impact the student's grade. Please bring these items DAILY, as they allow for optimal learning and continuity from day to day.

Tuner

For string instruments to function properly, they *must* be in tune. Therefore, all string players are STRONGLY encouraged to possess their own tuning equipment. Nowadays, there are many tuning device options ranging from tuner/metronome combinations, to free apps downloadable to your phone or mobile device.

Metronome

For all assigned recorded playing assignments, students will be asked to prepare the scales or musical excerpts at a specific speed. This requires the use of a metronome. This item should be a standard practice tool used just about every practice session. As with tuners, there are a myriad of metronome options ranging from fancy devices with many functions, to free online, or downloadable metronomes.

CLASSROOM RULES AND PROCEDURES

1. **Students will come to class prepared to learn.** Each orchestra member will be given **three minutes after the bell** to be in their seat with their instrument out of its case, and have all materials needed for class (music, pencil). It is essential that all orchestra members are ready to begin promptly in order to use our time together as efficiently as possible. With some classes taking place a significant distance from the orchestra room, it can be difficult to get to class and be ready in the given passing period. Please let the director know at the beginning of the year if you have a schedule that creates this difficulty.
2. **Students will be attentive and respectful.** When the director, their designee, or a student is addressing the ensemble, there will be no talking unless specific instructions are given for a particular activity. Students should raise their hand and address all major questions to the director. When the conductor works with one section or an individual not directly involving you, your focus of attention should remain on the conductor as concepts being worked on likely apply to you as well. It is important to maintain a respectful and focused rehearsal environment to ensure that all students can learn, distraction free.
3. **No food is allowed in the music rooms.** We are very fortunate at AHS to have wonderful facilities and it is important that we work to keep them that way.
4. **Complete participation is expected in class.** There will be no books, homework, cell phones/electronics, or other activities unrelated to rehearsal allowed during rehearsal. To achieve success as a group, it is important that every member participate fully.
5. **Music and Music Folders.** It is the responsibility of each student to care for the folder and the music issued to them.
6. **Be kind and courteous to your fellow Raiders.** A smile, "please," and "thank you," go a long way in making our community a more pleasant, enjoyable place to be.

7. All students are expected to abide by the Atholton Honor Code at all times and will be held accountable for any violations of the Honor Code.
8. The use of personal communication devices and other electronics will not be permitted during class time unless teacher permission is given. Students must follow all relevant HCPSS Policies, including but not limited to Responsible Use of Technology and Social Media (Policy 8080) and Technology Security (3040) policies. The student takes all responsibility for the device's safety, security, and maintenance. Staff members will confiscate these items if the above expectations are not followed, and the items will only be returned to a parent/guardian in the front office

ORCHESTRA REHEARSAL ETIQUETTE

1. Never be late for a rehearsal. Students should be in their seats, ready to start at the designated time. It goes without saying, never be late for a performance.
2. There should never be ANY cell phones or mobile devices out or on your stand during rehearsal, unless required for a specific activity. The device will be confiscated should it become a distraction. Devices also need to be silenced or turned off during all rehearsals so no inadvertent rings go off.
3. No gum chewing at any time during rehearsal.
4. Do not talk during a rehearsal unless required by a specific activity, or if you are asking a question. Sometimes if you are marking parts (bowings etc.) you may whisper to your stand partner or within your section. Excessive talking makes it difficult for your classmates to hear instructions as well as the music they are making.
5. Always position your stand so that you can see both the music and the conductor. You are learning how to play in an orchestra, so you will need to develop the ability to watch the conductor, if only out of the corner of your eye, at the same time as the music.
6. Students are expected to be engaged in rehearsal at all times. This includes knowing what is being rehearsed, even if it doesn't include your part or section. This also includes proper posture.
7. Both you and your stand partner can write in the music on the stand, but often the inside person on the stand (the person on the stand furthest from the audience) should mark the parts. BOTH students should have their own copy of the music and a pencil at their seat during rehearsal.
8. Bowings must be consistent within your section, however, it is up to the conductor to coordinate these bowings. Always ask for clarification if there is confusion regarding bowings, fingerings, etc.
9. Try to always keep your instrument in top playing condition. This includes carrying an extra set of strings (and changing them periodically), keeping the instrument clean, and making sure your bow hair is in good condition.

GRADING CRITERIA

Students learn and grow by playing their instruments and actively participating in daily in class rehearsals, evening rehearsals, and all performances. This type of learning cannot be “made-up” and *each person’s attendance is crucial to the success of everyone else*. **Everyone in the orchestra is important!** Full participation is essential and this includes full attendance at all rehearsals and performances including HCPSS Orchestra Assessment.

Participation (40%)

Students will be evaluated on their level of participation on a daily basis. Failure to fully participate in rehearsal by having all necessary materials and actively engaging in the rehearsal process will result in a lowered grade by 10 points. This applies to both in-class and evening rehearsals.

- Daily Rehearsals: 10 points per day (approximately 450 points per quarter)
- After-School Rehearsals: 20 points per rehearsal

Playing Tests & Assignments (25%)

Student progress will be evaluated periodically through performances tests. These tests will be based on exercises, scales, and ensemble music as a measurement towards attainment of musical goals. Test requirements and guidelines will be announced well in advance and cover material being worked on in class. Mr. Woomert is happy to provide extra help to interested students before school, at lunch, or after school.

Performances (35%)

All performances are required except for Spring Trip. ***Students are expected to be at both nights of the Winter and Spring Concerts*** to support their peers, and the hard work they have completed. *Failure to attend both evenings will result in a lowered performance grade.*

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Absences negatively affect the **entire** ensemble. **Everyone is an important and valued member of the ensemble** and we need you at rehearsals, on time. Rehearsal is for learning other people’s part as well as your own! A calendar of events is published far in advance here and on the website. Please mark your calendars accordingly. Work, vacations, and homework are **NOT** valid excuses for an absence or being late.

- HCPSS Policy regarding excused or unexcused absences will be followed for all rehearsals and performances.
- Unexcused absences may result in loss of participation points *and* loss of privilege to perform if the director believes participation may adversely affect the ensemble’s performance due to missed time learning the material.
- Performances cannot be missed for any reason. Should an *extreme* situation arise, contact the Director **as soon as** the conflict is known.

COMMUNICATION OF ABSENCES

*All absences must be communicated **in advance**. Note that just because an absence is communicated does not automatically excuse the absence: HCPSS guidelines will be followed.*

- The Director must be made aware of all conflicts as soon as the student or parent becomes aware of the conflict.
- PLEASE check athletics calendars as soon as you join a team, note conflicts and immediately tell the director.
- Assuming sufficient notice has been given, every effort will be made to work with students in resolving conflicts with school-sponsored activities or excused absences.
- Absences due to non-school sponsored activities, or unexcused absences, are unexcused and may affect performance opportunities.

Mr. Woomert is best reached via email at james_woomert@hcpss.org.

www.atholtonmusic.org

The website will be utilized to distribute pertinent information and announcements to all students and parents. Included on the website is the full calendar and within Charms will be all forms for our use. **It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the program to frequently check the website.*

HOWARD COUNTY ORCHESTRA ASSESSMENT

The Howard County Orchestra Assessment is required of ALL Howard County Orchestra students. *This is a one-time performance opportunity that cannot be made up.* Please plan for this NOW:

- ALL STUDENTS will travel with the orchestra to and from the adjudication. This insures that this is a team effort and that all students are rested and focused for their performance.

Every attempt at flexibility with athletics, clubs, churches, etc. will be made during the rest of the year; however, with Assessment, this is the one day we will require that everyone be present for the duration of the day.

Failure to participate in the HCPSS Assessment will result in a maximum grade of 'C' for third quarter.

IMPORTANT 2015-2016 AHS ORCHESTRA DATES

EVENT	DATE/TIME	Location
Orchestra Welcome Reception	Friday, September 29, 2015 7:00pm	AHS Cafeteria
Fall Concert	Wednesday, October 7, 2015 7:00pm	AHS Auditorium
Winter Concerts	December 2 & 3, 2015 7:00pm	AHS Auditorium
POPS Concert	Saturday, January 9, 2016 7:00pm	AHS Auditorium
Orchestra Workshop	Saturday, March 5, 2016 9-5pm	AHS Music Dept.
HCPSS Orchestra Assessments	Tuesday, March 22, 2016 OR Wednesday, March 23, 2016 Time TBA	Marriotts Ridge HS
Spring Trip	April 14-17, 2016	Location TBA
Spring Concerts	April 27 & 28, 2016 7:00pm	AHS Auditorium
Music Awards Banquet	Wednesday, May 18, 2016 7:00pm	AHS
Chamber Music Recital	Thursday, June 2, 2015 7:00pm	AHS Music Dept.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Large ensemble rehearsals, by nature, limit the ability of the director to interact with students and their individual skills. Though not required, only the students who take advantage of private instruction will fully meet their potential. *It is no coincidence that the majority of students who make the HCPSS GT and Maryland All-State ensembles study with great private teachers.* Mr. Woomert would be happy to direct you to resources that will help you find an appropriate private instructor.

*****EXTRA HELP FROM MR. WOOMERT** Whether you take private lessons or not, ASK MR. WOOMERT FOR HELP!!! He is available during lunches, before and after school, and can make appointments. Take advantage of the help and find out exactly what is going to get you to where you want to be!

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is an integral part of the success of both the program and YOU. Without fundraising ***from BOTH students & parents***, we could not afford to provide:

- New music
- New instruments
- Transportation to events
- Guest clinicians/conductors/artists
- Awards
- College Scholarships
- The list goes on and on...

Fundraising is not graded, however students and parents should contribute towards the success of the group via fundraising, rather than solely taking advantage of the work that others do for them. Keep in mind, the more you contribute the more you will get back. We cannot exist at our current level, or expand, without YOUR HELP in fundraising. Consider this your “Fair Share” and help out!

SYLLABUS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Please read the entire orchestra handbook with your family. Sign and return this form to Mr. Woomert no later than Friday, August 28th; this is a graded assignment.

We (Parent/Guardian AND Student) have read through the orchestra handbook and discussed the co-curricular policies and expectations of this class. We understand what is expected for participation in this class in order to learn and reach full potential.

We will collectively check the Music Calendar on the website and mark all appropriate dates on our personal/family calendars. We understand that upcoming events and announcements are always listed on the board in class and that Mr. Woomert and the Boosters will do their best in communicating throughout the year, and we will do our best as well.

I understand that more information pertaining to uniforms, fundraising, and other general Music Department or Music Booster issues are on the website at www.atholtonmusic.org.

Before we signed this, we have addressed any questions with Mr. Woomert *and* have updated our Charms Account Information as directed in the Charms Student Information Handout (*attached and on the website*) to insure that we are able to receive timely and accurate communications.

PRINT Parent/Guardian Name

Signature

Date

PRINT Student Name

Signature

Date