

The Academy Orchestra

Parent Guide

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Planning Time: Call for appointment



The Academy Mission Statement

Pursuing Truth, Wisdom, Excellence

The Academy's mission is to assist families in developing exemplary citizens by equipping students with core foundational knowledge enabling them to be culturally literate, prepared for college, and virtuous in character. We accomplish this through a rigorous curriculum of traditional content taught in a safe environment.

Class Expectations:

Respect: I will respect each one of you and expect the same in return. Music is a subject based on cooperation, and harassment of any kind, by any person, will not be tolerated.

Food: Food will not be allowed in the band room at any time. Not only does food damage instruments, but also it is impossible to play an instrument correctly while eating candy, gum, or any other food.

Hats: Students will not be allowed to wear hats inside the band room, as per the school handbook dress code. They can be distracting to others, and often prevent the amount of eye contact required to be successful in music.

Mobile Phones and MP3 Players: These are not allowed in the school, and students with these items will be asked to turn them off and put them away during class.

Grade Weights:

Concerts	25% of Final Grade	<u>Letter Grade Scale:</u>
Practice Records	25% of Final Grade	A = 90%-100%
Daily Participation	20% of Final Grade	B = 80%-89%
Playing Tests	15% of Final Grade	C = 70%-79%
Study Guides	15% of Final Grade	D = 60%-69%
		F = 59% And Below

Important: The highest grade you can earn without practicing is a 75%!

Supplies:

- Music Folder and Technique Binder
- Pencil - Do not bring pens to class!
- You will be provided with a school lock for your instrument locker. Your locker must be locked whenever you are not using your instrument in class.

Assignment Descriptions and the Colorado Model Content Standards

Several years ago the United States Department of Education adopted a series of standards to be achieved by students in each of the academic subjects. Music was included in these, and shortly after that the state of Colorado also adopted standards that are in line with those on the national level. My goal is to help students achieve these standards in an engaging, exciting, and challenging way. The standards are as follows:

1. Students sing or play on instruments a varied repertoire of music, alone or with others.
2. Students will read and notate music.
3. Students will create music.
4. Students will listen to, analyze, evaluate, and describe music.
5. Students will relate music to various historical and cultural traditions.

The excitement of learning to play an instrument will always be our main goal, but each of the following assignments will help us reach a deeper understanding of music as well as meeting the standards. Although it may seem like we have a lot to accomplish each quarter, it really isn't as much as it seems and each student should be able to maintain an "A" in the class.

Performances: As you know, music is a performance-based class... Everything we do is aimed at working together to make musical moments. If one person misses a performance it hurts the whole group in many ways. The sound will be thin, the absence of a part may make some students confused about where they fit in, and the missing student conveys the message that music, and the group, is not important. We need everybody! For grading purposes, students who come to perform at concerts receive full credit; while absent students receive no points at all. There are exceptions for family emergencies, serious illness, weddings (of which you are a participant, not just a guest), and other unavoidable conflicts. An absence due to illness will only be approved if accompanied by a doctor's note. If the absence is due to a previously scheduled event, I will need to be notified at least two weeks before the performance so that adjustments can be made. Students with approved absences will have to complete an alternative assignment to make up the missing points. Unapproved absences will result in a permanent loss of the concert grade.

Please Put These Dates In Your Calendar Now!

Concerts

October 15th 2009
December 10th, 2009
March 18th 2010
May 13th, 2010

Practice Records: Daily practice is the most important thing students can do to succeed! Learning to play an instrument and music is impossible without working at home. To reflect that, practicing is considered to be the same "homework" as a student would receive in any other class, and will be graded each week. In general, it should take less time to fulfill practice requirements each night than it does to do assignments for other

classes, and the results will be quickly noticed! I would prefer that students find some small amount of time to play each night, but if that is a problem they will still receive full credit providing that they fulfill the total amount required for the week on other nights.

- ❖ Starting in 7th grade, it is the responsibility of your child to make sure this gets turned in with a parent signature each Thursday. I will also provide them with new practice records each Thursday. Students will be required to fulfill five specific tasks each week.

Participation: Music making requires the cooperation of many players. For our purposes, the daily participation grade will apply to whether or not a student has all of the materials in class required for them to make music. These include a pencil and music, as well as the student's instrument and all of the materials that it requires, such as shoulder rests, bows, rosin, etc... Points will only be awarded to students who come to class prepared. Exceptions will be made if a student's instrument is being repaired for a reasonable amount of time, although I will need a parent note to verify this. (Usually no longer than one week)

Playing Tests: Students will be required to play assigned selections of music and will be graded on these performances. Each student will play in front of the class, which will be positive and respectful to them. I will evaluate each student using the same standards, and provide them with written feedback and advice. Generally, I will only grant students a few attempts before calling upon another individual. This can easily be avoided by being prepared... Students will always know what they will be tested over at least a week before the test.

Study Guides: Every few weeks I will assign a study guide relating to music that we are studying in class. This will be a short worksheet-style assignment that students will have one week to complete. The first page will generally ask students to define words and styles listed throughout the music, the second page will deal with other concepts in a game or puzzle format, and the third part of the assignment will offer students an opportunity to choose from several mini-projects. Examples could be preparing a one page report on the composer's life, researching other arrangements of the same music, or making up meaningful lyrics to the song's main theme. Resources could be a music dictionary, encyclopedia, or the Internet.

No-Parking Grade: All students will be required to keep their instruments in an assigned instrument storage locker in the band room during the school day. Instruments need to be dropped off in the morning before school starts, and it will not be acceptable for students to keep their instruments in any other locker or classroom. Practice records will be required for each week, and students will be responsible for taking their instrument home for this purpose.

Although any day will work for practice time, I will be checking the instrument storage lockers at 4:00 PM every Friday. An empty locker will earn a 100% for the Study Guide category, but a locker that still has an instrument in it will earn a 0% for that week's grade. Students who do not take their instruments home on Friday will find a "Parking Ticket" on the door on the following class day.

I realize that there are a few students that have a different instrument for home and for school. If this is the case, a parent note will suffice for an exception. Percussionists will be graded on the presence of their sticks and other materials. Of course, excused absences will also be taken into account.

Music Replacement Fines

Every piece of music that is handed out to you needs to be taken care of. It should be returned in exactly the same condition that it was handed out in. This music belongs to the school, and will be treated the same as library books or classroom books. **Therefore, you will be charged a minimum of \$5.00 for each piece of music that is not returned to Mr. Kemp at the end of the semester during which it was used.** This price may seem high, but it is not easy to obtain individual parts from a publisher. Some music may be more expensive than that, depending on how much the publisher charges to replace the individual parts. We need to replace this music so that more students can use it in the future. Take care of your parts!

Do not allow your parts to become ripped, folded, crumpled, or wet!

Orchestra Awards Criteria

Awards will be presented at the final concert of the year, and will be earned by completing the following criteria:

Orchestra Pin: Awarded upon completion of a student's *first four* concerts at The Academy.

Bronze Star Pin: Awarded upon completion of *eight* concerts at The Academy.

Silver Star Pin: Awarded upon completion of *twelve* concerts at The Academy.

Academy Letter: Awarded upon completion of sixteen concerts at The Academy, along with any scheduled contest festival or graduation performances.

Gold Star Pin: Awarded at the increments of *twenty* and *twenty-four* concerts at The Academy.

Most Improved Trophy: Awarded to the musician that has shown the most growth in performance skills, work ethic, or positive attitude. There will only be one of these each year.

Character Trophy: Awarded to the musician that has shown the best overall character throughout the entire year. I will be looking for someone who is always positive, is always ready to do their part, is interested in improving the entire ensemble by being a positive influence, and someone who does not make negative comments towards the other musicians.

Graduation Honor Cord: A pink graduation honors cord will be awarded to any senior that receives a major award during their tenure in the band program. Seniors must be current members of the band to be eligible.

Discipline Ladder Clause

Participating in the band program at Academy of Charter Schools is a privilege. Our success as an ensemble is dependent on our ability to work together towards a common goal, and this requires a safe and comfortable environment for all of our members. Anyone who causes disruptions in class or displays a negative attitude through insults or defiance is effectively creating speed bumps for our success. **Therefore, any person that reaches five steps on the classroom discipline ladder and/or a “Strike” and suspension for behavior in orchestra will be required to have a meeting with his/her parents, Mr. Kemp, and the assistant secondary director to review whether they should be allowed to return to band.** This policy is in place to protect our common goal of building the sense of teamwork required for a successful ensemble.

- ✓ Parents: please sign and return the following form with your child, which indicates that you have read and understand these policies. This will be your child’s first grade! Please keep the first four pages of this packet for your reference copy.

Orchestra Policies Acknowledgement Form

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I have read and
(Parent name, printed)
understand the expectations and grading policy for band classes at the Academy of
Charter Schools.

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent E-mail Address: _____